



# ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM

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**Thursday 21 July 2016**

**Attended:** Caroline Auckland (sub), Sally Balcon, David Barnett, Lorna Blackmore, Mark Booker, Stephen Bowser, John Cunningham, Michael Doyle, Alex Green, Dorothea Holman, Michael Holman, Bill Kern, Linda Lewis, Cllr Peter Lidstone, Katharina Mahler-Bech, Brian Lippard, Stuart Macdonald, Cllr Tracy Moore, Marguerita Morton, Christian Nouyou (sub), Charles Pope, Cllr Catherine Rankin, Cllr Don Sloan, Tim Tempest, Alastair Tod (Chairman), David Wakefield (sub), Mary Wardrop, Denise Watts, Philip Whitbourn (sub), Cllr Lynne Weatherly, Pat Wilson and Cllr Chris Woodward

**TWBC officers present:** Jane Clarke (Head of Policy and Governance), Kelvin Hinton (Planning Policy Manager), Jane Lynch (Head of Planning Services) and Mike McGeary (Democratic Services Officer)

**Also present:** Cllr Alan McDermott (Deputy Leader and Portfolio-holder for Planning and Transportation), Cllr David Jukes (Leader of the Council), Cllr Jane March (Portfolio-holder for Tourism, Leisure and Economic Development) and David Scott

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were reported from: Cllr Bob Backhouse, Cllr Ronen Basu, Adrian Berendt, Cllr Peter Bulman, Cllr Ben Chapelard, Jane Fenwick, Tim Harper, Sue Kaner, Sally Manning, Cllr David Neve, Angela Phillips (sub), Nick Pope and Anne Stobo.

### 2. MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Mike McGeary reported that the Town Forum's Management Committee had approved an application for membership which had been submitted by the Calverley Park Gardens Residents' Association; their substitute member, Christian Nouyou, was welcomed to the meeting. Mr McGeary also advised that Bob Atwood had stood down as the Chairman of the Friends of Tunbridge Wells Cemetery and therefore from membership of the Town Forum.

Mr McGeary also reported that: (a) a new substitute member had been appointed by the Calverley Park Residents' Association, namely Deborah Cooper, in place of Martin Prentice; and (b) Stuart Macdonald would be attending the meeting on behalf of the Calverley Park Crescent Association, as part of their 'rolling' representation, pending the appointment of a permanent representative.

### 3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman, Alastair Tod, made the following announcements:

**(a) Chairmanship of the Culture Working Group** – Mr Tod advised that, with Mr Atwood standing down from membership of the Town Forum, he was keen to have a new chairman of the Culture Working Group in place without too much delay. Mr

Tod added that, with that in mind, he had asked Linda Lewis to act as the Group's Chairman, pending confirmation of her status as a member of the Town Forum.

- (b) **Vice-Chairman of the Town Forum** – Mr Tod also advised that Adrian Berendt had been appointed by the Town Forum's Management Committee as the second Vice-Chairman (a post which had remained vacant since the AGM) for the remainder of 2016/17.
- (c) **Link with Senlis, Picardy** – Mr Tod said that he had been advised that Senlis, a small, historic town some 25 miles north of Paris, was keen to establish some form of relationship with Royal Tunbridge Wells. He advised that this approach had been made through Probus, adding that it was a proposal which he felt would bring mutual benefits. Mr Tod asked that, if any member wished to take an active role in progressing this issue, he would happily provide the necessary contact details.

#### 4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting dated 19 May 2016 were submitted for approval.

Mike McGeary advised that Jane Fenwick had requested the following amendment to minute 7 (public realm improvements to the town centre – phase 2) to be made.

Page 5, second paragraph (beginning "Mrs Fenwick raised a number of other..."):

In place of "She urged that nearby residential streets should be protected from excessive parking by contractor vehicles", Mrs Fenwick had said that she had asked this to be changed to "...protected from use by contractor vehicles".

