

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM**11 October 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 (P)
 Saunders (P)
 Stephens
 Tait (P)
 Worrall (P)

1. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 July 2007 be approved and adopted.

2. **LITTER IN WINCHESTER – PRESENTATION FROM THE WINCHESTER LITTER PICKERS**

(Oral Report)

Councillors Beveridge and Mather declared personal (but not prejudicial) interests in this item, as ordinary members of the Winchester Litter Pickers Group. Both spoke and voted thereon.

The Forum welcomed to the meeting Ms Allen as a representative of the Winchester Litter Pickers Group. She explained that the Group picked up and recycled litter from around the town, that they had been operational for 12 years and currently called on approximately 100 volunteers.

Ms Allen suggested that the Council could assist the Group by providing publicity to attract new, and especially younger volunteers, through the Council's website, publications and the Hat Fair.

She also requested that the Council encourage, as far as possible, retailers and other organisations to introduce wall-mounted cigarette receptacles, to combat the unfortunate side-effect of the recent introduction of the smoking ban. She suggested that these were particularly required outside the railway station, bus shelters and High Street shops.

The Forum noted that, in recycling as much of the litter it collected as possible, the Group received funds from recycled cans, but were limited by a lack of space to store the cans.

Ms Allen offered the Group's help to the Council to review the location and suitability of bins in the town.

During the debate, it was suggested that the Forum participate in an awareness raising open-day for Councillors to help collect litter with the Group.

At the conclusion of her presentation, the Chairman and Councillor Pines (in his capacity as the Mayor of Winchester) thanked the group for their excellent work in helping to keep Winchester free of litter. The Mayor also offered to organise a seminar of the relevant parties to consider ways in which the Council could work closer with, and further assist the work of, the Winchester Litter Pickers.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Winchester Litter Pickers be thanked for their work in the Town area.

2. That the issues regarding publicity (principally for new, younger volunteers and an open-day for Councillors), a review of the location and size of litter bins, cigarette receptacles and storage space for cans, be further considered at a seminar to be organised by the Mayor.

3. **FAIRTRADE IN WINCHESTER – PRESENTATION FROM MR ROBERT HUTCHISON**
(Oral Report)

The Forum welcomed to the meeting Mr Hutchison from the Winchester City Fairtrade Network. In summary, he explained that there were approximately 3,000 different Fairtrade products currently on sale in the UK. There were approximately 200 Fairtrade Towns across the country and the Network was poised to submit Winchester's application in the next few weeks, as the Town was very close to satisfying all the qualifying criteria.

He explained that the Network hoped to form a close working relationship with the City Council and with other organisations through the Winchester District Strategic Partnership. The Network would be applying for funding from the Forum to help produce a Winchester Fairtrade Directory and asking for its assistance to launch Winchester as a Fairtrade City.

The Directory was likely to be an eight-page A5 brochure, designed to widen understanding of fair trade issues and to promote the sales of fair trade products in Winchester. The proposed budget was likely to be £500 - £1,000 to design and print 1-2,000 copies. These would be freely available through universities, schools, colleges, libraries, churches, voluntary organisations, the Tourist Information Centre and retail outlets. It was planned that the leaflet should also be available from the Winchester District Strategic Partnership's website.

The launch of Winchester as a Fairtrade City was hoped to be a both a cultural and educational event, with the possibility of one or more guest speakers from Latin America or Africa, which benefited from Fairtrade. Mr Hutchison explained that foreign guest speakers often visited the UK as part of the national promotion of Fairtrade and, therefore, the travel cost was only likely to be from London to Winchester. Members further discussed the possibility of attracting sponsorship of the event from suppliers.

In response to questions, Mr Hutchison explained the criteria for Fairtrade products included the following elements:

- a fair and stable price for their products (above the world market price, to cushion against fluctuations in commodity prices);
- an additional premium to the community (part of which helped fund education programmes);
- a safe and responsible production (which encompassed audits of health and safety and employment conditions);
- built long term relationships between consumers and producers.

At the conclusion of the debate, the Chairman thanked Mr Hutchison for his presentation and advised him of the application process for funding from the Town Account.

RESOLVED:

That the Report be noted.

4. **WINCHESTER FIRE STATION – RELOCATION PROPOSALS - PRESENTATION FROM MR KEVIN BUTCHER (ASSISTANT CHIEF OFFICER)**
(Oral Report)

The Forum welcomed to the meeting Mr Butcher (Assistant Chief Officer, Winchester Fire Station). In summary, he explained that the Fire and Rescue Service was under a statutory duty to prepare a plan that outlined how it intended to consistently improve its service. Currently, a draft plan was undergoing a 12 week period of public consultation. Subject to this public consultation, the plan was scheduled to be finalised by the Fire Authority in February 2008.

