



FLEET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING

held on

Wednesday 3rd December 2025 at 7pm

* Councillor Schofield (Chairman)

* Councillor Einchcomb (Vice Chairman)

* Councillor Chenery

* Councillor Fang

* Councillor Holt

0 Councillor Hope

* Councillor Kuntikanamata

* Councillor May

* Councillor Neves

* Councillor Oliver

* Councillor Powell

* Councillor Richmond

* Councillor Stanton

* Councillor Taylor

* Councillor Tilley

* Councillor Wildsmith

* Councillor Woods

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

Also in attendance:

Rita Tong – Executive Officer

Councillor Steve Forster – HCC

Councillor Stephen Parker – HCC

Representative from Ancells Farm Preschool

FC DECEMBER 2025 ITEM 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Members received and accepted the apologies as recorded above.

FC DECEMBER 2025 ITEM 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Wildsmith declared an *Other Registerable Interest* in Agenda Item 8, on the grounds that he has a child attending the preschool.

FC DECEMBER 2025 ITEM 3 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Question received via email from a resident:

Can FTC provide details on how they are validating the responses to the survey, including preventing someone responding multiple times, ensuring only residents vote and enabling people who share devices to vote?

Answer:

Eleanor Greene of *Do the Numbers Ltd* was engaged to independently verify the results of the consultation. In reaching her conclusions, she carried out the following checks:

- Confirmed that the postcode provided with each response fell within the boundary map.
- Ensured that duplicate online submissions were prevented through SurveyMonkey's IP-based safeguards.

- Reviewed all responses against postcodes to identify any irregular patterns (for example, multiple votes from a single address) and confirmed that none were detected.

A copy of her report is included within the agenda papers for this meeting and is also available on the Harlington Project page of the Council's website.

Statement (summarised) and questions received via email from a resident:

The resident expressed concern about changes to the character of Fleet High Street, citing an increase in vape shops, cash-intensive businesses and barbers. They referred to national law-enforcement activity and reporting highlighting potential risks associated with certain types of high-street businesses.

The resident noted the recent opening of ARUSH LIMITED (trading as "Ismash Vape (Fleet)") and reported that this had prompted public concern locally. They also advised that, based on publicly available company information, they believe the business may be connected to a wider network of companies displaying patterns they consider to be of concern. The resident has provided a diagram illustrating these connections and advised that they are carrying out a wider review of high-risk business patterns on the High Street.

Questions:

1. *What licences, permissions or consents did Fleet Town Council provide to enable this premises to open?*
2. *Does the Council intend to use any of its legal powers — or to engage with partners such as Hart District Council, Trading Standards or the local Safer Neighbourhood Team — to ensure the premises is compliant with all relevant regulations?*
3. *More broadly, what action does the Council intend to take in response to the increasing penetration of potentially high-risk cash-intensive businesses on Fleet High Street?*

Answer:

Fleet Town Council does not hold any legal powers in relation to granting planning permissions, issuing licences, or monitoring compliance with trading or other regulatory requirements. These functions sit with the relevant statutory authorities, such as Hart District Council, Trading Standards and the Police.

While the Council cannot take direct action itself, it remains fully willing to support those agencies that do hold such powers, should they request assistance.

Question from Steve Forster:

With the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), has Fleet Town Council asked, or considered asking, Hart District Council to sell The Harlington to the Council?

Answer:

The Chairman of the Council and the Executive Officer recently met with Hart District Council's Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and asked whether HDC would consider transferring the freehold of The Harlington to Fleet Town Council. The CFO advised that such a transfer could not take place prior to the completion of the LGR.

Fleet Town Council has not specifically asked about purchasing the building. Based on the understanding that any sale would need to be at fair market value, it is unlikely that the Council would be in a financial position to do so.

The Council holds a 99-year lease on The Harlington, which provides security of tenure and enables long-term planning for the future of the facility.

