



FLEET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

held on

Wednesday 4th January 2023 at 7pm

PRESENT

Councillors: R. Schofield (Chairman), G. Chenery, K. Cottrell, P. Einchcomb, S. Engström, R. Fang, L. Holt, A. Hope, E. May, A. Oliver, R. Richmond, R. Robinson, S. Sharma Krishnamurthy, S. Tilley, P. Wildsmith and G. Woods.

Also Present:

Rochelle Halliday – Executive Officer
Councillor Adrian Collett – HCC
Councillor Steve Forster – HCC
Councillor Stephen Parker – HCC
Representative of Friends of Oakley Park
2 members of the public (representing the Car Show application)

FC JANUARY 2023 ITEM 1

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Members received and accepted apologies from Cllr Willcocks due to illness.

FC JANUARY 2023 ITEM 2

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Chenery and Tilley declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 12, Event Application Calthorpe Park.

FC JANUARY 2023 ITEM 3

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from the public.

FC JANUARY 2023 ITEM 4

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr Schofield reported his attendance during the period as follows:

- Attended the pantomime at The Harlington.

Cllr Schofield thanked everyone who supported the annual Christmas lunch including the Council Officers.

FC JANUARY 2023 ITEM 5

HCC/HDC ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr Parker gave an update on general matters of interest.

S106 funds from Cookham Park Development

Money from the s106 contribution for the development on Crookham Park will be used to fund pedestrian crossings on Reading Road South. The Queen Elizabeth Barracks working party is meeting on 20th January to review the road/cycling infrastructure elements of the development including safe walking routes to school.

Cllr Collett gave a further update.

Roads

The road network is regularly gritted during very cold weather.

There is an issue with the streetlights on Cove Road and although the section of road is not adopted, the County Council will take on the repair work.

South-East Water works at Ancells Farm

The works undertaken have been very noisy for those living near where the equipment is being operated. Any complaints should be directed towards Hart District Council Environmental Health.

Planning application – Rye Logistics Park

Concern was raised about any conditions being removed or altered for the HGV route.

Cllr Forster gave updates on the following issues.

Activities for Young People

Children's activities organised by HCC will now continue in the Easter and Summer holidays.

Potholes

Currently a lower than usual level of pothole reports is being received from the area. Potholes need to be reported if they are to be fixed by HCC.

Passing of Anthony Barrell

Former councillor Anthony Barrell passed away before Christmas; condolences are extended to his family.

Roadworks

Cllr Forster explained that the works due to take place in the Fleet Road dip have been rescheduled until January. CCTV investigations did take place and identified an issue with the underground utilities.

FC JANUARY 2023 ITEM 6

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED

The main and confidential minutes of the Council held on Wednesday 7th December 2022 were approved and signed as a true record by the Chairman.

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

Development Control 19th December 2022

It was agreed to take Item 12 next.

FC JANUARY 2023 ITEM 12

EVENT APPLICATION CALTHORPE PARK

Members consider a revised request for a Classic Car show to be held in Calthorpe Park.

Questions were asked regarding the toilet requirement for the projected number of attendees. Car parking won't be available on Calthorpe Park, so people will have to park in the town's main car parks. The applicant will need to apply for their own road closure, separate to the Carnival's application.

Members asked if a specific traffic management plan will be submitted to support the application. The applicants confirmed that this would be arranged.

It was confirmed that a bond is required by cheque, which is only cashed if required.

RESOLVED

Members approved the request subject to the conditions outlined at the RLA Committee meeting on 21st December 2022 being satisfied.

2 Members of the public left at 7.35pm.

FC January 2023 ITEM 7 BUDGET AND PRECEPT FOR 2023/2024 FINANCIAL YEAR

Members reviewed and discussed approval of the budget and precept for the 2023/24 financial year. Cllr Schofield provided some information on the Council's financial history and the challenges faced by the Council in the coming year.

The proposed budget and precept were reviewed in detail by the Budget Working Group. It is the recommendation of the Budget Working Group Council that the Council should set the precept to fully recover the budget.

A discussion ensued, and the following points were made:

- It is a balance between supporting residents in the current cost of living crisis and maintaining the Council's core services.
- Residents would expect the Council to make budget cuts, however, are likely to understand that the Council's costs have risen by the rate of inflation.
- Consideration should be given to suspending the new Harlington fund money and reallocating the amount to offset the budget deficit.
- Residents don't want services to be cut and the option for a balanced budget is small in monetary terms.
- There is a discussion by the Hart District Council cabinet tomorrow to agree a way forward for The Harlington lease.
- The Council's previous decisions of setting a zero increase in the precept and the impacts of COVID has left it in an uncertain financial position against the background of unexpectedly high inflation.

