

A G E N D A

Thursday 29 May 2014 at 6.30 pm
Council Chamber, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 1RS

EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

- 1 **Proposed changes to the Town Forum's Constitution** (Pages 1 - 4)

ORDINARY MEETING

- 2 **Apologies**
- 3 **Membership changes**
- 4 **Minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 March 2014** (Pages 5 - 14)
- 5 **Actions from previous meetings**
Evidence of formal appointments – all representatives
NB – To date, 22 out of the 37 active organisations have submitted evidence of the formal appointment of their representatives to the Town Forum.
- 6 **(a) Five Ways Public Realm - progress report and (b) Update report from TWBC's Cabinet**
Further to the discussion at the January meeting on proposals for the Five Ways Public Realm scheme, Cllr Paul Barrington-King will provide a report on the up-to-date position. In the absence of the Leader of the Council at today's meeting, Cllr Barrington-King will also provide a summary of some of the key issues which have been considered by TWBC's Cabinet since the last Town Forum meeting.
- 7 **Street cleansing and gully emptying - progress report** (Pages 15 - 16)
Further to the discussion held on this topic at the March meeting, the attached progress report is provided for members, for information.
- 8 **Reports from the Town Forum Working Groups** (Pages 17 - 18)
 - (a) **Water in the Wells** – Michael Holman, chairman of this working group, will provide an update report.
 - (b) **Leisure, Culture and Tourism** – June Bridgeman, chairman of this working group, will provide an update report.
 - (c) **Traffic Strategy** – Jane Fenwick, acting chairman of this working group, will provide an update report.
 - (d) **Planning and Development** – Michael Doyle, chairman of this working group, has provided the attached update report on TWBC's Site Allocations process (page 17).
 - (e) **Finance and Other Issues** – David Wakefield, chairman of this working group, will provide an update report.

9 Individual elector registration

The way in which people register to vote is changing in 2014, with the Government's introduction of the 'individual electoral registration' (IER) process. Adam Chalmers, TWBC's Democratic and Engagement Manager, will provide Town Forum members with an explanation of the changes.

10 TWBC consultation issues or items of general interest (Pages 19 - 20)

Appended in its usual format is an extract from TWBC's 'Forward Plan' of key decisions, in other words issues which are being considered by the Cabinet over the course of the next few months, which are of general interest. This is provided for Town Forum members for information only.

11 Any Other Business

Dates of the remaining meetings in 2014

Thursday 10 July

Thursday 25 September

Thursday 27 November (including the AGM)

All meetings to start at 6.30pm

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM

29 May 2014

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE TOWN FORUM'S CONSTITUTION

Introduction

- (1) At the Town Forum's AGM held on 28 November 2013, members might recall that there were no nominations made for the position of Chairman for 2013/14 and only one nomination made for the two Deputy Chairmen posts.
- (2) Accordingly, the existing Chairman, David Wakefield, was appointed to continue to serve as Chairman for a further six month period (up to 28 May 2014) and the Management Committee was tasked with examining what changes could be considered to the Forum's Constitution, in order to encourage more nominations to come forward for these key roles.
- (3) **This report was considered at the 20 March 2014 meeting, where the Town Forum gave its 'in principle' approval. The formal decision can only be made at an Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting, in accordance with the provisions of the Forum's Constitution.**

The current position

- (4) The Town Forum's Constitution specifies the following regarding the annual election of its Management Committee (section 5):
 - The Chairman must be a named representative of a member residents' association;
 - Of the two Deputy-Chairmen, at least one must be a named representative from a member residents' association;
 - The Chairman and both Deputy Chairmen 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. It is not intended that a Deputy Chairman will automatically become Chairman.
 - The Management Committee may co-opt onto the Committee (for up to one year in an advisory and non-voting capacity) up to three members of the Town Forum, whom it considers will help to fulfil the aims of, or have some valuable expertise to contribute to, the Town Forum.

The Management Committee's recommendations

- (5) The principal change recommended is that the Chairman must be a named representative of a member organisation, rather than the narrower field of a residents' association.
- (6) The opportunity has also been taken to propose a few – relatively minor – changes, to reflect how the Management Committee has been working in practice, in preparation for each meeting of the full Forum, as well as bringing the Constitution up to date on some TWBC strategic documents.

