



# AGENDA AND JOINING INSTRUCTIONS

Thursday 30 March 2023 at 6.00 pm  
Virtual Meeting - Online

## Agenda

**1 Attendance**

(Members will be checked-in as they enter the meeting – please ensure you use your real, full name. A draft attendance list will then be circulated after the meeting. Please advise the Secretary of any errors or omissions in the draft list.)

**2 Membership Changes**

- a) Changes of representatives
- b) New membership applications

**3 Minutes of the AGM meeting dated 24 November 2023** (Pages 4 - 6)

- a) Approval as a correct record
- b) Matters arising

**4 Minutes of Ordinary meeting dated 24 November 2023** (Pages 7 - 14)

- a) Approval as a correct record
- b) Matters arising

**5 Minutes of Ordinary meeting dated 19 January 2023** (Pages 15 - 23)

- a) Approval as a correct record
- b) Matters arising

**6 Updates from Member Organisations**

Please advise the Secretary before the meeting if you wish to raise a topic under this agenda item.

The Commons, introduction of new ranger Dan Colborne

- b) Town Twinning, Michael Holman
- c) Trinity Theatre
- d) Friends of the Earth, event
- e) other

**7 Future Meetings and Council Support** (Pages 24 - 27)

See discussion and background notes in the agenda papers

**8 Town Centre Area Plan and Local Plan**

Communication and engagement Presentation by:

- Hugh Pound Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning and Labour Group
- Carlos Hone, Head of Planning for TWBC

**9 Update from the Borough Council**

Update provide from Cllr Justine Rutland, Cabinet Member for Tunbridge Wells town and surrounding areas.

**10 Reports from the Town Forum Working Groups** (Pages 28 - 31)

- 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

**11 Urgent Business or Topics for Future Meetings**

**12 Future Meetings**

- 18 May 2023



## Joining Instructions – by computer

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: **356 670 912 193** Passcode: **8xGKxw**

(The meeting ID and passcode are embedded in the above web address so if using the link you will not need to enter them separately.)

During the 'join in' process please note:

1. Use your proper name. Please ensure your display name is your own full name and not, for instance, a personal nickname or "My iPad" or other unidentifiable object. The name can be altered when logging in. People who cannot be identified may not be admitted.
2. Agree to use your computer video
3. Agree to use your computer audio
4. If you have a problem, please email [Committee@tunbridgewells.gov.uk](mailto:Committee@tunbridgewells.gov.uk) to contact TWBC Democratic Services 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. To ensure a speedy entry into the meeting please ensure your display name shows your actual name.

## 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 Chair 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 Teams so that you can become familiar with the platform.



## ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM

**Minutes of the AGM held on Thursday, 24 November 2022, at 6pm  
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Royal Tunbridge Wells, TN1 1RS**

### ATTENDANCE

1

#### Member Organisations:

Beulah Road Residents' Association – Stuart Anderson and Chris Morris | Boyne Park Residents' Association – Sue Bishop and Dorothea Holman | Calverley Park Residents' Association – Jane Fenwick | Civic Society of Royal Tunbridge Wells – John de Lucy | Friends @ The Amelia Scott – Helen Mitcham | Friends of Grosvenor & Hilbert Parks – David Barnett | Friends of The Grove and The Avenues Residents' Association – Tim Tempest | Friends of Tunbridge Wells Cemetery – John de Lucy | Friends of Woodbury Park Cemetery – David Bushell | Grantley Court Residents Association – Lorna Blackmore | Inner London Road Residents' Association – Carol Wilson | Molyneux Park Gardens Residents' Association – Don Sloan | Nourish Community Foodbank and Sherbourne Close Management Committee – Marianne MacDonald | Soroptimist International of Tunbridge Wells and District – Caroline Auckland and Cat Mennell | St John's Road Residents' Association – Marguerita Morton | The Forum – Carolyn Gray | Tunbridge Wells Bicycle User Group – Adrian Berendt | Tunbridge Wells Friends of the Earth – Steve Walter | Tunbridge Wells Twinning and Friendship Association – Michael Holman | Upper Stone Street Residents' Association – Helen Featherstone | Warwick Park Residents' Association – Neil Williams.

#### Councillor Members:

Culverden ward – Cllr Justine Rutland | Pantiles and St. Mark's ward – Cllr Wendy Fitzsimmons | Park ward – Cllr Victoria White | St. John's ward – Cllr Peter Lidstone and Cllr Marguerita Morton.

#### Others in Attendance:

Borough Council Officers – Terry Hughes (Community Safety Manager) | Guests – Insp Ian Jones (Kent Police), Jill Ruddock, Angela McPherson, Oliver Diggins, Roz Heaton. Thomas Appleby, Jayne Sharratt | Secretary – Mark O'Callaghan.

### REGISTER OF MEMBERS

- 2            The Secretary returned the list of members of the Town Forum as set out in the agenda.

### VOTING ENTITLEMENT FOR MEMBER ORGANISATIONS AND COUNCILLORS

- 3            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 2021 AGM

- 4            The Chair noted that the minutes had been agreed in principle at the meeting in January 2022 but were submitted here for formal approval.

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the AGM held on 11 November 2021 be approved.

## **CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT**

- 5 The Chair summarised the annual report which highlighted the breadth and depth of activities the Town Forum had in their busy year.

Extra meetings were held such as the Forum Focus on 12 May 2022 which looked at the Forum's activities and ways it could function more effectively, virtual meetings for the local elections were held and those may be held as hybrid sessions going forward.

During the year the Forum was involved with more partnerships with the Borough Council which had been set up throughout the year and those included the town centre area plan, cooperation on Ukrainian refugees, the cost of living crisis and the shared prosperity levelling up.

Transport and active travel were highlighted.

It was confirmed that the Town Forum was supporting the Council to achieve its carbon neutrality objective by 2030.

There were 4 new members confirmed and those were:

- The Royal Wells Park Residents Group
- The Potteries Residents and Owners Group
- Tunbridge Wells Fair Trade Group
- Rotary Club of Tunbridge Wells

Attendance was named as an issue as that had dropped by 10 per cent.

Town Hall Space Limited were named as the consultants for the Town Hall co working.

Thanks was given to working groups for the amount of work they put in and they were considered to be were the backbone and drivers to the Town Forum.

Thanks to the Borough Council for their help at facilitating the meetings and in particular to the Secretary Mark O'Callaghan for all his support.

