FLEET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING

held at Ancells Farm Community Centre on
Wednesday 5th November 2025 at 7pm

* Councillor Schofield (Chairman)

* Councillor Einchcomb (Vice Chairman)

*	Councillor Chenery	0	Councillor Powell
L	Councillor Fang	*	Councillor Richmond
*	Councillor Holt	*	Councillor Stanton
#	Councillor Hope	*	Councillor Taylor
*	Councillor Kuntikanamata	0	Councillor Tilley
0	Councillor May	*	Councillor Wildsmith
*	Councillor Neves	#	Councillor Willcocks
*	Councillor Oliver	*	Councillor Woods

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

Also in attendance:
Rita Tong – Executive Officer
Councillor Stuart Bailey – HCC
Councillor Stephen Parker – HCC
Three representatives from Fleet Cricket Club

FC NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Members received and accepted the apologies as recorded above.

In accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, due to the continued non-attendance of Councillor Willcocks throughout the prescribed six-month period, he has now ceased to be a Member of the Council. Accordingly, a casual vacancy has arisen, which will be formally reported to the Returning Officer in accordance with statutory requirements.

FC NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Taylor declared an *Other Registerable Interest* in Agenda Item 12, as he is a Director of Fleet Market CIC.

FC NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 3 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

FC NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 4 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 2nd October meeting with rep of new RRN care home. Soft opening later this month. Offered some support for lighting in Gurkha Square for Fleet Festivities

- 6th October BID Board Meeting – agreement to support development of the Views play area with a contribution of £50,000 to be in addition to FTC budget of £150,000.
- 7th October Meeting at Blackwater and Hawley for presentation on military on Exercise Titan Storm.
- 7th October Meeting with representatives of HCC Library Services re-heating systems and future provision of heating to the library. Supported by Natasha from S&K
- 13th October Fleet BID AGM. Sadly, very poorly supported, only two businesses represented outside of Board members.
- 17th October Attended Hart Youth Awards – again an excellent evening with some remarkable achievements by some of our young people. FTC supported two awards.
- 22nd October Attended the HALC AGM at Botley, Southampton. Major item was subscription charges review. FTC annual fee to be increased by £300 whereas CCPC and EHPC's fee reduced. FTC awarded a prize for Community Communications
- 23rd October Advised of a sewer collapse in Oakley Park, attended site with Facilities Manager.
    - 1m deep sewer finally exposed at 2.2m depth. Work is now completed and apart from some vehicle damage to the grass near the entrance to the park reinstatement is acceptable.
    - As a consequence of the work at Oakley Park , Cappagh's area manager who had been involved in the Ancells sewer works returned to inspect Ancells site and agreed the quality of reinstatement, especially because of more recent visits by Thames tanker lorries, was unacceptable and reported back to Thames Headquarters who have now agreed to return to site and improve the reinstatement.
    - There is a continuing concern as to why Thames tankers are returning to site on a regular basis and this needs to be resolved
- 28th October Along with other Councillors visited the Odiham Scout hut at Basingbourne Park for a presentation on the Troop's proposals for a new building. The proposals look very promising and in principle cannot see any reason for FTC, as landlord, to object to the proposals. The key factor in achieving their aims is raising the money.
- 3rd and 4th November attended sessions for the Harlington Exhibition.
- 4th November together with the Executive Officer met with the Chief Finance Officer at Hart to discuss a number of finance issues primarily related to the Harlington.

FC NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 5 HCC/HDC ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following reports were received from Hampshire County Council.

<u>Cllr Stephen Parker (HCC)</u>

- **Footpaths:** There is a network of paths around and between Calthorpe Park School and Crookham Village requiring improvement. As designated footpaths would be required to be 3 metres wide, which is not feasible in all locations, a workaround has been agreed to designate them as bridleways, enabling the improvement works to proceed.
- **Valmead Zebra Crossing:** Planned works are scheduled for April 2026.