- 3-15 November - Harlington Exhibition, reported later, but I would like to express my thanks to all those Councillors that gave up time to attend and explain our plans and answer residents' questions. Also special thanks to Rita who manned the barricades every weekday for the duration of the exhibition.
- 9 November
 - Represented the Town Council at the brief service of remembrance and 2-minute silence at 11 o'clock at the War Memorial. A surprisingly good turnout for such a brief act of remembrance
 - Attended the Remembrance Service and Parade and laid a wreath on behalf of the Town Council. Amazingly well attended, the parade gets bigger every year. I would like to thank all those councillors and their family members who helped serve tea and coffee after the service at the War Memorial. Special thanks to Charlotte for her behind the scenes organisation
- 10 November
 - The Executive Officer and I attended an on-line presentation by CCLA and Jupiter Investments to clarify the sale of CCLA to a commercial investment company. Our concern is the level of investment that we have with CCLA and the level of return that the fund has yielded for the Council. Assurance was given that the CCLA fund would continue almost as a separate division of the new company but benefit from the broader investment experience of Jupiter
 - Together with Cllr Einchcomb, our Executive Officer and our Parks and Facilities Manager we met with the representative of Fearless Ramps (FR) to formalise and sign the Skate Park replacement contract. Representatives of Fleet Phoenix and two young skateboarding "experts" attended and had an interesting interaction with the representative from FR who agreed some minor amendments to the proposed scheme to improve the experience and the safety of the new installation, all at no extra cost! Physical work is due to start early in the new year.
- 11 November - Represented the Council at the brief service of Remembrance at the War Memorial
- 14 November - Together with Cllr Woods and our Executive officer attended a meeting with representatives of CCPC to resolve issues on the Fleet Connect Bus Service Contract.
- 19 November - Chaired a Harlington Working Group Meeting to review the outcome of the public consultation dealt with later in the agenda.
- 26 November – Attended the Fleet Christmas Festival which was a very successful event and very well attended. Thanks to Cllrs Tilley and Stanton for organising the festival.

The Chairman also reminded members that elections will take place in May 2026 and that the incoming administration may choose to revisit or overturn any decisions that are not contractually binding. He therefore advised that it would be helpful to set out the guiding principles behind decisions made, so that a future administration can clearly understand the rationale for those decisions.

The following reports were received from Hampshire County Council.

Cllr Steve Forster (HCC)

- **Out-of-Area Christmas Road Closure:** The M27 will be fully closed in both directions between Junctions 9 (Whiteley) and 11 (Fareham) from 8pm on 24 December 2025 to 4am on 4 January 2026. The closure is required to install a new four-lane underpass beneath the motorway using a 'box slide' construction method.
- **Homelessness:** Hart District Council participated in the annual homelessness survey and recorded no homeless individuals at the time the survey was undertaken.
- **Cody Technology Park:** A planning application has been submitted for development of the site. Residents have raised concerns, particularly in relation to bus service provision and potential upgrades to Kennels Lane.
- **Norris Hill Bridge:** Resurfacing and repair works are planned.
- **Road Markings:** Repainting of road lines and markings is scheduled for the next quarter. Members were reminded to report any required works in the Fleet area via the online portal so they can be included in the programme.
- **Disruptions from Roadworks:** Forty-three planned works have been postponed to minimise disruption arising from the Hitches Lane and Elvetham Road works. Efforts continue to coordinate roadworks to reduce impact on residents.
- **Gally Hill Road:** Issues with bus services continue and have been raised with Stagecoach.

Cllr Stephen Parker (HCC)

- **Stagecoach:** Issues reported include buses being deployed inconsistently, not adhering to published routes and timetables, and failing to stop when signalled. The most serious concern raised to date involves children being set down in inappropriate and remote locations. Hampshire County Council has raised all of these matters with Stagecoach, with particular emphasis on the safeguarding implications, and is awaiting a response.
- **Gully Hill Road:** Works are nearing completion and it is anticipated that the road will re-open prior to Christmas.
- **Road Closures:** All currently closed roads are expected to be re-opened for the Christmas period (22 December through to the New Year).
- **Aldershot Road and Sandy Lane:** Works are scheduled to commence in the New Year.

Cllr Peter Wildsmith (HDC)

- **Homelessness:** the survey is done on a day and time set nationally. HDC actually have placed three people in emergency accommodation recently. Members are encouraged to report sightings of homelessness to the Hart Housing team.
- **Hardship Grant:** The Hardship Grant scheme closed on 13 November 2025 and was almost fully subscribed. Fleet Town Council was given a grant towards its Christmas day lunch service to vulnerable residents.

At the request of Cllr Woods, it was noted for the formal record that the November Full Council meeting was held at Ancells Farm Community Centre rather than the usual venue. Subject to this addition, the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 5 November 2025 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

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

- Development Control 10th and 24th November 2025
- Establishment 12th November 2025

FC DECEMBER 2025 ITEM 7 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

Members noted receipt of the bank reconciliation and the list of payments for October 2025.

Councillor Stanton confirmed that the bank reconciliation for October 2025 and list of payments for October 2025 had been verified and signed off against the original bank statement.

RESOLVED

- a) That the bank reconciliation and list of payments for October 2025 be received and accepted.
- b) That the statement from Councillor Stanton confirming the verification and sign-off of the October 2025 bank reconciliation and list of payments be accepted.

Cllr Forster left the meeting at approx. 20.00pm.

