

**WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM****26 February 2004****Attendance:****Councillors:**

Pearce (Chairman) (P)

Bennetts (P)  
Berry (P)  
Beveridge (P)  
Craig (P)  
Davies (P)  
de Peyer (P)  
Hiscock (P)  
Love  
Mather (P)

Maynard (P)  
Mitchell (P)  
Nelmes (P)  
Nunn (P)  
Pines (P)  
Porter (P)  
Rees (P)  
Tait (P)

**Others in attendance:**

Councillor Verney

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**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from County Councillor Dickens.

**2. MINUTES****RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Forum held on 13 January 2004 be approved and adopted.

**3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no questions asked or statements made.

**4. WINCHESTER FESTIVE LIGHTS 2004 ONWARDS**

(Report WTF25 refers)

During discussion, it was confirmed that contributions totalling £21,000 had been made by the business community towards the cost of the 2003 Christmas Festival. Whilst noting this figure, Members requested the City Centre Manager to continue his efforts to secure increased funding, and to ensure that those businesses in Jewry Street and St George's Street which would benefit from the proposed extension of Christmas lighting also made reasonable contributions.

The meeting drew particular attention to the lack of lighting in the Broadway and the Chief Executive commented that, in the longer term, the Broadway/Friarsgate re-development may help to finance Christmas lighting in that area. Members pointed out that, with the remainder of the town centre benefiting from lights, the lack of

festive illumination in the Broadway would become even more noticeable. Therefore, consideration should be given to extending the lighting programme into the Broadway for 2004 and the Chief Estates Officer and City Centre Manager were requested to pursue the matter further. Members were particularly keen to see festive lighting of the Broadway trees and it was suggested that the advice of the County Council be sought regarding this issue, because the illumination of trees in the area of The Castle had been very attractive in 2003.

A Member requested that, if possible, a more subtle method should be used to promote the sponsor of the main Christmas Tree in the precinct, because the use of sponsorship boards around the base of the tree detracted from its appearance. This was noted

**RESOLVED:**

1. That Cabinet be requested to approve a supplementary estimate of £24,000 for 2004/05 to provide additional festive lights in Jewry Street and St Georges Street, together with other infrastructure and erection costs, subject to that sum being funded as follows :-

Winchester City Council	-	£ 8,000
Winchester Town Account	-	£ 8,000
Winchester City Centre Partnership	-	£ 8,000
<b>Total</b>		<b><u>£24,000</u></b>

2. That the Chief Estates Officer, in conjunction with the City Centre Manager, be requested to undertake the following action :-

(i) to continue to seek additional funding from the business community, particularly those businesses who would benefit from the extension of the Christmas lights into Jewry Street and St George's Street

(ii) to investigate the financial and practical implications of extending the Christmas lights into the Broadway from 2004 onwards.

**5. WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM - REVIEW**  
(Report WTF22 refers)

The Forum was reminded that the above report had been deferred from its meeting held on 13 January 2004. Any recommendations would now be considered by Principal Scrutiny Committee on 29 March 2004 and Cabinet on 31 March 2004.

Following a full discussion, Members generally concluded that during its first 18 months in operation, the Forum had achieved its principal aim of providing the opportunity for interested Town residents to engage more directly with the City Council. The public meetings had covered a range of issues and the attendance levels demonstrated that there was a demand for, and interest in, a Forum of this nature.

With regard to the future, Members considered that the Forum should be allowed to continue to evolve along current lines, particularly as it was beginning to play an increasing part in the Council's decision-making structure, through recommendations on the Town charge and related issues to Cabinet. At some stage, it may be

desirable to consider requesting Cabinet and Council to authorise the Forum to have limited delegated powers in respect of issues such as minor grants.

