



FLEET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

held on

Wednesday 2nd November 2022 at 7pm

PRESENT

Councillors: R. Schofield (Chairman), P. Einchcomb, K. Cottrell, R. Fang, S. Engström, L. Holt, A. Hope, A. Oliver, R. Richmond, S. Tilley, P. Wildsmith, B. Willcocks, G. Woods.

Also Present

Rochelle Halliday – Executive Officer
Councillor Mark Butcher – HDC
Councillor Steve Forster – HCC
Councillor Stephen Parker – HCC
2 members of the public

FC NOVEMBER 2022 ITEM 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Members received and accepted apologies from Cllr Chenery due to taking a member of his family to hospital, Cllr May due to ill health, Cllr Robinson due to a prior engagement, Cllr Sharma Krishnmurthy due to a prior engagement. Cllr Collett (HCC) also provided his apologies due to another meeting.

FC NOVEMBER 2022 ITEM 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

FC NOVEMBER 2022 ITEM 3 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were 2 members of the public present. One member of the public asked the following question. *The “Cost of Living Crisis” is impacting pensioners, and the less well-off countryside – even in Fleet. Meanwhile Fleet Town Council is throwing away over £200,000 per year as 10% (and more) inflation rapidly erodes the purchasing power of the so-called Harlington Fund. Moreover, FTC continues to extract over £400,000 per annum from hard-pressed tax-payers to fill this rapidly emptying money pit. What possible moral justification does the Council have to continue this imposition?*

Cllr Schofield responded as follows. This current wave of inflation has seen a rapid rise in just the last few months, it is not something that has continued for years. It is most regrettable but outside FTC’s control.

The moral justification for The Harlington is the huge social value that it delivers. It is viewed by some as solely an entertainment facility, but it supports Fleet Phoenix which provides an invaluable service to some of the youth of Fleet, it provides a home for Sacha’s Project which supports extremely vulnerable young people and the Baptist Church Nursery School, which supports a number of families that cannot afford child-care.

It is the meeting place for a broad spectrum of Fleet residents, U3A, The Town Women’s Guild, The Fine Arts Society, The Rock Choir, The Film club, The Jazz Club, several dance classes for a range of ages. It has been the location for the Blood Donor Service and the Vaccination

Centre during Covid. For the last several years The Harlington has supported the Remembrance Service. It is the venue for Hart's mother and baby service. The Harlington has supported the local Starburst charity by providing the venue for their annual fundraising events.

Local restaurants and bars admit that their businesses benefit when The Harlington puts on shows or entertainment. There is no immediate facility that could accommodate many of these community functions. It is in fact the largest multi-function venue in the District, the only one able to offer this range of facilities, but it is at the heart of the Fleet Community.

Councillors are not immune to the impact of the current financial situation, we are fully aware of the pressures being placed on households, but the contribution towards maintaining a facility for the benefit of not just the current users but future generations is the equivalent of 74 pence per week for a Band D household. Even if we are forced into refurbishing the current facility, we will be involved in a multimillion- pound investment. Having cash reserves limits the borrowing need and saves residents significant sums in interest payments.

1 member of the public left the meeting at 7.12pm.

FC NOVEMBER 2022 ITEM 4 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr Schofield explained that it has been a relatively quiet period since the last meeting. He reported his attendance during the period as follows:

Police Review Meeting - 11th October: where a major part of the discussion was focused on Anti-Social Behaviour, the lack of police response and the under reporting of incidents. The continuing frustration of either the response time or difficulty in accessing the 101 service was raised. The primary police response was the lack of resources and recruiting police into the North Hants area. Cllrs Forster and Butcher are taking a primary role in trying to improve the situation.

HALC AGM - 20th October: the Council was not represented at the AGM.

Fleet BID Board Meeting - 25th October: where the major discussion was the strategic direction of the BID and how it can best serve the levy payers.

Remembrance Sunday Preparations - 28th October: along with the Executive Officer and Projects and Committee Officer, Cllr Schofield met with Chairman of local Branch of RBL to finalise details of the Remembrance Service and Parade.

The Harlington Lease – 28th October: Cllr Schofield, along with the Executive Officer, met with a Director of Hollis Hockley to discuss the Draft Heads of Terms of the Harlington Lease in relation to standard Commercial Leases

Civic Quarter Redevelopment Working Group – 1st November: attended the Working Group meeting along with the Executive Officer.

SID Board results: for Elvetham Road for the period 3rd to 17th October. The 85thile speed was 35mph, marginally over the legal speed limit. 6% of vehicles travelled over 50mph with the maximum recorded speed of 81mph.

Over the 14-day period 24,526 vehicles were monitored with the highest hourly traffic count of 240 vehicles, the average hourly traffic count in the peak 8 hour daily period was generally around 120 vehicles. The road is definitely getting busier but not in comparison with main urban routes.

