

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM

23 March 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)

1. **MINUTES**

Members agreed a clarification to the last paragraph on page 8 of the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 26 January 2011 (Playground Five Year Refurbishment Plan – Update). It was agreed that Ward Members should be informed of when refurbishment works were being considered and not just undertaken, as the draft minute had indicated.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the above amendment, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 January 2011, be approved and adopted.

2. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mr Hibbert-Hingston introduced to the Forum the Winchester Street Pastors. In summary, he explained that Street Pastors was a response from local churches to the national problems of anti-social behaviour and alcohol related crime. He stated that Street Pastors had been successful in combating these problems in other parts of the country and had also reduced the perceived risk from crime.

He explained that Street Pastors formed an “urban trinity” between themselves, local government and the Police. Following training and Criminal Records Bureau Checks, the initiative sent Christians onto the streets and into pubs and parties to connect and build relationships with those they considered to be the disenfranchised of society. They also aimed to provide practical help through handing out lollies and flip-flops to people struggling with the effects of too much to drink and high heels and, with their permission, offered advice on drug counselling and housing services, etc.

Fourteen churches in Winchester had signed the Ascension Trust licence agreement (the church group that administered the schemes nationally) and 53 volunteers had so far come forward. With so many volunteers, it was anticipated that the Pastors could start patrolling the town centre from 9pm to 3.30am on Saturdays from 18 June 2011, with a view to extending the service to Fridays in the near future.

In response to questions, Mr Hibbert-Hingston explained that the scheme would be funded by the Business Improvement District, the Police and from local churches.

The Chairman thanked Mr Hibbert-Hingston for his presentation and wished the Street Pastors well.

3. **WINCHESTER ROUNDTABLE – THE BONFIRE** (Oral Report)

The Forum welcomed Mr M Russell from The Winchester Roundtable who gave Members a presentation.

In summary, Mr Russell explained that the bonfire had been run by the Roundtable for 53 years and that it had been successful in raising approximately £30,000pa for local charities through sponsorship, sale of fire torches and collection buckets on the night.

However, its recent success had brought with it new challenges for the 18 organisers of the Roundtable. The City Council’s Safety Advisory Group and the Police had underlined to the Roundtable their responsibilities in organising a large scale event, which attracted around 28,000 people. This had led to increased cost (which was the personal burden of the 18 organisers themselves) through additional barriers, lighting and the employment of a crowd management consultant, etc. However, he explained that this work had demonstrated that, subject to a satisfactory result of a bridges survey and the installation of additional, temporary bridges, the event could continue to be held at the current River Park site.

Mr Russell stressed the Roundtable’s particular problem of finding approximately 160 volunteers to help on the night. In response to questions, Mr Russell explained that the Roundtable was looking at attracting volunteers from the charities it helped, along with other possibilities.

At the conclusion of debate, the Forum thanked Mr Russell for his presentation and acknowledged the excellent work of the Roundtable and its vulnerability to the challenges that its success had brought. In underlining the importance of the fireworks display to the town, Members noted the existing officer support and free site hire offered and requested a report to a future meeting on any further measures the City Council could take to assist the Roundtable.

RESOLVED:

That a report be considered at a future meeting on any possible further measures the City Council could take to assist the Roundtable's Bonfire Night.

4. **WINCHESTER RESIDENTS' PARKING SCHEME – RESULTS OF CONSULTATION**
(Oral Report)

The Head of Access and Infrastructure explained that the period of public consultation on the parking scheme had now closed and that the Council had received approximately 1,800 responses. Due to the heightened public interest, officers had assessed the visitor permit issue first and concluded that 66% of the responses were against any change. On this basis, Report CAB2139 had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on 16 March 2011. Cabinet had decided that (in light of the public consultation), on balance, the flexibility of the existing scheme outweighed any advantages of changing it to tackle abuses of the permits.

The Forum noted that the analysis of other aspects of the parking scheme (such as changes to the zones) was currently on-going and that the results would be reported to a future meeting.

During debate, Members recounted their constituents' concerns regarding the proposed changes to the visitor permit scheme. Some Members questioned whether the suggested changes should have been put out for consultation at all, given the concern it had caused in the community and the additional workload and cost it had brought to the Council. In response, Councillor Bell explained that the process had begun before she took on the Portfolio and had been a response to residents' concerns regarding alleged abuses of the system. She added that, arising from the review, the Parking Team had improved its procedures to tackle any future abuses of the visitor parking permits.

RESOLVED:

That the Report be noted and that a future report, setting out the full results of the public consultation, be considered by a future meeting.

5. **PUBLICITY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FORUM**

[\(Report WTF155 refers\)](#)

The Report set out proposals to improve how the Forum engaged with the public, in response to the comments raised by Ms Vining during public participation at the previous meeting.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Ms Vining addressed the Forum. In summary, she welcomed the suggestion of a new town website as set out in the Report and underlined the Council's duty to inform its residents of the work it was undertaking on their behalf. Related to this, she commented on the role played by the Hampshire Chronicle newspaper and Winchester Area Community Action.

