



FLEET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING

held on

Wednesday 3rd November 2021

in the Harlington

PRESENT

Councillors:

R. Schofield (Chairman), P. Einchcomb, R. Fang, L. Holt, K Jasper, K. Kuntikanamata, A. Oliver, R. Richmond, R. Robinson, S. Tilley, P. Wildsmith, B. Willcocks, G. Woods.

Also Present:

Janet Stanton - Town Clerk
Mary Harris – Committee Clerk
Cllr Stephen Parker – HCC
Cllr Steve Forster – HCC and HDC
Cllrs Mark Butcher & Katie Davies – HDC
2 members of the public

FC Nov 2021 ITEM 1

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Members received and accepted apologies for absence from Councillor Chenery for health reasons and Councillor Wright due to a work commitment.

FC Nov 2021 ITEM 2

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

FC Nov 2021 ITEM 3

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from the public.

Councillor Schofield took the opportunity to update members on two webinars he had recently attended on:

- *Website Accessibility*, confirming that FTC is 'on the ball' with an accessibility statement on its website, although overall the site is limited in its capability. He confirmed that a 2022-23 budget allocation is proposed for a new fully compliant website.
- *Biodiversity and Climate Change* – a NALC initiative looking at the inspiring work of Hazelmere Parish Council in relation to encouraging pollinators, installing heat pumps etc. Cllr Schofield encouraged others to watch this presentation on the NALC website and recommended that the FTC Climate Change Working Group become active.

Cllr Schofield further referred to the 3 replies received following the request for feedback in Town Talk. One pointed out a perceived error in the article re paving materials whilst the other two made comments on the proposed downward devolution in Hampshire, concluding that any services under consideration should only be taken on if it was the wish of the people of Fleet and fully funded.

The Clerk was asked to make sure that Town Talk was made available on the FTC website. (Post meeting – all issues of TownTalk have always been on the front page of the FTC website).

FC Nov 2021 ITEM 4 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Members received and approved as a correct record the minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 6th October 2021. The chairman signed the minutes.

With the correction of a minor typo Council received and noted the minutes of the following Committees:

P&F	20 th October 2021
Development Control	27 th September and 11 th October 2021

With Council's agreement the following item was brought forward to enable discussion whilst two representatives of the Guides were in attendance.

FC Nov 2021 ITEM 7 DIVISION GUIDE HALL – BASINGBOURNE PARK

As landlords FTC were requested to give approval for the erection of a canopy over a paved area between the kitchen and the shed in order to provide additional 'outdoor' space, enabling more activities to be undertaken with good ventilation and weather protection. Following confirmation that no maintenance liability for the canopy would fall to FTC, Council unanimously approved the proposal. Cllr Oliver offered to facilitate a meeting with Hart District Council (HDC) Planning Officers to answer the Guide's queries regarding planning permission etc.

RESOLVED

That FTC approves the installation of a canopy at the Division Guide Hall – Basingbourne Park as detailed in the submitted documents.

FC Nov 2021 ITEM 5 BUDGET AND PRECEPT

As chair of Policy & Finance Committee (P&F) Cllr Holt introduced the discussion. He advised of the interrelationship between Ear-marked, General and Harlington Reserves. P&F had recommended that Council seek to fund a General Reserve of £360,000. In the absence of Business Interruption Insurance. This would serve as a cushion against a further possible loss in revenue income, due to a future pandemic or similar. It was however recognised that this was unaffordable at present, so it had been suggested that any call of this nature on Reserves be covered, on an interim basis, by the £2m+ Harlington Reserve. P&F sought Council approval for this approach.

P&F had further suggested that, in line with the Auditor's advice, some items in the Ear-marked reserve be moved into General Reserves as they do not relate to current or planned projects. This would result in a projected General Reserve of £220,000 at the end of the financial year.

