



AGENDA AND JOINING INSTRUCTIONS

Thursday 19 November 2020 at 6.00 pm
Virtual Meeting - Online via Zoom

Agenda

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- 1 **Apologies for Absence**
- 2 **Voting Entitlement for Member Organisations and Councillors** (Pages 5 - 6)
- 3 **Minutes of the 2019 AGM** (Pages 7 - 14)
The minutes of the 2019 AGM were noted at the meeting on 30 January 2020 and are attached here for formal approval.
- 4 **Chairman's Annual Report**
- 5 **Election of Officers** (Pages 15 - 18)

ORDINARY MEETING

- 6 **Declarations of Substitute Members**
- 7 **Membership Changes**
 - a) Changers to Membership
 - b) New Membership Applications
- 8 **Minutes of the meeting dated 17 September 2020** (Pages 19 - 28)
 - a) Approval of the minutes as a correct record
 - b) Matters Arising from the minutes
- 9 **Update from the Borough Council** (Pages 29 - 30)
 - Covid-19 Update
 - Cultural Funding and implications of the second lockdown
 - Emergency traffic schemes
- 10 **Town Centre Christmas Preparations**
- 11 **Community Ladders**
- 12 **Citizen Advice and Volunteers** (Pages 31 - 32)
- 13 **Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom**

- 14 Updates from Local Residents' Groups**
- 15 Reports from the Town Forum Working Groups** (Pages 33 - 34)
 - a) Strategic Planning Working Group
 - b) Transport Strategy Working Group
 - c) Culture, Leisure and Tourism Working Group
 - d) Wellbeing Working Group
 - e) Finance and Other Issues Working Group
 - f) Water in the Wells Working Group
- 16 Any Other Business**
- 17 Future Meetings**
 - 28 January 2021
 - 18 March 2021



Joining instructions – by computer

Click on the following to join the meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/95144587785?pwd=dnFzL0w0SWxmWCtCS1EyQ0F0V2Y1QT09>

Meeting ID: **951 4458 7785** Password: **843276**

(The Meeting code and password are embedded in the above web address. So if using the link you will not have to enter them separately.)

During the 'join in' process please note:

1. Agree to use your computer video
2. Agree to use your computer audio
3. Please ensure your 'registered name' is your own full name and not, for instance, "My iPad" or other unidentifiable object or email address. The name can be altered either before or immediately on entry to the Zoom meeting. People who cannot be identified will be asked to confirm their name.
4. If you have a problem, please enter the system and 'message' on the system direct to Mark O'Callaghan who will be running the system on behalf of the Town Forum.
5. On entry you will automatically be put into a 'waiting room'. If its busy there may be a delay in admitting you but be assured the meeting will not start until everybody waiting has been admitted.

Joining instructions – by telephone

Should you wish to join the meeting by telephone only, please dial one of the following numbers and add the meeting ID and passcode when requested by the system:

0208 080 6591 United Kingdom

0208 080 6592 United Kingdom

Meeting ID: **951 4458 7785** Password: **843276**

Important Information on joining

1. The meeting will be recorded and may be made available online.
2. Please mute your microphone when not speaking to reduce background noise.
3. The organisers may mute or unmute all or individual microphones if necessary, but we will try to avoid this.
4. If you wish to speak during the meeting please either type 's' in the chat window or raise your hand using the 'reactions' button. The Chairman will invite you to speak to avoid multiple people trying to speak at once. Please unmute your own microphone when invited to speak by the Chairman and mute again afterwards.
5. The meeting will be open early, from 5.30pm, for those who are not used to Zoom so that you can become familiar with the platform.

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TOWN FORUM AGM 2020

VOTING ENTITLEMENT FOR MEMBER ORGANISATIONS AND COUNCILLORS

Member Organisations who have attended at least 50% of possible meetings:

Beulah Road Residents' Association
Boyne Park Residents' Association*
Calverley Park Crescent Association
Calverley Park Residents' Association
Civic Society of Royal Tunbridge Wells
Culverden Residents' Association
Dudley Road Residents' Association*
Friends of Grosvenor and Hilbert Park
Friends of the Commons
Friends of the Grove
Friends of Tunbridge Wells Cemetery
Friends of Tunbridge Wells Museum, Library and Art Gallery*
Friends of Woodbury Park Cemetery*
Grantley Court Residents' Association*
Grove Hill House Residents' Association
Hawkenbury Village Association*
Inner London Road Residents' Association
Molyneux Park Road Residents' Association*
Nevill Court Roads Committee
Nourish Community Foodbank*
Poona Road Residents' Association*
Residents First
Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom
Soroptimist International of Tunbridge Wells and District*

St John's Road Residents' Association

Telephone House Neighbours' Association*

The Avenues Residents' Association

The Forum*

Tunbridge Wells Access Group

Tunbridge Wells Anti-Aircraft Noise Group

Tunbridge Wells Bicycle User Group*

Tunbridge Wells Friends of the Earth

Tunbridge Wells Older Peoples Forum

Tunbridge Wells Puppetry Festival

Tunbridge Wells Twinning & Friendship Association*

Warwick Park Residents' Association

(* = 100% of 4 meetings)

(36 out of 53)

Councillor Members who have attended at least 50% of possible meetings

Councillor Cobbold

Councillor Lidstone

Councillor Morton

Councillor Pope

Councillor Pound

Councillor Rutland

Councillor Scott

Councillor Woodward

(8 out of 18)

Member Organisations and Councillor Members not listed above have not met the attendance requirement set out in the Constitution and will not be unable to vote at the AGM.

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 27 November 2019 held at Town Hall, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent starting at 6.30pm

Members: Sally Balcon (Friends of the Commons), Tim Ball (Calverley Park Crescent Association), Jenina Bas-Pendry (Dudley Road Residents' Association), Adrian Berendt (Tunbridge Wells Bicycle User Group), Lorna Blackmore (Grantley Court Residents' Association), Mark Booker (Culverden Residents' Association), Diana Butler (Banner Farm Residents' Association), Robert Chris (Grove Hill House Residents' Association), John Cunningham (Warwick Park Residents' Association and Civic Society of Royal Tunbridge Wells), Marieke de Jonge (Tunbridge Wells Friends of the Earth), Andy England (Tunbridge Wells Access Group), Margaret Ginman (Friends of Woodbury Park Cemetery), Carolyn Gray (The Forum), Dorothea Holman (Boyne Park Residents' Association), Michael Holman (Tunbridge Wells Twinning and Friendship Association), Delphine Houlton (Hawkenbury Village Association), Adrian Johnson (Kingswood Residents' Association), Marianne MacDonald (Nourish Community Foodbank), Katharina Mahler-Bech (Telephone House Neighbours' Association), Paul Mason (Tunbridge Wells Bicycle User Group), Angela McPherson (Soroptimist International of Tunbridge Wells and District), Chris Morris (Beulah Road Residents' Association), Paul Sinclair (Clarence Road Users' Association), Don Sloan (Molyneux Park Gardens Residents' Association), Anne Stobo (Friends of the Tunbridge Wells Museum, Library and Art Gallery), Tim Tempest (The Avenues Residents' Association), Alastair Tod (Poona Road Residents' Association and Tunbridge Wells Puppetry Festival), David Wakefield (Tunbridge Wells Twinning and Friendship Association), Denise Watts (Tunbridge Wells Over Fifties Forum), Philip Whitbourn (Beulah Road Residents' Association) and Carol Wilson (Inner London Road Residents' Association)

Borough Councillors: Councillors Cobbold (Broadwater ward), Lidstone (St. John's ward), Morton (St. John's ward), Pound (Sherwood ward), Scott (Culverden ward) and Woodward (Broadwater ward)

Others in Attendance: Stephen Baughen (Head of Planning, TWBC), Sue Pound, Paul Taylor (Director of Change and Communities, TWBC), Mark O'Callaghan (Scrutiny and Engagement Officer, TWBC and Secretary to the Town Forum)

APOLOGIES

- 1 Apologies were received from Dave Barnett (Friends of Grosvenor and Hilbert Parks), John de Lucy (Friends of Tunbridge Wells Cemetery) and Jane Fenwick (Calverley Park Residents' Association).