## **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

- 6 The Secretary introduced the report and confirmed that nominations had been received as set out in the agenda.

The Secretary confirmed that the constitution allowed for two Deputy Chairs.

No challenges to the provisional result where received therefore it was declared that the votes cast were as follows:

- Don Sloan, Chair: Unanimous
- Adrian Berendt, Deputy Chair: Unanimous
- Jane Fenwick, Deputy Chair: Unanimous

The Chair thanked for his position and advised that they would do what they could in the coming year. Members of the Forum were invited to join working parties if they were minded.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That Don Sloan be elected Chair for 2022/23 until the date of the AGM 2023; and
2. That Adrian Berendt be elected Deputy Chair for 2022/23 until the date of the AGM 2023;  
and
3. That Jane Fenwick be elected Deputy Chair for 2022/23 until the date of the AGM 2023.

The Chair ended the Annual General Meeting and passed over to the Secretary who continued with the general meeting as per agenda.



**Minutes of the ordinary meeting held on Thursday, 24 November 2022, at 6pm  
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Royal Tunbridge Wells, TN1 1RS**

## ATTENDANCE

- 1 Member Organisations:  
 Beulah Road Residents' Association – Stuart Anderson and Chris Morris |  
 Boyne Park Residents' Association – Sue Bishop and Dorothea Holman |  
 Calverley Park Residents' Association – Jane Fenwick | Civic Society of  
 Royal Tunbridge Wells – John de Lucy | Friends @ The Amelia Scott – Helen  
 Mitcham | Friends of Grosvenor & Hilbert Parks – David Barnett | Friends of  
 The Grove and The Avenues Residents' Association – Tim Tempest | Friends  
 of Tunbridge Wells Cemetery – John de Lucy | Friends of Woodbury Park  
 Cemetery – David Bushell | Grantley Court Residents Association – Lorna  
 Blackmore | Inner London Road Residents' Association – Carol Wilson |  
 Molyneux Park Gardens Residents' Association – Don Sloan | Nourish  
 Community Foodbank and Sherbourne Close Management Committee –  
 Marianne MacDonald | Soroptimist International of Tunbridge Wells and  
 District – Caroline Auckland and Cat Mennell | St John's Road Residents'  
 Association – Marguerita Morton | The Forum – Carolyn Gray | Tunbridge  
 Wells Bicycle User Group – Adrian Berendt | Tunbridge Wells Friends of the  
 Earth – Steve Walter | Tunbridge Wells Twinning and Friendship Association  
 – Michael Holman | Upper Stone Street Residents' Association – Helen  
 Featherstone | Warwick Park Residents' Association – Neil Williams.

Councillor Members:  
 Culverden ward – Cllr Justine Rutland | Pantiles and St. Mark's ward – Cllr  
 Wendy Fitzsimmons | Park ward – Cllr Victoria White | St. John's ward – Cllr  
 Peter Lidstone and Cllr Marguerita Morton.

Others in Attendance:  
 Borough Council Officers – Terry Hughes (Community Safety Manager) |  
 Guests – Insp Ian Jones (Kent Police), Jill Ruddock, Angela McPherson,  
 Oliver Diggins, Roz Heaton. Thomas Appleby, Jayne Sharratt | Secretary –  
 Mark O'Callaghan.

## MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

- 2
- The secretary confirmed that the update referred to The Civic Society of Royal Tunbridge Wells only and did not include the Older People's Forum.
  - The secretary listed out the changes as per the agenda.
  - Since publication of the agenda it was confirmed that there was a fourth change; Kat Minaou was now the substitute representative for the Soroptimist International Tunbridge Wells and District, previously Angela Mcphearson. Caroline Auckland remains the primary representative.
  - There were no new membership applications.

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING DATED 16 JUNE 2022**

## 3 **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting dated 16 June 2022 were taken as a true record of the proceedings.

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING DATED 21 SEPTEMBER 2022**

4 The secretary advised that the minutes of the meeting dated 21 September 2022 were to follow.

## **UPDATES FROM MEMBER ORGANISATIONS**

5 There were no updates from member organisations for consideration.

## **SPOTLIGHT ON SAFETY IN TUNBRIDGE WELLS**

6 Caroline Auckland, Soroptimist International Tunbridge Wells and District outlined some of the survey findings which outlined the safety issues faced by women in Tunbridge Wells this was accompanied the use of visual aids.

- 112 people responded and 90% of those had experienced some form of sexual harassment in Tunbridge Wells.
- Grosvenor and Hilbert, St Johns Road and The Common as well as many more places were named as places people would avoid at night.
- Lighting was named as a major issue for people.
- Public transport for example High Brooms Station was named as somewhere people avoided.
- More Police, better education in schools were named as solutions.
- A supportive message from MP Greg Clarke was noted and welcomed.

Gill Ruddock, Soroptimist invited Members of the panel to respond to key points that were highlighted in the survey. What measures are in place to keep people safe and the need to highlight these to vulnerable people.

Inspector Jones, Police spoke about the need for a continuous dialog from the people in the borough and giving them the confidence to come forward to report offences and to know that they were taken seriously.

The possibility of a change in legislation was welcomed, to make these specific offences and allow more sterner sentencing powers; fine imprisonment or both depending on the offence.

Terry Hughes, Community Safety Manager spoke about the camera and lighting options available.

- It was advised that those were expensive to implement and it was important to undertake a survey on the location to confirm what changes could be made to make improvements and not making a situation worse rather than improving it.
- The report from the PCC survey and the Home Office reporting tool were mentioned. It was confirmed that 38 locations were logged from that tool and information taken from those assessments highlighted problem areas with issues such as graffiti, drug and alcohol use amount others highlighted.
- Over the coming calendar year the CSU and the Police Crime Reduction Officer were scheduled to hold Environmental Visual Audits in specific problem areas to gain more specific information about

- costings and possible solutions that could be implemented.
- It was mentioned that the budget for CCTV would be looked at with the CCTV Manager and the possibility of extending the CCTV reach to problem areas.
- Solutions such as Mobile rapid deployment cameras were difficult to implement but could be a solution.
- Widening footpaths in some areas was mentioned.
- The Town centre was raised as an area for issues lighting; example Clarence Road.
- Areas such a back alley to the Tunbridge Wells train station was mentioned as a potential problem area although it was fairly well lit, and had been cleaned up. Perception that no one cares, looked at for clean ups.
- The CSU Partnership plan next year along with a group of agencies will determine what the priorities will be and what actions will be taken.
- Although it was acknowledged that the town was thriving and a strong night time economy the goal was to be in a position where everyone can say Tunbridge Wells is a safe place.