- **Buses:** There have been ongoing issues with timekeeping and capacity. Hampshire County Council has had constructive engagement with Stagecoach South in seeking to resolve these matters.
- **Local Government Reorganisation:** All proposals have now been submitted to Government. Information on the forthcoming consultation is awaited and is expected later this year or early next year. It was noted that Government has opted for two large unitary councils in Surrey.
- **Consultation:** A consultation on the County Council's budget for 2026/27 is currently open and will close on 7 December 2025.

Cllr Stanton asked what surface material would be used for the proposed bridleways. Cllr Parker advised that they are likely to be tarmac.

Cllr Woods asked whether there had been any progress on the traffic order for single-side parking around Valmead School. Cllr Parker advised that the matter remains on the list for consideration, but due to the volume of requests, he was unable to provide a timeframe.

Cllr Stuart Bailey (HCC)

- **Consultations:**
  - A consultation on school transport is currently open. The proposal includes the removal of the facility allowing spare seats on school transport to be used by other passengers. This may be of particular relevance to Fleet residents given previous issues at Ancells Farm. The consultation closes on 7 December 2025.
  - The budget consultation explains the financial challenges facing Hampshire County Council and seeks residents' views on potential priorities and the overall direction of travel.

Cllr Oliver asked what the budget gap was for 2026/27. Cllr Bailey advised that the current forecast budget gap for 2026/27 is £143 million.

Cllr Schofield reported that Fleet Town Council had received a letter threatening debt recovery action in relation to the Ancells Farm school bus. He asked whether the Hampshire County Councillors were able to assist in resolving the matter, noting that Fleet Town Council was not a party to the contract concerned. Cllr Bailey advised that he would look into the matter.

Cllr Alan Oliver (HDC)

- **Planning Matter:** A planning application for a further large data centre on the site adjacent to Ively Road has been submitted. This falls within Rushmoor District Council's planning area and is on their system should Fleet Town Council wish to submit any observations on behalf of Fleet residents.
- **Hartland Village:** The developers have withdrawn their planning application for a further 300 homes and have halved their forward build rate. This reduction will have an impact on the timing of the construction of the planned school on the site.
- **Local Plan:** The recent *Call for Sites* received a strong response, and it is anticipated that the updated Local Plan will include provision for approximately **15,000 homes**.
- **Food Waste Collection:** The rollout of the food waste collection service has progressed well and is being implemented successfully.

Cllr Peter Wildsmith (HDC)

- **Job Fair**: Hart District Council expressed its thanks to Fleet Town Council for the use of The Harlington for the recent Job Fair, which was reported to be the most successful to date.

- **Hardship Grant**: The Hardship Grant scheme closes on 13 November 2025. As it has not been fully subscribed in previous years, Members were encouraged to promote the availability of the grant to eligible residents.

Councillors Bailey and Parker left at the conclusion of this agenda item.

FC NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 6 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 1st October 2025 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

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

- Development Control 13th and 27th October 2025 (if available)
- Policy & Finance 15th October 2025

FC NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 7 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

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

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

RESOLVED

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

FC NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 8 REPORT FROM FIRE SAFETY INSPECTION

A fire safety inspection was conducted on 25 September 2025. The following findings and actions taken were noted.

Inspection Finding	**Action Taken**
Ensure you record any and all systems of planning, organising, controlling, monitoring and reviewing the performance of each of the fire safety measures you have in place. A number of compensatory fire safety policies and procedures had been put in place but had not been recorded.	Documented issue, risk and mitigation for Fire Doors and Fire Vent. Investigating whether C2's can be remedied – if not will prepare a further risk note.
Carry out and record fire drills; to practice the procedures you have in place for people to follow in case of fire. Increased frequency of fire drills had been identified	Form developed to ensure all required information is captured regarding fire drills.

as a mitigating factor. These had not been recorded with any significant detail.	

RESOLVED

a) Members noted the findings and recommendations outlined in the Fire Safety Inspection report.
b) Members considered the actions taken to date and determined they were appropriate.