**RESOLVED** – That, with the above amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2016 be approved.

#### 5. ACTIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

##### 7 Public realm improvements to the town centre

Mr McGeary advised that a planning application had been made by the owners of the CAU restaurant for the exterior 'table and chair' area. The application, which would normally be determined by Planning officers under delegated powers, had been 'called-in' by a councillor and would therefore be considered by TWBC's Planning Committee, on a date not yet agreed. He added that, as part of the application, consultation with Kent Highways had shown that KCC would be minded to grant a suitable licence for an area up to 2.5m from the building, which Mr McGeary pointed out was less than the current usage.

Mr McGeary advised that the Borough Council had contacted the Valuation Office Agency to enquire whether a review of the rateable value of the premises was required, to reflect the external commercial activity, in case this impacted on the business rates due. However, the Agency had said that, as the existing rateable value contained provision for an outdoor seating area, there would be no adjustment made.

The Chairman added that at the last meeting, TWBC's Head of Environment and Street Scene had advised that, with similar infringements on the Pantiles, the Borough Council had no power to act because this was not public highway land, but in the freehold ownership of Targetfollow. Mr Tod pointed out that the use of the pavement for seating etc was subject to planning control and

consent had recently been given for a number of establishments on the Pantiles to use part of the pavement. He added that the planning authority could enforce against unauthorised use but that, in practice, this was difficult.

10 TWBC's Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee work programme

Mr McGeary advised that the proposal agreed at the last meeting – to ask the O&S Committee to consider adding “a study of the importance of taking a co-ordinated approach in project planning, such as has been illustrated in the next phase of the public realm scheme” had been forwarded to the Scrutiny and Performance Officer. (The ‘co-ordinated’ approach is reference to the need to take a wider look at the implications of such projects in terms of highways, traffic flow etc.)

Mr McGeary advised that this suggestion would be considered by the O&S Committee at its 15 August meeting and would feed back the outcome after that date.

## 6. UPDATE REPORT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Cllr David Jukes, Leader of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, provided the following update on issues of general interest:

**(a) The civic complex** – Cllr Jukes advised that TWBC’s plans to move to the next stage in its investigations into new offices and a replacement theatre had been approved at the Full Council meeting the previous evening. He added that, since this issue had last been reported to the Town Forum, the proposed tenants for part of the new offices had advised that their plans had been placed ‘on hold’, as a direct result of the Brexit vote. Cllr Jukes added that, while the Council was still on course with its plans, the timescale would be adjusted, to take account of the need to reach agreement with an alternative tenant. He advised that the previous timescale for completion of the building, which had largely been influenced by the prospective tenant’s requirements, would be reviewed.

Cllr Jukes advised that a suite of marketing documents would now be produced, adding that there was a good degree of buoyancy in that sector of the market. He said that the authority should be in a position to be able to apply for planning permission by the end of the current financial year, but that the start of the construction phase would not begin until an agreement for occupation had been signed with a tenant.

David Wakefield voiced his delight that the Full Council had approved moving on with the next phase of the new offices scheme and his appreciation for the openness of the Leader’s update report. He acknowledged that now was a good time for the authority to be seeking funding, while interest rates were so low. He was also pleased that the clear plan was for flexible use of the new offices and that the scheme would also see the retention of the existing Town Hall for alternative uses.

As for a new theatre, Mr Wakefield expressed some doubt, based upon the uncertainties of securing a sufficient income stream to justify the high capital cost. However, he added that, if sufficient quality shows and concerts could be offered, he hoped that a new theatre could attract audiences such as those who attended the Glyndebourne Festival – and maybe even Continental visitors who traditionally enjoyed ‘comic operas’.

Cllr Moore suggested that an argument to win over the doubters of this scheme was to stress the benefits of taking a long term view and emphasise the following: that a sensible investment now would bring about a legacy of an exciting new theatre and flexible-use accommodation – not just representing good business sense but resulting in facilities of which the town will be justly proud.