Summary of changes

(7) The recommended changes to the existing Constitution are set out below:

Current wording	Recommended wording
<p>Section 1 – Purpose of the Town Forum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contributing to the development and implementation of the Sustainable Community Plan as it relates to residents in Royal Tunbridge Wells and working with and informing the Local Strategic Partnership; 	<p>Remove this paragraph, on the basis that these strategic documents are no longer in place.</p>
<p>Section 5 – Management of the Town Forum</p> <p>The Town Forum shall be administered by a Management Committee of three officers elected at the AGM. The officers of the Management Committee shall be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Chair, who must be a named representative of a member residents' association; and • two Deputy Chairs, at least one of whom must be a named representative from a member residents' association. <p>The Management Committee may co-opt onto the Committee (for up to one year in an advisory and non-voting capacity) up to three other members of the Town Forum whom it considers will help to fulfil the aims of, or have some valuable expertise to contribute to, the Town Forum.</p> <p>The Management Committee shall meet at least four times a year and at least three members, including the Chair and one Deputy, must be present in order that a Management Committee meeting may take place.</p>	<p>The Town Forum shall be administered by a Management Committee. This shall be made up of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Three officers elected at the AGM: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 residents' association. 2. The chairs of the working groups. 3. In addition, the Management Committee may co-opt onto the Committee (for up to one year in the first instance and in an advisory and non-voting capacity) up to three other members of the Town Forum whom it considers will help to fulfil the aims of, or have some valuable expertise to contribute to, the Town Forum. <p>The Management Committee shall meet before each plenary meeting of the Town Forum and at least three members, including the Chair and one Deputy, must be present in order that a Management Committee meeting may take place.</p>
<p>Section 6 – Duties of the Officers</p> <p>(Duties of the Secretary)</p>	

Agenda Item 1

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• prepare, in consultation with the Chair, the agenda for meetings of the (Management) Committee and the Forum;	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• prepare, in consultation with the Management Committee, the agenda for meetings of the (Management) Committee and the Forum;
Section 7 – Meetings of the Town Forum Election process Election of the Management Committee at the AGM ...	 Election of officers of the Town Forum at the AGM ...

Conclusions

- (8) The purpose of this review was to see how the Constitution might be amended, so as to encourage members of the Town Forum to come forward for election as either a Chairman or one of the Deputy Chairman posts. It is hoped that the change set out above, under Section 5, will achieve that aim.
- (9) The opportunity has also been taken to propose a number of minor alterations to the Constitution, to reflect the working arrangements of the Management Committee, as it prepares for each meeting of the Town Forum.
- (10) The Town Forum is now asked to approve the recommended changes. The Constitution states that “changes to the Constitution can only be made at an AGM or EGM (Extraordinary General Meeting) and must be agreed by at least two thirds of those eligible representatives present”.
- (11) As we are half-way through the year, it is recommended that as the current Chairman is willing to stay in post until the AGM in November, he be formally appointed to remain as Chairman until then, at which point a replacement nomination – or nominations – will be considered.

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) That the schedule of proposed amendments to the Constitution, as set out above, be approved; and
- (2) That David Wakefield be formally appointed to continue to serve as Chairman until the date of the AGM on 27 November 2014.

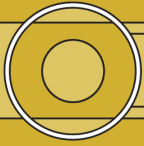
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ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM

Thursday 20 March 2014

Attended: Cllr Bob Backhouse, Sally Balcon, Lindsay Barker (sub), Lorna Blackmore, Mark Booker, Stephen Bowser, June Bridgeman, Cllr Peter Bulman, Adrian Cory, John Cunningham, Michael Doyle, Jane Fenwick, Alex Green, Michaela van Halewyn, Dorothea Holman, Michael Holman, George Lawson (sub), Katharina Mahler-Bech, Cllr Mrs Catherine Mayhew, Helen Mitcham (sub), Chris Morris, Altan Omer, Angela Phillips, Cllr Trevor Poile, Cllr David Scott, Alastair Tod, David Wakefield (Chairman), Mary Wardrop, Philip Whitbourn (sub) and Cllr Chris Woodward

TWBC officers present: Adam Chalmers (Democratic and Community Engagement Manager) and Mike McGeary (Democratic Services Officer)

Also present: Léonie Harrington and Cllr David Jukes (Leader of the Council)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were reported from: David Barnett, Sue Kaner, John Forster, Anne Stobo and Cllrs Ben Chapelard, Caroline Derrick, David Neve, Len Price, Lynne Weatherly and Frank Williams.

2. MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Mike McGeary, TWBC's Democratic Services Officer, reported that the Management Committee of the Town Forum had approved an application from the Culverden Residents' Association to become members; their representative, Mark Booker, was welcomed to his first meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2014 were presented.

The Chairman drew attention to a number of actions where he asked for a verbal update to be given, as follows:

Minute 7 – Re-painting of railway bridges, Mount Pleasant Road. Adam Chalmers, TWBC's Democratic and Community Engagement Manager, advised that Network Rail would shortly be inviting tenders for this work, with expectation that the work would be carried out in the late-spring period.

Minute 9 – 'Sounds of the Wells'. Adam Chalmers advised that Cllr Derrick was leading on the provision of a co-ordinated press pack relating to this initiative; he added that Cllr Derrick would welcome any further information on the specific events planned as soon as possible.

Minute 10 – South East Water customer metering programme. The Chairman, David Wakefield, advised that he had attended this briefing, along with a number of other Town Forum members. He added that he had found the event to be very informative and interesting.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2014 be agreed.

4. ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

16 January 2014

4 Evidence of formal appointment to the Town Forum

MMcG Representatives to submit evidence of their formal appointment to the Town Forum.

