



FLEET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL COUNCIL MEETING

held on

Wednesday 1st July 2020

PRESENT

Councillors: R. Schofield (Chairman), G. Carpenter, G. Chenery, P. Einchcomb, R. Harrison, L. Holt, A. Hope, K. Jasper, A. Oliver, R. Robinson, S. Tilley, S. Wheale, P. Wildsmith, G. Woods, J. Wright.

Also Present

Janet Stanton - Town Clerk
Susanna Walker - Committee Clerk
Wendy Allen - Office Manager
Charlotte Benham - Project and Committee Officer
Councillor John Bennison - HCC
Councillor Wendy Makepeace-Browne - HDC
Councillor Steve Forster - HCC

FC July 2020 ITEM 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

FC July 2020 ITEM 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

FC July 2020 ITEM 3 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from the public.

Councillor Schofield reminded members that as of Saturday 4th July 2020, current restrictions due to the pandemic are being lifted. This includes the reopening of the high street, children's playgrounds, the skate park and Fleet Link. However, the Harlington remains closed at this time. It was reiterated that Fleet Town Council need to be cautious during the slow recovery from COVID19, and have a responsibility to the whole community to prioritise public safety.

Councillor Schofield and Councillor Woods attended virtual meeting with HCC Transport Officers regarding the commencement of the Fleet Link bus service, which is due to commence on 15th July 2020. Due to social distancing at 2m, Fleet Link can only take 3 passengers per trip on the bus. Following government rules and the contract, FTC are being advised that the providers of Fleet Link can claim extra under the contract for any provisions they need to put in to place for safety, such as screens and relocation of seats. These are additional payments by FTC to the provider under the contract.

Members were made aware that there is a special provision within the contract for exceptional payment or losses, and because of the reduced number of passengers that can be carried,

there will be a shortfall in the fare receipts over the period of the contract, and FTC will be asked to compensate for that loss at the end of the financial year. HCC estimates that community buses across the county are running at about £28,000 a month loss, a proportion of which FTC are required to contribute. Councillor Schofield proposed to members that once further information is obtained from HCC regarding the financial situation, this will be passed to the Policy & Finance Committee meeting on 20th July 2020 for further consideration.

Due to government edict, FTC cannot commence any live entertainment therefore the Harlington remains closed at this time. The public toilets will also remain closed.

FC July 2020 ITEM 4 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of Council held on Wednesday 3rd June 2020 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

The Council also received the minutes of the following Committees and Working Groups:

Development Control	11th May 2020 26th May 2020 8th June 2020 22nd June 2020
RLA	17th June 2020

FC July 2020 ITEM 5 HCC / HDC UPDATE

HDC

Councillor Makepeace-Browne reported on the following:

- There is still a need for caution during this current period and this should be conveyed to residents, as COVID19 has not passed yet.
- Fleetwood Lodge Planning application in the Fleet Central area. There has been a lot of misinformation on social media regarding this, which has caused angst to residents. There is no issue with this application, which was handled appropriately and has subsequently been granted planning permission.
- Business grants. HDC is aware that there have been issues with some of the grants but if there are any businesses still with issues, to contact Councillor Makepeace-Browne.
- Civic regeneration programme. Tender presentations will take place on Tuesday 7th July 2020.

HCC

Councillor Bennison updated the members on the following:

- Household Waste Recycling Sites. The booking system currently has 5000 slots a week across the county.
- Residents can now book ahead for up to 7 days on some sites.
- Research shows there is a 2% no show of appointments.
- Available slots are released every 30 minutes throughout the day, to allow fair access to all residents.
- Some residents would like to know when slots are available, to save time online.
- Some slots have also been held back for telephone callers.
- County Action Plan for COVID19, to control the R number, reduce the spread of the infection and save lives.
- HCC briefings are taking place every 3 days.

Councillor Forster reported on the following:

- Special thanks were given to Fleet Town Council, with regards to the fast response given to any queries from residents.
- Problems with barriers placed in Fleet High Street. A risk assessment will be requested.
- Barriers outside Norway Parade and Birch Parade have been removed.
- HDC has put in an application for Fleet High Street to be pedestrianised. Concerns have been raised about businesses and residents being consulted, and the side roads being made safe.
- Phase 3 of cycle improvements through to Fleet Station and Hitchings Lane.
- Fleet Bid has been supporting local businesses with the business grant applications.
- Army bylaw review on the MOD land, which potentially means no recreational access at all on MOD land.
- Libraries are reopening on 6th July 2020.
- Summer reading challenge to be promoted online.

Councillor Oliver reported on the following:

- The pedestrianisation of Fleet High Street is a temporary measure and will be used as a trial, looking at the impact on surrounding roads and that safety isn't compromised.
- Possible free car parking in all HDC car parks until 1st August 2020
- An advertising campaign will be released for MiPermit, allowing anyone parking to pre-book their ticket, without touching the car park keypads.
 - The 20p transaction fee for any ticket purchased up to £1.60 will be waived

Members then discussed the following:

- Financial update. HCC has £110 million pounds unfunded, with approximately £85 million funded by the government.
- Cove Road roadworks are for SGN. Some of the traffic can be easily diverted, but the road will have a full closure for a few days.