FC NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 9 REPORT FROM INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2025/26

Members considered the report from the Council's Internal Auditor, Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd, on an interim internal audit conducted on 25 September 2025 for the 2025/26 financial year.

Audit Point	Audit Findings	Proposed Council Response
B. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS, GOVERNANCE AND PAYMENTS	I recommend the form is updated to include formal acceptance to receive information by electronic means in the form "As per Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972, I consent to the receipt of all council meeting papers by electronic methods. I understand I may withdraw this consent at any time"	Agreed. Form has been amended to include recommended wording.
B. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS, GOVERNANCE AND PAYMENTS	Based on the level of financial activity of the council, and through discussion with the Executive Officer, the authorisation threshold within FR 3.2.4 appears low and the council may wish to consider increasing this to ensure that appropriate action can be taken without delay if the need arises.	FR3.2.4 sets level at £2k. Other similar sized Councils have set the limit at: Godalming TC £4.5k Yateley TC £5k Church Crookham PC £2k Auditor recommendation reasonable given size of FTC. Suggest increasing to £5k.

B. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS, GOVERNANCE AND PAYMENTS	The council holds a credit card and has adopted a Credit Card Policy which is published on the council website. The policy includes spending limits for each cardholder, assigned to the specific job roles. I note that the minutes of the meeting held in February 2025 show that the council approved an amendment to these thresholds, but the updated limits have yet to be reflected in the policy document and this should be updated as soon as possible to avoid any confusion	Agreed Updated policy taken to P&F 15 October 2025. Approved Policy now on website.
G. PAYROLL	All staff members have a signed contract of employment, although these are inconsistent and contain different terms and conditions for different staff members, or in some cases no reference to key employment terms at all. I recommend the council considers using the new NALC model employment contract which has been developed in consultation with ACAS and is available on the NALC website.	To be taken to the Establishment Committee meeting on 12 November for discussion.

RESOLVED

a) Members considered the findings and recommendations outlined in the Internal Auditor's report and thanked Officers (particularly the Finance Manager) for their work that contributed to such a good report.
b) Members agreed to increase the Executive Officers authorisation in relation to FR3.2.4 from £2,000 to £5,000.

FC NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 10 CRICKET CLUB LEASE AND FACILITIES

Members received a presentation from Mark Bramah, Chairman of Fleet Cricket Club, outlining the financial challenges currently faced by the Club.

Members considered a range of issues raised by the Cricket Club (now operating as a Community Interest Company (CIC)), including:

- **Lease Agreement** – The lease requires review to reflect the Club's new CIC status. No Schedule of Condition was completed at the start of the tenancy, and the Club requested that the Council arrange this.
- **Building Compliance** – The Club sought assistance with completing a fire risk assessment and installing a fire alarm system.
- **Grounds Maintenance** – The Club highlighted the high costs (approximately £10,000) associated with maintaining Council-owned land and undertaking tree work, requesting support and asking whether the Council's contractors could cut the outfield.

- **Future Development** – The Club suggested installing a junior artificial pitch on the former tennis courts to reduce wear and pressure on the main pitch.

RESOLVED

a) That the lease be updated to reflect the change in the Club's legal status to a CIC.
b) That the Council further consider each of the Club's requests to determine what, if any, assistance may be provided.

The Fleet Cricket Club representatives left at the conclusion of this agenda item.

FC NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 11 THE VIEWS PLAY EQUIPMENT

At the September 2025 meeting of the Recreation, Leisure and Amenities (RLA) Committee, Members agreed to set a budget of £150,000 for *The Views Play Park* project.

At that time, it was hoped that Fleet Business Improvement District (BID) might contribute to the project; however, the level of any potential support was not yet confirmed. To enable planning to progress, the budget was set at £150,000, with any contribution from Fleet BID to reduce the Council's funding requirement accordingly.

