



FLEET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING

held on

Wednesday 4th February 2026 at 7pm

* Councillor Schofield (Chairman)

* Councillor Einchcomb (Vice Chairman)

* Councillor Chenery

* Councillor Fang

* Councillor Holt

* Councillor Hope

* Councillor Kuntikanamata

* Councillor May

0 Councillor Neves

0 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

Mike Bye – Chair of Friends of Oakley Park

Darren McGrath – Chairman of FTFC

FC FEBRUARY 2026 ITEM 1

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Members received and accepted the apologies as recorded above.

FC FEBRUARY 2026 ITEM 2

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

FC FEBRUARY 2026 ITEM 3

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from the public.

FC FEBRUARY 2026 ITEM 4

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

This is a brief report, the quiet period immediately post-Christmas and the New Year celebration.

The principal activity has been a series of exchanges with Skelley and Couch regarding the operating costs of running Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) and efficient new gas boilers. The outcome of this exchange is a report from S&C to be discussed under the appropriate Agenda Item.

22nd January - attended the first meeting of the year for HDAPTC, held in the Civic Offices Council chamber so that a hybrid meeting could be conducted to allow as many participants as possible. There were about an equal number of on-line participants as there were attendees.

The main event of the evening was a presentation by Hart's Chief Executive updating everyone on the latest position regarding Local Government Reorganisation and the new Local Plan. Both events now await central government direction. Local government elections will go ahead in May despite the government's offer to suspend elections yet again.

It was confirmed that Hart would not be disposing of assets prior to the reorganisation, but they would be carrying out an audit of all contracts.

It was suggested that the Council Offices became a permanent meeting place to allow hybrid meetings to continue as the facilities to conduct such meetings were generally unavailable in most local community halls.

The Chief Executive was happy to arrange some ad-hoc meetings as key issues impacting the Town and Parish Councils became available.

24th January - attended the Friends of Oakley Park Annual General Meeting. It was very well attended and an interesting talk on the Ecology and Diversity of Oakley Park was presented by Dr Wain who has been studying the natural environment of Oakley Park for some time.

27th January - along with Cllr Tilley, the Communications Officer and the Executive Officer attended a meeting to discuss the format of the Annual Residents Meeting which will again be discussed at the appropriate Agenda item.

FC FEBRUARY 2026 ITEM 5

HCC/HDC ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following reports were received from Hampshire County Council.

Cllr Steve Forster (HCC)

- **Weather Impact on Roadworks:** A number of planned roadworks have been postponed due to recent adverse weather conditions, particularly at the Norris Hill Road roundabout. These works will be rescheduled, and temporary repairs will be undertaken in the interim.
- **Reading Road South Crossings:** Construction is scheduled to commence in April 2026 and is expected to take approximately two to three weeks to complete.
- **County Councillor Grants:** there is still time to apply for a County Councillor grant. Applications remain open for a further month.
- **Albert Street Junctions Safety Improvements:** Following feedback from residents and local businesses, the raised speed tables will be implemented in a single stage. Road-narrowing measures will only be installed if they are later deemed necessary to achieve the desired result.
- **Potholes:** There has been a significant increase in pothole occurrences, with over 5,000 notifications received in the previous week alone. Wet weather conditions are causing accelerated deterioration of road surfaces. Year-to-date, over 62,000 potholes have been repaired. There is a severe lack of funding for road maintenance, which is a national issue. However, Hampshire's road condition remains better than that of many other counties, for example Surrey.

- **SEND Provision:** Hampshire County Council has increased the number of SEND places. The Government is considering significant reforms to the SEND system with the aim of improving outcomes for children with SEND.
- **Illegal Parking:** The UK Government is proposing new powers for local councils to address illegal parking on pavements, particularly where it presents a significant barrier for vulnerable pedestrians. Under the proposed approach, councils would have discretion to issue penalties for “unnecessary obstruction” without the need to introduce additional traffic signage.