Roz Heaton, Business Crime Manager Safe Town Partnership spoke about her role with the licence premises and the retailer to prevent crime in their premises and also keeping customers safe.

It was stated that within the night time economy, the violence against women and girls especially within the last 12 months had been taken very seriously by the Licensee and they understand that the onus is on them to keep their customers safe.

A lot of work had been done with 'Ask for Angela' posters, there are more bar runners in place and floor staff are performing more extensive searches.

At the end of October, a survey carried out across 3 premises and 3 separate weekends; Opera House, Aura and Pitcher and Piano with the age range between 18 – 35 plus highlighted issues such as:

- Lighting, trees from Mount Pleasant.
- Monson Road on the left under the colonnade was felt by some to be unsafe.
- Pantiles was felt by some to be unsafe.
- The 4 people who said they felt unsafe were from the younger age group and had either been a victim of crime or witnessed a crime.
- Spiking was mentioned a lot, however people had returned to a venue where spiking had occurred after security changes had been made.
- Cat calling and harassment.
- On a positive note, a lot of them said how boys/men of stepping in and challenging bad behaviour.
- More police, more security, female taxi drivers, female security were suggestions made by some in order to increase feeling of safety.
- Better public transport as after midnight it's a walk home.
- Personal alarms, safety tips cards were handed out to participants.

## **Reponses to questions included:**

- Inspector Jones agreed that education was key now and from an early age and would allow people to understand what formed a healthy relationship and what boundaries were.
- Suggestions were taken on board of tip cards for men to advise them on how to behave, and posters in the toilets advising them to 'be the Angela' for girls/women that are at risk.
- Despite there being a funding issue related to the recruitment of Police Community Support Officers, it was advised that there was a



massive budget for the uplift for Police Officers and there was a large number of student officers in the Kent Police Offices and those will be manning the streets of Tunbridge Wells once trained.

- A department had been assembled to carry out work which ensured there was a police service that was representative of the community it served in terms of gender, race and all other aspects.
- Through the Police and Crime Commissioner there were funds allocated to Kenwood Trust charity for risk reduction related to drugs and alcohol and employees are deployed into areas where young people frequent. Also funded are the street pastors which are a good presence and provide help to vulnerable people.
- Terry Hughes advised that he would contact Hilary Smith about the cycle path Grosvenor and Hilbert Park and the agreement that it would be lit better.

## ENVIRONMENT

- 7           The Chair introduced Mr Radu Corriola who presented with the use of a visual aid information about his Environment agency which was based in Tonbridge and their plan for communities and work on carbon emissions.

Mr Corriola explained different activities they were carrying out in order to reduce their footprint which included among others; currently there were 4,000 cars in their fleet and plans were in place to reduce that to 2,500 and to change to electric cars as soon as possible.

The Chair confirmed that the Tunbridge Wells Forum worked closely with the Tunbridge Wells Friends of the Earth and details of their works would be sent out in the next Forum correspondence.

The Forum would look more closely with the Council's works on the reducing their carbon neutrality.

The Repair café in Trinity in Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall which had started one up and were highlighted.

## COST OF LIVING

- 8           The Chair explained that this agenda item followed the cost of living summit in Sept arranged by the Council.

Marieanne McDonald from Nourish Community Foodbank advised that Nourish was now 10 years old and acknowledged the help given over the years from different members of the Town Forum.

- A video was shown to the Forum and Marieanne went on to explain the impact that the years of austerity, the pandemic and the current cost of living crisis has had on the charity.
- The scale of the issue has affected not only food but fuel.
- Distributing fuel vouchers on behalf of the Government and the Council.
- Before Covid, Nourish did not have to spend any money on food as they were supported by the community. During Covid it was decided to give out fresh fruit and vegetables at a cost of £500 per month.

- Customers shopping online more frequently has impacted the amount of donations given in shops.
- £9,000 per month to supplement donations, that including the cost of the fruit and vegetables Nourish are spending approximately £115,000 per year to supplement and meet the need of the community.
- Help is needed, and members of the Forum are asked to support, volunteer, set up collection points and spread the word of the charity.
- Suggestions were welcomed in terms of how Nourish can get better know in the community.
- Charlie's Angels outside Rusthall Church was highlighted and members are asked to help.
- It was highlighted that The Black Horse pub were doing warm food.
- Nourish are registered with smile Amazon and easy fund raising.
- Beulah Road residents association are doing a Reverse Advent Calendar, this was explained and it was suggested that others could do the same for the month or the 12 days before Christmas. The donations will be delivered to Nourish. It was suggested that the donations could be broken up into weeks so a large donation wasn't delivered on 24 December.

## **ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS CONSULTATION**

- 9                    Adrian Berendt spoke about the Electoral Arrangements Consultation which was due to finish.
- The electoral arrangements for the for the borough council was changing.
  - There had been a move to see whether there should be all out elections every 4 years.
  - The Town Forum did not have any strong opinions on this however, one concern related to high brooms was raised.
  - Highbroom was considered much more a part of Southborough than Tunbridge Wells and the arrangements would have meant that some of Highbrooms would become part of Tunbridge Wells and it was felt that this should be opposed.
  - Members of the Forum were encouraged to review the information about the electoral arrangements in their area and to please make their views felt if they had any concerns.

## **UPDATE FROM THE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

- 10                    Councillor Justine Rutland spoke about the Town Centre plan.
- Workshops were undertaken in October which included pop up consultation and a town centre walking tour.
  - 45 invited stakeholders attend 3 workshops which were broken up into movement, public railway improvements and development.
  - The consultation included a talking point questionnaire that ran for over 4 weeks and there were over 500 respondents to the survey.
  - The consultants LBA were considering the information and preparing a draft study for consideration by the working group and that should be completed in early 2023.

Adrian B explained the process and how the consultants had grasped the challenges and opportunities for Royal Tunbridge Wells were.

- The workshops showed that lots of people had the same concerns.
- Members of the Forum are encouraged to take speak to residents groups about what they wanted to see in Tunbridge Wells and feedback the information.
- From the Local , it was felt that it was made clear from the Planning Inspector's comments that the Town Centre was a missing element.

