



## FLEET TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING

held on

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at 7pm

\* Councillor Schofield (Chairman)

\* Councillor Einchcomb (Vice Chairman)

\* Councillor Chenery

# Councillor Fang

\* Councillor Holt

# Councillor Hope

0 Councillor Kuntikanamata

\* Councillor May

# Councillor Neves

\* Councillor Oliver

\* Councillor Powell

L Councillor Richmond

0 Councillor Stanton

0 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

#### FC MARCH 2026 ITEM 1

#### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Members received and accepted the apologies as recorded above.

#### FC MARCH 2026 ITEM 2

#### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

#### FC MARCH 2026 ITEM 3

#### QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from the public.

#### FC MARCH 2026 ITEM 4

#### CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

February is a short month

9th Meet with Mrs Forster to discuss the closure of the Harlington at the end of the year and give Sasha's Project plenty of notice to organise their activities during the shutdown.

11th Along with Cllr Holt visited Wellington college to look at their theatres and gain some insight into the Estate Management's experience of dealing with multi-disciplinary contracts and their experience of the types of contracts and contractors. It was an interesting and valuable day.

19th Sat in on BFFs Design Review meeting which predominantly focused on the issues and advice needed for the conversion of the shopping unit as the temporary location for the Harlington Operations but also involved some preliminary discussions on the RIBA Stage 2 with particular emphasis on the programme of work. More later

20th Along with Cllr Woods had a video call with Stuart Shanks, our Business Plan advisor. He is recovering from his medical problem and hopes to be able to be mobile again in March and is willing to come to the Harlington for further discussions. The primary purpose of the meeting was to challenge his assumptions and predictions for the future financial performance of the new Harlington.

23rd Attended a business group meeting organised by our local MP Alex Brewer. Other members of Fleet BID were in attendance including Cllr Richmond, in a personal business capacity. The consensus feeling of the meeting was that SMEs are financially suffering at present, and they are not seeing the support that is promised by central government.

Take this opportunity to remind Members of their having committed to following the Council's Code of Conduct which requires Members to respect their fellow Councillors and to not place the Council in disrepute. Everyone has freedom of speech but there are rules around debate, and the majority decision of the Councillors becomes the decision of the body corporate that is the Council and upon which the Officers of the Council have to act.

There are rules of debate that only allow a matter to be brought back to Council if there is a majority of Members who call for a matter to be debated again usually predicated on some new and revealing information becoming available that impacts the initial resolution.

Just making statements to Council or in public that some Members do not agree with the decision of the Council achieves no purpose. The time and place to raise any or all issues is in formal meetings of the Council in open debate.

## **FC MARCH 2026 ITEM 5**

## **HCC/HDC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The following reports were received from Hampshire County Council.

### Cllr Steve Forster (HCC)

- **Hampshire County Council 2026/27 Budget:** A budget of £3.3 billion has been approved. It is a balanced budget and has no service cuts within it. HCC achieved £95 million of efficiency savings. Central Government funding was reduced by £40 million which will need to be addressed in future years.
- **Secondary School Places:** Secondary school places for September 2026 went out last week. 90.3% of residents received their first choice, and 97% received one of their top three choices. Calthorpe Park School and Courtmoor School are oversubscribed. Hampshire County Council is not legally permitted to hold places open, meaning late applicants or families moving into the area may not secure a place at these schools even if they live within the catchment area.
- **Primary School Places:** Primary school allocations are due to be issued on 16 April 2026. Hampshire is experiencing a 7–8% decline in the birth rate, which is placing pressure on local schools. However, this is also creating opportunities to expand Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision.
- **SEND Reforms:** Central Government is encouraging more children with SEND to be educated within mainstream schools. This approach is already in place in Hampshire, although two new SEND schools are also being built.
- **Roads Repairs & Potholes:** With the improvement in weather conditions, permanent road repairs are now beginning. Hampshire County Council has

supplemented the £30 million provided by Central Government with a similar level of funding to address road maintenance issues.

- **Utility Company Works:** SGN has planned significant works on Stockton Road, which are intended to be undertaken in phases to minimise disruption. South East Water and Thames Water also have works planned.

### **Questions from Members**

Cllr Wildsmith asked how SEND provision was being delivered at Velmead School. Cllr Forster explained that Hampshire County Council operates five levels of SEND provision, each with different resourcing levels. At Velmead School, two modular classrooms were being installed and existing classrooms were being repurposed to support SEND provision.

Cllr Wildsmith asked whether road repairs carried out by utility companies were subject to quality control checks.