**(b) Devolution** – Cllr Jukes reported that discussions between the Kent districts and KCC over the transfer of certain powers had led to an agreement which, pre-Brexit, was to form the basis of a proposal being made to central Government. He advised that the EU Referendum result had meant that it was extremely unlikely in the short term that the Government would now have time to consider any such devolution proposals and so the decision had been made to postpone submission of the bid.

Alongside the bid, Cllr Jukes advised that KCC and the district councils were working in clusters (namely, North, East and West) to deliver more streamlined and joined-up services. He added that this was particularly the case where service responsibilities overlapped, such as Highways and Public Health. Cllr Jukes explained that West Kent, which was Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Sevenoaks District Council and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, was working closely together with KCC to understand whether it was plausible for certain highway functions, such as repairing potholes, to be transferred down to a district level.

Stephen Bowser welcomed the news. With the prospect of what amounted to a West Kent-based local government unit, he asked where its offices would be located.

Town Forum members learnt that, although the councils were still at an early exploratory stage, it was Cllr Jukes' own view that, in time, while each existing council would retain its own sovereignty, the operational delivery of services could be through some type of shared arrangement. He felt the timescale for this scenario was probably over a five to ten year period. Cllr Jukes stressed that the planned new offices for the Council were relatively unaffected by the devolution initiative, as the Borough Council – in whatever staffing numbers it ended up with over that time period – would end up with a flexible-use building which could continue to generate a potentially increased rental income.

John Cunningham sought confirmation that the proposed devolved highways powers would include the filling in of potholes. Cllr Jukes confirmed that this was being looked at.

Marguerita Morton also welcomed the devolution plans, especially the highways element, an issue upon which she said the Liberal Democrats had campaigned for a number of years. She asked whether the Borough Council had been guaranteed the required funding to be able to carry out proper highway maintenance.

Cllr Jukes said that he had asked KCC to provide confirmation of the actual cost of such maintenance as the basis of more detailed talks. He added that the districts had asked that a number of Kent Highways contracts (such as soft landscaping), which were due for renewal in the next three years, be rolled-over until it was clear how they would be commissioned. This, he added, would result in a more competitive process, leading to potential savings being achieved.

Michael Holman sought clarification over the timings of phase 2 of the public realm scheme and the impact of that on the proposed Cultural and Learning Hub development.

Cllr Jukes advised that it was vital that phase 2 of the public realm scheme and the highways element of the Cultural and Learning Hub were designed together, even if their implementation took place at different times. He added that, before that, he wanted the remedial work under phase 1 of the public realm to be completed satisfactorily.

Michael Holman also asked who the lead officer was for the public realm scheme, which Cllr Jukes confirmed was Gary Stevenson, the Head of Environment and Street Scene.

Cllr Moore suggested that, rather than the proposed Kent model of devolution simplifying local authority services, there might be a danger of creating a further layer of bureaucracy.

Cllr Jukes believed that, in the long term, the opposite could be the case. He envisaged a structure where three local authorities (East Kent, North Kent and West Kent) each served a population of approximately 350,000, with KCC operating a residual strategic authority role and significant savings being made in the number of councillors and staff across the county.

Cllr Jukes added that he would also like more devolved powers to be given to parish and town councils.

Mark Booker welcomed the devolution initiative, particularly the highways aspect. Bearing in mind the town's proximity to East Sussex, he asked whether any thought had been given to including Wealden District Council in the partnership. Cllr Jukes advised that he was in regular contact with the Chairman of Wealden, adding that he had many discussions about cross-border issues. However, he added that, although that channel of communication was open, he did not believe that a cross-county agreement would be possible.

In conclusion, the Chairman thanked the Leader of the Council for his helpful update and for answering so many detailed questions on the topics.

There were no specific actions points agreed.