Cllr Chenery asked whether a map showing the proposed works at the Albert Street junctions was available.

Cllr Forster confirmed that maps had been shared on his social media accounts and that he would forward a copy to the Executive Officer for distribution to Members.

Cllr Chenery asked whether the proposed works would disrupt delivery drivers.

Cllr Forster responded that most restaurants have off-street parking and that delivery drivers often choose not to use it.

Cllr Woods asked what plans existed to improve the roads in and out of Fleet, including the High Street.

Cllr Forster advised that there are currently no plans for resurfacing works due to budget constraints, except where safety concerns require intervention.

FC FEBRUARY 2026 ITEM 6

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 7th January 2026 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

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

- Development Control 12th January 2026

As the Development Control Committee meeting of 12 January 2026 was not quorate, Members reviewed the proposed observations and agreed they should be submitted on the Council’s behalf.

Councillor Forster left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.

FC FEBRUARY 2026 ITEM 7

FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

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

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

RESOLVED

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

FC FEBRUARY 2026 ITEM 8**ANNUAL RESIDENTS MEETING**

Members participated in a brief demonstration of *Slido* and approved its use at the Annual Residents Meeting scheduled for 10 March 2026. It was noted that non-technology options would also be available to ensure accessibility for all residents.

Members considered and agreed the proposed format and agenda for the meeting. They were also reminded to nominate local residents for the Community Hero Award.

RESOLVED

That the use of *Slido*, the new meeting format, and the agenda for the Annual Residents Meeting be approved.

FC FEBRUARY 2026 ITEM 9**REQUEST TO PURCHASE COUNCIL LAND**

A resident has requested that the Council consider selling a small piece of amenity land at Long Mead.

A previous similar request was refused on the grounds that the Council has a duty to protect and safeguard public land. Concern was expressed that granting such a request would set a precedent, making it difficult to refuse similar requests in the future. (Refer FC APRIL 2025 ITEM 8).

RESOLVED

The request to sell Council land was not approved.

FC FEBRUARY 2026 ITEM 10**KINDNESS CAMPAIGN: PROPOSED ROAD SIGNAGE**

Members considered a proposal from Fleet Lions regarding a “Kindness” campaign, including the potential installation of road signage at key entrances to the town.

Members expressed support for the principle of promoting kindness and considerate behaviour within the community and recognised the positive intentions behind the campaign. However, concerns were raised about the effectiveness and practicality of delivering this message through highway signage.

Members felt that the example wording proposed for the signs was too lengthy and could prove distracting to drivers, noting that any messaging would need to be significantly simpler to be appropriate for road use. It was also suggested that, if signage were to be pursued, a more straightforward road safety message such as “Please drive safely” might be more suitable.

Members further noted that any signage would be subject to approval by Hampshire County Council as Highway Authority and expressed doubt as to whether the proposed approach, including wording and branding, would receive the necessary permissions. In light of this, Members questioned the value of the Town Council offering formal support at this stage, prior to clarity being obtained on highway feasibility.

Members also suggested that there may be alternative, non-highway-based ways of promoting kindness within the town which could be explored as part of the wider campaign.

RESOLVED

That Fleet Town Council supports the aims of promoting kindness within the community but does not support the proposed road signage approach at this stage, pending further clarity on highway approval, wording, and alternative methods of delivering the campaign message.

FC FEBRUARY 2026 ITEM 11

HARLINGTON UPDATE

Members received an update from the Chairman on the Harlington renovation project.

