

## **WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM**

**26 January 2011**

**Attendance:**

**Councillors:**

Maynard (Chairman) (P)

Berry (P)

Collin (P)

Fall (P)

Hicks (P)

Higgins (P)

Hiscock (P)

Hutchison (P)

Love (P)

Mather (P)

Mitchell (P)

Nelmes (P)

Pearce (P)

Prowse (P)

Sanders (P)

Tait (P)

Thompson (P)

Witt (P)

**Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:**

Councillor Bell (Portfolio Holder for Environment)

**Others in attendance who did not address the meeting:**

Councillor Learney (Leader of Council)

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1. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 November 2010, be approved and adopted.

2. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

During public participation, Ms Vining addressed the Forum. In summary, she expressed her concern that the majority of the town's residents were largely unaware of the Forum's work and the issues it discussed. As a quasi-Town Council, she suggested that the Forum should improve its communications with residents, to engage a broader spectrum of society and therefore make better informed decisions.

In response, the Chairman thanked Ms Vining for her comments and the Forum agreed that a report should be presented to its next meeting, addressing the concerns she raised and suggesting ways in which the Forum could better engage with town residents.

Messers Scott, Rendall and Wallace also all addressed the Forum on the Residents' Parking Scheme and their comments are set out below under the relevant item.

**RESOLVED:**

That the next meeting of the Forum receive a report to consider ways in which the Forum could improve communication with residents.

3. **WINCHESTER RESIDENTS' PARKING SCHEME REVIEW**  
[\(WTF154 refers\)](#)

Councillors Thompson and Hiscock declared personal (but not prejudicial) interests in respect of this item as they were both members of Cabinet that had decided the basis of the consultation of the Residents' Parking Scheme Review (CAB2083 TP refers). Both Councillors spoke and voted thereon.

The Head of Access and Infrastructure explained that the Review had been triggered by concerns from residents and Councillors about the lack of parking capacity for residents within the inner zones, and to explore the issue of alleged abuse of the current visitors' parking permits. Report CAB2083 (TP) had been agreed by the Cabinet (Traffic and Parking) Committee and the Review was currently out for public consultation. The Council had so far received 1,000 responses and these would be considered and fed into any recommendations to amend the Scheme.

Mr Scott spoke as a resident of Stanmore and welcomed the opportunity that the Review had brought to include areas of Stanmore within the Residents' Parking Scheme. He underlined that parking had become a particularly contentious issue for many Stanmore residents and highlighted the following concerns:

- Increased parking on Olivers Battery Road North, following the closure of the Stanmore Hotel car park;
- Parking associated with the school run;
- Parking associated with Houses in Multiple Occupation;
- Student parking (which the proposed Parking Light Scheme might not combat, as many students may wish to park for only an hour. Mr Scott also compared the full parking schemes that controlled the roads around Peter Symonds College and argued that a similar scheme was required around the University, as more university students were likely to drive);
- Parking on grass verges and areas of open space,
- That, if the Review was not driven by cost-savings exercise, this should be made clear to local residents.

Mr Randell (also a Stanmore resident) underlined Mr Scott's concerns above and added:

- that Stanmore required a full residents' parking scheme, operational between 8am and 4pm to deter student and school run parking;
- that the proposed replacement of visitors' permits with scratch cards would be unfair to carers visiting residents within the parking controlled zones;
- that Lower Stanmore should be considered as a separate parking zone.

Mr Wallace (a resident of Hatherley Road) addressed the Forum and, in summary, spoke against the proposed replacement of visitors' permits with scratch cards. He considered that the scratch card scheme offered less flexibility and would therefore have a detrimental affect on house prices. In addition, it was likely to cost residents who received a reasonable number of visitors through the year more money and would introduce a number of practical problems that were only likely to irritate residents (for example, overnight visitors having to place a new scratch card in their cars by early morning).

He suggested that, if the visitors' permits were being replaced to combat abuses of the system, the Council should consider removing residents' current ability to buy a second visitor permit. Mr Wallace argued that it was this second permit that some residents might be tempted to sell (which was an abuse of the system), rather than the first which was a genuine benefit to all residents.

In response, the Head of Access and Infrastructure explained that public consultation on the possible extension of the Residents' Parking Scheme to Stanmore would start after April 2011.

Councillor Bell added that any extension of the scheme to Stanmore would be designed to deal with the parking problems identified by the residents (including the concerns raised above) and that this could include different approaches for different areas if appropriate. The Forum noted that none of the changes had been proposed to increase income for the Council.

