



ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM

Minutes of Meeting dated Thursday 25 March 2010

1. Present:

John Cunningham (Royal Tunbridge Wells Civic Society), Betsey Dix (Calverley Park Crescent Freeholders' Association), Jane Fenwick (Calverley Park Association), John Goodfellow (Banner Farm Residents' Association), Michael Holman (Tunbridge Wells Twinning & Friendship Association), David Morris (Rusthall Village Association), Christopher Thomas (The Chairman of the Town Forum and 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 (Vice-Chairman and Broadwater), John Miller (Culverden), Mrs Tracy Moore (St John's) and Frank Williams (Sherwood).

Others in attendance: Mary Burgess (Tunbridge Wells Girls' Grammar School) and Samantha Timms (Senior Committee Administrator).

2. Apologies:

Councillor Ronan Basu (Culverden), Daniel Bech (Telephone House Neighbours' Association), Councillor Bullock (Leader of the Council), Michael Doyle (Hawkenbury Village Association), Councillor Barry Edwards (Rusthall), Maggie Fraser (Tunbridge Wells Over Fifties' Forum), George Lawson (Inner London Road Residents' Association), Councillor Mrs Catherine Mayhew (Park), Peter Perry (Calverley Park Crescent Freeholders' Association), Councillor Price (Culverden), Altan Omer (Benhall Mill Road Residents' Association), Kate Sergeant (Clarence Road Users' Association), Simon Smith (Inner London Road Residents' Association), Alastair Tod (Royal Tunbridge Wells Civic Society) and David Webster (Clarence Road Users' Association).

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

3. Membership Changes

Councillor Frank Williams informed members that Sherwood would now be represented at the Town Forum by Zoe Jangaard, Trustee of TN2 and Alison Brown; this would be confirmed at the April's meeting of the Town Forum.

Christopher Thomas introduced Mary Burgess, a psychology and sociology teacher at Tunbridge Wells Girls' Grammar School is the School Council Coordinator and lead on pupil voice. Mary thanked the Town Forum for her warm welcome and informed members that the Girls' Grammar School had recently been awarded the Bronze Award for being an Eco-School. The School was now working towards achieving the Silver Award.

4. Minutes of Last Meeting Dated 25 February 2010

The minutes were agreed, subject to the following amendments:

Amendment to minute 11 Any Other Business', first paragraph
Summervale House should read Summerhill House (number 73 London Road).

Amendment to minute 11 'Any Other Business', Front Garden Parking, first paragraph to re-read as follows:

The Council as urged by the Town Forum and the Civic Society was piloting a survey of front garden parking in two areas. This would enable the Council to make directions to bring this under planning control. The Town Forum and the Society had offered help with the operation, and since the Council had responded to our initiative, the Town Forum should volunteer some help with the survey, and potentially for other work if the Council proceeded with directions. Any Town Forum members who were willing and available after Easter to get in touch with Alastair Tod direct.

Second paragraph to follow:

For members' information the an Article 4 Direction started with a presentation by the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum to the Borough Council's Local Economy and Housing Select Committee last year, on 15 January 2009, entitled 'In Royal Tunbridge Wells, Front Gardens turned into Car Parking Spaces'. Below is a link to that presentation:

www.townforum.org.uk/community/frontgardensparking-leh150109.pdf

Matters Arising: None.

5. Actions from Previous Meetings

On-going Action

That all representatives from **any association/member to provide details of activities** that they had undertaken and/or want to promote to Daniel Bech in order for them to be included on the Town Forum's website so that all members could know what was happening. This is particularly important so as to avoid duplication of activity and to show a single voice for Councillors to deal with.

The Chairman, Christopher Thomas, reiterated the fact that if any association/member wishes other Town Forum members to be aware of their organisation's activities, they need to inform Daniel Bech in order for them to be included on the Town Forum's website. All representatives are reminded to inform the Town Forum of concerns held by residents, who may not be represented on the Town Forum, but wish for a platform to raise such concerns.

