

August 2020



TOWNTALK

The newsletter from Fleet Town Council

Coronavirus Catch-up An Update from the Council

Introduction

These have certainly been extraordinary times and I wanted to start this newsletter by thanking you all for your patience and understanding over the last several weeks and months. I also want to take this opportunity to thank the many hundreds of volunteers who have been supporting our most vulnerable residents. Fleet is a great place to live, work and raise a family and it has always been a caring community. I know by us all working together this will remain the case going forward.

Our Annual Residents' Meeting, due to be held in March, had to be cancelled due to the pandemic. This prevented us from being able to see many of you in person and from having the opportunity to present our usual update.

This newsletter is designed to bring you up to speed on one or two of the topics that we would have covered and to answer some of the questions we have received from you during the "lockdown".

Firstly, The Harlington

Q. Why is it closed?

A. In line with Government guidelines the building is closed to the public until further notice. It will reopen when the guidelines allow us to do so. As the operators of a Civic building, we, of course, must be extra vigilant to ensure we abide by all the regulations and put public safety first.



The Box Office Team have been working hard to reschedule our shows and to move customers to the new dates but, as you will appreciate, the situation is still very fluid and things are changing daily. The team have been working really hard to reach people by email and phone calls to give the most up to date information and to keep the revised programme up to date on the website. Needless to say, as a result of the current situation, our income has taken a real hit like many other commercial businesses – more of that later on. *Continued on page 2.....*

NEED HELP DURING THIS PANDEMIC?

The Hart Response Hub has been set up in partnership with Hart District Council, Hart Voluntary Action and Hampshire County Council to provide assistance to Hart residents during this pandemic. For help with shopping, prescriptions or for a friendly phone call, phone 0333 370 4000. The helpline is available seven days a week, from 9am to 5pm.

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Photography: David Fisher — Aldershot, Fleet & Farnham Camera Club

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Despite the "lockdown" The Harlington has been proud to continue to support the community by hosting several National Blood Service sessions, as well as enabling Fleet Phoenix to use an annexe of the building for their extensive and valuable voluntary work.

While The Harlington has been closed to the public, we have also taken the opportunity to undertake some of the essential projects recommended in the Condition Survey that we commissioned.

If you were able to walk into the main auditorium at the moment, you would see a forest of scaffolding (pictures below) erected so that we could take down part of the false ceiling to inspect the roof space and the mass of fittings and equipment suspended there.



Auditorium Scaffolding: Upper Level View



General View of Hangers



Floor Level View

Q What was the outcome of the Condition Survey?

A. The good news is the building is not in imminent danger of falling down. The bad news is that nearly everything inside the building was termed "beyond its sell by date!". The Condition Survey involved a very detailed room by room assessment of every element of the building. It identified £4.8m worth of work, which includes £2m of Mechanical and Electrical work, £1m of major structural work and £1.8m worth of additional works. This is just to bring the building up to current building standards, without adding any additional visible benefits. This is not a cost that the Town Council feels it can support in view of Hart District Council's stated ambition to investigate the redevelopment of the "Civic Quarter".

Q. So, what are the future plans for The Harlington?

A. We are pleased that Hart District Councillors are continuing to discuss the regeneration of the Civic Quarter and the future of The Harlington building, which they own.

The Neighbourhood Plan (Policy 1) stipulates that the current functions of the area (including those provided by The Harlington) would remain. Be assured we will be doing our best to hold Hart to that agreement, whilst remembering that they, of course, own the land and the building.

Q. Will the residents of Fleet, have a say in what will happen to the building?

A. Any plans put forward by Hart for the regeneration of the Civic Quarter, which should include a replacement Harlington, will be subject to planning regulations and to public consultation; so everyone will have the chance to comment. Fleet Town Council, with a vested interest in the future of The Harlington and its operation, as well as in the future of our Town Centre, will continue to press to be involved in all discussions.

Q. What has happened to the Town Council funds ring fenced for the repair, refurbishment or rebuilding of The Harlington?

A. The money collected for the repair, refurbishment or rebuilding of The Harlington continues to be ring-fenced whilst we await the outcome of Hart's Civic Quarter regeneration investigations.

Q. When will The Harlington reopen?

A. Many of our providers and performers have made the decision to reschedule their shows to later in the year or, indeed, into 2021. We will also, of course, be following Government guidelines for the reintroduction of live performances. Rest assured we will be working hard to welcome you back into the building as soon as we possibly can. Please watch out for announcements on www.theharlington.co.uk and social media!

Parks and Open Spaces

Q. Why are we spending money on a new Play Area at Calthorpe Park?

A. It is important to stress that the money being spent on the new play area at Calthorpe Park comes from what is known as S106 funding (i.e. funding provided by housing development companies to provide community and leisure facilities). It is **not** coming from the precept that the Town Council collects. The new play area, the first in Fleet to accommodate disabled play, has been planned for the last 5 years and we are delighted that the work has now begun. Previously, Calthorpe was the only park without a play area.