VOTING ENTITLEMENT FOR MEMBER ORGANISATIONS AND COUNCILLORS

- 2 The Secretary confirmed that the voting entitlement of those who had achieved the required level of attendance was as set out in the agenda.

MINUTES OF THE 2018 AGM

- 3 The Secretary noted that the minutes had been agreed in principal at the meeting in January 2019 but were submitted here for formal approval.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the AGM held on 22 November 2018 be approved.

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT

- 4 The Chairman gave his report, a copy of which is appended to these minutes.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- 5 The Secretary introduced the report set out in the agenda. The following nominations had been received:
- Adrian Berendt – Chairman
 - Alastair Tod – Deputy Chairman
 - Don Sloan – Deputy Chairman

The Vice Chairman took the chair for the election of the Chairman and called for a proposer and seconder for the nominee. This being Adrian Berendt's fourth term as Chairman the consent of the meeting would be required.

Mark Booker proposed, and David Wakefield seconded, that Adrian Berendt be elected Chairman. The vote was carried.

The Chairman resumed the chair for the election of the Deputy Chairmen and called for proposers and seconds for the nominees. This being Alastair Tod's third term as Deputy Chairman the consent of the meeting would be required. This would be Don Sloan's first term.

Adrian Berendt proposed, and John Cunningham seconded, that Alastair Tod be elected Deputy Chairman. The vote was carried.

David Wakefield proposed, and Katherina Mahler-Bech seconded, that Don Sloan be elected Deputy Chairman. The vote was carried.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That Adrian Berendt be elected Chairman for 2019/20 until the date of the AGM 2020;
- 2) That Alastair Tod be elected Deputy Chairman for 2019/20 until the date of the AGM 2020; and
- 3) That Don Sloan be elected Deputy Chairman for 2019/20 until the date of the AGM 2020.

NOTE: The meeting concluded at 6.55pm.



The voice of the residents of Royal Tunbridge Wells

Town Forum AGM – Chair’s report 27th November 2019

How time flies. In thinking about what I should say tonight, for my 3rd annual report – remember that chairs are only supposed to be appointed for 2 years – so much seems to have happened.

I am about to make a prediction about next year, so I won’t be accused of 2020 hindsight (the sharper witted of you will note the clever pun). This is not to make political point, but to illustrate a point I made last year about the parallels between Brexit and Calverley Square. Whatever happens on 12th December, Brexit will not be done on 31st January. Just as that’s the easy bit in settling our relationship with Europe, having made a firm decision about what NOT to do, TWBC councillors now they (and we) need to come up with a solution of what IS going to happen. I am happy to say that there is progress on that front – more later – but there’s still a huge amount of work needed.

Last year I also said how much I regretted the tone of the debate about Calverley Square and I spoke about how discussion within the Town Forum had been much more measured – expressing support for the objectives and ambition but raising concerns about specifics. As a result of that stance, I was pleased to lead a non-political team of volunteers to make suggestions about a way forward. We submitted that report to the Borough Council at the end of the summer. I have reason to believe that its suggestions were welcomed as, following the rejection of the Calverley Square plan, I was invited to attend a series of cross-party meetings to discuss possible alternatives. The title belies the style of the work going on, because none of the parties are particularly cross. In fact, there is a remarkable degree of agreement. So much so, that I am sometimes reminded of the last sentence from *Animal Farm*.

The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which.

I am not suggesting that some of the councillors are the said animals, just that there seems to be unanimity amongst former foes.

As I have said on many occasions, it is the role of the Town Forum to raise concerns, to ask questions and to make suggestions. To be a critical friend to our elected representatives. It is up to Borough and County Councillors as elected representatives to decide whether to take notice.

We really appreciate the time that Borough Councillors give to spend yet another evening in the Town Hall, but I’d rather hoped for better attendance. Those that do come always tell

Formed in 2005, the Town Forum is the voice of the 50,000 residents of Royal Tunbridge Wells on issues of common interest

Town Forum Management Group

Adrian Berendt (Chair); Alex Green (Deputy Chair); Alastair Tod (Deputy Chair); David Wakefield (Finance); Jane Fenwick (Transport); Linda Lewis (Culture, Leisure & Tourism); Mark Booker (Strategic Planning); Michael Holman (Water in the Wells)

me how useful the meetings are – often more so that Full Council meetings! I emphasise that local County Councillors are welcome, whether as members or as observers.

	Attendances	Total possible	Rate			
Broadwater	5	12	42%			
Culverden	5	18	28%	(all one councillor)		
Pantiles & St Mark's	4	18	22%	(3 by one councillor, now left)		
Park	4	18	22%	(3 by one councillor)		
Sherwood	3	18	17%	(2 by one (new) councillor)		
St James's	1	12	8%			
St John's	7	18	39%			
	29	114	25%			

The Town Forum now has 51 member organisations, 44 of whom attended at least one meeting in the year and 9 attended all meetings. We had an attendance rate of 70% this year, which is remarkable. My thanks to you all, not just for attending, but for all your positive contributions. We welcomed 4 new members in the year

Dudley Road Residents' Association

Molyneux Park Road Residents' Association

Tunbridge Wells Friends of the Earth

Tunbridge Wells Dementia Friendly Community

and didn't lose any, although there are 4 or 5 about whose existence I am uncertain.

I am also aware of another couple of organisations in the pipeline. But we need more, particularly in the less well-represented parts of town. I had planned to hold at least one of meetings outside of the Town Hall in 2019. We need to go that in 2020.

The effort and expertise contributed by so many in the Town Forum is fantastic. Not just the working group chairs, although that is immense, but the members who voluntarily put in hours and hours of unpaid, but I hope not unrewarded, effort. These groups are where the work of the TF really happens, but we need more volunteers.

Linda Lewis is stepping down from leadership of our culture leisure and tourism working group. Someone wanted that renamed Tourism, Leisure and Culture, or TLC as it should more properly be. I don't know how Linda found time to be chair while masterminding this year's brilliant puppetry festival. Work has continued, of course on the Calverley Square project as well as the Emilia Scott cultural centre and we are indebted to both Linda and to Alex Green for their professional expertise, as well as all the other members of the group.

A lot of the controversy over Calverley Square has been about money and, with new plans being considered, I know that David Wakefield's Finance Working Group will continue to have its work cut out to scrutinise the Borough's income and spending plans over the coming 12 months.