## 7. SITE ALLOCATIONS LOCAL PLAN

Kelvin Hinton, TWBC's Planning Policy Manager, advised that the Full Council had approved and adopted the Site Allocations Local Plan at their meeting the previous evening. He added that this marked the final part of a lengthy process of identifying sites and areas for development across the Borough, as well as those which will be protected. It was noted that the Town Forum had played an active role in this process, with its detailed response to the draft Site Allocations document in 2014.

Mr Hinton advised that the Planning Policy team had already turned its attention to the next major task, namely a review of the Local Plan. He added that the key issues which the authority faced included the Government's: (i) push for more housing and for greater economic growth; and (ii) policy of a reduction in the protection of the countryside.

On the issue of housing supply, Mr Hinton said that many people had been asking why the situation had changed so rapidly from the existing requirement of the Borough accommodating approximately 300 additional units per annum to the latest estimate of 648 each year. He advised that this was entirely down to a change in government policy, where a process known as 'objectively assessed need' was the main driver in

arriving at the number of housing units which should be built across the Local Plan period.

Mr Hinton advised that key stakeholders in the Borough would be formally consulted on the review of the Local Plan, including the Town Forum. He advised that the first formal consultation would take place in the Spring of 2017, with the first full draft of a revised Local Plan scheduled for formal public consultation during the summer of 2018.

Mr Hinton said that one of the key elements which the Local Plan would look to address was to balance the competing demands of 'growth' (e.g. in housing, businesses, retail provision, leisure facilities etc) against 'constraints', (such as heritage, countryside amenity, avoiding congestion, preventing flooding etc). He added that the consequent need for infrastructure provision, such as roads, NHS services, public transport, schools etc, was a similar balancing process and a key feature of the review.

Specifically on housing provision, Mr Hinton advised that, under the existing Local Plan, 75% of all such growth was scheduled to occur within the Tunbridge Wells and Southborough town areas, thus one option which would be considered within the review would be to examine the possibility and the practicality of growth areas across other parts of the Borough.

The Chairman then opened up the issue for member debate.

- Brian Lippard referred to the Site Allocations Local Plan, specifically one of the identified 'areas of change' at Vale Avenue. He asked what the Borough Council's approach would be to this with potential developers, in other words, with the pressure to deliver large numbers of housing units, would there be a relaxation in terms of density and design.

Mr Hinton advised that many of the existing planning policies had been rolled forward into the new Local Plan period, which would protect the density and quality aspects of future development in the scenario described.

- Philip Whitbourn focused on the 20-year horizon of the new Local Plan. He asked whether, with discussions about local government structure across the county looking at the possibility of a West Kent authority, there was a similar approach which could be taken with housing and economic growth.

Mr Hinton advised that there was already a well-established process of regular discussions with both Sevenoaks and Tonbridge & Malling councils. He added that Sevenoaks faced a similar set of constraints as Tunbridge Wells in terms of its Green Belt land and its Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. With Tonbridge & Malling, Mr Hinton advised, with less such constraints, a good response had been received to the 'call for sites' process, leading to them being in a more advanced position at this stage of the review. However, Mr Hinton stressed that there was a 'duty to co-operate' amongst local authorities in the planning process, which would ensure that discussions would continue, more likely with Tonbridge & Malling, he added.

- The Chairman, Alastair Tod, sought clarification over the existing 2006 Local Plan policies. Mr Hinton advised that some policies had been 'rolled over', as a result of the saving of policies in March 2009, the adoption of the Core Strategy in June 2010 and the adoption of the Site Allocations Local Plan. He added that

an updated list of Local Plan 2006 saved policies would be available shortly on the Council's website.

- Stephen Bowser advised that, as part of the Government's policy of encouraging growth in housing numbers, he was aware that a significant number of units were being provided through the conversion of redundant factory buildings.

Mr Hinton acknowledged the point, adding that local authorities would be required to play a more active role in facilitating the process.

- John Cunningham referred to the Local Plan review engagement process. He asked whether formal interest and amenity groups – such as Chambers of Commerce, the Civic Society etc – would be consulted.