FC DECEMBER 2025 ITEM 8 ANCELLS FARM COMMUNITY PRE-SCHOOL

Members received a presentation from a representative of Ancells Farm Community Pre-School and considered a report from the Executive Officer regarding a request for financial support, including grant funding or other assistance to cover room hire costs.

The Pre-School requested an extension of their hours to provide a more sustainable service and the use of three rooms rather than the current two. Given the lateness of the request, Officers had not been able to assess the impact on other hirers or the financial implications.

RESOLVED

To defer the decision until the Full Council meeting in January 2026, at which time the Pre-School would provide the following information:

1. Three years of financial reports, including, if possible, details of seasonal fluctuations in income.
2. A completed Grant Application.
3. The most recent Ofsted report.

The representative from the Preschool left the meeting at the conclusion of this item (approx. 20.08pm).

Cllr Parker left the meeting at approx. 20.18pm.

FC DECEMBER 2025 ITEM 9**DRAFT BUDGET 2026/27**

Members considered a report from the Executive Officer requesting approval of the revised estimates for 2025/26, the draft budget for 2026/27, and agreement of the precept for the financial year 2026/27.

Members were also asked to note the budget forecast projections for 2027/28 and 2028/29, which are based on Officers' understanding of the Council's potential future activities.

During discussion, Members considered the adequacy of the marketing budget to promote the new venue and ensure existing users transitioned successfully. They also noted the uncertainties associated with moving to a temporary site and agreed it would be prudent to include a contingency provision. Members suggested that the current budgeted Band D increase of 4.22% might need to rise to address these concerns. It was therefore resolved that a Budget Working Group consider these issues.

RESOLVED

To hold a Budget Working Group meeting at 6.00pm on Wednesday 10 December 2025.

Cllr Richmond left the meeting at approx. 20.30pm.

FC DECEMBER 2025 ITEM 10**LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION FOR HAMPSHIRE**

Members considered a report on the latest stage of the Local Government Reorganisation in Hampshire. It was noted that, due to the scale of the consultation, the Government was primarily interested in responses from larger organisations such as health boards, and that a response from the Council would count as a single submission, whereas individual submissions from Members would each be considered separately.

RESOLVED

That Members could submit individual responses to the consultation, but that it was not considered necessary to submit a formal response on behalf of the Council.

FC DECEMBER 2025 ITEM 11**HARLINGTON UPDATE**

Members noted that the public consultation to determine the preferred concept design option for the Harlington refurbishment had concluded.

A public drop-in event was held, attended by 201 residents, providing an opportunity for questions to be asked and answered. Throughout the consultation period, the Council's Frequently Asked Questions page on the website was regularly updated to reflect queries received in person at the drop-in event, via email, and on social media.

The raw results from both the online survey and paper voting slips were submitted to an independent auditor for verification. The auditor's report was provided to Members for information.

The Harlington Working Group met on 19 November 2025 to consider the consultation results and other matters arising from the consultation and recent developments. The Chairman provided a verbal update on these discussions.

A frequently raised question during the consultation concerned whether Fleet residents should receive any form of benefit or recognition, given that they are funding the renovation, although residents from outside the parish will also enjoy the improved facility. A report outlining several possible options was presented to the Harlington Working Group, and it was agreed that these options should be considered further by a separate Working Group.

Following consideration, the Harlington Working Group made the following recommendations to Full Council:

- a) Instruct BFF to proceed with design development based on Option A, prioritising delivery within budget. It was acknowledged that Option A is a conceptual design and will require refinement to address issues previously raised (e.g., stage access, bar functionality, staff circulation, storage, etc.). Where possible, the design should allow for future development potential (for example, in relation to the stairwell layout).
- b) Instruct BFF to install gas boilers rather than air source heat pumps.
- c) Reallocate the surplus reserve previously held for a pension liability to fund the fit-out of a Hart Shopping Centre retail unit to accommodate the temporary relocation of Harlington activities.
- d) Engage with Fleet Phoenix and Sasha's Project to discuss how the renovation project may affect their operations and agree appropriate arrangements.

RESOLVED

- a) To note the independent auditor's report on the consultation results.
- b) To accept the Harlington Working Group's recommendations as set out above.
- c) To formally request that Hart District Council consider funding the ASHP in order to meet their carbon footprint reduction targets.

FC DECEMBER 2025 ITEM 12 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following announcements were made:

- The Chairman invited Members to join him for drinks and nibbles at the conclusion of the meeting to celebrate the festive season and to thank Members for their service during 2025.
- Members were requested to review and provide feedback on a proposed questionnaire to be sent to residents in the New Year; the questionnaire would be circulated by email.

FC DECEMBER 2025 ITEM 13 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled to be held on Wednesday 7th January 2026 at 7pm at the Harlington.

The meeting closed at 9.13pm.

Signed.....
Chairman

Date:.....