I spoke last year about whether the efforts of Mark Booker and his Strategic Planning Group were making a difference to the shape of the Local Plan, which provide the bulk of the work this year. Whether or not it was due to the Town Forum's contribution, a lot of our recommendations do seem to have found their way into the published Plan. If you have read the Town Forum's input, you will appreciate the monumental scale of Mark's effort.

Not only has he managed to paint a big picture of the messages that we wanted to get across, he has gone into an inordinate amount of detail. I hope that other members of the management group won't mind me 'marking' him out for a special mention this year.

In the previous year (2017-18) Mark and his group were involved with the Public Realm phase 2 and I am pleased that we will talk about that a bit later tonight. Maybe I could remind you of my words last year.

"Our response to the Public Realm phase 2 has been less well-received. The original designs envisaged a new square in the middle of the town, something of which we could all be proud. As far as I can see, the latest design is little more than a slight narrowing of the road and a better view of the War Memorial. Both are welcome, but, in my views, don't justify the cost."

Looking at it today, I'm not sure that I would want to change much of that. It is a definite improvement, but I still feel it is an opportunity missed to have done something more dramatic.

At last year's TF AGM, Alastair Tod indicated his wish to stand down. I am delighted that he didn't really mean it. We co-opted him back on the management group anyway and he is standing this year as Deputy Chair again. Thank you so much for all your work in the working groups Alastair and your personal help to me.

It is an accolade to Michael Holman's Water in the Wells Group that he is the subject of Mary Harris's column in this week's Courier. Well done Michael. The theme of water seems to be a sine qua non in new developments and I am confident that progress is being made for more public art at Fiveways.

I'm also delighted that we have recruited Marianna MacDonald to lead the health and wellbeing group. The work that they and the Sorooptimists did on auditing benches in the town was outstanding and really useful. Those amongst us who are readily able to walk (or cycle) everywhere underestimate the value of benches for those that need a breather every so often. The difference between someone being able to walk home or catch a bus / cab might well be a bench on Grosvenor Hill...one that has been lost over time. I look forward to seeing more benches around town

The list of topics discussed by Jane Fenwick and her Transport Working Group continues to lengthen. As well as attending and speaking at most JTB meetings, the working group has responded to numerous consultations, most notably and recently, the transport parts of the Local Plan. Again, it is a testament to Jane's input, that the mentions of transport in the Local Plan are so positive.

The groups have also contributed to the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, due to be submitted by the Brough Council this week. We performed an audit of the walking routes into town. The results confirmed what we probably already knew. Walking into the centre of Tunbridge Wells is a challenge – broken bricks, lack of road crossings, high volumes of fast traffic. No wonder that 12 pedestrians have been knocked over in the past 12 months in our town.

I remind you of the TfL report on the positive impact walking and cycling and public realm improvements which can increase sales on the High Street by 30%. Such interventions led to a fall vacancy rates of 17% and a rise in retail rental values by 7.5%. Over a month, people who walk to the high street spend 40% more. If anyone is in any doubt, a survey from a London Borough reported that 63% of businesses thought that their customers arrived by car, against just 20% of customers said actually did so.

What else? RTW in Bloom – yet more success . Thanks to Katharina in particular – we’ll hear the details of all the Gold and Silver medals from you later.

Two highlights for me from the same meeting. Dr Stephen Peckham on the shocking state of air in Kent - much worse than we imagined, followed by students from schools talking about climate change. They were so eloquent, and we can learn a lot from them. So much so that I look forward to setting up a Youth Town Forum next year.

What else for Next year? More work on the Local Plan, particularly the transport aspects; and more on the alternative to Calverley Square. I am particularly pleased to announce that the cabinet has agreed to make one of its members – David Scott – responsible for liaison with the Town Forum. This puts us on a more equal footing with parish councils, about which I am delighted.

The Town Forum remains as relevant as ever. As I said last year, long may it continue to be a channel for unbiased information, a fake news free zone. But we need more help. We need more people to join the Forum and to volunteer time on the working groups.

Finally, an apology and a few thanks.

If I have forgotten to mention something, or someone, I’m really sorry. There are simply too many great things to talk about and I started writing this speech at about 4pm today!

Special thanks to the members of the management group, who put up with my whims and my lack of organisation and without whom the Town Forum would simply not function.

Secondly, Katharina Mahler-Bech, who maintains our website and social media accounts. We have a twitter account and there are frequent posts about relevant information. As of 2 hours ago, we were at 769 followers, a 20% increase on last year. Well done Katharina. The hashtag is simple... it’s @townforum.

Thank you to William Benson and his team for their continued support of the Town Forum. The level of engagement with the Town Forum from the Borough Council has been excellent this year and a positive improvement on previous years. I hope and believe that the TF’s input has been useful. There has been quite a lot of change within Democratic services, but I’m delighted that Mark O’Callaghan has [been] volunteered to help the Town Forum. It’s only been a couple of months, Mark, but you are already making a positive difference. Long may it continue.

My biggest thanks go, of course, to my wife, Louise and to our family, for their forbearance and support. The standard morning conversation in our house often starts with Louise asking me what I am doing today, to which the correct response should be doing some paid work. The actual answer is, well, I’ve got to go down to the town hall for a meeting about...

As I said last year, I am happy to continue as chair for a further year, if you want, but I don't think it right that I repeat that sentence next year. I can't stress how enjoyable the role is. There is almost no responsibility and plenty of opportunity to stick your nose into other people's business, asked or unasked. Please, please, please will someone volunteer for next year.

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TOWN FORUM AGM 2020 ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Introduction

1. The Town Forum is administered by a Management Committee of officers elected at the AGM and the leaders of the working groups.
2. The officers are:
 - the Chair, who must be a named representative of a member organisation; and
 - two Deputy Chairs, at least one of whom must be a named representative from a member organisation.

Nominations submitted

3. At the specified deadline for the submission of nominations, the following nominations had been submitted:

Chair

Adrian Berendt (fifth term)

Deputy Chair

Don Sloan (second term)

4. Statements from each of the candidates are set out at the end of this report.
5. The Town Forum's Constitution states: "The Chair and both Deputy Chairs shall be elected annually and will only be eligible to serve a maximum of two terms in any one office unless a majority of eligible voting Forum members agree to allow a further term of office." Thus, further terms of office is permissible, subject to the agreement of the majority of persons voting at the AGM.

Voting eligibility

6. The Constitution states that at least one third of nominated representatives who satisfy the voting entitlement requirements must be present for the AGM to take place and for the officers therefore to be elected.
7. 36 out of 53 member organisations of the Town Forum have met the necessary attendance requirements (i.e. have attended at least 50% of possible Town Forum meetings across the year) and their representatives will be entitled to vote.
8. 8 out of 18 Councillor members have also achieved the minimum meeting attendance requirement.

Statement from Adrian Berendt

2020 has been a year of suspended animation for many things. I am therefore willing to be your chair for one more year, but that has to be it...five years is enough!

Louise and I have lived in Queen's Road since 1993, our children grew up in Tunbridge Wells and went to St. Gregory's School. As chair, I have tried to represent the interests of Town Forum members and to develop its influence. I look forward to the opportunity to continuing that work. I am keen also to hear from members who think we should be taking a different direction.

