



ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM

Minutes of Meeting dated Thursday 17 December 2009

1. Present:

Stuart Anderson (Beulah Road Residents' Association), Daniel Bech (Telephone House Neighbours' Association), John Cunningham (Royal Tunbridge Wells Civic Society), Michael Doyle (Hawkenbury Village Association), John Higgs (Hanover and Rock Villa Residents' Association), George Lawson (Inner London Road Residents' Association), Katharina Mahler (Telephone House Neighbours' Association), Ian Naismith (Hanover and Rock Villa Residents' Association), Peter Perry (Calverley Park Crescent Freeholders' Association), Kate Sergeant (Clarence Road Users Association), Christopher Thomas (Chairman of Town Forum, The Goodwins No's 1 & 2 Residents' Company/Woodbury Close Residents' Association), Mary Wardrop (Hawkenbury Village Association and Chair of Sherborne Close) and Philip Whitbourn (Beulah Road Residents' Association).

RTW Ward Councillors: Peter Crawford (RTW TF Vice-Chairman, Broadwater), Barry Edwards (Rusthall), John Miller (Culverden), Frank Williams (Sherwood) and Chris Woodward (St John's) and Roy Bullock (Leader of the Council),

Others in attendance: William Benson (Director of Change and Business Support), John Davies (Chairman of Kent County Council) and Christine Davies, Rodney Stone (Clerk, Commons Conservators), Alan Legg (Principle Design and Heritage Officer), Samantha Timms (Senior Committee Administrator) and Mary Harris (Courier).

2. Apologies:

Town Forum Members: George Carey (NW Kent Access Groups), John Goodfellow (Banner Farm Residents' Association), Michael Holman (Tunbridge Wells Twinning & Friendship Association), Altan Omer (Benhall Mill Road Land Association), Simon Smith (Inner London Road Residents' Association) and Alastair Tod (Royal Tunbridge Wells Civic Society).
Councillors Mrs Tracy Moore (St John's), Leonard Price (Culverden).

(Christopher Thomas in the Chair for the duration of the meeting.)

3. Membership Changes

No membership changes were reported formally, however, the Chairman did stated that Arthur Hutchins would be standing down as Chair of the 4RRA at the end of the year due to him moving outside of the Borough. This would be confirmed at the January's meeting of the Town Forum.

4. Minutes of Last Meeting Dated 26 November 2009

The Town Forum agreed that these minutes would be agreed at the next meeting of the Town Forum dated 28 January 2010.

<http://www.townforum.org.uk/minutes/minutes17122009.pdf>

5. Reports from Borough Councillors

Councillor Bullock – Informed the Town Forum that following the Full Council meeting on 16 December 2009, William Benson was appointed as the Council's new Chief Executive; this would take effect from 1 February 2010. The Town Forum congratulated William on his success and wished Sheila Wheeler all the best in her new position as Chief Executive at Somerset County Council.

Councillor Bullock also stated that Jonathan MacDonald, Director of Regeneration and Sustainability, would join the Council on 15 February 2010.

6. Reports from Champions/Vision Committee

Meeting with Targetfollow – Daniel Bech informed members that on **Friday 11 December 2009**, Christopher Thomas and he met with Jeremy Aldous and Harry Savory of Targetfollow at the Corn Exchange, Pantiles, to discuss various topics, which are of interest to the Town Forum.

- 1) Rejuvenation of the Pantiles – There are no plans filed yet.
- 2) The possibility of routing the Town Centre Bus Links / 'Shopper Hopper' buses through Linden Park Road and High Street – Targetfollow welcomed these ideas. This will be raised at a future meeting with Arriva Bus.
- 3) The possibility of Targetfollow to let the Town Forum use an empty shop on the Pantiles for a short period at no rent was discussed; Jeremy Aldous said that this was feasible.
- 4) Jeremy Aldous informed that some offices on the Pantiles would run out of their leases in 2014. DB said that there is a Local Economy & Housing Select Committee on 7 January 2010 giving a recommendation on how South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) / West Kent could work together more efficiently with the borough. He will update Targetfollow in due course.
- 5) Within the rejuvenation programme a substantial amount of planters and troughs will be put up on the Pantiles. CT suggested that these could be planted by schools participating in the "Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom" initiative. Staff of Targetfollow could then maintain the planters. Jeremy Aldous welcomed this idea.
- 6) DB suggested that Kent Highways would facilitate a cleaning up and decorating of RTW roundabouts, provided there would be volunteers or sponsors ready to take on the involved works. Jeremy Aldous showed interest, as there might be a chance to erect a small sign raising awareness of the Pantiles at the London Road / Eridge Road roundabout.
- 7) The opportunity to organise a "Weinfest" in Royal Tunbridge Wells was discussed.
- 8) Jeremy Aldous suggested that there should be regular meetings with the Town Forum.

