



FLEET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING held on Wednesday 4th September 2024 at 7pm

* Councillor Schofield (Chairman)

* Councillor Einchcomb (Vice Chairman)

# Councillor Chenery	0 Councillor Oliver
# Councillor Fang	* Councillor Richmond
* Councillor Holt	0 Councillor Robinson
* Councillor Hope	* Councillor Taylor
* Councillor James	* Councillor Tilley
0 Councillor May	* Councillor Wildsmith
* Councillor Neves	0 Councillor Willcocks
	* Councillor Woods

* Present # Absent & No Apology Received 0 Apology for Absence L Late

Also in attendance:

Rita Tong – Executive Officer
Councillor Stephen Parker – HCC
Councillor Adrian Collett – HCC
Mike Bye – Chair of Friends of Oakley Park
Terence Read – Hampshire Police

FC SEPTEMBER 2024 ITEM 1

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Members received and accepted the apologies as noted above.

FC SEPTEMBER 2024 ITEM 2

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Wildsmith declared a registerable interest for item 24 – Harlington Lease on the grounds that he is a member of the Hart District Council Cabinet. Cllr Wildsmith left the Chamber whilst this item was debated.
Cllr Taylor declared he was a District Councillor.

FC SEPTEMBER 2024 ITEM 3

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from the public.

FC SEPTEMBER 2024 ITEM 4

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr Schofield noted that as it had been the holiday period, he had little to report.

Cllr Schofield offered his congratulations to Cllr Tilley and her team for the success of Music on the Views – he had attended and thought it was a great event.

The following reports were received from Hampshire County Council.

Cllr Stephen Parker (HCC)

- Echoed Cllr Schofield's comments on Music on the Views.
- Devolution has raised its head again. The County and three unitaries, in consultation with the District Councils, had made a formal expression of interest and were in conversations.
- Thames Water are using their emergency powers to address the leaks in the sewer pipes in Hitches Lane. HCC are aware there have been numerous tankers on local roads which have caused traffic issues and requested they use more sensible routes but can't stop them as the roads are public roads. The current repairs are estimated to take 2-3 weeks.

Cllr Adrian Collett (HCC)

- Echoed Cllr Schofield's and Cllr Parker's comments on Music on the Views.
- Hitches Lane has an aging pressurised sewerage system that keeps bursting at different points. Thames Water estimate it will take 6-12 months to install a new pipeline. Meanwhile they are using the tankers to pump and remove sewage to affect the repairs.
- HCC is addressing the issue of school buses for Ancell Farm residents. Originally, a school was planned as part of the development, but when it was determined that there were sufficient spaces in nearby schools, the decision was made not to build it. Instead, school buses were agreed upon as a solution, but that agreement was unilaterally changed by HCC a couple of years ago. Children under 8 years of age are bused for free but the parent of older children have to pay for a seat on the bus. However, this year, a strict application of eligibility criteria was introduced as a cost-saving measure, which reduced the size of the bus and therefore the spare seat capacity. This was not communicated to residents in a timely manner. As a result, some families who intended to purchase spare seats have been unable to do so. In the short term, additional transport is being provided while more sustainable, long-term solutions are explored.

Cllr Woods asked if the new government would impact any of the cost-saving initiatives HCC were intending to implement. Cllr Parker said they weren't expecting any funding changes from the new government in the short to medium term, so all decisions intended to be made in June were now expected to be made in September.

Cllr Woods noted that the scheduled dates for road works were not being met. Cllr Parker explained that all dates provided were provisional, as emergency works take priority and cannot be planned in advance. Additionally, weather conditions affect road works, with warmer temperatures being more suitable for certain projects. As a result, as many road works as possible are scheduled for the summer months.

The following report was received from Hart District Council.

Cllr Wildsmith (HDC)

- HDC have appointed a full-time environmental services officer whose remit will include enforcement.

FC SEPTEMBER 2024 ITEM 6**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 3rd July 2024 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

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

- Development Control 8th and 22nd July 2024, 12th August 2024
- Establishment 10th July 2024
- Policy & Finance 24th July 2024

FC SEPTEMBER 2024 ITEM 7**REPORT FROM EXTERNAL AUDITOR FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2023/24**

BDO have issued their audit report for 2023/24. Whilst the accounts are not qualified, they have made the following recommendation: "To be in line with best practice we recommend that when minuting the appointment of the internal auditor, the council record they have considered the independence of the appointed auditor".

RESOLVED

Members noted the unqualified audit report for the financial year 2023/24 and agreed to include a statement regarding the internal auditor's independence in future minutes on the matter.

FC SEPTEMBER 2024 ITEM 8**NOTICE OF CONCLUSION OF AUDIT FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2023/24**

In accordance with Sections 20(2) and 25 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, Fleet Town Council must publish its Notice of Conclusion of Audit on its website by 30 September 2024 and make the External Auditor's report and Annual Governance and Accountability Return available to its residents both on its website and from its offices.

RESOLVED

Members agreed that the inclusion of the External Auditors Report and AGAR in the above agenda item and the Notice of Conclusion of Audit in this agenda item met the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

FC SEPTEMBER 2024 ITEM 9**APPOINTMENT OF AN INTERNAL AUDITOR**

Members considered the report evaluating the results of an invitation to provide internal auditing services. In their discussions, they assessed the independence of the proposed auditors, along with their experience, qualifications, and the cost of their services.