The Chief Executive reminded the meeting that the CPA Inspectors had pointed out the need for the City Council to reach out more effectively to communities and the CPA regarded the Forum as a good example of working towards that aim. He continued that consideration was currently being given to the production of a document entitled 'City Centre Vision', which would attempt to join up a range of issues which affected the Winchester Town area. Therefore it may be appropriate, if Members were agreeable, for the Forum to drive the production of that document.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Verney suggested that public meetings could be improved by allowing a 20 minute 'open session' when Members of the public could raise any issue, apart from planning related matters. Planning matters could be raised for discussion at the end of the meeting, if there was sufficient time. That suggestion was noted.

There were some comments of concern about the lack of clearly identifiable achievements by the Forum and whether, having covered all the major issues of concern, there would be no important topics left to discuss. In reply, the majority of Members considered that the Forum had achieved various actions in a range of areas, and had enabled a Winchester Town view to be fed into relevant consultation exercises and initiatives. With regard to topics, it was generally agreed that, in an area such as Winchester Town, there would always be matters of concern and one Member highlighted requests from local landlords and restaurateurs to have public meetings which focused on their respective issues.

RESOLVED:

1. That, subject to consideration by Principal Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet, the Winchester Town Forum continue with its current approach to considering issues which affect the Winchester Town area and that possible changes, such as limited delegated authority, be discussed at the appropriate time as the Forum continues to evolve.

2. That, to improve the effectiveness of the Forum, a review of the mailing database be undertaken to ensure that all relevant groups were being included.

3. That feedback forms be circulated at each public meeting, to provide additional information about how the public sessions were being perceived and to help identify possible improvements.

4. That the Chief Executive be requested to involve the Town Forum in the 'City Centre Vision' document at the appropriate time.

6. **UPDATE ON COMMUNITY WARDENS**  
(Oral Report)

The Forum considered an update note tabled at the meeting by the Director of Community Services which explained that, on 25 February 2004, Council had approved the annual budget, which included funding for a neighbourhood warden service for parts of the Town area.

The meeting was informed that officers had commenced work on the details of the service and a report would be submitted to Cabinet in March or early April 2004. That report would seek approval on matters such as operational arrangements, coverage, and community consultation and Cabinet may wish to consult the Forum on such issues before any final decisions were made. Personnel Committee would also need to give its approval to the establishment of the new posts. Having regard to the time necessary to undertake those processes, it was unlikely that any wardens would be operational before Autumn 2004.

Whilst noting the above, the Forum expressed concern that fuller information had not been provided to Members at an earlier stage, on issues such as the consultation programme with local communities and the proposed operational arrangements for the wardens. Therefore, it was agreed that the Chief Executive should be made aware of those concerns and that a group of Members be appointed with whom the Director of Community Services could consult before and during the introduction of the warden service.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Chief Executive be informed of the concern of the Town Forum regarding the lack of information about the introduction of the warden service and any indication as to how the consultation and operational arrangements would be handled.

2. That Councillors Nelmes, Nunn and Pines be appointed as representatives of the Forum with whom the Director of Community Services be requested to consult regarding the introduction and operation of the warden scheme.

7. **FORUM PUBLIC MEETING – 11 MARCH 2004**  
(Oral Report)

It was noted that the next public meeting of the Town Forum would be held on Thursday 11 March 2004 and would discuss "Modern Architecture in Historic Towns". The guest speakers for the evening (Mr Robert Adam and Mr Ian Deans) had both confirmed their attendance and Members agreed that the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Economy and the Environment should also be invited to attend.

RESOLVED:

That the arrangements for the next Forum Public Meeting, to be held on 11 March 2004, be noted.

8. **CONSIDERATION OF TOPICS AND DATES FOR FUTURE PUBLIC MEETINGS**  
(Oral Report)

RESOLVED:

That the next public meeting of the Town Forum be held on 30 June 2004 at 7pm in the Guildhall, Winchester, and the topic for consideration be 'Vision for the City Centre'. **(date later changed to Thursday 22 July 2004)**

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 8.45pm

Chairman