

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM**6 June 2007**Attendance:Councillors:

Hiscock (Chairman) (P)

Barratt (P)
Berry (P)
Beveridge (P)
Fall (P)
Hicks (P)
Higgins (P)
Love (P)
Mather (P)
Maynard (P)

Nelmes (P)
Nunn (P)
Pearce (P)
Pines
Saunders (P)
Stephens
Tait (P)
Worrall

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 June 2007 be approved and adopted.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr Weeks (Winchester Residents' Association) spoke to reiterate the points he had made at the previous meeting. In summary, he considered the purpose of the Forum was to discuss the issues that affected the unparished town area of Winchester.

He also asked for an update on air pollution in the town centre, the proposed Crown Post Office closure, developers' highways contributions and the relocation of traders from the Antiques Market in Silver Hill.

In response, the Head of Access and Information explained that a report on progress on the Air Quality Action Plan (which would take into account the Silver Hill development) would be available shortly. He also explained that the County Council was in the process of revising the policy on the collection of developers' contributions for highways improvements, which would probably lead to a greater role for the City Council in helping to identify schemes and projects. He added that there had been some problems with the recording and monitoring of contributions and this was also being reviewed, as part of the process of amending the Development Control agency agreement.

With regard to the proposed Crown Post Office closure, the Chairman explained that he was due to attend a conference on this subject in Swindon in the near future. He added that the Forum hoped to hold a public meeting at

some point during the Post Office's 6-week public consultation period, but the Post Office had yet to announce when this period would commence.

In relation to the possible displacement of traders from the Antiques Market, as a consequence of the Silver Hill redevelopment, the Chairman explained that this was a commercial matter between the traders and their landlords.

3. **WINCHESTER TOWN ACCESS PLAN**
(Report WTF94 refers)

The Report set out the progress to date on the development of the Access Plan for Winchester and proposed future involvement of the Forum.

During discussion, the Forum agreed that the public consultation it would undertake on the Plan should;

- involve all those who receive the papers of the Forum,
- involve small topic based focus groups,
- allow for those who want to input to a number of the topic areas,
- involve young people through appropriate mechanisms such as colleges,
- include appropriate Parish Councils, and
- include the Cathedral.

Members noted that the Report set out a number of groups that would be consulted as part of the process and agreed to contact the Chairman with suggestions for any other groups that should be involved.

RESOLVED:

That the Report be noted.

4. **MAGDALEN HILL CEMETERY – CREMATION PLOT SCHEME**
(Report WTF95 refers)

The Corporate Director (Governance) introduced the Report and answered a number of questions regarding the financing of the scheme. In summary, he explained that the capital for the new cremation plot would be funded from the General Fund's Major Investment Reserve. This would be repaid by the Town Account over a period of 15 years and it was possible for the Forum to consider, in the annual budget process, whether these repayments should be financed by a future increase in cemetery fees and charges.

Following debate, the Forum welcomed the scheme as an important facility for the Town.

RESOLVED:

1. That the scheme for the provision of a new cremation plot area at Magalen Hill Cemetery, at an estimated cost of £45,000 (including fees), be approved.

2. That the impact of the financing charges upon the Town Account, as set out in paragraph 2.2 of the Report, be

recommended for approval, by the Head of Finance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources.

3. That the Forum considers the annual review of cemetery charges as part of the 2008/09 budget process.

5. **ROLE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDENS, POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS (PCSOs) AND ACCREDITED COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS (ACSOs)**
(Oral Report)

The City Council's Neighbourhood Warden Manager, Mr Devlin, gave the Forum a presentation on the different roles of the Wardens, PCSOs and ACSOs.

In summary, PCSOs were uniformed staff who worked for and supported the Police in local communities. PCSOs dealt with low-level crime issues and anti-social behaviour. Most of their time was spent on patrol (usually on foot or bicycle) and were sometimes accompanied by Police Officers. However, they did not have the same powers of arrest as Police Officers, but they could detain suspected offenders for up to thirty minutes, in which time they could call on the Police for support.

ACSOs reported to Hampshire County Council. They operated high visibility, uniformed patrols in marked vans which were equipped with CCTV. The officers had powers to provide advice and issue warnings and, where appropriate, could issue fixed penalty notices for anti-social behaviour, littering, fly-tipping, graffiti and cycling on a footpath. However, their power to issue penalty notices was currently rarely used. Officers could also request the name and address of offenders and failure to comply made the offender liable to arrest by a Police Officer. In addition, ACSOs had the power to confiscate alcohol and cigarettes from young people.

The Neighbourhood Wardens worked with other agencies and residents to deter anti-social behaviour, reduce the fear of crime and improve the environment. The Wardens wore red uniforms and removed graffiti, fly tipping and drug needles on sight. They also reported abandoned and untaxed vehicles and worked in enhancing community involvement with local groups and school children.

During debate, the Forum discussed the potential for the public confusion regarding slightly differing roles of the three agencies. However, Members noted the close liaison that existed between the agencies, which in practice assured a high quality of service to the public, and the innovative publicity the Wardens undertook to promote their particular role.

In light of the increasing problem posed by mini-motorbikes, Mr Devlin explained that he had written to residents to highlight their potential danger and to gather information on offenders.

At the conclusion of debate, the Forum thanked Mr Devlin for his presentation and for the Wardens' work in the community.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be noted.

6. **2007/08 WORK PROGRAMME - UPDATE**
(Report WTF96 refers)

The Forum agreed to establish an Informal Group to help prepare the Town Account budget with the Head of Finance. Following debate, Councillors Beveridge, Nelmes and Fall were appointed as representatives of the Liberal Democrat Group, with Councillor Pearce as Standing Deputy. Councillor Mather was appointed as a representative of the Conservative Group with one other Conservative Councillor and deputy to be appointed after the meeting. In addition, the Chairman requested that any growth bids should be submitted to next meeting of the Forum to be held on 11 October 2007.

With regard to grants awarded from the Town Account, the Chairman explained that he would shortly be discussing this issue with officers to ensure a greater input from the Forum.

The Corporate Director (Governance) explained that during the winter, the Forum would be asked to comment on the emerging Local Development Framework on behalf of the Town. Although no dates were set, it was likely that the Forum would organise public consultation meetings whose outcomes would be considered by an Informal Group which, in turn, would advise the main Forum.

In noting the large number of agenda items scheduled for the 11 October meeting, the Forum agreed to defer the discussion with local businesses about the future of the High Street (in relation to the Silver Hill development) to an additional meeting in March 2008.

Members noted that a report on the budget would be submitted to the 11 October meeting and a report on the Access Plan would be submitted to the 15 January 2008 meeting.

Finally, the Forum noted the proposed public meeting that would be held to discuss the closure of Winchester's Crown Post Office. Councillor Saunders requested that her suggestion that the Post Office pay for the room hire for the meeting be minuted, although her suggestion was not supported by others on the remainder of the Forum.

RESOLVED:

1. That, subject to the above amendments, the work programme as set out in the Report be approved.

2. That an Informal Group be established to help prepare the Town Account budget with the Head of Finance. Membership: Councillors Beveridge, Mather, Nelmes and Fall (Deputy Councillor Pearce). A further member and Deputy to be appointed from the Conservative Group.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 8.00pm

Chairman