While Covid-19 has accelerated many of the mega-trends which we were already seeing in the way that we live, work and play, in other ways it has fundamentally challenged our assumptions about what our town should be. The key to success for Royal Tunbridge Wells is to identify those things that will return in the new normal and those that have changed forever. This is no small task and will take longer than a few months. At this time, I believe that the Town Forum is needed more than ever as critical friend to the Borough Council.

Key for 2020/21 is supporting the Borough Council in submitting the new Local Plan in good time. Even in areas where we might disagree, the alternative of not submitting a plan risks a worse outcome.

Town Forum members will be aware of my unashamed view that residents need a greater choice about how they travel and that the most vulnerable road users need protecting on our streets. This means enabling them to use sustainable travel safely and easily and to be able to walk or cycle for many of their daily journeys. Covid-19 has illustrated how alternatives are possible and we need to seize the opportunity. As I write, the UK government has announced Tranche 2 of its Emergency Active Travel Fund and I will be supporting TWBC in its bid for a fair share of that funding for West Kent.

During my (absolutely) final year in office, I want the Town Forum:

- To finalise its input to the Local Plan, to ensure a clear and coherent vision for the future of the whole town, particularly a comprehensive transport strategy to prevent the increase in housing leading to a corresponding increase in traffic congestion.
- To further widen its membership and to encourage community participation from those areas of the town and sections of the community – particularly younger residents – that are currently under-represented.
- To deepen engagement with borough and county councillors representing town wards. While successful on an individual basis, I am disappointed by councillor attendance at Town Forum meetings.
- To finally establish Tunbridge Wells as a “20's Plenty” town – with 20mph in all residential streets.

I continue to represent the Tunbridge Wells Bicycle Users Group, formed to make Tunbridge Wells a cycling friendly town and I coordinate 20's Plenty for South East England

Statement from Don Sloan

I am willing to stand for a second year as Deputy Chairman of the Town Forum.

I have been a member of the Town Forum for several years, first as a Borough Councillor (2014-2018) and more recently representing residents of Molyneux Park Gardens.

Tunbridge Wells has been my base since 1975 though I was abroad for much of the time until 2001. Since then Helen and I have lived in Tunbridge Wells continuously.

As a member and former President of the Rotary Club of Tunbridge Wells I have supported and been actively involved in a variety of community projects. My other interests include being a member of a local discussion group and trying to keep fit.

I see the Town Forum as the channel for residents of unparished areas, through their representatives, to communicate effectively with the Borough Council and to respond to Council consultations. In particular, we need to ensure that all town centre wards are *fully* represented on the Forum and at meetings by their councillors and representatives of organisations.

The work of the Forum and its committees is invaluable. Above all I want the Forum to continue to be highly trusted to give fair, balanced and considered views on the development of our town, and in a non-partisan way. The cross party talks between councillors and guided by our Chairman should continue.

If elected as Deputy Chair I would continue to support our Chairman and promote and uphold the reputation and values of the Town Forum.

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ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM

**Minutes of the meeting on Thursday, 17 September 2020
held online via Zoom, starting at 4pm.**

Members: Caroline Auckland (Soroptimist International of Tunbridge Wells and District), David Barnett (Friends of Grosvenor & Hilbert Parks), Jenina Bas-Pendry (Dudley Road Residents Association), Adrian Berendt (Tunbridge Wells Bicycle User Group), Lorna Blackmore (Grantley Court Residents' Association), Mark Booker (Culverden Residents' Association), Stephen Bowser (Residents' First), Marieke de Jonge (Tunbridge Wells Friends of the Earth), John de Lucy (Friends of Tunbridge Wells Cemetery), Peter de Wit (Nevill Court Roads Committee), Irene Fairbairn (Tunbridge Wells Anti-Aircraft Noise Group), Jane Fenwick (Calverley Park Residents' Association), Margaret Ginman (Friends of Woodbury Park Cemetery), Carolyn Gray (The Forum), Dorothea Holman (Boyne Park Residents' Association), Michael Holman (Tunbridge Wells Twinning and Friendship Association), Delphine Houlton (Hawkenbury Village Association), Katharina Mahler-Bech (Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom and Telephone House Neighbours' Association), Marguerita Morton (St. John's Road Residents' Association), Sue Pound (COCA), Don Sloan (Molyneux Park Gardens Residents' Association), Dawn Stanford (Nourish Community Foodbank), Anne Stobo (Friends of the Tunbridge Wells Museum, Library and Art Gallery), Tim Tempest (Friends of The Grove), Alastair Tod (Poona Road Residents' Association) and Carol Wilson (Inner London Road Residents' Association)

Borough Councillors: Councillors Lidstone (St. John's), Morton (St. John's), Pope (Park), Pound (Sherwood), Rutland (Culverden), Scott (Culverden), and Woodward (Broadwater)

Others in Attendance: William Benson, Chief Executive of TWBC), Rebecca Bowers (TWBC Health Improvement Team), Jane Clarke (TWBC Head of Policy and Governance), Ian Firth, Angela McPherson (substitute representative for Soroptimist International of Tunbridge Wells and District), Councillor Podbury (Rusthall) Councillor Rankin (Kent County Council), Hilary Smith TWBC Economic Development Manager), Angus Stewart (substitute representative for Tunbridge Wells Anti-Aircraft Noise Group), Adrian Thorne (Residents Against Ramslye Development)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 1 The following apologies were received:
 - Stuart Anderson (Beulah Road Residents' Association)
 - Tim Ball (Calverley Park Crescent Association)
 - Mark Brown (Tunbridge Wells Puppetry Festival)
 - Brian Lippard (Civic Society of Royal Tunbridge Wells)
 - Marianne MacDonald (Co-optee)

DECLARATIONS OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

- 2 The following substitutes were representing their respective member organisations:
 - Carol Wilson (Inner London Road Residents' Association)

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

3 a) Changes to Membership

- The following changes in membership were noted:
- Nourish Community Foodbank – Dawn Stanford was now the representative

- Residents' First – Steve Bowser was now the representative with Chris Stevenson as substitute.

b) New Membership Applications

New membership applications had been accepted from:

- None

MINUTES OF THE MEETING DATED 7 JULY 2020

4 a) Approval of the minutes as a correct record

The minutes were agreed.

b) Matters Arising from the minutes

None.

UPDATE FROM THE BOROUGH COUNCIL

5 William Benson, Chief Executive of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, provided an update, comments included –
National/Covid updates:

- Further details on the most recent government announcements were awaited, it was unclear on the powers and responsibilities of the new Covid Marshals.
- Working with KCC to understand who does what in terms of enforcement and also to ensure that we are ready in the event of numbers ticking up more.
- Tunbridge Wells numbers above the county average but well below the national average. Some of the increase follows the national trend but, in addition relates to household clusters, care settings and hospitality settings.
- Dame Mary Ney has published a report on lessons learned from the experience in Leicestershire:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-covid-19-outbreaks-lessons-learned-and-good-practice>
- Flu - Concerns of flu are down because the southern hemisphere did quite well and people are being more Covid-aware.
- Since the planning reform presentation at a previous meeting of the Town Forum, a number of meetings including all Kent MP's and Kent Leaders had been held. There had been almost universal condemnation of the proposals. It was Greg Clark MP's view that the proposals were unlikely to make it through Parliament.