Sadly, just when we intended to start the work, virtually everything stopped as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Work did recommence at the end of May and it is now planned to open the new facility in August so local children will be able to enjoy the equipment, including the new multi play fort, before they go back to school.



The new playground at Calthorpe park pictured above consists of 3 play zones, interlinking paths, safety surfaces, accessible equipment and disabled access.

We are delighted to say that during the pandemic tennis has become very popular and over 200 new family memberships have been taken out for use of the courts. Initially following government guidelines 3 of the 6 courts were opened and were fully booked between 9 a.m. and 8 p.m. every day. We have now been able to open all 6 courts which will allow more people to enjoy the sport and take some valuable open air exercise. For more details on Tennis in Calthorpe Park, including membership, please see page 5.



Ancells Farm Park



Calthorpe Park Tennis Courts

Q. Are all the parks and open spaces available for people to use?

A. Absolutely! More and more people have been accessing our parks and open spaces – all of which remained open throughout the COVID-19 health crisis – as they take their daily exercise and meet up with friends and family outside of their houses whilst, of course, observing social distancing! Our parks are more important than ever and it has been good to see families out enjoying these amenities. However, despite increased litter picking, extra people, sadly, bring extra litter and we would like politely to ask everyone to take their litter home and assist our Grounds Maintenance Teams who are doing an excellent job in keeping our parks clean.

All playgrounds were deep cleaned before opening but, as you may appreciate, it is not possible for staff/grounds maintenance operatives to be on hand to regularly clean or disinfect public play equipment, so please take responsibility for your own and your children's wellbeing. This means as well as washing hands regularly, it's also a good idea to carry hand sanitiser/wipes when using the play areas so that you and your children can stay safe while enjoying the facilities. There is for the time being, a maximum number of people allowed in the play area at one time so if it's busy when you visit, consider coming back later on, or on another day, when it is quieter.

Q. Why are there barriers in the high street?

A. The barriers to close off the parking bays in the town centre are a temporary measure to help social distancing during this difficult time and to enable us to start reopening our local high street safely and successfully. Please continue to support our wonderful local businesses.

We all suspect that the composition of our high street is changing and that this pandemic will probably accelerate that change. Recognised experts are predicting that leisure and entertainment are likely to play a more important part in our community as we rebuild our lives. We feel it is, therefore, vitally important to encourage the cultural and leisure activities that will bring our community together again. Retail/shopping will always remain an element of the attraction to visit the town centre, but it will likely no longer be the primary focus of the high street. If Fleet is to remain an attractive, sustainable town centre it will need to be aware and responsive to these changing trends.



During June the floral displays were once again installed along Fleet Road – Fleet Town Council decided to support the town centre and to bring some cheer in these difficult times. If you're out and about we hope you enjoy them!

At the time of writing this Newsletter, Hart District Council will be making a decision regarding the temporary pedestrianisation of Fleet Road between Upper Street and Church Road with the aim of enabling social distancing and encouraging more people into the high street. Their meeting will be held on the 30th July and we await the results.

Now the finances!

Q. What is the Council's financial situation?

A. At the Annual Residents' Meeting we would, as usual, have presented a financial statement on how we spend your money. It is perhaps worth pointing out that the Town Council's element of your Council Tax (based on 2019/20 Band D) is 5.5% (i.e. £99.81 out of £1,777.69).

We had prepared a balanced budget for Financial Year 2020/21 but like lots of businesses, we have been badly hit by the COVID-19 shut down and, as previously mentioned, lost virtually all our projected income. We are responding by reducing costs wherever possible, but it is likely that we will have to delve into our limited general reserves to survive the year. We are going to delay the budgeting process for next year as long as possible, so we can make an educated assessment of what the final financial implications of the pandemic are, but we are predicting a difficult financial year next year and potentially a longer time than we would have wished to rebuild our reserves.

Hopefully we will be able to hold an Annual Residents' Meeting next year and bring everyone up to date with events. In the meantime, we will make sure that everyone is kept informed of developments through issues of Town Talk, our website and social media.

I hope you will find this Town Talk helpful in bringing you up to date. Like all of you, my fellow Councillors and I look forward to a better time when we can resume some form of normality. In the meantime, stay safe and well.

- Bob Schofield, Chairman of Fleet Town Council



Councillor Bob Schofield

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY - Fleet Town Council Meetings				
A full list of Fleet Town Council meeting dates is available at www.fleet-tc.gov.uk				
August	September	October	November	December
10 - Planning	2 - Council	7 - Council	4 - Council	2 - Council
24 - Planning	14 - Planning	12 - Planning	9 - Planning	7 - Planning
	16 - RLA	19 - Policy & Finance	23 - Planning	16 - RLA
	28 - Planning	26 - Planning		21 - Planning

Play Tennis for only £41 a year!