Mike McGeary, TWBC Democratic Services Officer, advised that the position remained that 21 out of the 35 active representative organisations had now submitted evidence of their formal appointment to the Town Forum. The Chairman reiterated once more the importance of submitting this information, in the interests of good governance.

5. UPDATE REPORT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, INCLUDING TWBC'S DRAFT 'VISION'

Cllr David Jukes, Leader of the Council, advised that the responses received so far on **TWBC's draft 'Vision'** had been positive. He reminded the Town Forum of the key focus of the 'Vision', namely how funding pressures on local government were leading TWBC to find improved ways of generating income through sound investment of its capital. The draft 'Vision', he added, reaffirmed TWBC's 'enabling' role; it was also a document that would develop during its lifetime and would be the subject of an annual reporting process to the authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cllr Jukes advised.

Cllr Jukes responded to some of the issues raised through the public consultation phase. He advised that not every issue had been included in the document, because the Council had tried to keep it manageable in size and content. This explained why, for instance, 'Brighton Mainline 2' had not been included, as TWBC's capacity to influence its future was almost nil, Cllr Jukes advised. Similarly, on highways issues, the Leader advised that TWBC was not the lead authority, although he added that the working relationship between Kent Highways and TWBC was very good at present.

Cllr Jukes advised that he was a member of the newly-formed South East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), through which TWBC might be able to secure funding for strategic improvements, but there were absolutely no guarantees, he added.

Cllr Jukes also reported on the progress of the road improvement scheme taking place in **Longfield Road**, aimed at alleviating traffic congestion. He advised that the engineering works on this 12 month project would begin in May.

The Chairman invited Town Forum members to comment on the draft 'Vision'.

- June Bridgeman raised two aspects: (a) that the content of the 'Vision' indicated to her that this was less of a vision, more a five-year plan; and (b) that her working group's response to TWBC's draft 'Green Infrastructure Plan SPD' (item 7(b) in the agenda papers) contained much that was relevant to what TWBC should be striving for, namely a joining up of the green spaces across the town centre, as part of a development master plan;
- Jane Fenwick believed that TWBC should adopt a bolder, aspirational position in terms of the highway infrastructure it would like to see, beyond the next five years. The draft 'Vision' was, she added, as opportunity to set out

what TWBC planned to achieve in the longer term, including relief roads, if that is what was felt to be the most cost-effective congestion remedy;

- Sally Balcon was concerned at the reference in the draft 'Vision' to the possible 'encroachment on green space', to address traffic congestion. If this meant part of Tunbridge Wells Common, she added, it was important to remember the value of the town's asset, both in its natural beauty and educational benefit as well as a tourist attraction;
- Michael Holman questioned whether the draft 'Vision' was as inspirational and aspirational as it could be. He believed that the great value of a vision document was in its spelling out how improvement could be achieved, phrased in terms that harmonised with Tunbridge Wells and disposed its citizens to support it. As an example, he added, he felt the Foreword would benefit from stressing that the Borough's cultural history was embedded in its landscape, its geology and in its health-giving waters. It was on this spa heritage that the Vision should take its inspiration, Mr Holman stressed;

Mr Holman said that the 'next steps' approach set out in the draft 'Vision' was to be welcomed, adding that he would also like to see a timescale added where actions were listed. Finally, he felt it important to set out clearly how the 'Vision' would be embedded in TWBC's other planning processes;

- Lorna Blackmore asked if KCC could obtain EU funding for some of the infrastructure projects that would benefit the Borough. Cllr Jukes stressed that the EU bidding process was through the LEP, to which he referred earlier, adding that the South East grouping of local authorities would need to determine where the greatest priorities lay;
- Adrian Cory referred to the 'challenges and opportunities' section of the draft 'Vision' and enquired why the document appeared not to address the pockets of deprivation which existed in the town area. Cllr Jukes acknowledged the point made, adding that tackling deprivation most certainly remained one of the authority's priorities;
- On the transport issues raised, Mark Booker referred to data that showed that approximately 86% of the town's traffic originated and terminated in the town, leading to the conclusion that relief roads were not the best solution to tackle congestion. He also reminded the group that a 1998 scheme for use of a section of Tunbridge Wells Common would have reduced journey times by no more than 15 seconds. His conclusion was, therefore, that the real objective was to encourage people out of their car usage, particularly for journeys of less than two miles;
- Alastair Tod referred to the draft 'Vision' statement on the future of the civic complex, where it stated that "...the Council will be developing a clear framework for the re-development of this site". He asked for some clarity over the use of the word "re-development";
- Philip Whitbourn suggested that it should more accurately state '... the future of the site...' rather than 're-development';
- June Bridgeman felt that the use of the word 'confident' in the document should really be more about people's well-being, adding that she would like to see more emphasis on the provision of facilities and services for those who were generally less well-off.

Cllr Jukes responded to the issues on traffic and transport, advising that the town had a long history of proposals for relief roads and other congestion-alleviation schemes. He remained of the view that there was little prospect of by-passes or relief roads, as there seemed to be no opportunity to impose such an infrastructure without creating significant opposition across the Borough.