Councillor Rutland spoke about the cinema site:

It was acknowledged that planning permission had been granted to Retirement Villages. Although this was not the decision the Town Forum had hoped for, thanks were given to those that came to speak.

Moving forward RVG were currently looking to finalise their legal agreement which the intention of this being concluded and a decision notice issued before Christmas.

RVG will now be securing a contractor and design team with a view to starting on site demolition and bulk dig late summer 2023, main contract and starting on site 2024.

They would be happy to provide a greeting to the Town Forum next year and were putting together a Comms team and plan to come back to Cllr Rutland about timings on that.

Councillor Rutland spoke about:

- Christmas lights in the town centre were mainly funded by Tunbridge Wells together BID and the Council has contributed.
- Extra lights in castle street and at the clock tower.
- The trees outside the Town Hall were lit with uplighters which the Council installed.
- Two switch on events in Chapel Place and the Pantiles that were well attended and very positive feedback from local businesses.
- BID gift guide featuring town centre businesses and these were being distributed to areas outside the local town including Sevenoaks and Crowborough to encourage visitors.
- Members of the Forum are encouraged to support local businesses and attractions.

Economic Development Updates included:

- The launch of Love Local\_Tunbridge Wells
- Small business Saturday event
- A tourism networking event at Trinity.
- Visit Kent will be holding their winter networking event at Trinity and Calverly Grounds Skating
- Consultation with businesses in the north end of the town centre related to the Market.
- 3 active travel schemes had been submitted to KCC for the possible inclusion in their Active Travel England and we should

hear by the end of December:

- Segregated cycle routes for the Pembury Road with bus priority.
- Low traffic neighbourhood pilot.
- Across town route via the Commons.
- Ukrainian Guests
  - Focus of Council is to find replacement hosts for those that are coming to the end of the original 6 month hosting agreement where the host does not wish to continue.
  - More funding has been issued by KCC to hosts to encourage them to extend their hosting.
  - Additional funding from central Government has not been secured.
  - Volunteers are needed
  - Weekly Newsletter issued by Council which provides updates.
- Cost of Living
  - Thanks were given to Nourish and Town Forum Members involved in the support
  - New digital hub [tunbridgewells.gov.uk/costoflivingsupport](https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/costoflivingsupport)
  - Members are encouraged to add information about areas that may be of benefit to others onto the hub.
  - [Warm.welcome.co.uk](https://warm.welcome.co.uk) is another website which will show you where your nearest warm room is.
- Dunorlan Park – Car Parking Consultation
  - Lots of engagement with local residents and users of the park
  - Most of the respondents drive to park and would not be willing to pay for parking.
- Cabinet
  - Cabinet meetings taking place across the borough.
  - Q and A sessions held after main Cabinet meeting and that section is not webcast. The next session will be held in the Town Hall but information on future venues will be disclosed in due course.

Answers to questions included:

- Town Square and the legal agreements should be determined by the end of the year. Town Forum are down to have some meetings in the Town Hall and other venues around the borough as well as virtual.
- Any suggestions of available venues are welcomed.

Jane Clarke outlined the updates from the Borough Council.

- Jane agreed to issue the slides so they can be circulated to the Town Forum members.

## REPORTS FROM THE TOWN FORUM WORKING GROUPS

- 11 Several of the working groups had submitted reports as per the agenda.

Michael Holman, Water in the Wells mentioned that the person reorganising the spring has a website that's up and running [www.royaltunbridgewellswater.com](http://www.royaltunbridgewellswater.com) and this can be used to get updates on progress and order water from the well.

It was suggested that feedback could be brought before the Forum about the Planning Inspector's comments on the Local Plan and the Council's reaction to this.

## **URGENT BUSINESS OR TOPICS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

- 12 It was suggested that feedback could be brought before the Forum about the Planning Inspector's comments on the Local Plan and the Council's reaction to this.

It was suggested that the person from the Youth Forum should have been invited to speak and this was agreed, they will be asked to speak more at future meetings.

Councillor Lidstone responded to a question about problems in St John's park and The Meadows:

- It was advised that gangs had been vandalising those parks and forced the café to close.
- It was not felt that enough had been done and future meetings with the Police and CSU along with the Friends of the Park were due to be set up. Information about those meetings would be circulated.
- Residents to the park are involved in monitoring the park and locking gates.

## **FUTURE MEETINGS**

- 13 The Chair closed the meeting and confirmed that the next meeting was scheduled for the 19 January 2023.



**Minutes of the ordinary meeting held on Thursday 19 January 2023, at 6pm  
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Royal Tunbridge Wells, TN1 1RS**

## **Attendance**

**1 Member Organisations:**

Beulah Road Residents' Association – Stuart Anderson and Chris Morris | Boyne Park Residents' Association – Sue Bishop and Dorothea Holman | Calverley Park Residents' Association – Jane Fenwick | Civic Society of Royal Tunbridge Wells – John de Lucy | Friends @ The Amelia Scott – Helen Mitcham | Friends of Grosvenor & Hilbert Parks – David Barnett | Friends of The Grove and The Avenues Residents' Association – Tim Tempest | Friends of Tunbridge Wells Cemetery – John de Lucy | Friends of Woodbury Park Cemetery – David Bushell | Grantley Court Residents Association – Lorna Blackmore | Inner London Road Residents' Association – Carol Wilson | Molyneux Park Gardens Residents' Association – Don Sloan | Nourish Community Foodbank and Sherbourne Close Management Committee – Marianne MacDonald | Soroptimist International of Tunbridge Wells and District – Caroline Auckland and Cat Mennell | St John's Road Residents' Association – Marguerita Morton | The Forum – Carolyn Gray | Tunbridge Wells Bicycle User Group – Adrian Berendt | Tunbridge Wells Friends of the Earth – Steve Walter | Tunbridge Wells Twinning and Friendship Association – Michael Holman | Upper Stone Street Residents' Association – Helen Featherstone | Warwick Park Residents' Association – Neil Williams.

**Councillor Members:**

Culverden ward – Cllr Justine Rutland and Cllr Martin Brice | St James' Ward – Cllr Ben Chapelard | St. John's ward – Cllr Marguerita Morton.