RESOLVED

Members resolved to appoint Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd as their internal auditors for the 2024/25 financial year

FC SEPTEMBER 2024 ITEM 10**THE LION'S REMEMBRANCE DAY INSURANCE FOR ROAD CLOSURES**

Due to changes in the insurance provision for Fleet Lions and other volunteers undertaking the road closures for the Remembrance Sunday commemorations, Fleet Town Council was

asked to cover the road closure activity under the Council's public liability insurance in 2023 (refer to minutes from Nov 23 Item 9). Members were concerned about the financial liability of covering the road closures and requested that Hart District Council be approached to see if they would cover the activity. As Hart District Council were not able to insure the activity, Fleet Town Council insured it on a one-off basis. The Executive Officer has confirmed that the insurance situation has not changed for Fleet Lions and seeks Members views on the arrangements for the 2024 Remembrance Day road closure.

RECOMMENDATION

Members approved the provision of insurance coverage for the parade and commemoration service taking place at the War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday on 10th November 2024, provided the following documentation was submitted to the Executive Officer:

- Risk Assessment from The Lions on the road closure process.
- Risk Assessment from the Royal British Legion on the commemoration service.
- A copy of the Safety Advisory Group approval for the event.

FC SEPTEMBER 2024 ITEM 11

FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

Members noted receipt of the bank reconciliation and list of payments for June & July 2024.

RESOLVED

- a) To receive and accept the bank reconciliation and list of payments for June & July 2024.
- b) Members were unable to accept a statement from Councillor Robinson that the bank reconciliation and list of payments for June & July 2024 had been verified and signed due to his absence from the meeting.

FC SEPTEMBER 2024 ITEM 12

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Members received a high-level report on the Government's proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and considered a request to participate in a consultation survey by the National Association of Local Councils.

RESOLVED

Members determined they wished to complete the NALC survey concerning the proposed changes to the NPPF. Members requested a meeting be held on Monday 9 September 2024 following the Planning Committee to determine the Council's responses to the questions posed.

FC SEPTEMBER 2024 ITEM 13

FINANCE AND RISK REGISTER 2024/25

This item was deferred to the 2 October 2024 Full Council meeting.

FC SEPTEMBER 2024 ITEM 14

REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

This item was deferred to the 2 October 2024 Full Council meeting.

FC SEPTEMBER 2024 ITEM 15

RETENTION & DISPOSAL OF DOCUMENTS POLICY

This item was deferred to the 2 October 2024 Full Council meeting.

FC SEPTEMBER 2024 ITEM 16**TREASURY & INVESTMENT POLICY**

This item was deferred to the 2 October 2024 Full Council meeting.

FC SEPTEMBER 2024 ITEM 17**PUBLICATION SCHEME**

This item was deferred to the 2 October 2024 Full Council meeting.

FC SEPTEMBER 2024 ITEM 18**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Members received and noted the following announcements

- Parking Permits – please return no later than the Friday of week issued.
- New Councillors – to provide a brief statement about themselves for the Communications Officer
- All Councillors – to arrange a time to have their photo taken with the Communications Officer.

FC SEPTEMBER 2024 ITEM 19**INTRODUCTION FROM THE NEWLY DESIGNATED NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICE OFFICER**

The new Hart South Dedicated Neighbourhood Officer, PC Terence Read, briefly introduced himself.

Cllr Einchcomb thanked PC Read for his works regarding the travellers incursion at Basingbourne Park and Cllr Woods thanked him for his work regarding overnight stayers at Ancells Farm Park.

FC SEPTEMBER 2024 ITEM 20**COUNCILLOR RESIGNATION**

Members noted Cllr Kate Cottrell's resignation as Town Councillor on 23 August 2024. The vacancy notice was published on 27 August 2024 and will run for 14 days (excluding bank holidays). Once this period has passed, Hart District Council will confirm if an election is to be held to fill the vacancy. Otherwise, the vacancy will be filled by co-option.

FC SEPTEMBER 2024 ITEM 21**SAFE DISPOSAL OF LITHIUM BATTERIES CAMPAIGN**

This item was deferred to the 2 October 2024 Full Council meeting.

FC SEPTEMBER 2024 ITEM 22**DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled to be held on Wednesday 2nd October 2024 at 7pm in The Harlington.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS – CLOSED SESSION

The Chairman stated that the following items for discussion relate to the engagement and terms of service in relation to employees and terms of tenders, and proposals and counterproposals in negotiations for contracts.

RESOLVED

That subject to 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.

FC SEPTEMBER 2024 ITEM 23

PENSION

Members considered a request by an officer to join the Council’s pension scheme.

RESOLVED

Members approved the request by an officer to join the Council’s pension scheme.

FC SEPTEMBER 2024 ITEM 24

HARLINGTON LEASE

Members received a report from the Executive Officer and received a verbal update from the Chairman on the progress of the Harlington Lease.

RESOLVED

Members noted the reports on the progress of the Harlington lease and agreed the next steps.

FC SEPTEMBER 2024 ITEM 25

THE HARLINGTON TENDER

Members received an update on appointing architectural services for The Harlington development

RESOLVED

Members noted the progress in appointing an architect to design the refurbishment of The Harlington and agreed next steps

The meeting closed at 9:04pm.

Signed.....
Chairman

Date:.....