The Chairman next turned to the recommended response of the Town Forum's Management Committee to the draft 'Vision' document; the detailed response had been circulated with the agenda. Cllr Jukes picked up on the 'parks and open spaces' comment by saying that no-one should have any concerns about Dunorlan Park; he added that, as a further example of TWBC's commitments towards the town's parks, funding had been secured from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the submission of a scheme for Grosvenor and Hilbert Park.

Mr Holman reminded Town Forum members that, as individuals, they were being encouraged to respond to the draft 'Vision' document via TWBC's website. The deadline for comments was Friday 28 March.

In summary, the Chairman acknowledged that the Leader of the Council was keen on delivering progress and improvement for the Borough, which was – generally – to be welcomed. However, the points raised in the Town Forum Management Committee's draft response, coupled with the issues summarised above, highlighted where issues of concern remained, the Chairman added.

Adam Chalmers advised that all of these matters would be fed back into the public consultation process, which would go before the Cabinet on 10 April. The Chairman expressed the hope that the Town Forum's views, which represented a large part of the un-parished area of the Borough, would have a certain weight attached to them.

RESOLVED – That the draft response of the Town Forum's Management Committee, as supplemented by the summary of issues above, be approved and submitted to the Borough Council.

6. LOCALISM 'PROSPECTUS'

Adam Chalmers explained that the Cabinet portfolio-holder and the Director of Change and Communities had both had to give their apologies for absence for this item. He explained how the Localism 'Prospectus' had been prepared by TWBC, with the intention that parish and town councils, as well as local organisations and community groups, might work with the Borough Council in order to re-design and improve the delivery of some specific services; a list of services considered appropriate for this initiative was set out in the agenda papers, which included the report submitted to the Cabinet on this issue, dated 27 February.

Whilst emphasising that the key focus of the Prospectus was on parish and town councils, Mr Chalmers particularly invited expressions of interest in the services listed on page 27 of the agenda, adding that there was a full list of contact names set out in the agenda for those groups who wished to explore the initiative further.

Cllr Scott advised that one of the items listed in the report under the 'Community Right to Bid (assets of community value)' section – the Royal Oak public house in Tunbridge Wells, in which he had been involved – had provided a positive benefit in bring a particular section of the community together, as well as putting into action their right to attempt to retain a valuable asset.

The Chairman, David Wakefield, asked what the significance was of listing the Remembrance Sunday service under 'community events' suitable for community groups etc to run. Mr Chalmers explained that it was just an example, adding that this was more appropriate for services that were held in the Borough's parish and town council areas.

Sally Balcon, in referring to the general principle of community groups taking on responsibility, reminded members that a significant number of 'Friends of ...' groups were already in existence. She felt that more liaison between TWBC and these groups would mean that joint objectives could be achieved more quickly.

Mary Wardrop drew attention to the fact that the report made no mention of the 'unparished area' of the Borough; she felt this was significant in terms of what was realistic and that this should be highlighted.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted at this stage.

7. STREET CLEANING IN TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Dorothea Holman explained the problems that members of Boyne Park Residents' Association (BPRA) had been suffering with (a) street cleaning and (b) gully emptying. It was noted that, in the case of (a), this was a TWBC service, while with (b), KCC was the responsible local authority.

The main issue with both services, Mrs Holman advised, was that parked vehicles prevented a thorough service from being undertaken. Since giving notice of this problem, she added, TWBC's contractor, Cory, had been in contact with her to advise that they would give advance notice of their visits to the streets covered by the BPRA by placing notices in the road, asking motorists not to park, in order to gain access to all areas. Mrs Holman added that, to date, she had not been so successful with KCC in trying to achieve the same advance notice.

- Angela Phillips advised that a similar problem existed in Culverden Park Road, adding that failure to undertake gully emptying had caused a significant problem in Woodbury Park Cemetery during this past winter.
- Jane Fenwick felt that, despite the difficulties being experienced, the pressures on street parking were so great that she could not see any acceptable remedy in the short term.
- Adam Chalmers advised that, if any resident felt that the street cleaning contract was not being properly operated, the first action to take was to make a formal complaint to TWBC – either by phone or via the website. That should prompt an inspection and investigation by TWBC contract monitoring staff, he advised.
- Mr Chalmers added that TWBC was fully prepared to work with local resident groups to try and find a solution which, he added, might require some individuals or groups placing signs in their streets, to prevent parking prior to the contractor's visit.
- Léonie Harrington, on behalf of KCC, added that the same approach should be followed for the gully emptying service. In the first instance, she advised, residents might wish to e-mail her and she would take the matter up with the contract manager.
- Mary Wardrop enquired whether the same advice should be followed under other circumstances, such as autumn leaves blocking gullies. Mr Chalmers advised that a formal complaint would be followed up and acted upon in the same way.