It was further explained that the draft 2022-23 budget was a 'maintenance budget' only, including no specific projects save the new website (which was to be funded through Ear-marked reserves). After discussion it was generally agreed that there were no immediate cost-savings to be made, staffing was at a minimum and appropriate provision had been made for known cost of living increases e.g. in fuel prices. Despite this cautious approach the budget was in deficit and without an increase in the Precept would require a call on the General Reserve of £137,000. P&F therefore sought Council guidance on a possible Precept increase that would be both pragmatic and acceptable.

Members had a robust, constructive and wide-ranging discussion regarding this proposal, and highlighted the importance of keeping the public well informed regarding any decision made.

RESOLVED

1. That the Harlington Reserve serve as a back-up to the General Reserve in the event of a future pandemic,
2. That P&F consider the following when proposing the 2022/2023 draft budget for approval at the December Council meeting.
 - a) That the precept be set with a 4% cost of living uplift.
 - b) That any budget deficit be balanced from General Reserves.

FC Nov 2021 ITEM 6

GURKHA SQUARE MARKET, FLEET

Members thanked the Clerk for her helpful paper which gave the background and offered a number of options following the request by the current Market Operator to terminate their agreement. Members were confident that there was an appetite for a market in Fleet and that with the expertise available within the Council and in the BID that it might be possible to create a positive outcome, although it was unclear whether FTC had the resources to give to this at the present time. A councillor led Working Group, with energy, was needed to create a plan. Cllr's Richmond and Willcocks agreed to take this project forward.

RESOLVED

Members agreed that Cllr's Richmond and Willcocks take forward investigating the options for running the market.

FC Nov 2021 ITEM 8 CIVIC QUARTER AND MULTI FUNCTIONAL COMMUNITY VENUE

Cllr Schofield reported on a recent meeting of HDC's Civic Quarter Working Group, which was focused on public engagement. As a result, an opportunity for public feedback was planned for January / February 2022 which would be used to gauge public reaction to some of the concepts of redevelopment. It was encouraging that another meeting had been set for December, indicating renewed activity on this matter.

In response to a question Cllr Schofield confirmed an updated independent cost estimate at Q4 2021 of £12.9m for the Multi-Functional Community Venue. Taking into account the Harlington Reserve and availability of a Public Works Board Loan, for the Multi-Functional Community Venue project remained affordable

RESOLVED

To note the update on the Civic Quarter and Multi-Functional Community Venue.

FC Nov 2021 ITEM 9

COMPLAINTS

No complaints had been recorded since the last meeting.

FC Nov 2021 ITEM 10

TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

Members received and noted an update from the Town Clerk. The following matters were discussed:

- **Christmas Day Lunch.** An appeal was made to Councillor's for donations of bottles of wine, prosecco and mints. The Clerk would produce a list of what was needed and circulate.
- **Platinum Jubilee Working Group.** FTC is liaising with other organisation to share plans and hopefully coordinate the event across Fleet.
- **Action Day** – Saturday 6th November – planting bulbs in the Cemetery
- **HALC AGM** – Cllr Einchcomb attending as FTC representative.

Councillor Parker reported:

- **HCC** - are meeting soon to discuss and agree the budgetary principles for the next two years in order to develop a Medium-Term Financial Strategy

Councillor Butcher updated members on the following from HDC:

- **Speed Indicator Display's (SID'S)** – After significant hurdles have been overcome, it is hoped the SID's will be deployed in locations around Fleet in the next couple of months. It was also reported that the Police had been more proactive lately with their enforcement van and hand-held cameras.

Councillor Forster reported:

Anti-social behaviour and Crime – there has been a reported increase including the theft of key-less cars in the area. The police are working proactively to catch a gang of youths acting in an anti-social manner and causing intimidation.

FC Nov 2021 ITEM 12

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The date and time of the next meeting of the Council is on Wednesday 1st December 2021 at 19.00 in the Harlington.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 20.59.

Signed.....

Date.....

Chairman

Part 3 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Exclusion of the public in accordance with Section 1(2) and by reason of the confidential nature of the business of the Town Council, the Public and Press were excluded from the Meeting.

There were no confidential items.