**Others in Attendance:**

Borough Council Officers – Lee Colyer (Director of Finance, Policy and Development (S151 Officer), Hillary Smith (Economic Development) Lara Mort (Youth Forum) Secretary – Louise Kellam

## **Membership Changes**

- 2** It was confirmed that Julia Soyke has replaced David Wakefield as Substitute representative for Tunbridge Wells Twinning Organisation.

## Spotlight on Safety in Tunbridge Wells

- 3
- Caroline Auckland, Soroptimist International Tunbridge Wells and District outlined some of the survey findings which outlined the safety issues faced by women in Tunbridge Wells
  - 'Reclaim the Night Walk' was undertaken between Rushall and Tunbridge Wells along with other members of the community
  - Along with Greg Clark, zoom calls had been held to address the issues of Catcalling and street harassment.
  - Followed by an invitation from Greg Clark to attend his second reading private member's bill on protection from sex-based harassment in public
  - This passed unanimously amongst all political parties, which will not go to the third reading in the House of Lords, to become an act of parliament and there by Law.
  - Tunbridge Wells Police are also in support of the bill
  - Additional Police patrol has led to decrease in violent crimes.
  - There have been several incidents of indecent exposure and the Community are being asked to continue to be vigilant and report anything suspicious
  - Disappointment was expressed - that there will be no S106 funding available to improve the unlit cycle path through Grosvenor and Hilbert Park.
  - Funding has been allocated for walking and cycling routes by KCC
  - A list of unsafe transport routes has been compiled and a Safety Walk has been set up in Rusthall Common to highlight these issues.
  - Cuts in bus routes (Rusthall, High Brooms, Sherwood, and the Hospital) will put those without their own transport at risk walking in the dark.

## Environment

- 4
- The Chair introduced Marieka de Jonge— local coordinator for Tunbridge Wells friends of the Earth.
- Marieka provided an update on the group and its activities they were doing as a group to raise awareness of climate crisis and encouraging people to take positive action
  - Connect with a network of local groups such as Soroptimists, Tunbridge Wells Fair Trade Group, Tunbridge Wells Bicycle user group to enable several events to be organised such as litter picking and tree planting
  - Using the car less shopping local and reducing packaging, as well as reducing food waste and recycling more goes a long way to helping the environment
  - Electricity and home insulation as well as solar panels would help with this
  - Work is currently under way with Greg Clark to organise a public meeting get a local electricity bill passed by government to allow communities to sell locally produced electricity directly to residents.

## Trinity Theatre Update

5 The Chair and board of Directors at Trinity Theatre, Steven James provided an update on the financial position of Trinity Theatre.

- Last three years has proven to be exceedingly difficult due to covid closures and other restrictions, and rapid inflation and the rise in cost-of-living has not helped.
- Pre covid levels of attendance are not returning which is alarming
- The Theatre relies heavily on ticket sales and café takings and people walking through the door
- However, seven hundred members and many valuable community groups do use the theatre. We were fortunate to received community grants which have now ended
- The theatre now has no national or local government funding, and it stands purely on its own
- Significant changes have been implemented along with some exceedingly tough decisions made to reduce staffing levels and costs by 20%
- Trinity is extremely fortunate that it has over one hundred volunteers which has been critical in supporting its operation.
- A new streamlined management team focusing on a new set of priorities which are combining a broad and interesting programme with the right commercial focus.
- The creative team are working extremely hard to on reaching out to many young children and helping with their speech development needs.
- Key object is making theatre more robust and self-sufficient financially for a sustainable future.
- The heritage clock tower is now due to open in April 2023 only made possible with the funding received from the National Heritage Lottery Funding and TWBC
- Trinity Theatre have expressed an interest in taking over the Pump rooms based in the Pantiles which will open Trinity to a new audience
- A fundraising campaign was launched at the Trinity latest AGM where it set a challenge to raise £15k by end of Jan and £100k by end March if achieved it will allow reserves to be built and will place the Trinity in a strong position to start 2023/24 Budget.



## Budget and Special expenses

6 Lee Colyer spoke about the Budget and Special Expenses.

- It was highlighted that the population in the Tunbridge Wells borough had stagnated
- The census showed a decline in younger population <15year olds had declined by 12%
- Whereas the older population >64 and over had increased what the data did highlight that the decline was focused primarily on the age range between 64- and 65-year-olds.
- This age range change could have significant implications for the borough going forward.
- Further information can be found on the ONS Website around the datasets and characteristics of the Borough's demographic by individual wards.
- TWBC Council is experiencing an increase in employment costs £835k due to high levels of staff turnover of >25% coupled with staff retention issues.
- Elevated levels of utility expenses have had an impact on the Council's costs. These do not include the running of the leisure centres.
- External contracts are running at an indexation rate of 16% which is adding an additional £1.3m costs to the running of the waste contracts, grounds maintenance and Leisure provision.
- The new administration reviewed several sales fees and charges which has resulted in additional income will come from Crematorium, Planning, Garden Waste and Car Parking.
- Council tax increase was capped at 3%.
- Council will receive additional grants from the Government to deal with homelessness, along with other grants which have been received.
- TWBC base line funding level which is £2.4 the first 4% of all business rates have been collected. For the first time in six years the borough council be receiving revenue support grant.
- Less new homes bonus is being received along with the removal of the lower tier two service grant.
- The current year's budget was balanced needing to draw on reserves of £944k therefore leaving the council with an issue where its income has not been sufficient to cover its expenses of around £1m.
- TWBC is not alone with this issue and all councils are facing major underfunding from government and are having to take extraordinary measures.
- The council's reserves of £20m will fall dramatically as it needs to carry out major capital works which require significant investment to keep safe and operational.
- Budget Survey has been sent out with a purpose to help educate and inform the types of services the council is responsible for along with the costs of running them.
- The survey information will be taken to feed into future decision and spending so far there has been over one thousand respondents feeding into the survey which adds more weight to the council's decision making.

