



FLEET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FLEET TOWN COUNCIL

held on

Wednesday 20th May 2026 at 7pm

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|----------------------------|------------------------|
| * Councillor Chenery | * Councillor Powell |
| * Councillor Einchcomb | * Councillor Schofield |
| * Councillor Engstrom | * Councillor Stanton |
| * Councillor Forster | * Councillor Taylor |
| * Councillor Hope | * Councillor Tilley |
| * Councillor Kuntikanamata | * Councillor Wildsmith |
| * Councillor May | * Councillor Woods |
| * Councillor Oliver | |
| * Councillor Parker | |

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

Also in attendance:

Rita Tong – Executive Officer
Mike Bye – Chair of Friends of Oakley Park
Leslie Holt – Co-Option Candidate
Kevin Davidson – Co-Option Candidate

FC MAY 2026 ITEM 1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

Councillor Schofield was proposed by Councillor Chenery and seconded by Councillor Woods for the position of Chairman.

Councillor Wildsmith was proposed by Councillor Taylor and seconded by Councillor Parker for the position of Chairman.

Following a vote, Councillor Schofield was elected Chairman of the Council for the ensuing municipal year.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Bob Schofield be re-elected to the office of Chairman of Council for the local government year 2026/2027.

The Declaration of Acceptance of Office was signed by Cllr Schofield.

FC MAY 2026 ITEM 2 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Councillor Einchcomb was proposed by Councillor Woods and seconded by Councillor May. There were no other nominations.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Paul Einchcomb be re-elected to the office of Vice Chairman of Council for the local government year 2026/2027.

FC MAY 2026 ITEM 3

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Members received and accepted the apologies as recorded above.

FC MAY 2026 ITEM 4

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Tilley and Schofield declared an *Other Registerable Interest* in Agenda Item 10 on the grounds they are both members of Fleet BID.

FC MAY 2026 ITEM 5

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from the public.

FC MAY 2026 ITEM 6

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

8th April Along with Ben Crane attended the later stages of the BFF Design Review Meeting which was held as a hybrid meeting on site and via video links.

13th April Attended an on-line meeting for an update on the Hart Youth Awards organised by Fleet Phoenix. Everything is being managed to programme.

14th April Attended the Mental Health Awareness Fair at the Harlington and listened to the Keynote speaker Robin Ince who spoke on Neurodiversity. Well represented and well attended event. This could become an annual event.

15th April Along with Cllr Einchcomb attended the HDAPTC AGM at HDC's offices. Apart from AGM formalities of appointing officers etc the main speaker was Hart's Chief Executive Officer on the coming developments of LGR now that Central Government has decided on the final formation of the Unitary Authorities and the programme for elections.

27th April Harlington Working Group meeting to update members on latest developments

28th April Attended Oakley Park along with Facilities and Open Spaces Officer to meet field representatives of Thames Water to investigate a potential new sink hole identified by the chairman of Friends of Oakley Park. Thames reps acknowledged the very high **possibility** of a developing sink hole as the depression aligns with a sewer. A follow up investigation is required with a camera crew.

29th April Along with the Executive Officer met with the Manager of the Hart Shopping Centre to discuss the latest developments of the temporary lease for the relocation of the Harlington activities into the shopping unit. More of this later in the Agenda.

29th April Along with Ben and Sam we carried out a dimensional survey of the columns to the main auditorium of the Harlington which required the removal of several wall panels. The information was required by the Structural Engineers designing the new roof structure to the

main auditorium. We had to return later to uncover two more columns that were not so readily exposed and not so readily accessible, but all dimensions have now been confirmed.

1st May Attended hybrid meeting with Executive Officer and representatives of BFF and Synergy to re-assess the current programme of works and the most likely dates for the Harlington closure. The most appropriate form of delivery contract was also debated.

5th May Along with Cllr Tilley attended a BID Board Meeting where a new Chairman and a new Board Member were appointed.

FC MAY 2026 ITEM 7

HCC/HDC ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following reports were received from Hampshire County Council.

Cllr Steve Forster (HCC)

- First meeting of the new administration to be held 21 May 2026.