Cllr Forster advised that utility companies operate under separate legislation that allows them to self-certify the quality of their repairs. However, Hampshire County Council undertakes spot checks on approximately 10% of repairs and may increase this level if issues are identified. Where members of the public report concern about repairs, Hampshire County Council will investigate regardless of who carried out the work.

Cllr Woods asked about traffic management measures at Velmead School.

Cllr Forster advised that the yellow zig-zag markings have been extended to the maximum length permitted by law. Hampshire County Council intends to introduce a Traffic Regulation Order to install yellow lines on one side of the road to prevent parking on both sides, which currently causes traffic flow issues. However, consultation sometimes shows that such measures can lead to displacement parking elsewhere and may not fully resolve the underlying problem.

### **FC MARCH 2026 ITEM 6**

### **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

Members noted a spelling error on Item 8 that required correction. The hard copy was manually amended and the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2026 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

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

- Development Control 26<sup>th</sup> January and 9<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2026
- Policy and Finance 18<sup>th</sup> February 2026
- Establishment 25<sup>th</sup> February 2026

### **FC MARCH 2026 ITEM 7**

### **FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT**

Members noted receipt of the bank reconciliation and the list of payments for December 2025 and January 2026.

Councillor Stanton was not available to confirm that the bank reconciliation and list of payments for January 2026 had been verified and signed off against the original bank statement.

### **RESOLVED**

Due to the absence of Councillor Stanton, to defer this item to next month.

**FC MARCH 2026 ITEM 8****THE VIEWS PLAY PARK – TENDER APPROVAL**

Members considered the Tender Brief and associated procurement documents for the proposed replacement of play equipment at The Views Play Park. The brief sets out the scope of works, project objectives, and key design and safety requirements. The redevelopment seeks to deliver a high-quality, safe, inclusive and engaging play environment suitable for children aged under 8 and 8–12 years.

Members noted that the payment terms contained an error and that the staged payments should be amended to 30%, 60% and 10%, rather than 30%, 90% and 10%.

**RESOLVED**

- a) Subject to the minor amendment noted above, to approve the Tender Brief and associated procurement documents.
- b) To authorise Officers to commence a compliant tender process via Find a Tender.
- c) To approve the formation of a Tender Evaluation Panel comprising Officers, nominated Councillors, and Fleet BID representation.
- d) To report back to Full Council with a recommendation for contract award.

**FC MARCH 2026 ITEM 9****HARLINGTON UPDATE**

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

Hart Shopping Centre has confirmed that it is able to offer a lease. However, the proposed start date is approximately six weeks later than originally anticipated. The implications of this later start date have not yet been fully assessed. Members authorised the Executive Officer to proceed with lease negotiations in consultation with the Harlington Executive.

Burrell Foley Fischer has provided its draft Stage 2 report. The report includes a detailed review of project costs. Whilst the overall project cost remains within the agreed budget, it appears this has been achieved by reducing the contingency allowance from 10% to 6.5%. Members noted that this may reflect increased certainty following the completion of invasive surveys but requested confirmation of the rationale for this change.

The project programme has also been updated and indicates a later start date for the commencement of works. Whilst this delay had originally been expected to be challenged, Members noted that, in light of the revised lease start date at the shopping centre, the timing may prove appropriate. The overall programme length has also been reduced from 18 months to 14 months.

The Synergy Group has recommended that monthly meetings be held with the Harlington Executive. It is proposed that these meetings take place mid-month so that any matters requiring a decision can be brought to Full Council in a timely manner if necessary.

The Synergy Group has also recommended adopting a two-stage design and build procurement approach. Under this model, Burrell Foley Fischer will develop the design to an appropriate stage before the project is tendered, with the appointed contractor then involved in finalising the detailed design.

**RESOLVED**

- a) To note the update from the Chairman.
- b) To authorise the Executive Officer, in consultation with the Harlington Executive, to proceed with the lease negotiations.

**FC MARCH 2026 ITEM 10                      ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

**FC MARCH 2026 ITEM 11                      FRIENDS OF ANCELLS**

Members noted the receipt of £4.7k from the former Friends of Ancells group, donated upon their dissolution.

These funds were raised to support improvements at Ancells Farm Park and will be placed in an earmarked reserve to be used solely for capital improvements at Ancells Farm Park, such as improved surfacing around play equipment or works to connect pathways between play areas.

The Council formally records its thanks to the group for its work and legacy contribution to the park and wider community.

**FC MARCH 2026 ITEM 12                      ANNUAL RESIDENTS' MEETING**

Members noted the final agenda for the Annual Residents' Meeting on 10 March 2026.

**FC MARCH 2026 ITEM 13                      DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled to be held on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 at 7pm at the Harlington.

The meeting closed at 8.44pm.

**Signed.....**  
**Chairman**

**Date:.....**