During debate, the Forum was particularly concerned about how the removal of visitor permits could affect carers. Although the present scheme of providing specific carer permits would be continued, it was noted that this was only available to registered carer agencies. Therefore, relatives or friends that cared for residents (of any age) within the zoned areas were likely to be adversely affected by the proposed change. Additional concerns were raised that the changes could increase the social isolation suffered by some elderly residents, as the increased costs could deter the number visitors they receive.

The Forum also commented on:

- the possibility of limiting the number of permits to Houses in Multiple Occupation;

- concerns about the cost to residents of any new parking scheme in Stanmore;
- that, if Sunday parking charges were introduced, this would require the continuation of residents' parking restrictions to Sundays in the inner zones at the same time as the introduction of charges;
- the need to include residents of Olivers Battery Road North in the consultation;
- that many residents had expressed their disapproval of replacing the visitors' permits with scratch cards;
- that the scratch card scheme could include so many exceptions and exemptions, that the scheme would be almost unworkable;
- that the scratch card scheme would penalise residents (often elderly residents) who did not own a car, but had a visitors permit for friends, relatives and carers.

In response to Members' concerns regarding the purpose of the removal of visitors' permits, the Head of Access and Infrastructure stated that the number of abuses of the current scheme was unknown and largely anecdotal. However, he explained that there had been specific reported incidences of people attempting to buy and sell permits and, whilst the system remained flexible, the potential for such abuse would remain. He clarified that the scratch cards were marked with the resident's address, zone and permit number.

Several Members had voiced concerns regarding the removal of visitors' permits and replacing these with scratch cards. The Head of Access and Infrastructure acknowledged that it would reduce flexibility for some residents and that this issue would be taken into account, as part of the Review along with the consultation responses.

He added that the proposal currently being consulted upon to allow all residents in inner zones (rather than just those living on the boundaries of zones) to nominate a second zone in which they could park, had been proposed to help inner zone residents make the best use of available parking capacity. It was anticipated that most residents would nominate an outer zone area as these, on average, had more spare capacity than the inner zones.

At the conclusion of debate, Councillor Bell thanked the Forum and the public that spoke and explained that the comments raised (in particular, the possibility of removing the second visitors permit and the issue of carers' parking) would be considered as part of the Review. The results of which, along with any proposed changes, would be brought back to a future meeting of the Forum 23 March 2011 and would be determined by the Cabinet (Traffic and Parking) Committee.

#### RESOLVED:

1. That the consultation on the Winchester Town Residents' Parking Scheme be noted.

**2. That Cabinet (Traffic and Parking) Committee take into account the concerns raised above during its consideration of the Review.**

**4. ACCESS PLAN AND AIR QUALITY PLAN – UPDATE**  
(Oral Report)

The Head of Access and Infrastructure circulated at the meeting a paper (available electronically [here](#)), which set out background information on the Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) and the Winchester Access Plan.

This had not been notified for inclusion within the statutory deadline. The Chairman agreed to accept this item onto the agenda, as an item requiring urgent consideration, in order that the matter could be progressed and not delay other related Council business.

The Forum noted that, due to their interdependency, the Access Plan and the AQMP were being considered together, alongside other issues such as the City Council's Travel Plan for staff, the High Quality Environment Change Plan and the Government's Sustainable Transport Fund.

These issues would be considered in detail by a re-constituted Air Quality Management Informal Member/Officer Group, to be appointed by Cabinet. Following a debate, the Forum requested that Cabinet consider appointing Councillors Hutchison and Mitchell onto this Group as representatives of the Forum.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Report be noted.

**2. That, should Cabinet agree to its creation, Cabinet be requested to consider appointing Councillors Hutchison and Mitchell onto the Air Quality Management Informal Member/Officer Group as representatives of the Forum.**

**5. MOVING TO A COMMISSIONING APPROACH FOR NOT FOR PROFIT SECTOR FUNDING**  
([Report WTF153 refers](#))

Councillors Mather and Love declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest as Trustees of the Trinity Centre, which had previously received a grant from the Town Account. However, as there was no detailed discussion on any individual grants, both Councillors spoke and voted thereon.

The Assistant Director (Active Communities) explained that the Report set out Cabinet's new approach, which targeted a reduced budget for grants on those organisations whose aims and objectives closely matched the priorities of the Community Strategy. She tabled an addendum to the Report which set out

which organisations had been invited to make an application for revenue funding.

The Forum noted that these applications would be considered by the Town Account (Grants) Informal Group and that this would make recommendations to the next meeting of the Forum, to be held 23 March 2011.

The Forum also agreed that officers should discuss with the Chairman about its future role in the commissioning process relating to grants, on the principle that the Forum it should retain as much freedom as possible in this process. The results of these discussions would also be reported to the next meeting for consideration.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Town Account Informal Grants Group meets to review applications for grants to not-for-profit organisations in 2011/12, and that decisions be taken at the Town Forum meeting on 23 March 2011.