- June Bridgeman felt that the division of responsibility between TWBC and KCC for these services was a key issue. She added that there needed to be effective liaison with the residents concerned, which would allow each group to take the necessary action.
- Cllr Bulman believed that the onus was clearly on the contractor to put out advance notice signs, not on individuals or groups of residents.
- John Cunningham felt that the problem stemmed from a lack of close supervision of contractors and/or reluctance to penalise past failures to maintain required standards.
- Mr Chalmers advised that there was an effective monitoring and auditing process in place for this contract, adding that regular meetings were held with representatives of the contractor. He added that, on the issues raised by Mrs Bridgeman and by Cllr Bulman, he would discuss with the Head of Environment and Street Scene whether either or both of these suggestions were practical.
- The issues which had been highlighted above prompted Jane Fenwick to suggest that the time had arrived when the highway service should be returned to district council control, as had been the case under the earlier agency arrangements.
- Cllr Scott felt that preventing vehicles from parking ahead of street cleaning or gully emptying would be difficult to achieve, because of the problem associated with the displacement of cars. He added that the situation was made more difficult because some vehicles were parked not on a daily basis but in the same location for longer periods. Cllr Scott also linked the current problem with that of temporary repairs to highway potholes; he acknowledged that, on occasions, it had been necessary this past winter to effect temporary repairs but he felt that there was evidence that a more permanent remedy was being overlooked.

In concluding the discussion, the Chairman welcomed the positive response from both the TWBC and KCC to the specific issue raised, which he hoped would lead to a permanent remedy.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That residents who feel that the street cleaning contract is not being performed adequately make a formal complaint to TWBC, whose Street Scene Enforcement team will inspect and take up with the contractor;
- (2) That where the same problem occurs with KCC's gully emptying service, residents contact Léonie Harrington, KCC's Community Engagement Officer, who will take the issue up with their contracts manager; and
- (3) That Adam Chalmers discuss the other suggestions made with TWBC's Head of Environment and Street Scene and report back on the outcome.

8. WORKING GROUPS

Update reports were made from the working groups as follows:

Water in the Wells Working Group – The Chairman, Michael Holman, reported on the progress being made on possible water features at the following sites:

Longfield Road, North Farm – where he advised that discussions were taking place, looking at the practicalities of installing a water feature at each of the new roundabouts

which were being provided as part of the congestion relief road scheme. Cllr Scott had been involved in these discussions. He advised that the key problem with this proposal was that the scheme programme had already been agreed so, while TWBC was giving its backing to this initiative, the opportunity to provide connections to water and electricity as part of the overall scheme was extremely limited in time. Cllr Scott added that he was trying to apply as much political pressure as possible, to find a remedy;

Care home in Mount Ephraim – Michael Holman advised that there were proposals for a care home in Mount Ephraim where a water feature was planned for the garden area. He added that he was hopeful that the scheme design would enable the feature to be viewed more generally from Mount Ephraim, rather than being solely for the benefit of the residents;

Grosvenor and Hilbert Park – Michael Holman circulated photos of the former fountain in this park, which was ‘de-commissioned’ in 1941;

Fiveways – Michael Holman advised that the Leader of the Council had asked him where the Water in the Wells group would wish to have the water and electricity supply so as to make possible the installation of a water feature as part of the Fiveways public realm scheme. He added that it was difficult to be certain on this point, as a key element was whether TWBC was planning to relocate the Millennium Clock as part of the overall proposal. Mr Holman advised that discussions with RVP shopping centre operators had shown that they were fully supportive of a water feature within Fiveways;

Union House, Pantiles – Michael Holman advised that, from an architectural and an engineering perspective, this location was considered to be ideal for a water feature. He added that some modern constructions had the capability of being dismantled and re-positioned; this was of particular significance in this location, he advised, while the longer term future of Union House was being debated. With that in mind, he suggested that the provision of a water feature at Union House was suitable for inclusion within TWBC’s draft ‘Vision’ document;

Other issues – Prof Holman advised that, as part of the Twinning Association’s 25th anniversary of the signing of the Twinning Charter, Wiesbaden’s Lord Mayor, Sven Gerich, would be visiting Tunbridge Wells in July and, as part of his programme, be opening a photographic exhibition entitled ‘Wiesbaden, Water and the Wells: 25 Years of Twinning’.

Michael Doyle advised that Dandara, the developers of the proposed Knights Park development, had now opened an office in Calverley Road; he reminded Forum members of their support for a water feature as part of the development at Knights Park. Michael Holman advised that discussions had already been held with Dandara, with a view to a water feature being provided within the community space at Knights Park, which would provide an important link with the water heritage of Tunbridge Wells.

RESOLVED – That the progress report be accepted.

Leisure, Culture and Tourism Working Group – June Bridgeman, Chairman of this working group, advised that she was keen to convene a meeting of all of the ‘Friends of ...’ groups, to improve co-ordination between them.

On the issue of TWBC’s Destination Management Plan, and specifically the working group which had been established by TWBC, Mrs Bridgeman was keen to ensure that the views of the Leisure, Culture and Tourism Working Group were submitted and considered.