Policing

Cllr Butcher outlined the ongoing work he is undertaking with the police. He met with the District Commander, District Inspector and District Sergeant to raise awareness of the issues.

A secure web form has been set up with the schools for retailers to report issues to them. A rapid response team has been set up in Fleet. CCTV issues also raised with the police.

Members thanked Cllr Butcher and others for their efforts. It was noted that a police representative reporting to FTC meetings would be welcome.

Cllr Forster stated that he had approached the Police Crime Commissioner regarding the funding for additional outreach work.

Parking and Roads

Cllr Forster updated members regarding parking orders that are out for consultation noting mixed responses so far.

Fleet Road (opposite Stockton Avenue) dip in the road - Thames Water will be closing the road to undertake some CCTV surveillance underground to investigate the issue.

Service for Young People

Additional funding for services for young people is being sought, any ideas are welcome.

Restructure of HDC

A restructure of HDC is due to be implemented in January 2023. Cllr Oliver added that the HDC restructure will align portfolios with the three new Executive Directors.

Crossing Points on Reading Road South

Cllr Parker reported that additional crossing points were being progressed with HCC.

Waste Strategy

Cllr Oliver reported that HDC were discussing the waste strategy with HCC. The new Eastleigh Materials Recycling Facility is due to open in 2025 and will enable a wider range of materials to be recycled.

Cllrs Butcher and Forster left the meeting at 7.39pm.

The minutes and the confidential minutes of the Council held on Wednesday 5th October 2022 and the confidential minutes from the meeting held on Wednesday 7th September 2022 were approved and signed as a true record by the Chairman.

The Council received and noted the minutes of the following Committees:

RLA	28 th September 2022
Policy and Finance	19 th October 2022
Development Control	10 th October and 24 th October 2022

Members received the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, as reviewed by the Policy and Finance Committee.

RESOLVED

That the revised Standing Orders and Financial Regulations be adopted.

FC NOVEMBER 2022 ITEM 8 INVESTMENT REPORT

Members received the

- a. Corrected investment report for the period ending 30th September 2022
- b. A proposal to agree transferral of a further £400,000 from the Nationwide Business Instant Saver account to a higher interest account.

It was noted that £400,000 was already agreed for transfer into the Nationwide Business 1 Year Saver Account at the Policy and Finance Committee meeting on 19th October 2022.

RESOLVED

Members resolved to

- a. Note the corrected investment report for the period ending 30th September 2022.
- b. To transfer £400,000 from the Nationwide Business Instant Saver account to a higher interest account/one year account.

FC NOVEMBER 2022 ITEM 9 CORONATION OF KING CHARLES III AND THE QUEEN CONSORT

Members discussed the Council's role in the Coronation celebrations on 6th May 2023. The remaining Jubilee funds could be utilised along with any funding the Council wishes to add to next year's budget.

RESOLVED

Members resolved that FTC would facilitate the Coronation celebrations for 6th May 2023.

FC NOVEMBER 2022 ITEM 10 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Members noted a revised list of Committee Membership.

FC NOVEMBER 2022 ITEM 11 BUDGET AND PRECEPT FOR 2023/24

Members received a verbal update from Cllr Holt following the Budget Working Group meeting on 1st November 2022. Members reviewed a second version of the draft budget and comments were made. A further draft budget will be available next week. The budget is due for agreement at the next Council meeting.

FC NOVEMBER 2022 ITEM 12 INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

Members received the interim Internal Audit report and noted the audit actions report.

FC NOVEMBER 2022 ITEM 13 CIVIC QUARTER REGENERATION

Members received a verbal update report from Cllr Schofield following the Civic Campus Regeneration Working Group meeting on 1st November 2022. Additional funding for a viability report will be brought to the December HDC Cabinet meeting for review. The decision whether to proceed to the planning permission stage will take place at the March HDC Cabinet meeting.

FC NOVEMBER 2022 ITEM 14 COMPLAINTS

Members noted that there had been no complaints.

FC NOVEMBER 2022 ITEM 15 EXECUTIVE OFFICER’S REPORT

Members received and noted the Executive Officer’s report. Members discussed the issue of thermal imaging cameras. It was noted that most likely scenario is that they will be made available to residents so that they can test their properties for heat leakage, through a deposit scheme operated by parish councils.

Members were informed that this year’s Remembrance Service may be the last one to take place in The Harlington, as All Saint’s Church should be open by the end of this year.

The date for the next Establishment Committee is likely to be 30th November 2022 and will be confirmed shortly.

FC NOVEMBER 2022 ITEM 16 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Council is on Wednesday 7th December 2022 at 7pm in The Function Room of The Harlington.

The meeting ended at 8.15pm.

Signed.....

Date.....

Chairman