



ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM

Minutes of Meeting dated Thursday 19 April 2007

1. Present:

Jenny Alexander (Rusthall Village Association), Daniel Bech (Telephone House Neighbours' Association), Jennifer Blackburn (Rusthall Village Association – Vice-chair), June Bridgeman (Soroptimist International), John Cunningham (Royal Tunbridge Wells Civic Society), Betsy Dix (Calverley Park Crescent Freeholders' Association), Michael Doyle (Hawkenbury Village Association), Bruce Goodwin (Grove Hill Residents' Association), Matt Goodwin (Village Residents Association – RTW TF Chairman), Richard Gould (Calverley Park Crescent Freeholders' Association), John Higgs (Hanover Road and Rock Villa Association), Michael Larsen (Friends of the Grove), George Lawson (Friends of Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Commons), Ian Naismith (Hanover and Rock Villa Association), Keith Perry (Benhall Mill Road Land Association), Altan Omar (Benhall Mill Road Land Association), Gill Twells (Royal Tunbridge Wells Civic Society), Mary Wardrop (Hawkenbury Village Association), David Webster (Clarence Road Users' Association), Christopher Weller (Calverley Park Association), Philip Whitbourn (Beulah Road Residents' Association),

In attendance: Councillors Peter Bulman, Mrs Catherine Mayhew, Leonard Price.
 Nicholas Ide (invited by Telephone House Neighbours' Association).
 Jim Watson (invited by Cllr Leonard Price)

2. Apologies:

Graham Bradley (Rock Villa and Hanover Residents' Association), John Goodfellow (Banner Farm Residents' Association), Michael Hicks (Inner London Road Residents' Association), Michael Holman (Tunbridge Wells Twinning and Friendship Association), Patrick Shovelton (Inner London Road Residents' Association) and Christopher Thomas (The Goodwins 1&2 Residents' Company)
 Cllr Roy Bullock, Cllr Peter Crawford, Cllr David Wakefield.
 Samantha Timms – TF Secretary/TWBC Senior Committee Administrator (RTW TF Minutes by Jennifer Blackburn)

3. Membership Changes

Patricia Smith (The Goodwins No 1 & 2 Residents' Company) has resigned as a member of the Town Forum.

Grace Thomsett-Hill (Clarence Road Users' Association) has resigned as a member of the Town Forum; David Webster continues to be the representative for the Users' Association and that her position would be filled shortly.

4. Minutes of Last Meeting Dated 22 March 2007

The minutes were agreed, subject to the following amendments:

Amendment to minute 8 'Transport Committee Workshop Discussion Paper'- third paragraph, bottom line. (proposed by Mr Higgs)

Remove 'and' before 'urgent discussions with rail undertakings' and replace the full stop with a semi-colon. Add the following after that semi-colon 'and fixed penalty tickets for vehicles parked on pavements irrespective of yellow lines; control over obstructions on pavements including A-Board and hoc café furniture.'

Amendment to Minute 10 'Reports from Committees - Housing and Environmental', third sentence (proposed by Christopher Thomas)

Remove the words 'he had had a meeting' and replace with 'all Members of the Housing and Environment had met'.

5. Matters Arising/Actions Completed from the Meeting dated 22 March 2007

Actions outstanding from 22 March 2007 Town Forum:

- Action 5.2 – Matt Goodwin agreed to contact Janet Naim regarding the job description for the Press Officer.
- Action 5.4 – Councillor Bullock informed the Town Forum that the land ownership for the strip of land between the Station and Morrison's car park was still ongoing and he would report back to the next Town Forum meeting on the progress being made.
- Action 5.5 – Matt Goodwin stated that he had not yet met with the other Directors and that he would circulate the dates to the Town Forum as soon as possible.
- Action 9.1 - That Jenny Blackburn submits the Town Forum's views/amendments as above in writing to the Commons Conservators.