Mrs Bridgeman also reiterated the importance of the Green Infrastructure Plan – Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), upon which her working group had submitted a formal response, as part of TWBC's public consultation process. A copy of that response had been circulated with the agenda papers.

Mrs Bridgeman emphasised the relevance and significance of having some form of green framework plan in place, which would link the green spaces in the town, but alongside a proper town development plan – the latter being absent from the Borough Council's suite of strategies, she felt.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the update report be noted; and
- (2) That the working group's response to TWBC's consultation on its draft Green Infrastructure Plan SPD, as set out in the agenda, be endorsed.

Traffic Strategy Working Group – The Acting Chairman, Jane Fenwick, had submitted an update report with the agenda, which covered the main areas of activity since the last Town Forum meeting.

Mrs Fenwick advised that TWBC's Transport Strategy had once more been delayed in its submission for final approval. Alongside this issue, Mrs Fenwick reported that members of the working group had met with TWBC's Parking Manager, Rosemarie Bennett, to discuss the development of the emerging Parking Strategy. She added that discussions with Mrs Bennett had been very encouraging.

Mrs Fenwick told the Forum that John Barber, the Chairman of the Friends of the Commons group, wished to see some formal crossing points installed, to provide safer access to Tunbridge Wells Common; she asked for the Town Forum's 'in principle' support for that proposal as well as for seeing this incorporated into the Transport Strategy.

Mrs Bridgeman saw this proposal as emphasising the issue which she had just highlighted, namely the importance of establishing a green framework plan, which would link these issues together, within the context of an over-arching town development plan.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the progress report be accepted; and
- (2) That the Town Forum endorses the proposal by the Friends of the Commons to see formal crossing points implemented, to provide safer access on to Tunbridge Wells Common.

Planning and Development Strategy – Michael Doyle, Chairman of this working group, drew attention to his agenda report, which explained how TWBC was proceeding in its evaluation of formal submissions made to the draft Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD).

He added that TWBC was still having to respond to developers' proposals, ahead of the Site Allocations DPD process being finalised next year; this was not an ideal position to have to face, he added, and placed the planning authority at risk in maintaining its current housing policy.

Mr Doyle also reported on the latest position re. AXA PPP and their Hawkenbury office site. He stated that their plans to build a parking 'deck' – as part of their expansion proposals – would not now proceed, leaving him to believe that local residents would be faced with yet more on-street parking.

Cllr Bulman thanked Mr Doyle for sharing the latest position on the AXA site, adding that he would be looking to call in the planning application. Cllr Mrs Mayhew advised that she had already triggered that process.

RESOLVED – That the progress report be accepted.

Finance and Other Issues – David Wakefield, Chairman of this working group, advised that there were no additional items to report from within his working group's remit.

9. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE TOWN FORUM'S CONSTITUTION

The Chairman, David Wakefield, reported on the work of the Town Forum's Management Committee, which had met to consider how minor changes to the Forum's Constitution might encourage more nominations to come forward for the key roles of Chairman and the two Vice-Chairmen positions.

The principal amendment set out in the agenda papers was to propose that the Chairman should be elected from amongst all member organisation representatives, rather than from the narrower field of resident association delegates.

The opportunity had also been taken to suggest a few other, minor, amendments, to reflect the actual working arrangements of the Forum's Management Committee.

Attention was drawn to the fact that the proposals could not be formally agreed at this meeting, as any changes to the Constitution could only be made at the AGM or an EGM, following proper notice, as set out in the Constitution.

Alastair Tod enquired whether 'member organisations' included the Borough Council. He was advised that TWBC was not a member organisation.

Michael Holman felt that the Town Forum had functioned very well over the past two years, under its working group structure. He added that the 'burden' on the Chairman was now shared amongst the chairmen of the working groups, a situation which had helped significantly in this improved overall position.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the schedule of proposed amendments to the Constitution, as set out in the agenda, be approved in principle; and
- (2) That the Town Forum consider this issue formally on 29 May, under an 'extraordinary general meeting' section of the agenda that same evening, where the formal decision can be taken.

10. TWBC CONSULTATION ISSUES

Mike McGeary, TWBC's Democratic Services Officer, introduced an extract from the latest version of TWBC's Forward Plan, in which he drew attention to issues of general interest to the Town Forum which were being considered by the Cabinet in the coming months. It was presented for information only.

Alex Green enquired if members of the public were able to attend the Cabinet meetings, to observe proceedings. Mr McGeary confirmed that this was the case, adding that members of the public could also register to speak on specific issues at the Cabinet meeting, for a maximum of three minutes on each matter, subject to them registering their wish to do so, prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Young Persons' Travel Pass – Michael Doyle advised that he had followed up on one of KCC's consultation issues, namely the proposal to replace the Kent Freedom Pass with a 'Young Persons' Travel Pass'. He felt the changes being proposed were reasonable and should be supported by the Town Forum.