Local Community updates:

- It was announced yesterday that our MHCLG bid for revenue funding has been approved. We haven't heard yet about the capital application for renovation of Crescent Road.
- The funding amounts to £153,396 and will mean we can carry on providing emergency housing and assisting those we are housing into longer-term arrangements such as private rentals and supported accommodation.
- The Council's Covid-19 Panel, on which the Town Forum is represented by Adrian Berendt, has received updates on our plans for workstreams on financial hardship, housing, community safety and health.

Local Business updates:

- Looking to see how we can help businesses take advantage of the Kickstart scheme. £2bn scheme to help the under 25s but as limited to businesses with a minimum of 30 vacancies this excludes SMEs. The West Kent Partnership is setting itself up as an intermediary and the Council will be publicising this with local businesses: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/kickstart-scheme>
- All discretionary business grants disbursed.
- Positive update from Targetfollow - no businesses on the Pantiles have closed and some new lettings in train.
- On Meadow Road Car Park there have been supply chain issues in getting the replacement lights delivered but we're expecting them in the first week of October.

Council Services updates:

- New website up and running – well done to the digital team on a smooth handover
- All three leisure centres were open. Swimming pools and classes filling up, gyms quiet. Family swim attendance at around 80 per cent. We are inspecting regularly to check for cleaning etc. We are also ramping up the marketing.
- Theatre – decision to re-open with details of the programme to be announced on 21 September. Will include a monthly residency from the comedy store and work with local community groups.
- Details of the Council's financial situation are set out in the Budget Strategy report to Cabinet. Initial projections of £1m per month losses had been tempered by a government loss sharing scheme. In-year losses were now reduced from £8m to £2m.
- There was no clarity on what would happen after 31 March. The Government's Comprehensive Spending Review ahead of the Budget was delayed.

In answer to questions the following comments were made:

- The Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce was also an intermediary in respect of the Kickstart scheme.
- The Tunbridge Wells Walking Tour app was now available.
- The Russell Hotel continued to support local homeless people and were accommodating 11 such people. 20 further homeless people were being accommodated elsewhere in the borough. The Council was aware of 2 individuals who were unable to be accommodated due to their behaviour and lack of willingness to engage with services.
- The Council just didn't know what was going to happen with its funding. As a precaution it had suspended most of its capital programme and were holding its reserves flexibly. The Government was urging Council's not to cut services and were full of praise but this was not backed up with money.
- Environmental Health and Public Health officials were working to prevent the spread of a Covid outbreak at a local school. The Kent Outbreak Control plan had been enacted. There was no indication of this being a wider issue with schools.
- Whilst numbers of infections remained steady a full lockdown was unlikely but the Council was preparing for any changes in circumstances.
- Unemployment in the borough was at 4.7%, this was lower than the current Kent average at just over 6% but much higher than the pre-Covid average of approximately 1%. Further increases were expected following the end of the furlough scheme and in the new year.

- If the Council was required to cancel theatre or ice rink tickets a full refund would be given. Ticket insurance was also available if there was a lack of confidence.
- The Town Forum was engaged in discussions around a Cultural Compact for Tunbridge Wells which was looking to promote both culture and creative industries. Any interested member could get involved either directly or through the Culture, Leisure and Tourism Working Group.

ONE YOU KENT

- 6 Rebecca Bowers, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Health Improvement Team, presented on the One You Kent service, comments included:
- One You Kent was a free adult (18+) service to help people live healthier lifestyles, tackling issues around diet, alcohol, smoking.
 - Pre-Covid services were delivered face-to-face in community centres and leisure centres. These had moved online with video and telephone support.
 - Group weight management courses were popular and had benefitted by moving online, attendance and completion rates were increased.
 - Health Walks around the borough had restarted, with advice from the Ramblers. There was a weekly group in Calverley Grounds and it was hope there would be more soon.
 - A holistic approach was adopted with clients, each contact started with an assessment which may include a number of health and non-health support services (e.g. housing and financial services).
 - Referrals to the service can be made through www.oneyoukent.org.uk or 03000 200 636.

In answer to questions the following comments were made:

- Health Walks were exempt from the rule of 6 so could take place with up to 30 but feedback has suggested that 10 is a more comfortable number. They are free to join and led by volunteer Walk Leaders. All walks have been assessed in line with government guidelines and booking is essential due to restricted numbers. More information on how to book can be found on our website.
<https://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/walkfinder/tunbridge-wells-walking-for-health>
- Training is available if anyone is interested in being a Walk Leader.
- The Health Team were primarily focused on walking in order to help inactive people to become more active but could signpost to other running or activity clubs if appropriate.
- People can self-refer or refer on behalf of another, the only criteria is that the client must be 18+, a resident of Kent and have a willingness to make lifestyle changes.
- The Health Team consisted of 5 people supported by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. The team largely commissioned partners and worked with volunteers to deliver services but could take a direct role in the event that a volunteer was unable.
- Any assistance in promoting the service would be welcome, numbers of volunteers was consistent but referrals were slightly down. Further details are attached.

EMERGENCY ACTIVE TRAVEL FUND TRAFFIC SCHEMES AND LOCAL CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

7

Adrian Berendt, Town Forum Chairman, and Hilary Smith, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Economic Development Manager, presented on the recent changes to the High Street, comments included:

- The High Street was now one-way northbound.
- Members of the Town Forum and representatives of the Council and the Business Improvement District visited the High Street to speak to business owners and visitors. There were some minor concerns but no overwhelming condemnation of the scheme despite negative reporting in the press.
- More than half the business owners supported the scheme, more so amongst the hospitality businesses.
- Concerns included:
 - Lack of consultation (perhaps understandably given the limited time constraints imposed by the Government)
 - Ugliness of the plastic bollards (temporary)
 - Access for deliveries and bin lorries
- Approximately two-thirds of shoppers supported the scheme. Around half had walked to the town centre and half had either driven or taken other transport.
- Initial suggestions that the one-way should be southbound was not raised as a concern by people on the High Street now that northbound had been implemented.
- The bollards could be replaced with more attractive 'parklets' which could include seating, planting or cycle parking. There was strong support for the use of these.
- The experience of engaging directly with businesses and visitors had been positive.
- The purpose of the scheme was to make the High Street more accessible to pedestrians. It is not the intention that it should solve any traffic management issues.

In answer to questions the following comments were made:

- Some businesses had commented that their deliveries could be changed and in one case it had proven beneficial to switch to smaller vehicles, but more notice of the changes would have been appreciated.
- More work needed to be done to solve the problem with bin lorries. There were so many different providers that a coordinated approach was difficult.
- Car drivers had not been spoken to as part of this exercise (except those that were encountered walking on the High Street). Nor had residents and more work was required.
- Trial or temporary road closures had been considered. Increased rat-running in Castle Street had been noticed so this would remain under review.
- The reduced traffic had resulted in a nicer environment on the High Street.
- Pedestrian welcoming (as apposed to vehicular warning) signage could be considered but these would have to be within the highway regulations.
- The Residents' Survey in 2015 had identified strong public support for widespread pedestrianisation of the town centre. A recent visit to Norwich city centre highlighted that pedestrianisation encouraged footfall and it was possible to have parking and people traveling into town by vehicle and still have a pedestrian friendly environment in the centre.