Local Development Framework – Core Strategy Hearing Session – Matter: "Royal Tunbridge Wells"

– Philip Whitbourn stated that he and Daniel Bech had attended the Independent Examination's Hearing Session relating to Royal Tunbridge Wells on the morning of **Friday 4 December 2009**.

The Town Forum noted that the Inspector, Roy Foster, had been provided with a copy of the Town Forum's formal submission (January 2008 on the Core Strategy). The Inspector had allowed a presentation by Philip under issue 5 of the day's agenda and the presentation sought to reinforce key points in the Town Forum's document, coupled with an attempt to assist the Inspector on such other matters as had been raised at the Hearing.

A summary of the main points - including relevant documents/comments/submissions of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum during 2007-2009 concerning Core Strategy / Town Centre Area Action Plan: <http://www.townforum.org.uk/consultation/ldfcorestrategyhearing041209.pdf>.

Cinema Site - Application for a Stopping up Order on claimed footpaths – Phillip Whitbourn had attended the Western Area Planning Committee dated **7 December 2009**; at that meeting the footpaths across the Cinema Site were discussed. The Committee had agreed the following recommendation:

“That an Order, in a form to be prepared by the Legal Services Manager/Monitoring Officer, be made under s257 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to Stop Up the claimed footpaths and that an agreement be entered into in accordance with s35 of the Highways Act 1980 for the creation of two walkways, and that if no objections to the Order be received, or any such objections are withdrawn, the Order be confirmed. If objections are received and not withdrawn, the Order be sent to the Secretary of State for confirmation.”

The minutes of the Western Area Planning Committee meeting can be found on the Council’s website: <http://www.twbc-apps.co.uk/committee/westplan/minutes/09-10/09dec09/09dec09.pdf>

Cinema site / RTW Conservation Area at Risk – Members were reminded that on the 16 July 2009, questions regarding Cinema site / RTW Conservation Area at Risk were asked to Councillor Leonard Price (Culverden Ward, RTW). On **17 December 2009**, a reply was received from Trevor Gasson, TWBC Interim Director of Development & Planning.

Cinema site / RTW Conservation Area at Risk - Combined Questions/Answers:
<http://www.townforum.org.uk/community/qa160709cinema-rtwcaatrisk-reply171209trevorgasson.pdf>

7. Any Other Business

RSPB – The Chairman reminded members of the Town Forum that should they wish to raise an objection to the authorisation of the Forestry Commission to allow 100 hectares of woodland into open heath and mire habitats, they had six weeks from 4 December 2009 to do so as per email previously sent.

8. Dates of next meetings of the Town Forum

2010

- o 28 January 2010 at 6.30pm
- o 25 February 2010 at 6.30pm – Gateway update
 - introduction by Mary Wardrop (Hawkenbury Village Association)
 - presentation William Benson (TWBC Chief Executive), Denise Shortall (Customer Services Mgr)
- o 25 March 2010 at 6.30pm
- o 22 April 2010 at 6.30pm
- o 27 May 2010 at 6.30pm
- o 24 June 2010 at 6.30pm
- o 29 July 2010 at 6.30pm
- o 30 September 2010 at 6.30pm
- o 28 October 2010 at 6.30pm
- o 25 November 2010 at 6.30pm
- o 16 December 2010 meeting
 - provisional, there is a possibility of holding this meeting in a different venue and at a different time.

28 January 2010 is the next full Town Forum - Any reports/short papers to be emailed / posted to Samantha Timms by no later than 10am on Tuesday 12 January 2010.

9. The Chairman thanked all those present for attending and wished everyone a happy Christmas and New Year. The meeting came to a close at 7.05pm.