Mr Hinton confirmed that this would be the case, with formal consultation taking place as a key part of the engagement process.

Mark Booker, Chairman of the Forum's Planning and Development Working Group, presented his group's report, which focused on TWBC's 'call for sites' consultation – the starting point for the Local Plan 2013-33 review.

He began by suggesting that some of the assumptions that sat behind the 'objectively assessed housing need' should be queried. Without some form of clarification of these assumptions, Mr Booker maintained, the increase in housing stock within Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough, across the Plan period, would result in an extra 9,720 units and a population increase of 20,000 (in excess of a 25% growth) if the current percentage allocations to different towns and villages in the Borough were maintained.

Mr Booker acknowledged the need for affordable housing, but he questioned the reliance within TWBC's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) of 2015 upon market housing for most housing need; he believed that market housing tended to draw in new residents from outside the Borough instead of providing for proven, rather than theoretical, need.

One of the key assumptions which Mr Booker felt should be queried was employment. He advised that the SHMA stated that employment had flat-lined in the town over the past 25 years, but was forecasting 16% growth in the next 20 years, based upon government forecasting models. He felt that, without substantial new allocations of employment land, it was most unlikely that the town would see significant employment growth, adding that this factor should influence the computation of housing numbers.

Mr Booker also advised that four further 'areas of change' had been identified, which the Working Group would like the Borough Council to consider. He summarised the rationale behind each of these as part of his presentation.

- Cllr Moore reassured Town Forum members that the Tunbridge Wells town members on the Borough Council's Planning Policy Working Group took every opportunity to argue that a policy of applying the 75% growth in housing numbers just within Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough was unsustainable.
- Cllr Rankin strongly endorsed that view. She advised that she had, for some considerable time, argued the case for a more equal balance of town and rural members on the Working Party, with recent history showing that the urban part of the Borough had been poorly represented. She added that the building of

more homes had been very heavily focused on Royal Tunbridge Wells rather than any other parts of the urban area.

Cllr Rankin added that there was a further problem associated with the steady delivery of housing within Royal Tunbridge Wells, namely that it had largely been achieved without the accompanying infrastructure gains required to support the additional growth. Cllr Rankin advised that, as a result, she had led a move towards examining the option of 'garden villages' for the Borough. She added that a garden village in the order of 5,000 homes would provide a major boost towards the Borough meeting its housing needs over the coming 20 years.

(For anyone interested in learning more, the following link is to a central government prospectus on 'garden villages/towns and cities, 'DCLG Locally-Led Garden Villages, Towns and Cities prospectus March 2016'): [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/508205/Locally-led\\_garden\\_villages\\_towns\\_and\\_cities.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/508205/Locally-led_garden_villages_towns_and_cities.pdf)

Mr Booker agreed with this initiative, adding that such a proposal might ideally link with the existing Tonbridge to Ashford railway line for ease of commuting access. He added that the 'duty to co-operate' under which planning authorities worked should help with promoting the garden village proposal.

- David Wakefield thanked both Mr Booker and Dr Whitbourn for their helpful and informative contributions. He added that he was keen to see housing provided that focused on accommodating 'key workers' (such as NHS staff, police staff, teachers etc) and not a continuation of homes that increased the numbers of middle-income families.
- Denise Watts felt that there should be greater emphasis not on affordable 1-bed flats for purchase (because of the high service charge that accompanied this type of accommodation) but on affordable accommodation for renting.
- John Cunningham was keen to reverse the trend for Tunbridge Wells increasingly becoming a 'dormitory' town, with large numbers (reportedly up to 30,000 people daily) commuting out of town for their employment, replaced by a similar number coming in for the same purpose.
- Alex Green welcomed the initiative led by Cllr Rankin. He asked (a) what the next steps were and (b) if there were any ways in which the Town Forum could assist.