2. That officers liaise with the Chairman about the future role of the Forum in the commissioning process relating to grants, and that a recommendation be made as to this role to a future meeting of the Forum.

**6. WINCHESTER TOWN ACCOUNT BUDGET 2011/12**  
(Report WTF152 refers)

The Head of Finance introduced the Report and clarified a number of issues. These included that:

- any savings from arising from a new contract for the Recreation Grounds and Open Space Maintenance Budget would be reported to Cabinet on 9 February 2011 and fed into the Town Account's reserves.
- That the projected spending on the Theatre Royal contribution was an indicative figure and did not pre-judge any decision that the Forum might make at its next meeting when considering grants.
- That, through the BID process, it was likely that the Christmas Lights display would be enhanced for 2011/12.
- That the £16,000 expenditure growth for play grounds in Appendix 2 related to the possible conversion of the Sarum Close and Firmstone Road areas for alternative community uses.

During debate, Councillor Mitchell (who was also Chairman of the Allotments Association) updated the Forum on the latest position regarding allotments in the town. In summary, he explained that there was a significant waiting list for many of the sites and that there was scope for a small increase in the charge the Council levied. He also explained that he was investigating whether further allotment sites could be created

A Member proposed an allocation of £1,700 from the 20mph speed limit budget to repair the St Faiths Church Yard perimeter fence. Following a vote, this amendment was not carried.

Several Members also questioned the allocation of funding regarding the proposed play area capital growth options (Appendix 3 refers). Whilst the Forum agreed the total capital growth budget for play areas, it required the possibility of some flexibility from the allocations set out in the Report.

RESOLVED:

**1. That Cabinet be recommended to approve the detailed budget for 2011/12 and the indicative projections for the strategy period as set out in the Report.**

**2. That, whilst agreeing with the total capital growth budget for play areas, there should be the possibility of some flexibility from the allocations set out in the Report.**

7. **WINCHESTER TOWN OPEN SPACE FUND**  
[\(Report WTF149 refers\)](#)

This Report had not been notified for inclusion within the statutory deadline. The Chairman agreed to accept this item onto the agenda, as an item requiring urgent consideration, in order that the matter could be discussed as it had implications for the Town Account Budget (WTF152 refers above).

During debate, the Forum noted that a report setting out changes to the Open Space Fund arising from the new Community Infrastructure Levy would be considered by the Cabinet (Local Development Framework) Committee at its meeting on 23 February 2011.

The Forum also discussed the effect its contribution towards the Winchester Sports Stadium had on the town's Open Space Fund and how this had affected the Forum's ability to support other schemes, such as the Erskine Road play-area. In response, the Head of Landscape and Open Spaces agreed to forward to Members of the Forum a detailed analysis of the Open Space Fund and the schemes on which it had been spent.

RESOLVED:

That the current financial position of the Winchester Play and Sport pots and implications for the Play Area Refurbishment Plan be noted.

8. **PLAYGROUND FIVE YEAR REFURBISHMENT PLAN - UPDATE**  
[\(Report CAB2118 refers\)](#)

This Report had not been notified for inclusion within the statutory deadline. The Chairman agreed to accept this item onto the agenda, as an item

requiring urgent consideration, in order that the matter could be discussed as it had implications for the Town Account Budget (WTF152 refers above).

The Head of Landscape and Open Spaces explained that the Report set out a revised programme of refurbishment, in the light of recent budgetary constraints.

During debate, the Forum agreed that officers should re-examine the possibility of re-patching the surface of the North Wall skate park (given its importance to the town's teenagers).

In response to a Member's concerns, it was explained that the refurbishment plan was to maintain existing play areas to a safe standard; it did not therefore include proposals for possible new play areas such as Erskine Road and North Hill Close.

At the conclusion of debate, the Head of Landscape and Open Spaces agreed to consult with Ward Members when refurbishments works were being undertaken within their wards.

RESOLVED:

1. That the revision of the five year refurbishment and maintenance programme, as set out in the report be agreed.
2. That the proposed conversion of the play area at Sarum Close to amenity open space and Firmstone Road to allotments be approved, subject to the results of consultation with local residents and budget and statutory advertisement.
3. That the possibility of patch resurfacing North Walls Stake Park be considered.
4. **That the release of Open Space Fund monies and proposed revenue budget expenditure for the schemes above, over the next four years be approved, subject to annual review of the programme as part of the business planning process.**

9. **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN**  
[\(Report PS435 refers\)](#)

RESOLVED:

That the Report and Forward Plan (sent 17 January 2011) be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 10.00pm

Chairman