Cllr Alan Oliver (HDC)

- First meeting of the new administration to be held 21 May 2026.

FC MAY 2026 ITEM 8

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 1st April 2026 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

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

- Development Control 13th and 27th April 2026, 11th May 2026
- Policy & Finance 22nd April 2026

Councillor Hope requested that the Development Control minutes be amended to reflect that he was Chairman for that meeting.

FC MAY 2026 ITEM 9

COUNCILLOR CO-OPTION

Members received presentations from Mr Holt for the Courtmoor Ward and Mr Davidson for the Fleet Central Ward.

RESOLVED

To approve Leslie Holt to be co-opted as a Member of Fleet Town Council for the Courtmoor Ward and that Kevin Davidson to be co-opted as a Member of Fleet Town Council for the Fleet Central Ward.

Leslie Holt signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form and remained for the remainder of the meeting.

Kevin Davidson signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form and then left the meeting.

FC MAY 2026 ITEM 10**GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE**

Members noted that 16 of the 18 Councillor positions on Fleet Town Council were filled by elected Members and therefore the Council met the requirement that at least two-thirds of the Council must hold office as a result of being declared elected.

Members further noted that the Clerk, Rita Tong, obtained the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) in 2016, which included the module relating to the General Power of Competence. The Council therefore met the requirement that, at the time the resolution is passed, the Clerk holds a recognised professional qualification.

RESOLVED

That Fleet Town Council, having met the conditions of eligibility as defined in the Localism Act 2011 and the Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012, resolves to adopt the General Power of Competence from 20 May 2026 until the next relevant Annual Meeting of the Council.

**FC MAY 2026 ITEM 11
GROUPS 2026/27****NOMINATIONS TO COMMITTEES AND WORKING**

Members considered and agreed the allocation of members to Committees and Working Groups (*copy attached to record minutes*):

- a) Membership of Committees 2026/27.
- b) Membership of Working Groups 2026/27.

RESOLVED

That the Members listed in the table attached would serve on the Committees and Working Groups during 2025/2026.

FC MAY 2026 ITEM 12**APPOINTMENTS TO EXTERNAL BODIES**

Members considered the allocation of members to represent Fleet Town Council on External Bodies in 2026/27 (*copy attached to record minutes*).

The Executive Officer was instructed to contact Hart District Council to confirm whether the Hart Community safety group still existed at parish level.

RESOLVED

To approve the proposed representation of FTC on External Bodies for 2026/2027.

FC MAY 2026 ITEM 13**POLICY ADOPTION**

Members considered and agreed the following policies and documents for the 2026/27 Council year:

- a. Standing Orders (as amended)
- b. Financial Regulations
- c. Treasury & Investment Policy
- d. Risk Management Strategy

- e. Health & Safety Policy

RESOLVED

- a) To approve the proposed amendments to Standing Orders.
b) To adopt the above documents for the 2026/27 Council year.

FC MAY 2026 ITEM 14

MEETING SCHEDULE FOR THE COUNCIL 2026/27

Members received the meeting schedule for the forthcoming year.

RESOLVED

To approve the proposed schedule of meetings for the Council 2026/27.

FC MAY 2026 ITEM 15

MEMBERSHIP OF OTHER BODIES AND ANNUAL FEES

The members considered the Council's affiliation membership and the associated annual fees.

RESOLVED

To approve the payment of the following fees for 2026/2027.

- a) HALC - £1,400
b) NALC - £1,601
c) ICCM - £110
d) SLCC - £480

FC MAY 2026 ITEM 16

COUNCIL LEGAL AGREEMENTS

Members considered the written reports received to support requests to waive annual rent.

On the proposal of Councillor Wildsmith and seconded by Councillor Oliver, Members unanimously agreed to reduce the annual rent to a peppercorn for the remainder of the lease periods for the following organisations:

- 1st Crookham Scouts in Basingbourne Park
- 22nd and 26th Odiham Scouts in Calthorpe Park
- Lions Community Store in Basingbourne Park

Councillor Stanton queried whether the Guides based in Basingbourne should be on the list of organisations to pay rent. The Executive Officer to check the legal records and report back to this Committee at the next meeting.