If you buy Tennis membership for Calthorpe Park you can play Tennis as much as you like for just £41 per year! The membership fee entitles each household to a unique 4 digit code that can be used to access the Courts after making a reservation online! To purchase membership visit www.calthorpeparktennis.com and set up an account.



Fleet Tennis League

The LTA, in partnership with Local Tennis Leagues also run a Tennis League in Fleet. The league involve adults of similar abilities playing friendly singles matches when and where it suits them. Results are submitted online and players can move into a different box in the league to play new players in the next round. www.localtennisleagues.com/fleet



The Gurkha Square Market

Under the direction of Fleet Town Council, the new operator has now taken over the Fleet Market on Gurkha Square as of Saturday 18th July. It is hoped that the new operator will bring more variety to the market and attract many more local customers.

The organisers are keen to make visitors to the Market feel safe and are following government guidance on social distancing.



Coronavirus Update - Fleet Cemetery & Ancells Farm Community Centre

* Fleet Cemetery

Fleet Cemetery & Garden of Remembrance is OPEN, but please observe social distancing when visiting

* Ancells Farm Community Centre

Ancells Farm Community Centre is closed except for the Pre-school which has now reopened.

For enquiries call: 07702 834701 or Email: ancells@fleet-tc.gov.uk

Christmas Day Lunch 2020

Fleet Town Council in collaboration with Churches Together (Fleet) usually organise a free Christmas Day Lunch for those in Fleet & Church Crookham who would otherwise spend Christmas Day alone. However given the COVID-19 situation we are currently unsure if this event will be able to go ahead and if so in what format.

If you would be interested in attending the event, plans permitting, please contact us so we can add you to a list to be kept up to date.

Please contact - Email: info@fleet-tc.gov.uk Tel: 01252 625246/07584072340

Photo Credit: Chris Martin



Fleet Town Council would like to take this opportunity to again thank all of 2019's wonderful volunteers and generous sponsors: The Harlington, CH Cleaning Services, The Heron on the Lake, Sugarplum Boutique & Home, Imagination Displays, Elvetham Heath Council, Church Crookham Council, the Fleet & Church Crookham Society, Morrisons, Waitrose, Tesco, Southern Co-op, Marks & Spencers, Redfields Garden Centre, Toy Arena, various councillors and several members of the public. We really couldn't have done it without you!

Your Councillors

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What are the different Councils responsible for?

Fleet Town Council

- Ancells Farm Community Centre
- Cemeteries and Burials
- Christmas Lights
- Floral Displays
- Grants
- The Harlington
- The Harlington Coffee Shop
- Parks & Play Equipment at: Ancells Farm, Basingbourne, Calthorpe, Oakley Park, Edenbrook & The Views
- Pavilions at: Ancells Farm, Calthorpe, Basingbourne and Oakley Park
- Planning Application Consultations
- Annual Residents' Meeting
- Skate Park at The Views
- Tennis Courts in Calthorpe Park
- War Memorial
- Football Pitches
- Notice Boards

Hart District Council

- Abandoned Vehicles
- Building Control
- CCTV
- Car Parks and Fines
- Council Tax Enquiries
- Electoral Registration
- Gypsies and Travellers
- Housing / Homelessness
- Fly Tipping
- Licensing
- Noise Pollution
- Pest Control
- Planning
- Recycling / Refuse / Special Collections
- Street Cleaning / Litter
- Taxi / Private Hire Licensing

Hampshire County Council

- Bus Permits
- Blue Badges
- Education
- Pre-school, Infant, Junior, Secondary, Further, Higher and Adult
- Environment
- Highways and Footways
- Libraries
- Minerals
- Social Services—Adult/Children
- Street Lighting
- Trading Standards
- Transport
- Waste Disposal

Useful Telephone Numbers ...

Ancells Com Centre	07702 834701	Frimley Park Hospital	01276 604604
Basingstoke Hospital	01256 473202	The Harlington	01252 811009
Birth/Death/Marriage Reg	0300 555 1392	Hart District Council	01252 622122
Bus Permits	0300 555 1376	Hart Leisure Centre	01252 629879
Citizens Advice Bureau	03444 111 306	Hart Shopping Centre	01252 811834
Council Tax	01252 774444	Hart Voluntary Action	01252 815652
Electoral Registration	01252 774077	Library	0300 555 1387
Fleet Cemetery	01252 625246/ 07880 722941	MP –	
Fleet Link Bus Service	01252 518090	Ranil Jayawardena	01256 702468
Fleet Town Council	01252 625246	Police	101
Hants County Council	0300 555 1375	Refuse	01252 622122
		Hart Response Hub	0333 370 4000