- The current scheme, whilst recognised that it was a trial and had to fit into restricted criteria was not pedestrianisation so failed to achieve all the benefits.
- The Town Forum was generally in favour of pedestrianisation but recognised that any such scheme must be done sensitively with the support of local residents and traders.
- Pedestrianisation of the High Street would, in any case, have to allow access for residents and deliveries. A trial could be arranged.
- Next steps for the High Street scheme included provision of summary of the survey results to businesses and work to design improvements to the schemes which would be subject to road safety assessment and approval by KCC.

Hilary Smith and William Benson provided an update and answered questions on other traffic schemes in the borough which included – A26 cycle route:

- ‘Wands’ had been installed along the route. Whilst not a perfect solution they were a definite improvement so far as cyclists were concerned.
- Some wands had been removed, some deliberately although not necessarily maliciously where they impacted on access.
- KCC would regularly inspect the route and replace where appropriate.
- Focus should not be lost on more permanent improvements.
- The legality of electric-scooters using cycle lanes was unclear.

Reynolds Lane:

- Plans for a physical modal filter on Reynolds Lane were not possible due to a lack of turning space. A signed-only restriction had been implemented.
- There had been a reduction of traffic on the road and no significant impact on the A26.
- It was hoped that lower traffic on Reynolds Lane could encourage its use for active travel to the schools.
- Both positive and negative feedback had been received. Most negative comments related to the loss of a route to avoid the A26.
- The longer the signed-only scheme was in place the more people may realise they can ignore it so further work on enforcement or other measures would be needed.
- There had been many more people walking the Lane since the lockdown and this was an opportunity to create a green route through town.
- Outside of the morning and evening rush, there was no time saved by using Reynolds Lane so hopefully the restriction would allow some drivers to realise this.
- Fewer vehicles would encourage more walkers, creating virtuous circle of improvement.

Camden Road:

- KCC had not supported the scheme as part of the Emergency Fund but the Borough Council was looking to progress it itself. It was important for the long term sustainability of the scheme that it enjoy the support of local businesses and residents. The Council was therefore waiting to see the outcomes from the High Street scheme before committing.

20mph Zone:

- Anecdotal evidence suggested that some of the signs and markings

for 20mph has started to be implemented but there was no official update from KCC.

- All schemes agreed by KCC under the Emergency Fund must be implemented by 20 September.
- Separate 20mph schemes were being progressed in Culverden and Sherwood. The combined schemes (with St. John's) would see a majority of residential or town centre roads as 20mph.
- KCC had implemented a town-wide zone in Tonbridge and Faversham so there was no reason in principle why the same could not be done in Tunbridge Wells.
- More than 2000 streets in Kent were now 20mph, it was becoming the norm rather than exception and this represented a significant policy change for KCC.
- Taxi firms in towns with 20mph zones reported support for the restrictions as they lowered their fuel costs. Perhaps this was one way to gain the support of taxi firms in Tunbridge Wells.

Other:

- It was important that people tell KCC if they support a scheme otherwise they will only receive the negative.
- There was a problem on London Road near the junctions with Vale Road where vehicles were trying to turn around. Wands or similar could be used to block the area being used. As a highway safety issue this should be reported to KCC.
- Timescales imposed by the Government meant that communication and consultation had been difficult but Tunbridge Wells had done comparatively well from the scheme.

Hilary Smith provided an update on the Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan, comments included:

- The plan formed part of the emerging Local Plan
- The plan covered five cycle routes and sixteen walking routes in Royal Tunbridge Wells
- Phase one of the plan included several cycle routes which were previously identified in the former Cycling Strategy but had been reviewed in accordance with revised Department of Transport guidance.
- Consultants Phil Jones Associates were working on phase two of the plan which involved looking to the Low Traffic Neighbourhood model for the urban areas of the Borough and inter-urban routes between Tunbridge Wells, Paddock Wood and Tonbridge.
- Work on phase two was nearing completion and a full presentation could be made to a future meeting.

In answer to questions the following comments were made:

- Communication had been difficult for the Emergency Fund schemes and lessons had been learnt. The Plan provided an opportunity to start discussions so that there were ready schemes for when funding became available.
- The Emergency Fund schemes had highlighted the potential of trialling schemes. The High Street would have potentially taken years under normal circumstances.
- The importance of trialling schemes should not be underestimated. Even if not delivered perfectly from the start they demonstrate the potential and offer a fast track, but responsible way, to getting things done and allow decisions to be made on evidence rather than theory.

William Benson confirmed that enforcement of the traffic restrictions on Mount Pleasant (outside the Town Hall) had commenced, initially with warning letters which would be followed by Penalty Charges in future. The Council had tried to communicate the changes to the restrictions through all available channels.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

- 8 Alastair Tod presented the report set out in the agenda explaining the proposed reforms to the planning system. Discussion included the following comments:
- Currently any residential development of over 10 units must include 35% affordable housing. This was proposed to be increased to 50 units the threshold. This will mean that in the majority of cases, developers will not be required to provide any affordable units.
 - The term 'affordable' as it applied to Tunbridge Wells was misleading as it only meant 80% of market rate and this was still too expensive for most people.
 - Of the 35% affordable housing, 25% would be 'first homes'. This meant that the amount of social housing the Council could ensure was delivered as part of any major development would be reduced to approximately 26% of the total.
 - The proposals also would mean that any infrastructure relating to new developments would have to be delivered by the Council before the construction started. This would mean that the Council would likely need to borrow money to pay for infrastructure at its own risk without any guarantee that the development would be completed.
 - The reforms amounted to a developers charter which would see very little affordable and social housing being provided. This would ultimately lead to town centre consisting only of exclusive properties.
 - Care should be taken when considering percentages because the intention of the reforms was to substantially increase the total number of properties being built. A smaller percentage of a large number may be more than a larger percentage of a small number.
 - It was important to understand the actual need for the right number and type of houses. The desire was to provide mixed communities rather than the sprawling estates of the past.
 - The practice of providing social housing by way of a deal with a developer had proved to be ineffective, in Tunbridge Wells at least.
 - The proposal to increase the affordable housing threshold to 50 was technically limited to 2 years but one must be suspicious that it was the intention to make it permanent.
 - The Council was pressing hard to get its Local Plan out to Regulation 19 Consultation before the deadline to try to avoid the higher housing targets which would come in to force if the reforms were implemented.

CLEAN AIR DAY (8 OCTOBER)

- 9 Marieke de Jonge presented. Comments included:
- Tunbridge Wells Friends of the Earth had a meeting the next week to see what it could do to support Clean Air Day on 8 October.
 - There would likely be work with school to take advantage of the anti-idling campaigns around schools and the town centre.
 - This would also provide a good opportunity to work with young people and potentially revive the Youth Forum.

- Any members with good connections with a school kindly contact Marieke as engaging with schools was particularly difficult.
- Any suggestions for further activities would be welcome.
- A motion would be considered at the next Full Council meeting which sought to implement non-idling zones around schools.

UPDATES FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS' GROUPS

10 Inner London Road Residents' Association – Carol Wilson advised that they supported the 20mph zone in the Town and had been pleased to see their suggestion for improvements to Church Road included in the bid for phase 1 of the Emergency Active Travel Fund schemes but bitterly disappointed these were not progressed. These had been long standing issues.