Actions:

- 5.1 Matt Goodwin to contact Janet Naim regarding the job description for the Press Officer.
- 5.2 Councillor Bullock to report back to the next Town Forum meeting on the progress being made on land ownership at the Station/Morrisons.
- 5.3 Matt Goodwin to circulate the dates of his meetings with the Directors to the Forum as soon as possible.
- 5.4 Councillor Scholes invite a TWBC Officer to attend the Town Forum on 24 May to discuss the Tour de France route and times.
- 5.5 That Jenny Blackburn submits the Town Forum's views/amendments as above in writing to the Commons Conservators.

Actions Completed:

- Action 5.1 - That the Committee Administrator would contact Councillor J Cunningham again and ask for the reasoning behind the charge £25 per item for disposal of bulky waste. See Gary Stevenson's response, appendix A to these minutes.
- Action 5.5 - Mr Goodfellow agreed to email the Committee Administrator with his questions again and that the Committee Administrator would put them to Robert Cottrill for reply.
- Action 5.6 – Councillor Scholes invite a TWBC Officer to attend 24 May Town Forum meeting to discuss the Tour de France route and times.
- Action 6.1 - That any member who has any ideas as to the new Tunbridge Wells logo to submit them direct to Councillor Wakefield or to Di Talbot, Publications Manager.
- Action 7.1 - That Councillor Bullock speak with Kent County Council as to the new taxi stands and report back to the next full Town Forum meeting with an update. Ongoing correspondence between Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Joint Transportation Board and Kent County Council.
- Action 8.1 - That the Town Forum welcomes and endorses the ideas set out in "Getting around Tunbridge Wells – Residents' Views" as a contribution on behalf of residents of Royal Tunbridge Wells to the development of more effective transport policies for their town.
- Action 8.2 - That the Town Forum urges Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to disseminate them for wider debate and to consider them as a key input to the preparation of the proposed Town plan, the update of the Borough Transport Strategy and the roll forward for the Community Plan.
- Action 8.3 - That Matt Goodwin, Chairman of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum, arrange a meeting with Kent County Councillor Ferrin, Portfolio Holder for Highways, together with Borough Councillors Cunningham, Portfolio Holder for Environment, Davies, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Highways and Economic Development and opposition leader, Mills, to discuss the document and to receive a detailed response to each of the matters that the report raises.
- Action 8.4 - That the "Getting around Tunbridge Wells – Residents' Views" be submitted to the next available Tunbridge Wells Joint Transportation Board.
- Action 8.5 - That East Sussex County Council, Wealden District Council, Network Rail, Arriva and any other partners be supplied with a copy of the document.
- Action 10.1 - That the Vision Committee liaise with the Housing and Environment Committee to ensure that duplication does not take place between the two committees. Ongoing.
- Action 10.2 - That 'Equality' be added to paragraph (6).
- Action 12.1 - That Daniel Bech write a formal letter of complaint to the Planning Department and to Sheila Wheeler, Chief Executive, outlining the Town Forum's objection to the development of a commercial car park opposite 8 York Road, Tunbridge Wells. Awaiting reply.
- Action 12.2 - That the Cosmos Restaurant letter received by John Higgs be circulated to all Town Forum members for their information.

6. Report from Borough Councillors

Councillor Mayhew informed the Town Forum that a Homelessness Strategy was out for consultation with a deadline of 24 April 2007 and answered questions about sites, allocations and criteria.

Councillor Bulman reported on the outcome of the recent Audit Commission visit. "Fair and Improving" but we needed to demonstrate more progress over time, particularly in the area of "clarity of purpose" and action plans.

He also reported the change of Leader of the Council, Councillor Bullock would be the new Leader as from 23 May 2007; he had constituted a Cabinet of five portfolio holders, namely: Councillor Mrs Mayhew, Housing; Councillor Horwood, Finance; Councillor Scholes, Leisure; Councillor Mrs Thomas, Planning; and Councillor Barrington-King. It was noted that the titles of the portfolio holders and the new Leader of the Council would be approved at the Annual Council meeting due to take place on 23 May 2007.

Actions:

- 6.1 Please ensure that public consultation papers be brought to the Town Forum's notice well before the deadline for response.
- 6.2 Matt Goodwin had written to the Chief Executive regarding the funding of Transport Report "Getting around Tunbridge Wells", a reply needs to be sought.