Actions Outstanding from the Meeting dated 26 November 2009

- 4.1 Graham Goddard to contact the Ambulance Service for clarification on their reorganisation proposals for a 'make ready' centre.
- 4.3 Graham Goddard to seek clarification from Kent & Medway Social Care Trust on whether in-patient services are/will be provided from Maidstone.
- 4.6 Graham Goddard to look to provide a 'who does what' chart on their website which could also be sent to the Town Forum for publication.

Samantha Timms informed members that she was in regular contact with Graham Goddard who was chasing up on the actions.

Actions Outstanding from the Meeting dated 28 January 2010

- 9.1 Councillor Crawford to contact the Town and Country Housing Group regarding wheel clamping and inform Mr Sharma of the response.

Update dated 25 February - Councillor Crawford gave an update to the Town Forum and stated that this was an on-going action which would be resolved in due course. The signage regarding wheel clamping in the Ramslye area was not adequate and needed to be looked into further.

Actions from the Meeting dated 25 February 2010 – There were no actions set at the 25 February 2010 meeting.

6. Reports from Borough Councillors

Councillor Miller – Informed members that Ward Walks would be carried out in the Culverden area in June 2010; the timetable was as follows:

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Wednesday 9 June | 10am - 2pm |
| Thursday 10 June | 1.30pm - 5pm |
| Saturday 12 June | 10am - 12noon |
| Monday 14 June | 1.30pm - 5pm |
| Tuesday 15 June | 4.15pm - 7.15pm |
| Thursday 17 June | 4.15pm - 7.15pm |
| Friday 18 June | Additional date to use if required: 10am -12noon |

7. Town Forum's Aims and Objectives Review

It was agreed at the last meeting that the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum's Aims and Objectives would be agreed at this meeting. The ideas for the Forum's aims and objectives considered at the January 2010 meeting were as follows:

Town Forum's Objectives:

- Improve the town's streetscape and maintain the historic character of its buildings and features
- Improve public transport and private vehicle access and support improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists
- Support and initiate environmental initiatives such as Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom
- Support the maintenance and development of public housing and public services
- Act as expert local champions/experts to support current local issues
- Maintain and improve parks, open spaces, and playground facilities
- Other issues as they arise
- Encourage energy efficiency by residents, business and TWBC
- Encourage sustainable strategies for residents and businesses

Local issues:

- Highlighting and removing grot spots
- Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom
- Cinema site development
- Public transport to new Pembury Hospital and future development of K&S site
- Consulting with KCC concerning transport and street lighting issues

Town Forum's Aims:

1. Royal Tunbridge Wells be cleared of Grot Spots (with priority on the Ritz Cinema Site Building during 2010)
2. Kent Highways (KCC) delivers the promised "high standard" regarding roads, pavements, streetlights and signs
3. The town centre of Royal Tunbridge Wells becomes more pedestrian friendly
4. Trading be reintroduced at the former Morrison's site, Station Approach
5. Adequate and appropriate leisure facilities be made available for ALL ages
6. Royal Tunbridge Wells be promoted as a centre for art and culture
7. The Royal Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area be actively defended
8. Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom be re-launched in 2010
9. Improve and expand parks and open space, utilisation of the Commons
10. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's cost cutting
11. Support and develop employment and businesses within the borough

Since the January meeting, a Town Forum group (Daniel Bech, Jane Fenwick, Michael Holman) had met on 5 March and had submitted revised Aims and Objectives for the Town Forum to agree, which were attached to the 25 March agenda and are set out below. <http://www.townforum.org.uk/administration/aimsobjectives08032010-rtwtf250310.pdf>

Revised Aims and Objectives:

1. Royal Tunbridge Wells be cleared of Grot Spots (with priority on the Ritz Cinema site building during 2010).
2. The Royal Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area be actively defended (removal of Royal Tunbridge Wells from the English Heritage declared 'at risk' list; participation in the Town Centre Area Action Plan).
3. Kent Highways Services (KCC) delivers the promised "high standard" regarding roads, pavements, streetlights and signs.
4. Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre be made more pedestrian friendly (enforcement of bus gate, no parking on and removal of obstacles from pavements).
5. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council maintains and improves parks, open spaces, and playgrounds and leisure facilities for ALL ages.
6. Royal Tunbridge Wells be promoted as a centre for art and culture (re-launch of Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom; support for Trinity).
7. Energy efficiency and sustainable strategies for residents and businesses be encouraged.
8. Employment and businesses, health services and public transport be supported and developed within the town (trading be reintroduced at the former Morrison's site, Station Approach).
9. Future special expenses and other expenditure relating to Royal Tunbridge Wells - the unparished area of the Borough of Tunbridge Wells - be considered.