Members considered a report from Skelly & Couch analysing the operating costs of an air source heat pump (ASHP) system compared with gas boilers. In doing so, Members took into account the following factors:

- The capital cost of each option
- The risk of project creep associated with ASHP capital costs, based on the Council's previous experience with the Decarbonisation Scheme and the current Hart District Council Frogmore Leisure Centre project
- The estimated useful life of each option, including quoted figures and known actual performance
- Operating costs, including daily standing charges
- Decarbonisation objectives of both Fleet Town Council and Hart District Council

Members concluded that, while the Council's long-term intention is to install an ASHP system (and the Council will put the necessary infrastructure in place to enable this in the current renovation project), there are currently fewer financial and logistical risks associated with installing gas boilers. Gas boilers were therefore identified as the Council's preferred option at this time. Members also noted that planned measures within the renovation would reduce heat loss and improve the building's carbon footprint, meaning progress towards decarbonisation would still be achieved.

Due to the length of time required to negotiate legal agreements, authorisation was sought to commence discussions regarding a lease at the proposed alternative venue.

Members noted that there had been no recent communication from BFF regarding the status of the project.

RESOLVED

- a) To proceed with the installation of gas boilers, with the understanding that conversion to an ASHP system is intended in the future.
- b) To authorise the Executive Officer to commence lease negotiations with the landlords of the alternative venue.
- c) For the Chairman to contact BFF to arrange regular project updates.

FC FEBRUARY 2026 ITEM 12

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following announcements were made:

- The draft meeting dates for 2026/27 have been circulated. Members were asked to check the dates and notify the Executive Officer of any issues.

- The Council's application to register land at the Cemetery has been submitted to HM Land Registry. Due to known backlogs, it may be some time before the application is processed.
- Cllr Einchcomb provided an update on a recent meeting regarding S106 monies. It may be possible to use S106 funding when replacing existing playgrounds, provided the application can demonstrate a change of use or scope that meets the criteria of the fund.
- Cllr Schofield reminded Members that elections are scheduled for May 2026. Members intending to re-stand were encouraged to inform the Executive Officer which ward they plan to stand in, where possible, to help avoid contested elections.

FC FEBRUARY 2026 ITEM 13

UPDATE ON COMPLAINTS

- Incident involving a minor and a sign while cycling at Calthorpe Park
 - The Council's insurers have assessed the site following the reported incident. The matter is being managed through the Council's insurance process, and no liability has been accepted.
- Complaint regarding line marking on Calthorpe Park Tennis Courts
 - A report has been provided to the complainant in relation to the tennis court line-marking paint. The report confirms that the appropriate paint was used and that it was applied in accordance with relevant guidance. The report also notes the importance of users wearing suitable footwear appropriate to the surface and prevailing conditions.

FC FEBRUARY 2026 ITEM 14

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled to be held on Wednesday 4th March 2026 at 7pm at 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 FEBRUARY 2026 ITEM 15

FLEET TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB

Darren McGrath, Chair of Fleet Town Football Club gave a presentation on a proposal requiring landlord consent under the provisions of the lease.

RESOLVED

Members approved the proposal subject to two conditions:

- The 24/7 access referred to needs to be limited to emergency use only and not for trading.
- Safety signage at the entrance of the grounds be installed.

FC FEBRUARY 2026 ITEM 16 S106 PROJECT

Members received a project proposal from Cllr Tilley to install removable power sources utilising existing S106 monies earmarked for High Street improvements. Members were supportive of the proposal and indicated that the addition of an outdoor sound system in Gurkha Square could also deliver significant benefits.

Cllr Tilley reported that a quote had been received for a feasibility study to determine whether the project was viable. It remained unclear whether S106 monies could be used to fund feasibility studies, and clarification had been requested from the S106 Officer at Hart District Council, with a response still awaited. On the working assumption that feasibility studies were not eligible for S106 funding, Members discussed alternative funding options and requested that Cllr Robinson approach Fleet BID to establish whether they would be willing to fund the study.

Cllr Tilley further advised that, following advice from an Assistant Highways Manager at Hampshire Highways, she intended to challenge elements of the quote received.

RESOLVED

- a) To approach Fleet BID to determine if they would support the project.
- b) To challenge the quote received.
- c) To review the scope of the project presented.

The meeting closed at 10.05pm.

Signed.....
Chairman

Date.....