Civic Society of Tunbridge Wells – Alastair Tod advised that they were attempting to have the Amadeus Antique Shop on Mount Ephraim, which had fallen into disrepair, made an Asset of Community Value. The proposal was initially to highlight the issue to the owner who had previously refused to engage with the community but he had since died. It was hoped that the status would make the new owners aware of its important historical significance. The Society was still short of the 21 signatures needed to complete the application.

Boyne Park Residents' Association – Dorothea Holman advised they were concerned at the recent debate on banning pavement parking given the narrow streets. William Benson confirmed that currently pavement parking was a Police matter. If at any point in the future powers were given to district councils then a policy would be formed which would be subject to public consultation and the full decision making processes of the council before anything was implemented. Jane Fenwick advised that the Transport Working Group would be responding to the national consultation in November and individuals were encouraged to comment.

Updates were provided on the following construction projects in the town – The Belvedere (former cinema site):

- Little visible progress.
- Discussion had continued with the Council until recently but it appeared that Covid-19 had interrupted progress.

Former Arriva site:

- Work had been delayed as more than expected asbestos had been discovered and further clean-up operations were needed before progressing.

Pantiles 1887 (former Union House site):

- Works were progressing and the public areas and water feature were due to be installed in November.

REPORTS FROM THE TOWN FORUM WORKING GROUPS

11 Water in the Wells Working Group – Michael Holman advised that the Council were trying to identify a suitable drinking water and bottle filling fountain for Dunorlan Park. This could also be installed in The Grove, St John's Recreation Ground and Calverley Grounds. It had proven difficult to find something that could do all but progress was being made.

Transport Working Group – Jane Fenwick advised that a full report would be circulated with the group's minutes and the group was working to ensure the various alleyways and footpaths were registered as Public Rights of Way to prevent their loss. The lack of discussion at the recent Licensing Committee on the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy had been disappointing given the Working Group's engagement with the consultation process over a period of two years. This was an important policy affecting taxis and passengers across the Borough.

Culture, Leisure and Tourism Working Group – Carolyn Gray advised that a report was attached to the agenda and ask what progress was being made but the Council's Civic Complex Cross-Party Working Group. William Benson advised that since a report to Full Council in December a brief had been prepared to engage consultants which would have been due at Cabinet in June, unfortunately progress had been delayed due to Covid-19. Work would need to involve reviewing the Cultural Strategy and other policies to form the basis on any future decisions. Much of this would be undertaken when the Council progresses work on the Cultural Compact. The Council had also been exploring the potential around flexible working space. No meetings of the Working Group had been held since December but some of the recommendations from that meeting were being worked on.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12 None.

FUTURE MEETINGS

13 19 November 2020 (AGM)
 28 January 2021
 18 March 2021



The Amelia Scott Cultural Trust (TASCT) is delighted to announce the securing of a grant of £250,000 from The Garfield Weston Foundation.

This significant award signals both the importance and the scale of TASCT's work in supporting the development of the new Amelia Scott in Tunbridge Wells.

The support of such a rigorous and respected foundation will help TASCT secure additional funding and to deliver a cultural platform and programme that engages fully with the whole community.

We are grateful to the Garfield Weston Foundation and trustees for their belief in the project.

Matthew Hockley Smith

TASCT (Chair)

Matthew R Hockley Smith



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Overview

March-September 2020

**citizens
advice**

**Tunbridge Wells
& District**

IMPACT OF COVID-19

There is no doubt that, as for all organisations, this has been an exceptionally challenging six months. The entire team moved from office to home working in the space of a day in March and we continue to be moved by the commitment, energy and generosity of our volunteers in stepping up to deal with the crisis and the ongoing increase in demand for advice.

In the first, rather surreal, week of lockdown, there were over 2.4m hits to the Citizens Advice website. Our team, while adjusting to home working, helped 237 people with over 400 issues. From March until the end of September we have advised nearly 3,000 people compared with just over 2,000 in the same period in 2019. As expected, queries regarding employment and benefits have more than doubled over the last six months and many of those contacting us, including many more younger people, are seeking our help for the first time.

	2019	2020
Number of clients	2123	3000
Employment queries	400	850
Housing	500	700

Since March, our advisers have been helping people via phone, email and webchat. Some of our beneficiaries have adapted remarkably well to remote advice, despite initial complications with documents; we will continue to support volunteers to work from home for the foreseeable future, while also recognising that there will always be a need for face to face meetings - particularly for our more vulnerable clients.

The team is supporting people locally as well as playing its part in answering the national advice line and supervisors are supporting the team via phone and email.

LOCAL ADVICE NEEDS

As the impact of the pandemic becomes clearer, we can see that the local vulnerable households are falling deeper into crisis.

Around 12,400 people have been furloughed in our borough and we are bracing for a surge in need when the Job Retention scheme ends in October and again after Christmas when businesses seek to cut costs by making redundancies - with all the knock-on effects we know that brings. The demand for help with Universal Credit (first time claims and moving from legacy benefits to UC) has more than doubled and we are concerned about a rise in housing issues and homelessness as a result of the recent lifting of the eviction ban.

We are recruiting a trainee debt caseworker and have plans to build a team of debt specialists to deal with the increase in debt cases we expect to see over the coming months.

VOLUNTEER TRAINING

Our new volunteers are currently undertaking their training via Zoom and we are grateful to members of the staff team who have stepped in to augment online training and cover specialist areas. We are delighted that 16 new recruits will start to take live cases from the end of October with a further 5 receiving additional training. They will be supported by an enhanced team of five supervisors, who will give support and mentoring via phone and email. We have also increased our case-checking capacity to ensure quality of advice.

We have three new recruits who are waiting to begin their training and a waiting list of eighteen people who will be interviewed before starting a new round of training in the New Year.



PROJECTS & OUTREACHES

All of our outreach locations have moved to remote working for the foreseeable future - this includes our advice sessions at 6 GP surgeries, the YMCA, the Kitchen Table community cafe, the Mental Health Resource Hub, Pembury Library and the Soup Bowl drop-in centre for people who are homeless or on very low incomes.



citizens advice Tunbridge Wells & District

Connecting to Communities

- Cranbrook Library
- Pembury Library
- Soup Bowl
- The Hub
- YMCA (under 25s)
- The Kitchen Table
- GP's Surgeries
 - Greggs Wood
 - St Andrews
 - Kingswood
 - Rusthall
 - Clanricarde
 - Lamberhurst

The advisers who run these outreaches are available to take referrals via phone and, although we have been able to organise a limited number of face to face meetings with more vulnerable clients, we are keen to get back into the community again as soon as we can.

IMMINENT OFFICE MOVE

We have taken the opportunity of a forthcoming break clause in our current rental contract to plan a move later this year to a more central, visible and welcoming office space in the Royal Victoria Place shopping centre (next to Marks and Spencer on the ground floor). We hope that the move will enable us to reach more and different people and as there will be no rental charge this will save us vital funding which can be invested into providing additional support.

Our plan is that we will be based in the RVP for a period of at least three years and in that time we will raise the profile of our charity locally. We expect our move to a more visible location will help us to support those who will be particularly hard hit by the fallout of the pandemic in the years ahead, including those who may not otherwise have sought our help - either because they were unaware of our existence in the town or because they thought our services were 'not for them'.