Cllr Rankin advised that the Department for Communities and Local Government had invited expressions of interest from local authorities for making a bid for funds to employ consultants to investigate and build the case for a garden village. She added that TWBC had accepted that such an investigation was a necessary option as part of the review of the Local Plan. Cllr Rankin felt that, if the authority made a pledge to the establishment of a garden village, over (say) a 10-year period, it might be possible to reduce the immediate pressure for more housing, as the authority would be able to show its commitment to a more progressive project.

Cllr Rankin also said that local authorities had been encouraged to identify more areas for economic growth through a government-led proposal that the resultant business rates could be retained, to support councils in their service provision.

She also responded to the point raised by John Cunningham: she felt that, whatever the figures, residents who commuted for their employment were more likely to be from the higher professional groups, with those coming into the town from lower-graded areas of work. She believed that it was in the town's interest to look to redress that imbalance, adding that the way in which 'quality' employers could be encouraged to establishing their businesses in Tunbridge Wells was largely through boosting the town's vibrancy and attractiveness.

- Dr Whitbourn asked whether Mr Booker's proposed response to TWBC's 'call for sites' consultation process might be slightly amended, to take account of the 'garden villages' initiative raised by Cllr Rankin. Mr Booker signalled he was happy to do so, subject to the agreement of the wider Town Forum membership, in the context of housing numbers in the town area.
- Michael Holman supported this proposal, adding that he would like to see greater use of the 'garden village' phrase, in order to boost the understanding and acceptance of the concept.

**RESOLVED** – That Mr Booker's recommended response to TWBC's 'call for sites' consultation, as set out in the agenda, be amended to include support for the 'garden village' initiative and the altered paper be approved as the Town Forum's formal submission.

## 8. ACTIVE TRAVEL STRATEGY

A copy of the Town Forum's response to a consultation document produced by KCC had been circulated with the agenda; it related to the County Council's 'Active Travel Strategy'.

It was noted that responsibility for preparing the Town Forum's response had been taken by members of the Transport Strategy Working Group. Generally, the view was expressed that not only did the Town Forum support KCC's ambition to make 'active travel an attractive and realistic choice for short journeys in Kent', but it would like to see this as the preferred mode for all short journeys. Where the Active Travel Strategy fell short, it was suggested, was in its lack of any specific targets or funding for actions.

Under the section of the consultation form where respondents were asked to raise any other issues, it was noted that four additional points had been set out, covering: (i) poor air quality for pedestrian and cyclists acting as a barrier to active travel; (ii) a proposal that KCC might want to consider amending its school place allocations policy in favour of those who can walk or cycle to school; (iii) the impediment created by pavement parking; and (iv) encouraging the devolution of certain highways functions to the Borough Council, in order to better meet local needs.

Due to the deadline set by KCC, the response circulated to Town Forum members had already been submitted to the County Council, following the approval of the Town Forum's Management Committee.

The submitted response was endorsed by the Town Forum and no specific action points arose from this report.

## 9. WORKING GROUPS

Update reports were made from the working groups as follows:

**Transport Strategy** – Attention was drawn to the update report prepared by Jane Fenwick, the Acting Chairman of this working group, which had been circulated with the agenda.

In addition, Stephen Bowser, a member of the Working Group, read out an update report from Irene Fairbairn, the Chair of the Tunbridge Wells Anti-Aircraft Noise Group (TWAANG), which advised that the organisation had been appointed as a member of the newly-constituted Noise Management Board set up by Gatwick Airport Ltd.

**Planning and Development Strategy** – Mark Booker, Chairman of this working group, reported on a number of key planning-related topics, details of which were circulated in his informative update report.

Mr Booker added that the next presentation being offered to Town Forum members by TWBC's Planning Policy team was taking place on 20 September at 1.30pm.

Michael Holman urged Town Forum members to read this update report, as it provided a clear guide to some of the problems which the Planning service was currently facing in terms of government policy and further legislation.