Following its Annual General Meeting, Fleet BID has now confirmed an offer of £50,000 towards the project. A condition of this offer is that the Council's contribution remains at £150,000, resulting in a total project budget of £200,000. Fleet BID also requested that, should the final contract sum be less than £200,000 (as occurred with the Skate Park tender), the reduced cost would be shared proportionately between the parties.

RESOLVED

a) That the total project budget for *The Views Play Park* be increased from £150,000 to £200,000.
b) That any reduction in the final contract cost, if applicable, be shared proportionally with Fleet BID.

FC NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 12 FLEET MARKET

Members noted that Fleet Town Council currently provides an outdoor storage area which is being used by Fleet Market. This arrangement was originally intended to be temporary but has since become longstanding. The continued use of this space has placed pressure on the Council's own storage capacity, which is already limited, and no charge is currently made to the Market for use of the area.

Members acknowledged that the Market relies on this storage to remain viable and that pitch space is also provided free of charge, supporting the Market's continued operation. Staff highlighted, however, the importance of maintaining sufficient storage for Council activities, particularly in light of the upcoming Harlington refurbishment, which will increase the Council's storage requirements.

The Market has requested that a shared rental arrangement be explored, with costs apportioned between the Council and Fleet Market.

Members commended the efforts of Cllr Taylor in stabilising the Market and improving its financial viability.

RESOLVED
That officers obtain costings and report back to a future meeting with options for a sustainable solution.

FC NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 13 PUBLIC CPR TRAINING SESSIONS

Fleet Town Council has, since 2025, facilitated monthly public CPR training sessions at The Harlington, supported by the St John Ambulance (SJA). Sessions have been held from May to October 2025, with cancellations in May, August, and October due to insufficient participant numbers.

SJA has confirmed their willingness to continue supporting these sessions provided a minimum number of participants justify deploying two volunteers and equipment from Farnborough.

While there is some administrative work involved in informing participants when sessions are cancelled, the sessions provide a valuable life-saving skill to members of the public.

RESOLVED
To continue offering one session per month in 2026 (excluding August), with SJA support as outlined.

FC NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 14 MUSIC ON THE VIEWS 2026

Members received a report from Cllr Tilley regarding plans for *Music on The Views 2026*, which included a request for the Council to allocate funds—similar to the arrangement for the Christmas Festival—to meet the following costs:

- Safety Officer – £350
- First Aid – £300
- SIA Security – £2,000
- Event Cancellation Insurance – £1,050

RESOLVED

a) That £4,000 be added to the 2026/27 budget to cover the costs of the Safety Officer, First Aid, SIA Security, and Event Cancellation Insurance.
b) That officers investigate whether the event cancellation insurance could be incorporated into the Council's main insurance policy, and if so, identify the associated cost.
c) That Cllrs Tilley and Stanton prepare a phased budget for *Music on The Views 2026* to determine when funds will be required for Council cashflow and budgeting purposes.

Cllr Wildsmith left at the conclusion of this agenda item.

FC NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 15 HARLINGTON UPDATE

Chairman gave an update on the project and the Public Consultation.

RESOLVED
To note the Chairman's update.

FC NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 16 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following announcements were made:

- The PWLB loan application for the skatepark has gone through all the processes and the money will be in the Councils account on 12 November 2025. A Meeting has been set up with the contractors to commence the project.
- The Remembrance Parade is this upcoming Sunday. Members are needed to help serve tea and coffee to the public and / or man the drop in public consultation.

FC NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 17 COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

A complaint was received by a resident regarding the Calthorpe Play Area. The issues raised are over noise, anti-social behaviour and parking issues. The Executive Officer, in consultation with the Chairman, responded to the complaint on the Council's behalf.

A complaint was received over information published on our website that was considered to be confidential by the complainant. The report in question has been removed from the website and the complainant is satisfied with the Council's actions.

FC NOVEMBER 2025 ITEM 18 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled to be held on Wednesday 3rd December 2025 at 7pm at the Harlington.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

Signed…… Date:……..
Chairman