During debate, Members agreed that, in terms of community information, areas of the town were currently less well served than most parished areas that produced parish newsletters.

Members discussed and discounted a proposal to produce its own newsletter on the grounds of cost and because the information provided would quickly go out of date.

Whilst the Forum noted that not all residents would be able to easily access a new town website, they agreed that a website could reach, and be of benefit to, a large number of people. In agreeing to investigate the possibility of a new website further, Members recognised that the Forum should also continue to consider other measures to better communicate with the public, as part of an on-going process of evaluation.

RESOLVED:

That the Forum delegates to the Corporate Director (Operations), in consultation with the Chairman, further investigation into;

a) better use of existing community newsletters;

b) a new Town Forum website;

c) and continues to consider other measures to better communicate with the public, as part of an on-going process of evaluation.

6. **WINCHESTER TOWN ACCOUNT COMMUNITY GRANTS REVENUE AND CAPITAL AWARDS 2011/12**

[\(Report WTF156 refers\)](#)

Councillor Collin declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in respect of his involvement as County Councillor who had grant aided Age Concern Winchester, the Carroll Centre, KAYAC, Homestart, Stanmore Combined, Winnall Community Association, Winnall Junior Youth Club and Winnall Rock

School. He also declared a personal and prejudicial interest as a board member of the Carroll Centre and Stanmore Combined. Councillor Collin left the room during the consideration of the item and took no part in the debate or vote thereon.

Councillor Higgins declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest as he was on the advisory board of Trinity Winchester. Councillor Higgins also declared a personal and prejudicial interest as the Treasurer of Winnall Youth Club and left the room during the consideration of that item and took no part in the debate or vote thereon.

Councillor Hiscock declared a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of his strong associations with Trinity Winchester and the Nightshelter and he left the room during the consideration of the item and took no part in the debate or vote thereon.

Councillor Love declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in respect of the application from the Trinity Winchester. Councillor Love spoke and voted thereon.

Councillor Nelmes declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest as an ordinary member of the Winchester Dramatic Society. Councillor Nelmes spoke and voted thereon.

Councillor Mather declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest as a member of the Trinity Winchester Advisory Committee and she spoke and voted thereon.

Councillor Prowse declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in respect to her involvement with Stanmore Combined and a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of the Carroll Centre as a trustee and she left the room during the consideration of the item and took no part in the debate or vote thereon.

Councillor Thompson declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in respect of her involvement with Stanmore Combined. Councillor Thompson spoke and voted thereon.

The Corporate Director (Operations) explained that the recommendations for grant awards from the Town Forum had been made by the Town Account (Grants) Informal Group in the normal way, based on the information provided about the funding through the commissioning process. He explained that after the Town Account (Grants) Informal Group had met, full Council had amended the General Fund contribution to individual organisations for 2011/12. Although the Forum might wish to reconvene the Informal Group or reconsider the recommendations, the Corporate Director (Operations) suggested that the amounts involved were not such that this would be necessary, unless the Forum had very specific concerns. An update report would be provided to a future meeting which would also cover the opportunities for the use of the remaining budget available for grants in the Town Account.

In response to a comment, it was agreed that future reports should include comparative information of grants awarded in previous years.

Councillors who had served on the Informal Group highlighted an error in the Report regarding the grants to Age Concern Winchester and the Nightshelter as corrected and agreed below.

RESOLVED:

1 That revenue grant awards from the Town Forum Grants Budget be approved as follows:

- (i) Winchester and District CAB £ 9,980
- (ii) Hat Fair £3,468
- (iii) Trinity Winchester £3,850
- (iv) Theatre Royal £20,000
- (v) Age Concern Winchester £340
- (vi) Carroll Centre £520
- (vii) Hampshire and IOW Youth Options (KAYAC) £250
- (viii) Homestart Winchester £560
- (ix) Stanmore Combined £60
- (x) Young Carers £250
- (xi) Nightshelter £400
- (xii) Winchester Live at Home £560
- (xiii) Winnall Community Association £500
- (xiv) Winnall Junior Youth Club £500
- (xv) Winnall Rock School £500

(Winchester Detached Youth Project was advised to resubmit an application after discussion with officers from the commissioning team)

2 That the following capital grant be approved:

- (i) Winchester Dramatic Society £10,000

7. **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN**
[\(Report PS440 refers\)](#)

The Forum noted the benefits of the single issue public meetings it had held in the past. The Chairman asked that suggestions for future meetings be forwarded to Democratic Services and during debate, Members suggested meetings on Silver Hill, the arts and the future of the hospital.

RESOLVED:

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

8. **VOTE OF THANKS**

As this was the last meeting of the Forum in the current Municipal Year, the Chairman thanked Members and officers who had contributed to the Forum's work and the Chairman's thanks were reciprocated accordingly by all those present.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 8.30pm

Chairman