RESOLVED

- a) To waive the annual rent for the 2026/2027 financial year for the following leases:
- Fleet Cricket Club (Calthorpe Park) – annual rent £4,140.
 - Fleet Phoenix in The Point – annual rent £1,200
- b) To reduce the annual rent to a peppercorn for the remainder of the lease periods for the following organisations:
- 1st Crookham Scouts in Basingbourne Park
 - 22nd and 26th Odiham Scouts in Calthorpe Park

- Lions Community Store in Basingbourne Park

FC MAY 2026 ITEM 17

FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

Members noted receipt of the bank reconciliation and a list of payments for March 2026.

Councillor Stanton confirmed that the bank reconciliation and list of payments for March 2026 have been verified and signed off against the original bank statement.

RESOLVED

- 1) To receive and accept the bank reconciliation and list of payments for March 2026.
- 2) To accept the statement from Councillor Stanton that the bank reconciliation and list of payments for March 2026 have been verified and signed off.

FC MAY 2026 ITEM 18

RE-APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR 2026/27

Members were provided with evidence in the agenda papers to enable them to consider and reach conclusions regarding the independence and competence of the Internal Auditor, as required. They were also provided a copy of the engagement letter.

RESOLVED

- a) To confirm satisfaction with the independence of the appointed Internal Auditor.
- b) To confirm satisfaction with the competence of the Internal Auditor.
- c) To note the previously approved Letter of Engagement with the Internal Auditor.

FC MAY 2026 ITEM 19

HARLINGTON UPDATE

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

- All RIBA Stage 2 design issues (bar 1) have been resolved such that BFF and the various design groups can progress with RIBA Stage 3.
 - The only item to be finally resolved is the practicality, cost and planning issues related to the front balcony.
- The major debate at BFF's Design Group Meeting was the air circulation in the main auditorium. Different retractable seating systems use different means of ensuring the air is circulated efficiently. BFF and Skelly and Couch have agreed upon an appropriate system and methodology.
- Three BFF architects spent a day on site and measured all doors for accessibility and fire standards. They extensively toured the roof spaces to familiarise themselves with the internal roof structures.
- The programme review suggested that there has been a slight slippage in progress and the current most likely on-site start date is 1st February 2027, but termination of activity in the Harlington is still planned for the end of December.

- The end of the RIBA Stage 3 Design phase is critical to starting negotiations for a Two Stage Delivery Contract. This is being recommended by Synergy as the least financial risk option. It brings the contractor into the project at an early stage to be involved in the final detailed design and risk management.
 - The balance is lower risk against potentially higher cost.
- Cost remains a key issue at this time with PWLB rates at a record high of 6.68% compared to the 1.2% when the initial Harlington planning application was submitted. This of course inhibits what we will be able to afford within our budgetary constraints.
 - The Council can ride the immediate storm as there is no immediate need to borrow within this calendar year and any loan commitment is valid for 12 months.
- BFF have submitted a pre-application planning advice notice for the potential temporary Harlington venue.
- For any new Members who would like a briefing session on the Harlington Project, the Chairman is happy to arrange a suitable time to bring members up to speed.

RESOLVED

To note the update from the Chairman.

FC MAY 2026 ITEM 20 STATEMENT OF COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE 2025/26

Members noted the statement of the attendance of Councillors at ordinary meetings of Full Council during 2025/26.

FC MAY 2026 ITEM 21 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following announcements were made:

- Cllr Schofield celebrated his 80th birthday on 19th of May 2026.
- The new skatepark was officially opened on Monday 18 May 2026 and has been well received.
- Duty Manager Sam Joliffe stars in True West on Wednesday 27 May and Thursday 28 May 2026 at The Harlington.
- Nouveau Cabaret, a show put on by one of The Harlington’s regular hirers, is on Friday 29 May 2026.

FC MAY 2026 ITEM 22 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled to be held on Wednesday 3rd June 2026 at 7pm at the Harlington.

The meeting closed at 8.38pm.

Signed.....
Chairman

Date:.....