Jane Fenwick asked whether the cost of the new pass (£200) was required to be paid in one sum or broken down into staged payments. She also asked what the impact was on pupils who travelled from Tunbridge Wells to schools in East Sussex, i.e. out of the county. Mrs Fenwick added that, as with highway services, this was another aspect of being a border community, where she felt that cross-border co-operation and linked strategic thinking was important.

Subsequent to the meeting, it has been confirmed that: (a) payment for the new pass can be split into two payments of £100 each, across the academic year; and (b) it is believed that the new pass will still allow pupils to undertake "direct journeys to neighbouring councils, where the journey starts or finishes within the KCC area".

Mary Wardrop asked whether the mileage being travelled from home to school was still a factor in qualifying for the pass. Léonie Harrington advised that neither the current pass nor the new one was based on mileage.

The Chairman, in summing up, asked Mike McGeary to submit a supportive response to KCC, as part of the public consultation process.

RESOLVED – That Mike McGeary, Administrator to the Town Forum, respond to KCC, indicating the Town Forum's support for the proposed 'Young Persons' Travel Pass'.

(b) Street lighting and the 'part-night operation' – Léonie Harrington advised that, with the clocks going forward by one hour for British Summer Time on 30 March, the period during which certain street lights would be switched off would be from 1am until 6.30am.

(c) Tunbridge Wells in Bloom – Katharina Mahler-Bech advised that the 2014 Tunbridge Wells in Bloom season would be launched on 11 April.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 29 May 2014 at 6.30pm – which will include an 'extraordinary general meeting' section, to discuss the suggested Constitutional changes set out in minute 9 above.

Subsequent meetings:

10 July, 25 September and 27 November (including the AGM)

The meeting concluded at 8.20pm.

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM

29 May 2014

STREET CLEANSING AND DRAIN/GULLY EMPTYING

Introduction

- (1) At the 20 March meeting of the Town Forum, Dorothea Holman explained the problems that the residents of Boyne Park had been experiencing with both (a) street cleaning and (b) drain/gully emptying, principally because of parked vehicles. The purpose of this report is to summarise what follow-up action took place and how this might be applied to other resident associations who suffer similar problems.

Street cleansing

- (2) This service is a TWBC responsibility and is provided by the contractor Cory.
- (3) Mrs Holman had raised concerns that parked vehicles along both sides of Boyne Park were preventing a proper cleansing service from being provided. She had offered to co-ordinate contact with residents, to prevent parking on each side – on different days – which it was hoped would supplement action by the contractor, who planned to put up site notices to the same effect.
- (4) The outcome was that, through this collaborative effort, one side of the road was swept on 29 March and the other side on 5 April (both Saturdays). The quality of the work was checked through a site inspection on each of the following Mondays by TWBC's Street Scene Team Leader, who reported that the standard of cleansing was very good.

Conclusion

- (5) Through joint effort between TWBC, the contractor and an active member of the residents' association, a satisfactory outcome was achieved. If other resident associations feel that the standard of the street cleansing contract could be similarly improved, they are asked to contact Edwin Burgess, TWBC's Street Scene Team Leader, to discuss the details direct. He can be reached by e-mail at edwin.burgess@tunbridgewells.gov.uk or by phone on TW 554216.

Drain/Gully emptying

- (6) Drain/gully emptying is a KCC responsibility.
- (7) Mrs Holman had earlier advised that vehicles parking in Boyne Park were, similarly, preventing a proper drain/gully emptying service from being carried out, leading in very wet weather to large pools of rain water lying on the highway for many days (or for weeks, in the case of a number of periods during this immediate past winter.)
- (8) At the 20 March meeting of the Town Forum, Léonie Harrington, KCC's Community Engagement Officer, undertook to discuss the situation with the relevant contracts manager at KCC.

Agenda Item 7

- (9) Léonie Harrington advises that the contracts team contacted Mrs Holman, to let her know when the drains were due to be cleaned. Yellow cones were to be put out the night before to try and ensure that cars did not park over the gullies. One of their drainage engineers also met with Gary Stevenson, TWBC's Head of Street Scene.
- (10) KCC's policy with regard to cleaning gullies can be viewed from the following link:
www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/what-we-look-after/drainage-systems
- (11) The contracts team will provide Léonie Harrington with a list of the roads in Tunbridge Wells where gully-emptying is due to take place, as well as a timescale for the work (within a two month window). This will be forwarded to Town Forum members as soon as this becomes available. The programme has been the subject of a review, following the winter flooding.
- (12) The number for drainage queries is 03000 41 81 81.

Overall conclusions

- (13) Where difficulties are experienced with either road cleansing or gully emptying, there are complaints procedures already in place via the TWBC and KCC websites. With persistent problems, such as described above, where vehicle parking is preventing a proper service from being carried out, the collaborative action taken over the last two months demonstrates that remedies can be found.
- (14) As a reminder, the relevant contact details are as follows:

Street cleansing – TWBC - <http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/residents/parking-travel-and-streets/street-care-and-cleaning/Report-Litter> or telephone TW 554216.