FC July 2020 ITEM 6 AUDITORIUM CEILING

Members received a verbal update on the progress of the Auditorium Ceiling inspection and discussed the following:

- FTC is still waiting for the structural report – once it is available, a copy will be sent to HDC along with estimates for any work required.
- Remedial work to the timber beams in the ceiling is required and FTC is waiting for a quote from a specialist company.
- There have been delays to the delivery of the ceiling tiles, which is now expected by the end of July.
- The main auditorium of the Harlington will remain closed until the end of July.
- The Chairman gave thanks to the Harlington's Venue Technician for his work on the project.

Whilst the scaffolding is in position in the auditorium, there is potential for non-structural work in the ceiling space to be undertaken. This includes:

- Changing all the ceiling lights over to LEDs, which is a huge benefit for future operations and reduces the risk to staff whilst changing the light tubes at height. This also promotes FTC's green credentials.
- The necessary compliance work.
- The cost of the compliance work and LEDs amount to approximately £25,000 and could be funded from the Harlington Reserve Fund.

RESOLVED

Members agreed to:

- a. Approve the non-structural works put in hand whilst the scaffolding is in position.
- b. Approve a budgetary allowance of £25k from the Harlington Reserve Fund to cover this work.

FC July 2020 ITEM 7 FLEET TOWN COUNCIL - COVID19 RECOVERY

Members noted that the COVID19 Recovery Working Group is continuing to meet regularly to review the Council's activities in line with the latest governance guidance. Members were made aware that the Harlington was not eligible for the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure grant it had applied for. Current budget projections had not included this or any other external funds.

Members were advised that as FTC is a precept body it is not eligible to receive a grant,

FC July 2020 ITEM 8 NEW COUNCILLOR VACANCY

Members noted that that the Councillor vacancy for the Central Ward was advertised for the prescribed 14 working days.. It has been confirmed that 10 registered electors from the Central Ward did not come forward and request a by-election; therefore FTC can co-opt a Councillor to fill the vacancy. Details will be included on social media and the website. Any resident wishing to be considered for co-option will need to complete an application form and these will then be brought to the Council meeting on 2nd September 2020 for consideration.

FC July 2020 ITEM 9 BUDGET 2021/2022

Members noted that due to the current situation, it is not possible to start the budget process for the budget 2021/2022 until September 2020 as there is still uncertainty on when public buildings, theatres and venues will be allowed to operate fully. The Budget Working Group will need to review the latest situation and if necessary bring any necessary recommendations to the Council meeting on 2nd September 2020. The proposed budget will then be taken to the Policy & Finance Committee meeting in October 2020,

Members noted that all staff have been asked to look at further ways to cut back on a spending at this time.

FC July 2020 ITEM 10 COVID 19 UPDATE

Members received and noted the COVID19 update report from the Clerk. Members noted the following:

- All tennis courts are fully open. There are approximately 120 new memberships this year.
- Football training and fitness classes in groups of 6 are taking place in the local parks.
- The Cemetery is open.
- Children's playgrounds and skate parks open on Saturday 4th July 2020.
- FTC is following all the government guidelines.
- FTC has produced a 30 page risk assessment to cover all equipment in the playgrounds, to comply with government guidelines.
- To ensure social distancing, every piece of equipment in each play park displays a sign indicating the maximum number of users.
- Some play equipment has been removed, in order to comply with social distancing.
- Signs will be put up in all playgrounds, outlining parental responsibility in the parks.
- All playgrounds will be deep cleaned before Saturday 4th July 2020.

- Members were asked to check their local parks and playgrounds on a daily basis, to check that the correct signage is up.
- 5 permanent members of staff and 14 zero hours member of staff have been furloughed.
- 2 members of staff have returned to work part time.
- Public toilets in the Harlington will remain closed.
- Covid Secure Risk Assessment for staff returning to work.
- Members of the Council are requested to make an appointment when they wish to come to the office, and then enter the building through the front door. Meetings will be held in the function room or café, and not the main staff office.

Members discussed the following:

- Request for a Car Boot sale –
 - The recent RLA Committee had resolved that Parks should not be used for a Car Boot sale, due to the volume of people and children using the parks.
 - Concern was expressed that the use of a car park would not be ideal as it could deter people from coming back to the town to park and shop.
- A discussion on the Car Boot sale had not been requested for inclusion in the July Council Meeting. Members were fully aware matters not on the agenda could not be discussed without notice.
- The issue, if requested could be formally brought to Council at the next meeting in September 2020.
- Cllr Oliver requested his frustration to be recorded.
- Councillors voiced their support for a car boot sale, but not within a park.
- Litter increase in parks.

FC July 2020 ITEM 11 TOWN CLERK’S REPORT

Members received the Town Clerk’s report and noted the following:

- Calthorpe Park Playground. This playground is scheduled to open at the end of July / August 2020.
- Gurkha Square Market. The new operators will take over on the 18th July 2020, with a proposed market launch in August 2020.

FC July 2020 ITEM 12 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The provisional date of the next virtual meeting of the Council is scheduled for Wednesday 2nd September 2020 at 7pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.02pm.

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 will be excluded from the Meeting

The following types of business will be treated as confidential:

- a. Engagement, terms of service, conduct and dismissal of employees**
- b. Terms of tenders, and proposals and counter-proposals in negotiations for contracts**
- c. Receipt of professional legal advice and preparation of cases in legal proceedings**
- d. The early stages of any dispute**
- e. Matters of a Commercial nature**

FC July 2020 ITEM 13 CONTRACTUAL MATTER

Members received revised documentation on a contractual matter.

RESOLVED

To approve the documentation.