Various comments had been received from Cllr Chris Woodward, Kate Sergeant, John Goodfellow and Daniel Bech; a summary of their comments/suggestions is as follows:

- Councillor Chris Woodward – Provide and improve local community facilities (NB Parishes, etc getting new community halls. St John's losing, or potentially losing TOCH Hall in Silverdale Road area) and what was Aim 10 saying – it just mentions 'cost cutting'.
- Kate Sergeant – Leisure Facilities, may it be suggested that the Town Forum broaden this to 'Community' facilities. General observation that whilst the Town Forum's objectives were quite specific about the built environment, they did not seem to acknowledge the importance of the *people* of the area – perhaps the Town Forum could add something like '...to enrich the lives of all the people of Royal Tunbridge Wells'.
- John Goodfellow – Amendment to Aim 4 – Delete "enforcement of bus gate".
As Transport Champion, I provided a detailed report on the "bus gate" which stands accepted by the Town Forum. This report found that the bus gate is as pedestrian friendly as elsewhere in town, and strict enforcement would, if anything worsen the situation in the town centre as a whole.

The general Aim to make the town centre more pedestrian friendly includes the bus gate area, and is therefore a sufficient and appropriate statement of the Town Forum's aims in this respect.

If another specific aim is desired in its place, I suggest this could be "20mph speed limit in the town centre", so successful in many other towns, and not costly to provide but making a town decisively more "pedestrian friendly".

Support for the maintenance of Planning Protection for the Eridge Railway Line

– Aim 8 includes support for public transport and its development within the town.

This could be taken to include support for the prospect of re-connecting TW Central to the West Station, but not necessarily any further. There is considerable support and desire in Sussex to get rail re-connection from Lewes to Uckfield and from Eridge to Tunbridge Wells (Central); and for Tunbridge Wells to co-operate with them to achieve this re-connection which, if fully developed, could significantly reduce the town's road congestion. Re-connection is a stated aim of the Town Forum's "Getting Around Tunbridge Wells" compiled by June Bridgeman.

Transport to Pembury Hospital - The need for improvement to bus services to the new hospital is recognised; but the equally great need to improve car parking facilities is not, and should be included.

- Daniel Bech – Aim 5 – insert the words '*Community and*' before 'Leisure'.

Outlined to members of the Town Forum were the differences between aims and objectives; aims were broad and long term, whilst objectives were short term and more specific. It was suggested to the Town Forum that a separate list of specific objectives be written along side the aims and objectives being agreed. It was also made clear that the sentences in brackets within the revised list were current objectives and it was felt that the Aims and Objectives' document should be brief and to the point and that more specific objectives, such as John Goodfellow's comments, should be incorporated within a separate objectives' document. Councillor Williams asked that when compiling the specific objectives, could improving traffic congestion and pollution along Longfield Road, the town centre, St John's Road and Pembury Road be included.

After discussing the comments and suggestions detailed above, it was agreed that Aims 4 and 5 be reworded slightly to read as follows:

4. Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre be made more pedestrian friendly (*integrity* of bus gate, no parking on and removal of obstacles from pavements).
5. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council maintains and improves parks, open spaces, and playgrounds and *community and* leisure facilities for ALL ages.

The Town Forum also agreed that the aims and objectives be visited on a yearly basis but with updates on any progress being reported back to the Town Forum accordingly.

AGREED:

That the Aims and Objectives listed above, including the two amendments and as shown in Appendix A to these minutes, be agreed.

8. Reports from Champions/Vision Committee

Transport Update – John Goodfellow provided the Town Forum with an update. He stated that the periodic revision of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Transport Strategy was now underway. He stated that the revised Strategy would have due regard to the joint status of Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge as a Regional Hub which required a range of multi-model transport services to support its higher order economic, cultural and service activity.