There were several suggestions made with regards to the budget and precept.

Cllr Hope left the meeting at 8.00pm.

Council Budget

Members discussed the proposed budget for the 2023/24 financial year.

After some consideration it was agreed to set the budget as drafted without any changes.

RESOLVED

To approve the budget for the 2023/24 financial year as proposed.

Precept 2023/24

Cllr Fang proposed an amendment to the original motion to set a balanced budget and precept by suspending the new Harlington fund. The motion was seconded and a recorded vote was requested, as detailed below:

Votes For

Cllr Fang

Cllr Sharma Krishnamurthy

Votes Against

Cllr Chenery	Cllr Richmond
Cllr Cottrell	Cllr Robinson
Cllr Einchcomb	Cllr Schofield
Cllr Engström	Cllr Tilley
Cllr Holt	Cllr Wildsmith
Cllr May	Cllr Woods
Cllr Oliver	

MOTION FAILED.

The following amendments to the original motion were proposed, seconded and **FAILED** upon voting:

- A 10% increase in the operational precept only and for the new Harlington precept to be fixed.
- Modified Option 4 in the budget proposal report, 10% increase to total precept, but no cuts to grant funding.
- Option 5 in the budget proposal report (full budget recovery), 16.2% increase to precept.
- A 10.5% increase to the precept.
- A 9% increase to the precept and no cuts to grant funding.
- A 10.5% increase in the operational precept only.

RESOLVED

- An amendment to the original motion was proposed, seconded and voted in favour of increasing the precept by 9.8% for the 2023/24 financial year. The precept request will therefore be £1,258,132.
- That the budget deficit is balanced from General Reserves.

Cllrs Sharma Krishnamurthy and Wildsmith left the meeting at 9.20pm.

FC JANUARY 2023 ITEM 8

FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

Members noted receipt of:

- a. The bank reconciliation for November 2022
- b. The list of payments for November 2022

Cllr Robinson confirmed inspection of the November 2022 bank reconciliations which were in order, and that he has signed the bank statements and payment schedules.

RESOLVED

- To accept the bank reconciliation for November 2022.
- To accept the list of payments for November 2022.
- To confirm that the bank reconciliations for November 2022 equal zero and that the bank statements match the reconciliations.

FC JANUARY 2023 ITEM 9

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

Members noted receipt of and considered the recommendation from the RLA Committee to approve the renewal of the existing grounds maintenance contract for a further two years.

The contract pricing will be increased annually in line with the April RPI rate in accordance with the existing contract terms. The value of the contract for the current financial year is £145,559.

RESOLVED

Members approved a two-year extension to the existing grounds maintenance contract with Nigel Jeffries Landscapes.

FC JANUARY 2023 ITEM 10 ANNUAL RESIDENTS' MEETING

Members noted the proposal that a Working Group be set up to prepare and progress the content of the Annual Residents' Meeting.

Members agreed to form a working group to prepare the content of the Annual Residents meeting. Cllrs Holt, May, Schofield, Tilley and Woods agreed to serve on the Working Group.

FC JANUARY 2023 ITEM 11 COUNCIL MEETING DATES

Members considered the revised Council meeting dates for 2023/24, which showed an amended date for the Annual Meeting of the Town Council in May 2023.

Members agreed to maintain the original date of 10th May 2023 for the Annual Meeting of the Town Council.

FC JANUARY 2023 ITEM 13 HAMPSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS EXTRAORDINARY AGM

Members considered a Council representative to attend the Hampshire Association of Local Councils (HALC) EAGM on 23rd February 2023 and vote on behalf of the Council.

RESOLVED

That Cllr Einchcomb would attend the HALC EAGM and vote on behalf of the Council.

FC JANUARY 2023 ITEM 14 VISION DAY

Members noted that the vision development sessions will take place over two sessions on Wednesday 18th January 2023 and Wednesday 22nd February 2023 at 7pm in The Harlington. The sessions will provide an input into developing the Council's strategy for the coming four years. Some preliminary work will be provided in advance to aid discussions.

FC JANUARY 2023 ITEM 15 COMPLAINTS

No complaints had been recorded since the last meeting.

FC JANUARY 2023 ITEM 16 EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Members received and noted the Executive Officer's report.

Members noted a Climate Change event at HCC will be attended by Cllr Cottrell.

Members agreed to donate any surplus Christmas food items to a Christmas celebration for Ukrainians planned for January in The Harlington. Hart District Council is funding the venue hire for the event.

FC JANUARY 2023 ITEM 17

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Council is on Wednesday 1st February 2023 at 7pm in The Function Room of The Harlington.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.38pm.

Signed.....

Date:.....

Chairman