**Water in the Wells Working Group** – Michael Holman, Chairman of this working group, provided a detailed update report. He drew attention to the logo for Water in the Wells, produced with the assistance of a design student from West Kent College. He further drew attention to the establishment of the charity 'Refresh Tunbridge Wells', which had now established CIO ('Charitable Incorporated Organisation') status.

Mr Holman's update report included an impressive list of water-related projects that had either been completed (or near-completion) or fell into one of the following categories: under construction; infrastructure in place; planning under consideration; or under review. A list of potential sites identified in the draft Public Art Strategy document was also set out.

Mr Holman drew attention to two items of significance: (i) at Royal Wells Park, Berkeley Homes had installed a major water feature running the whole length of the development, with a water table at the top, stepped rill and three cascades down through the site centre to two separate features at the lower end. He said that Berkeley Homes had also installed three new Wiesbaden bicycle stands, fronting Mount Ephraim; (ii) the issue of concern, Mr Holman advised, related to the Chalybeate Spring on the Pantiles, where Mr Holman expressed concerns over the shabby appearance of the building housing the spring and the continuing lack of an overall plan for its management. He invited suggestions as to how this situation could be improved.

**Tourism and Leisure** – The Chairman of the Town Forum advised that John Cunningham had made a proposal for a number of heritage trails across the town, more details of which would be provided at the September meeting of the Forum.

**Finance and Other Issues** – David Wakefield, Chairman of this working group, advised that there were no specific issues to report on.

**Culture** – Linda Lewis, Chairman-elect of this working group, summarised her first update report. She drew attention to two items of significance for the group, namely: (i) it was felt that TWBC's proposals for a new theatre should be added to the Working Group's remit; and (ii) there was a strong feeling that the group needed to be better informed about the 'journey' of the Cultural and Learning Hub and be able to provide input at appropriate times, not when it was too late to influence key decisions.

Michael Holman referred to the sentence in the report which described the group's need to "...hear, listen and comment and input.." to the development of the Cultural and Learning Hub. He asked Mrs Lewis if her group was satisfied it was obtaining what was needed. Mrs Lewis said that this was an aspect which she would discuss with Jo Wiltcher, the Museum Manager, at the next meeting of the group, taking place on 1 August.

**RESOLVED – That the progress reports be accepted.**

## 10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) **Residents' parking – Boyne Park** – Dorothea Holman reported that the Boyne Park Residents' Association had applied for a residents' parking scheme; she added that this had been considered at the most recent meeting of the (TWBC/KCC) Joint Transportation Board. Dr Holman voiced her dissatisfaction with how this item had been dealt with at the meeting, with the outcome likely to have an adverse impact on parking within the wider area. She felt it necessary to share these concerns with the Town Forum membership.
- (b) **TWBC support for Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations** – Tim Tempest wished to record his residents' association's appreciation for the financial support provided by TWBC for local celebrations held in June, to mark the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. David Wakefield voiced similar thanks on behalf of the Inner London Road Residents' Association.
- (c) **Women's Local Government Society** – Cllr Rankin advised that the Women's Local Government Society (WLGS) was looking to commemorate 100 women nationally who had been active leaders in local government in 1918. She added that she had asked TWBC to apply for a grant from the WLGS, as there had been local women playing a significant part in democracy at that time.

Cllr Rankin said that expressions of interest could be received up until November this year. She invited the Civic Society or local historians, who might have information on women in local democracy (which may include local government or local institutions such as health boards) or suggestions about how they could be commemorated to inspire others, to contact her direct.

- (d) **Heritage Open Days** – John Cunningham advised that, once more, Heritage Open Days would be taking place from 8 – 11 September across the Borough. He added that there were 42 places/events which members of the public could visit, with Mabledon reappearing on the list after a long break, as well as a current archaeological dig site. Mr Cunningham said that a full programme would be published in mid-August.

## 11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 22 September 2016 at 6.30pm

The meeting concluded at 9.00pm.