## Answers to questions included:

- Why has the population not grown as expected – it was advised that although there was a large influx of new homes being built, well over a third of them are claiming single person discounts.
- A question was asked whether TWBC were aware of the number of empty properties in the borough, it was stated the number was a few hundred. The new administration has now introduced a council tax premium for empty properties to try and encourage these homes to be brought back into use.
- A question was asked whether the additional income had been calculated from the coworking space. This had not been calculated as the Town Square agreement had not been signed
- How does TWBC compare to other councils, as there are many councils going bust? It was advised that the majority of councils that have struggled is due to increases in children and social care costs which are draining those authorities, and the result of the poor decisions around assets. District councils do not have this type of exposure, but the deficits are real, due to the broad range of discretionary services being offered.
- Why have Employee costs increased?. It was explained that the increase in staffing cost was due to an increased establishment with the integrated service offered by the Amelia and staff from KCC have been TUPEd across, and the cost-of-living increase put in place.
- Will the reduction of working age people will this have an impact on the shared service working space,? It was explained that you need a balanced local work force, and when the data moved the council needs to react to it.
- What is the demographic mix of single persons claiming single person discount? This data of the population is not available, and it is thought the aging population is influencing this demographic.

## Civic Centre and Co-working Space.

7 Lee Colyer spoke about the Town Hall co-working space and what this means

- The Town Hall is over one hundred years old and now is far too big to meet the council's needs.
- TWBC costs to keep the town hall in good repair runs into the thousands, therefore TWBC advertised the space for a co-working opportunity
- A contract will be issued to Town Square for a 15 year term, which will enable the capital cost to be funded from them paying rent to the council.
- Town Square are also a business so will be left alone to run the remainder of the space and encourage other businesses to rent out space etc.

## Answers to questions included:

- The Town Forum asked how these changes would affect its usage of the Town Hall. They were advised that they would have to approach Town Square like all other organisations contact Town Square and agree a room hire rate etc.

## Update on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund/Levelling Up

8 Hilary Smith, Economic Development Manager provided an update

- TWBC received over £1m of funding over 3 years, from monies allocated amongst districts around the country which replaced European Union funding.
- It was explained that the money is split out over the 3 years as follows: (year 1 £91k) is allocated, (year 2 will be £182k) and the remainder in (year 3 will be £725k). These are rounded up figures.
- An investment plan, advising which projects TWBC intended to take forward, was submitted Aug 1. The confirmation to go ahead on these projects was received in December.
- RTW Street scene improvement spend is still not finalised and suggestions are welcomed from the Town Forum of any other ideas on how monies can be spent on improving the town centre.
- It is also hoped that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund might be matched by funding from the business improvement district and further ideas from the Town Forum members would be helpful.

## Answers to questions included:

- These negotiations started about 18 months ago why has there been such a delay? It was confirmed that Central Government was the issue.
- If the money is not spent is it lost? Due to lateness in response the government have allowed a level of flexibility to flow the money into year 2
- Creative Tunbridge Wells - will the work ~~roll on~~ undertaken since before the pandemic roll on? Initially the Arts Council England provided some funding and were keen to develop strategic partnerships to support the cultural and creative economy. This was renamed Creative Tunbridge Wells.
- £54,500 has been allocated to West Kent Business Support Scheme, can you expand on these schemes? It was confirmed that these schemes are focused on supporting people who are looking to set up new businesses or are new to business.
- A question was raised around micro businesses and what was meant by that term? It was confirmed as 5 members of staff or less.
- What are the criteria around Green Grants?, These small community grants are not available now and would be opened to others until years 2.

## Town Centre Area Plan

9 Sharon Evans, principal Policy Planning Officer provided on the progress on Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan.

- RTW local plan will focus on the vision and strategy for the town centre to ensure prosperity and success.
- LDA design have been commissioned to carry out work to look at retail and economic issues and city sights on transport and movement of decarbonisation
- Work started in early October which involved a walking tour with the consultants and members of the working group along with workshops, pop up shops and talking points consultation
- KCC, Highways team and neighbouring authorities, bus operators, RVP all provided input into the meetings to produce ideas for the town centre
- A public survey had 606 responses with 178 suggestions, along with a separate survey for local businesses.
- Major area for improvement was creating better links between the top and bottom part of the town along with creating more green spaces as well as addressing the congestion in the town
- More activities for younger families as well as better utilisation of RVP.
- Consultants are currently pulling all these ideas and suggestions together which will provide a master plan framework, to ensure all parts of the town work well together.

### Answers to questions included

- Would it be possible to advise what is meant by quick wins? These were in reference to the soft projects i.e., street scene improvement, working with business etc.
- Is there an expectation that the consultants will look at things which are contradictory, i.e., traffic congestion and air pollution on one hand and free parking on the other etc. It is important to look at the areas that have been identified and come up with a plan which steers the town towards more cycling, green spaces and Public transport which all came out very strong in the surveys etc.
- How did you address communicating with older people in the population as this sector may not have access to the internet or find form filling difficult. Regarding the engagement it was confirmed that close links were developed with the comms team to ensure the message was well publicised to ensure a wide cross section of people was reached.
- Was the traffic enforcement at the top end of town and a Farmers Market within your remit?. The enforcement was not part of their remit, however the TCAP is heavily involved in the reintroduction of a farmers' market.
- Can a proper consultation/presentation would be delivered to the Town Forum before publication.? – It was confirmed that several the TCAP working group sit on the town forum, where a presentation would be given, and all parties would be able to feed into the consultation.

## Update from Borough Council

10 Update provided by Justine Rutland (Cabinet Member for Tunbridge Wells Town and Local Areas.

- KCC have awarded TWBC £25k to deliver active travel plans including Langton Green/Rusthall to TW incorporating the Commons cycle route (£15k) and Low traffic neighbourhood in St. Johns (£10k). Funding to be spent by Jan 2024
- KCC Consultation which is being carried out in relation to Ark Children Centre in Broadwater which will be affected – further detailed to be circulated via a link after the meeting
- The Bid Director Sarah James Adams has moved onto a new opportunity. Five ways will receive 5 new planters to replace the old black plastic ones
- Changing Places toilets will open in RVP towards the Fenwick's end to replace the original one at the old Gateway, and a new one opening soon in Bedgebury.
- Amelia Scott is continuing to prosper with an increase in children visiting and borrowing books.
- An invitation to tender for a Farmers Market Concession has been placed on the Kent portal and can be found at ([Kentbusinessportal.org](http://Kentbusinessportal.org)). Please spread the message, to anybody who may be interested
- Plans for a council resident survey, have been postponed until later in the year.
- Community Support Fund, where six applications were received for the £100k, which was created to help provide financial assistance to help organisations within the community to support residents during the cost-of-living crisis, the community grant panel are hoping to meet next week to decide on the applications.
- Thanks was expressed to all Officers for their hard work and dedication.