The new space will enable us to offer a quick, triage/drop-in service for people with simple advice needs with appointments being made for those who require more specialist advice.

FUNDING

We are extremely grateful to have received emergency Covid-19 funding from the national Citizens Advice charity, Kent Community Foundation, the National Lottery, the Clothworkers' Foundation and the Julia & Hans Rausing Trust. This provided the funds to set up our team to work from home and to increase the size of our supervisor team

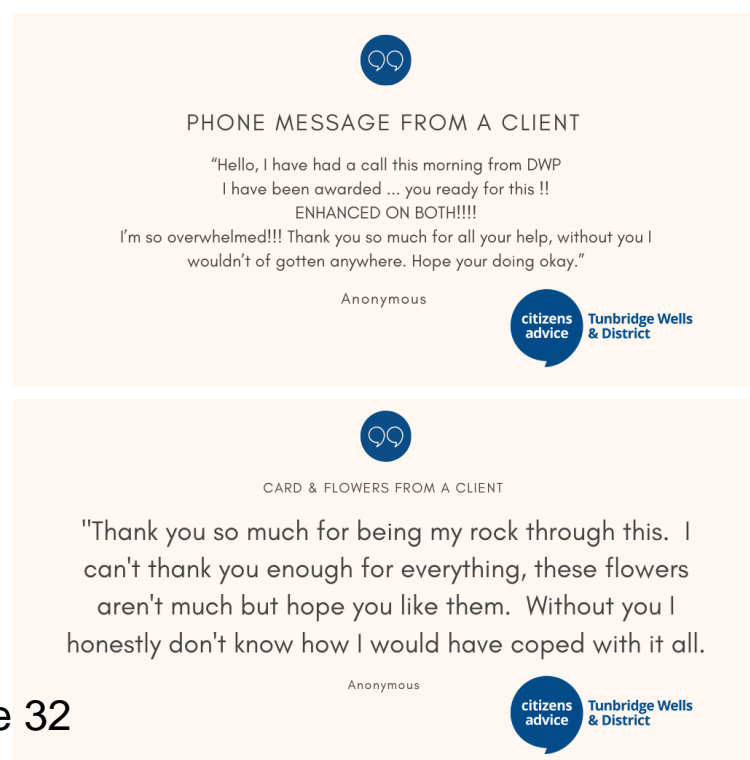
As ever, we have also received much appreciated support from our wonderful Friends organisation who, despite having to cancel several fundraising events, have made a generous donation towards our core costs and even organised a socially-distanced sponsored walk over the Summer.

We are also grateful to Charlotte, who runs our communications and raised over £1000 with Zoom quiz nights during lockdown and our Advice Services Manager, Jenny who ran the Virtual London Marathon for us in Sevenoaks. In the rain and without the crowds to cheer her on this was a fantastic achievement which raised £1000.

FEEDBACK

As ever, the positive feedback that we receive from beneficiaries keeps us going. Our 'Book of Joy' where we record and keep messages and thank you cards has moved online while we are unable to use the office and can be viewed at www.catwd.org.uk/ournews

We continue to raise our profile locally using social media, (gaining over 67 followers on Twitter since lockdown and starting an Instagram account which now has over 200 mainly local followers) as well as local press, with recent articles in the Times of Tunbridge Wells and an interview on BBC Radio Kent.



PHONE MESSAGE FROM A CLIENT

"Hello, I have had a call this morning from DWP
I have been awarded ... you ready for this !!
ENHANCED ON BOTH!!!!
I'm so overwhelmed!!!! Thank you so much for all your help, without you I
wouldn't of gotten anywhere. Hope your doing okay."

Anonymous

CARD & FLOWERS FROM A CLIENT

"Thank you so much for being my rock through this. I
can't thank you enough for everything, these flowers
aren't much but hope you like them. Without you I
honestly don't know how I would have coped with it all."

Anonymous

Report from the Transport Working Group to the RTW Town Forum

on 19th November 2020

Members: Jane Fenwick (chair), Lorna Blackmore, Tom van den Burgh, Sally Balcon, Carol Wilson, Katharina Mahler Bech, Ian Rennardson, Sally Balcon, Adrian Berendt, Cllr Peter Lidstone, Cllr Catherine Rankin and Cllr David Scott.

The TWG met on Tuesday 3rd November by Zoom. The following discussion took place

1. **Emergency Active Travel schemes:** Concerns were expressed about the 20mph signs in the town centre are inconsistent, confusing and limited within the main 'gateway' signs. TWG members will review the 20mph signs across the town centre and highlight problem areas. Speeding traffic on the A264 cross town route is also causing concern. Reynolds Lane: Following a meeting of residents, borough councillors and local schools chaired by AB there is overall support for a trial closure.
2. **Tranche 2 schemes.** Tranche 2 funding will be for permanent measures and could include Tranche 1 trials leading to permanent schemes but details are delayed. CR confirmed that KCC is committed to more consultation on these next schemes.
3. **Hawkenbury:** Halls Hole Road Junction improvement: There is concern that the bell mouth on the Dunorlan Park side had not been sufficiently narrowed. CR will raise our concerns with KCC.
4. **Public Realm access:** TvdB reported that drivers going uphill on Mount Pleasant heading for the restricted 'public realm' only turn left or right at the last minute if camera car is in operation. The turn right arrow on Crescent Road has not been removed despite this manoeuvre now restricted. Cllr Scott indicated that a review of the operation of traffic in this whole area is planned and contributions to this discussion would be helpful.
5. **Pavement Parking:** A draft of the TF response to this consultation had been circulated advocating support for Option - Total Ban. The TWG concurred with this approach.
6. **Parking permits.** LB reported long delays in some residents obtaining parking permits from TWBC and visitor permits. Furthermore, visitor tickets sold in 10s or 20s lapse after 12 months without a refund or the option to roll them forward. TWG will raise these issues with TWBC.
7. **Taxi Licensing:** The minutes from the Licensing Committee meeting in September report show that Committee has taken notice of the TWG's concerns about security of the current process of issuing drivers licences.
8. **Future transport:** DS reported that the Five Year Plan currently under consideration by TWBC includes in para 4.6 plans for the development of infrastructure for light electric vehicles (similar to golf buggies) with a driver and carrying up to 8 people, ideal for ferrying people from top to bottom of town. The TWG agreed to work with DS to develop ideas to submit in 2021.

WG CLT ANNUAL REPORT 2020

I took over as Chair of the group in February, when all seemed generally well with the world. A month later we went into lockdown. The group has met a couple of times on Zoom, and exchanged a multitude of emails.

We have been discussing the aftermath of Calverley Square, and the future of the Civic Centre buildings, as well as progress this year on The Amelia Scott, including changes to design and budget over-runs. Four members were able to have a tour of The Amelia Scott building site, and our next Zoom meeting will be with Matthew Hockley-Smith, Chair of the Amelia Scott Cultural Trust. We have also been concerned about costs involved with running the Fusion Leisure Centres, and the signage for the public realm paving by the war memorial, in regards to visitors/ tourists coming to the town. We are pleased to see The Assembly Hall reopened after receiving a Local Government Grant, and monies from DCMS Cultural Recovery Fund going to venues across the town.

Carolyn Gray