Gully emptying – KCC - www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/what-we-look-after/drainage-systems or telephone 03000 41 81 81.

Mike McGeary

TWBC

(d) UPDATE ON SITE ALLOCATIONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT (DPD) PROCESS – MAY 2014

- (1) Last month, Mike McGeary sent us all an e-mail, which told us about a decision by the Planning Inspectorate relating to Fowlers Park in Hawkhurst. The significance of that decision was that it reinforced the position taken by the Borough Council to continue to pursue the emerging Site Allocations Development Plan Document process in providing locations for the remaining requirement of the Core Strategy housing target of 6,000 new dwellings in the Borough, up to 2026.
- (2) As a reminder, in 2012 the Government introduced the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This sets out a number of requirements for local planning authorities “to boost significantly the supply of housing” including assessing needs for ‘market and affordable housing’ in the housing market area. TWBC – alongside many other authorities, part-way through the plan-making process – decided that it would continue to progress with the Site Allocations DPD as this would provide certainty for local communities and landowners. It would then begin a review of the Core Strategy and, as part of this process, reassess the need for market and affordable housing.
- (3) There have been some interesting developments since the update on the Site Allocations process which I gave in March. Another Planning Inspectorate decision on a site within the Harrogate Borough Council area raised questions about the adequacy of the authority’s Core Strategy ‘new dwellings’ target, agreed in 2009. When measured against the NPPF requirement of an “objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the market area” (not the local authority area incidentally), the Inspectorate specified that the Council’s submitted DPD figure fell “...considerably short of the objectively assessed need”.
- (4) In the Midlands, there has been a successful High Court challenge made by developers against Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, which may also have consequences for the position of TWBC, and others. (In the case of Solihull, the successful High Court challenge was against the Council’s recently-adopted Local Plan over the ‘de-allocation’ of a site as a potential location for new homes.)
- (5) In March this year, Sevenoaks District Council completed an Examination into its Allocations and Development Management Plan, based on a Core Strategy adopted in 2011. On 8 May the Inspector wrote to the authority asking them to consider the implications of the Solihull judgement for their approach. At the time of writing, Sevenoaks District Council is considering how to proceed.
- (6) These latest developments have caused some significant concerns amongst local planning authorities. Until such time as the legal position – and the Government’s advice – has become clear, TWBC is continuing to produce the submission version of the Site Allocations Development Plan Document with the intention of publishing the document for further consultation by the end of this year.

Agenda Item 8

(7) I shall provide a further update at the July meeting.

Michael Doyle
Chairman of the Planning and Development Working Group
May 2014

Extract from latest version of ‘Notice of Intent to Make Key Decisions’, summarising issues on which TWBC will be consulting in the next few months (including existing consultations*) or other matters of general interest.

Cabinet:

Advisory Board:

Lead Officer:

(a) Leader of the Council: David Jukes

There are no specific issues to highlight in this immediate period.

(b) Finance and Governance Portfolio-holder: Councillor James Scholes

Corporate and financial overview (ahead of budget-setting for 2014-15)

7 August 2014

Finance & Governance,
15 July 2014

Lee Colyer

(c) Tourism, Leisure and Economic Development Portfolio Holder: Councillor Jane March

Creative workspace project

26 June 2014

Communities,
25 June 2014

Hilary Smith

(d) Planning & Transportation Portfolio Holder: Councillor Alan McDermott

Borough Transportation Strategy – to agree final document

7 August 2014

Planning & Transportation, David Candlin
14 July 2014

Tunbridge Wells Parking Strategy – start of consultation

7 August 2014

Planning & Transportation, Kevin Hetherington
14 July 2014

Site Allocations DPD for pre-submission consultation

18 Sept 2014

Planning & Transportation, Jean Marshall
28 August 2014

(Draft) Community Infrastructure Levy – preliminary charging schedule

18 Sept 2014

Planning & Transportation, Jane Lynch
28 August 2014

(e) Housing, Health, Wellbeing & Rural Communities Portfolio Holder: Councillor (to be confirmed)

No specific issues to highlight in this immediate period

(f) Sustainability Portfolio Holder: Councillor Paul Barrington-King

Supply and installation of solar photovoltaic on roof of St John's Sports Centre

26 June 2014

Communities,
25 June 2014

Karin Grey

Community Safety Partnership – strategic assessment

26 June 2014

Communities,
25 June 2014

Caroline Arnold

(g) Joint Portfolio-holders: (i) Leader of the Council and (ii) Finance and Governance: David Jukes and James Scholes

John Street car park - proposals for redevelopment

18 Sept 2014

Finance & Governance
26 August 2014

David Candlin

Kevin Hetherington: Head of Communities and Wellbeing
Jane Lynch: Head of Planning
Lee Colyer: Interim Director of Finance
Karin Grey: Sustainability Manager

David Candlin: Head of Economic Development
Hilary Smith: Economic Development Manager
Jean Marshall: Planning Policy Manager
Caroline Arnold: Interim Head of Partnerships