7. Presentation by Sean Clark, Head of Finance and Property Services

Sean Clark, Head of Finance and Property Services, gave a presentation to the Town Forum regarding revenue budget and consultation. A copy of the presentation was circulated to Members of the Town Forum for their information (Appendix B, sent under separate cover).

Questions raised by Members of the Town Forum covered: the investment of £33 million reserves and what return was being achieved; spending of this capital sum on projects to improve the environment; provide benefits for residents. Sean stated that a "Reserves Policy" was needed to address these issues. The question of value for money for the council tax paid by residents and monitoring of Council contracts were also raised.

Special Expenses for the town of Tunbridge Wells were also explained and Sean was of the opinion that these would need to be reviewed.

8. Reports from Committees

Planning Committee (formerly Town Forum Strategy Committee) – Members of the Town Forum were informed that the meeting in June would not be a workshop like the Transport experience. It would be more educational about the process of the Local Development Framework and its constituent parts. A copy of the Transport Development Framework response to the local Development Framework Core Strategy consultation was provided. Brief details of work carried out recently had also been circulated.

Townscape and Street Scene Committee – Nothing further to report.

Vision Committee – Nothing further to report.

Transport Committee – June Bridgeman reported that the Joint Transportation Board had given its full support to the "Getting round Tunbridge Wells" report, saying that it was a constructive document. Councillor Scholes had suggested that the Town Forum should have a seat on the Joint Transportation Board in order to engage with officers more.

The question of printing costs was raised since June had funded the costs of some copies herself. It was suggested that since the Town Forum had no budget, each residents' association should make a £10.00 donation to be match funded by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

Housing and Environmental – Nothing further to report.

Actions:

- 8.1 That clarification be sought as to whether the Town Forum may have a seat on the Joint Transportation Board.

9. Any Other Business

- (A) **Street Lighting** – Street lighting in private roads was to be funded by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council; everyone who had contributed to the campaign was congratulated.
- (B) **Excessive Speeds on Forest Road** – Michael Doyle raised the issue of excessive speeds along Forest Road on the Land Registry corner. He asked if the Town Forum could purchase the speed monitoring equipment for loan to local areas wishing to carry out monitoring.
- (C) **Health Committee** – Philip Whitbourne asked whether there should be a separate Committee for Health in view of the important discussions taking place.
- (D) **Issues relating to Sean Clark's Presentation** – June Bridgeman asked David Webster if he would be willing to look into the issues arising from Sean Clark's presentation and report back.
- (E) **Capital Reserves** – Michael Larsen raised the issue of how to spend the capital reserves. There was some discussion and the Town Forum were reminded that any proposals had to meet the Council's four priorities. There were no conclusions.

Action:

- 9.1 That David Webster prepare a short report on the most important issues arising from Sean Clark's presentation.

10. Dates of next three meetings of the Town Forum – The Town Forum agreed to the following:

- Thursday 24 May at 7.30pm – Tour de France to be included on the agenda.
- Thursday 28 June 2007 at 7.30pm – Planning Committee Education Workshop relating to the processes of the Local Development Framework.
- Thursday 26 July at 7.30pm

24 May 2007 Town Forum - Any reports/short papers to be emailed/posted to Samantha Timms no later than 10am on Thursday 10 May 2007.

APPENDIX A

Action 5.1 Bulky Waste Charge - 22 March 2007 Minutes

Reply for the Town Forum.

"Why do the Council charge £25 per item for bulky waste collection - surely this would encourage fly-tipping?"

The Council makes a charge of £25 for the collection of bulky waste items to:

- 1) to encourage people to consider the alternative options available to put the items to reuse or be recycled; and
- 2) contribute to the cost of providing the service.

The charge is waived for people in receipt of housing/council tax benefit. It has not been increased since 1st April 2006. We did not see an increase in fly tipping when the charge was increased last year. There is some flexibility over what constitutes an 'item'.

Gary Stevenson - Head of Environment and Street Scene Services