### Answers to questions included:

- A question was raised whether the Council had £100k to give away. – It was confirmed that the Council had raised income during its in-year budget review and have allocated revenue from that.
- Mount Pleasant traffic enforcement will commence in early April

## Town Forum Working Groups

11 Detailed reports were distributed prior the meeting

- A tribute was paid to Bob Backhouse, and thanks was given to his contribution to the Green Network report in 2013/2014.  
A memorial service would be held in Sherwood later in January.

# Agenda Item 5

- Sally Balkan was also remembered for her contribution as being a founding member of the Town Forum and people were advised a memorial service will be held in March, details to be provided.
- The Culture, Leisure and Tourism Working Group are hoping to meet in shortly to kick start their activities.
- Finance and Other Issues Working Group, David Wakefield asked for support to input more effectively into the Budget for 2024/25

## **Urgent Business**

There was no Urgent Business raised

## **Future Meetings**

Next Meeting to be held Virtually on the 30 March 2023.



March 2023

### Town Forum in Action: Background/context for Forum meeting, 30 March 2023

#### **1. Who we are**

The Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum is a partnership between Residents' Representatives and ward Councillors in the Town of Royal Tunbridge Wells, the unparished area of the Borough of Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

It was formed in July 2005 with the purpose of addressing local issues.

See:

[www.townforum.org.uk](http://www.townforum.org.uk)

<http://townforum.org.uk/administration/townforumobjectivestermsofreferencejune2016.pdf>

<http://www.townforum.org.uk/terms.html>

- Gives the original 2011 constitution and then amended in 2016, plus amended aims and objectives, terms of reference.

#### **2. What we do (types of activities)**

-Communicate with councillors and critical friend to TWBC

-Encourage members to address their concerns to ward councillors and officers, and advise how to raise issues and speak at TWBC committees (e.g. Joint Transportation Board [JTB])

-Speak in support of member organisations at TWBC committees where appropriate (e.g. where issues have a wider concern)

-Respond to consultations, TWBC and others on behalf of the RTW TF and encourage RTW TF members to contribute and/or respond themselves

-Provide a platform for communications to and from our members and with other organisations. Presentations at meetings.

-Engage with the community, giving updates via meetings, minutes, and

Website: [townforum.org.uk](http://townforum.org.uk)

Facebook: [TownForumRTW](https://www.facebook.com/TownForumRTW)

Twitter: [@townforum](https://twitter.com/townforum)

Participate in TWBC Working Groups when invited

Identify needs and promote improvements in Royal Tunbridge Wells ideally before final plans are prepared and published for consultation e.g. in planning, transport, leisure, finance, environment, safety etc.

Persuade TWBC and developers to refresh existing, and install new, water features in keeping with the character of Royal Tunbridge Wells

#### **3. Recent significant actions**

## 3.1 Cross-Party Working Group

Chaired the Council's Cross-Party Working Group leading to:

- agreement on Town Hall co-working
- new outline strategy replacing Calverley Square

Participation in other working groups

- Town Centre Local Area Plan
- Ukrainian refugees
- Shared Prosperity Fund

For last year's actions see Chairman's report attached to November 24, 2022 AGM agenda.

## 3.2 Responded to consultations

- Tunbridge Wells Local Plan:

Responded to the Planning Inspector's questions under Stage 1 of the Public Examination; it is based on RTW TF 'Call for Sites' response and RTW TF 'Reg 19 Consultation' response and deals only with issues concerning the town Royal Tunbridge Wells (Planning Working Group February 2022). Participation in next stage.

- Towards Change – analysis of transport issues  
(Transport Working Group, June 2017)

- Town Centre Transport Plan (taking account of Covid and Climate change priorities): *The 'New Normal' for Transport in RTW*  
(Transport Working Group, Updated May 2020)

- National government consultation on Pavement Parking  
(Transport Working Group, November 2020)

- Vision for Royal Tunbridge Wells 2017-2033  
(Planning Working Group, February 2017)

- Stage 2 Cultural Hub (Amelia Scott Project)

- KCC consultation on Cultural Strategy  
(Culture, Leisure, Tourism Working Group, March 2017)

- Article 4 Direction for St James Ward (intended to be much wider coverage)

- TWBC Budgets  
(Finance Working Group, January every year)

## 3.3 Helped in conducting surveys

- Undertook with TF volunteers identification of all the alleyways, twittens and paths to ensure all are registered as PROW or have legal protection. Report produced, paths added to TWBC GIS.

Awaiting discussion on further action by TWBC re legal protection.

Referred two 'Lost Ways' to Ramblers Association for inclusion in their campaign.

-LCWIP (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans) pedestrian routes: assisted officers in walking survey of condition of proposed LCWIP routes in preparation for funding applications.

-Survey the benches in the town RTW



-Local List of Buildings of Architectural and Historic Importance

-High Street survey of businesses and public  
(resulting now in more attractive and one-way traffic street)

### 3.4 Provided Platform for presentations at meetings

This year:

- Local Government Boundary Commission England: LGBCE Electoral Boundary Review
- Updates on the Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Commons
- new plans for cinema site
- proposals for Chalybeate spring

### 3.5 Helped prepare way for easing traffic congestion / cycling

Through engagement with officers and councillors:

- pressure to reduce 'free' on street parking
- object to park and ride and bypass suggestions
- 20mph in residential areas (ambition is the whole town RTW)
- deter use of bus stand on London Road as a bus depot for school services
- 'Go' buses no longer drop children on Culverden Down
- High Street as one way street since 2021 (2nd year of Covid-19 lockdown)

-Continue to work with and defer to the expertise of TW BUG, Bicycle Users Group

-Took part in "Cycle Path for visitors" (2015-16).

### 3.6 Community safety

Pressed to keep CCTV in town

Asking for accessible public toilets for everyone

### 3.7 Water features

Campaigned for more water features, now added in Royal Tunbridge Wells e.g. at:

- Knightswood
- Royal Wells (old Kent and Sussex hospital site)
- 1887 The Pantiles

### 3.8 Culture, Leisure, Tourism

-Published Tunbridge Wells tourism and the cultural offer "*A place of pleasure and resort*" (Leisure, Culture and Tourism Working Group, January 2013)

>>> <http://www.townforum.org.uk/community/rtwtourismculture-report2013.pdf>

-Took part in and advised on projects such as Wayfaring Signage, Information Points, Map of RTW, tourism leaflet, Plaques for Historical Walks.