The draft plan included proposals to relocate the North Walls Fire Station to the existing workshop site in Winnall. If approved, it was anticipated that this work would commence in 2009/10.

Mr Butcher explained that the North Walls site was purpose built in 1937. However, the station had recently altered its duty system, which meant that it was permanently staffed on a 24-hour basis. This had improved response performance by 14% and increased capacity to undertake other duties, such as home fire safety and engaging with the community and young people. However, the confines of the North Walls site meant that there was insufficient space to further improve this expanding service.

The proposed relocation to Winnall not only offered the required additional space, but better links to the surrounding major road networks, which was important to respond quickly to road traffic accidents and was not restricted by the North Walls one-way system.

As a related issue, the change in the duty system meant that it was no longer vital for crews to live very close to the station and, therefore, the Fire and Rescue Service was considering releasing its accommodation in Lower Brook Street. Mr Butcher added that the new station would still require some retained duty firefighters and that it was likely that some of these would be able to transfer from North Walls, whilst others would be recruited within Winnall.

In response to questions, Mr Butcher discussed the stations' current workload and the Forum noted that it responded to some 6,000 fire alarms, of which 90% were false, 9% were very minor and only 1% required a full scale response. The station had therefore been active in encouraging a reduction in the number of false fire alarms that automatically called Fire and Rescue Service, and its success in this had enabled more time to be spent on other work.

At the conclusion of debate, the Chairman thanked Mr Butcher for his presentation and the work of the Fire and Rescue Service in the Town area.

RESOLVED:

That the Report be noted.

5. **THE EVENING ECONOMY FRAMEWORK CONSULTATION**
[\(Report WTF101 refers\)](#)

The Corporate Director (Operations) explained that one of the targets in the Economic Action Plan was to produce a framework for the evening economy in Winchester town centre. He explained that consultation on the draft document was now underway and that this was accessible via the Council's website

During discussion, the City Centre Manager explained that whilst the largest growth in the retail sector could be attributed to the relaxation of Sunday trading hours, there was an opportunity for businesses to remain open later in the evening. He cited the success of businesses located around The Square as an example, which was a positive outcome which could be equally experienced in Parchment Street.

Members added the importance of maximising use of the Council's own buildings in creating a vibrant evening economy. They suggested that the Guildhall host live music events for young people and that the Courtyard Café reintroduce jazz evenings and performers. Other Members commented on the potential for businesses to utilise the area outside the Casson Building in St Georges Street.

RESOLVED:

That the Report be noted.

6. **UPDATE ON BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**
[\(Report WTF100 refers\)](#)

The City Centre Manager introduced the Report which explained that Winchester town centre's businesses had voted to become the UK's 51st Business Improvement District. This would ensure a five year programme of improvements to the commercial trading and built environment and that many of these projects would involve future partnership working with the Forum.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Report be noted.
2. That the Forum agrees that their contribution to the BID had been spent appropriately.

7. **WINCHESTER TOWN ACCOUNT 2008/09 BUDGET PREPARATION**
[\(Report WTF99 refers\)](#)

The Head of Finance explained that the Report set out the draft financial strategy for the Town Account. This had been developed by the Forum's Informal Budget Group and would be used as the basis to draw up next year's budget.

Following discussion of a Member's suggestion, the Forum agreed to retain the reserve at approximately 10% of the total annual net expenditure, as set out in the draft strategy. Members considered that this acted as a safeguard against variances in expenditure and income throughout the year which were often difficult to accurately predict.

Members noted the probable future calls on the Town Account Budget (such as the replacement of the Christmas Lights and engineering works at North Walls Recreation Park) and discussed the scope for increasing fees as much as possible, without damaging availability of services to the public.

At the conclusion of debate, it was agreed that any other detailed proposals from Members should be fed into the Informal Budget Group for consideration, before it reports back to the Forum.

RESOLVED:

That the Report be noted and Members forward any further comments to the Winchester Town Forum Informal Budget Group for its consideration.

8. **2007/08 WORK PROGRAMME**
[\(Report WTF98 refers\)](#)

In considering its future work programme, the Forum noted the October Forward Plan and the latest Scrutiny Work Programme.

In addition to this, Members noted a number of minor changes to the programme were necessary and that these would be circulated after the meeting for Members' information.

RESOLVED:

That the Report be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 8.50pm

Chairman