-Amelia Scott Culture, Arts, and Heritage Project:

Supported the strong views in the town against minimising her name to a 'brand' Amelia instead of full name 'Amelia Scott'

### 3.9 Environment

Published the "RTW Green Network" 2016

>>> <http://www.townforum.org.uk/community/rtwgreennetwork-report2016withphotos.pdf>

adopted by TWBC

## Agenda item 7

### Future meetings and Council support for RTW TF

#### Some discussion points

##### *Background*

- Council facing both acute financial pressure and pressure on its staffing capacity. The extent of future support is unclear. Appreciation is expressed by the Council for the value of 'our work across a range of issues to act as an interface between the work and policy setting.'
- We were set up as being dependent on the Council i.e. no budget, need for meetings venue, and GDPR data protection considerations are important.

##### *How to respond?*

- We would need a different constitution to operate independently, perhaps with a different role. We'd have to register separately for GDPR.
- in the longer term we could perhaps be replaced by a Town Council as in Sevenoaks, but there have been difficulties there. Without the Town Forum there would be a democratic deficit for our town centre.
- Large numbers of virtual meetings may limit our effectiveness.

##### *Future meetings and venues*

- A virtual meeting is arranged for 18<sup>th</sup> May, no other options currently available at the the Council throughout May.
- For meetings after that at the Town Hall we are subject to what the Council can arrange for us through Town Square who control the Council Chamber and room bookings for all non-Council meetings. Council CEO enquiring on our behalf.
- Possibility of a 'community hire rate' and perhaps Council setting up a small budget for that.
- Meetings at other venues? Camden Centre, Sherwood, Showfields, Amelia Centre? Pump Room though not sure who to approach. Could businesses help? Plenty of possibilities but they need funding.
- The lack of microphones and projection facilities at alternative venues would impact the quality of presentation that could be provided at our meetings.

##### *Operational support*

- Operational support: currently Council provides help with arranging the main meetings (six per year), agenda setting, contacting speakers (Council officers and staff, and others outside), writing minutes, also setting up and note taking for Management meetings (around 6 per year).
- Bearing in mind our role and what we contribute through our time, participation in partnership groups and the reports we produce (see Town Forum in Action sheets attached) we look to the Council for continuing support
- Organisations have changed in the way they operate in recent years. Could consider an even greater focus on our Working Groups that already do most of our work. Have public meetings, electronic magazine to disseminate information?

## TWG report to the RTW Town Forum on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Members: Jane Fenwick (chair), David Scott, Katharina Mahler Bech, Chris Ferguson Gow, Peter Lidstone, Carol Wilson, Lorna Blackmore, Ian Rennardson and Adrian Berendt. Last met on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023

1. **Active Travel:** £25,000 from the Government's 'Capability Fund' awarded to KCC has been allocated to TWBC to design pedestrian and cycling infrastructure schemes. The two initiatives being considered are:
  - a. Local engagement with residents in St John's and St James's about motor vehicle related issues and possible solutions, particularly in relation to improving the safety and comfort of walking, including, for example, the walk to schools in the area.
  - b. To design new cycling infrastructure between Langton Green-Rusthall-Tunbridge Wells to include new cycle paths adjacent to existing pedestrian paths on Major York's Road and Mount Ephraim.
2. **Mount Pleasant traffic monitoring:** In the week before the enforcement of traffic controls on Mount Pleasant between Church Road and Monson Road began, TWG members, councillors and others undertook a traffic count for an hour. Located at Monson Road, York, Dudley and Newton Roads and the traffic lights at Church Road, they observed 264 vehicle movements. This compares to 459 movements on the first count in March 2019. About 1,800 pedestrians were seen walking along Mount Pleasant in that hour which is significantly more than the number of vehicles observed. Of the total 264 recorded movements, 175 were 'illegal' and that level has more than halved since the count in March 2019 suggesting that drivers are increasingly aware of the restrictions. The latest count on March 17<sup>th</sup> this year showed similar results to the count last month.

The group has produced a draft report highlighting observed issues and potential solutions. The main concerns are the safety of the Monson Road crossing near the Amelia Scott, any potential increase of motor vehicles using York and Dudley roads as cut-throughs and entry signs to the scheme.
3. **Public Transport Forum (23<sup>rd</sup> February):** a) Network Rail reported that as part of its Long Term Strategic Planning (10-20 years ahead), it is looking to improve connectivity between Kent and Gatwick Airport via a direct service between Tonbridge and Gatwick with connections with Ashford and the Tunbridge Wells and Hastings line. Preliminary work has been considering timetable viability between Redhill and Gatwick where the capacity issues are the greatest, and potential infrastructure changes to stations and tracks along the route to improve capacity and reliability of potential services.

b) Bus operators reported concerns about the impact on service levels should the financial support from Government and KCC end. Arriva reported passenger levels are 81% of pre-Covid levels. The £2 maximum bus fare scheme which bus operators said has had little impact on passenger numbers, is being extended for another 3 months. Brighton & Hove buses reported that illegal parking on the bus stand on Meadow Road is threatening the future of that service from Brighton which terminates in RTW. The drivers need to park up to rest there before the return journey.
4. **Parking:** It is understood that a new Parking Strategy taking account of the changed work, travel and retail patterns post pandemic is to be produced by TWBC to inform their final decisions on whether to dispose of some car park assets. This strategy is to be incorporated into the Town Centre Area Plan as part of a broader movement plan for the town centre.
5. **Cycling event:** TWBUG has organised a public cycle ride on the A26 on 9<sup>th</sup> June. For details see below.

# CRITICAL MASS BICYCLE RIDE

**Tonbridge**  
*Railway Station*

If the A26 was cycle friendly,  
potentially 100s of school children  
could use it every day.

*Cycle to School*



**to Southborough Common**



*Cycle to Work*

Two rides: both converging at  
**Southborough Common**, before  
returning, or continuing as you wish.

**Tunbridge Wells**  
*Fiveways*

## 6:30pm Friday 9th June

TONBRIDGE AND TUNBRIDGE WELLS  
**TBUG**  **TWBUG**  
**BICYCLE USERS GROUP**

Book your place: **Eventbrite.com**  
Further information: **twbug.org.uk**  
Contact: **hello@twbug.org.uk**

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