The Town Forum was assured that all comments/views/suggestions received from residents' groups, individuals, Select Committees and Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum would be taken into consideration when compiling the Transport Strategy. It was noted that formal

consultation would take place with key stakeholders in May/June 2010, with wider consultation with the community taking place in the summer 2010.

Councillor Mrs Moore stated that the members' report (namely Councillors Ransley and Neve) on the Draft Transport Strategy referred to above was being submitted to Cabinet on 29 April 2010. Members were also informed that the members' report was the opinion of two councillors and not the Council's opinion. Cabinet on 29 April will consider the members' report together with the actual report on the Draft Transport Strategy being submitted by the Head of Economic Development and Regeneration.

John also informed members of the re-connection of the railway from Tunbridge Wells to Eridge and beyond; this was considered by the Council's Local Economy and Housing Select Committee. Councillor Mrs Moore stated that a presentation had been given on the Uckfield Line at the Tunbridge Wells Transport Group; this line was protected within the Local Plan.

Jane Fenwick asked that the bus network be improved, not just clean and tidy buses but low emission buses. Councillor Mrs Moore stated that the Quality Bus Partnership, which had now been established for two years, was successful and was improving fleets and encouraging the companies to lower the emissions.

"Cleaner & Greener Royal Tunbridge Wells" - RTW Town Centre Walk 4 March 2010
(Daniel Bech, Ronen Basu, David Elliott, Christopher Thomas.

It was agreed that this subject be deferred until 22 April 2010 when more members of the Town Forum would be present.

9. Any Other Business

Street Inspections - Kent Highway Services (KHS) and Tunbridge Wells officers had carried out the first four street inspections to identify: areas of paving which needed maintenance or reinstatement due to use of inappropriate materials; street cleansing issues as well as street furniture and signage issues. A large amount of work had been carried out in Crescent Road, Church Road and part of Mount Ephraim and that officers had an extensive tracker system of agreed work and completion dates.

Due to the large amount of pot holes that had occurred after the recent winter, KHS resources were currently focused on carriageway safety related maintenance. However, officers do have an undertaking from Kim Hills that he was committed to completing the street scene work in Tunbridge Wells and that work would recommence at the end of May 2010.

The Town Forum thanked Lene Beynon, Borough Engineer, and Daniel Bech for their persistence and hard work in replacing tarmac on pavements with more appropriate materials, such as red brick.

Local Magazine – Jane Fenwick informed members that an article appeared in the recently issued Local magazine regarding Energy Savings/climate change. Jane suggested that the Town Forum invite the Head of Sustainability to a future meeting of the Town Forum to inform members what the Council was doing to promote and encourage energy saving and tackling climate change / carbon emissions. Members agreed with this.

[Jonathan MacDonald was appointed TWBC Director of Regeneration and Sustainability, - Rob Cottrill, Director of Planning and Regeneration, left in September 2009]

Concessionary Fares – John Goodfellow stated that £1.3m was being spent on concessionary fares. It was noted that bus companies were not making any money from the scheme; perhaps the Town Forum could investigate this matter further.

Adequate Parking Provision at the New Pembury Hospital – John Goodfellow stated that an additional 100 spaces were now being applied for, making a total of 350 spaces at the new hospital. He went on to say that Central Government were thinking of scrapping the parking

fees at hospitals; this would be a big issue for debate in the future. The Town Forum also noted that the new hospital would have to pay for the bus routes to be extended to carry passengers to and from the hospital.

Land Registry – Jane Fenwick informed members of the Town Forum that she had received confirmation that the Land Registry offices in Hawkenbury were in fact closing and that the building was prime for relocating the Town Hall services. It was noted that the Council had not at this stage made any decision as to the relocation of the Town Hall.

10. Dates of next meetings of the Town Forum

2010

- 22 April 2010 at 6.30pm
- 27 May 2010 at 6.30pm – Graham Goddard, Hospital Development Director, Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust
- 24 June 2010 at 6.30pm
- 29 July 2010 at 6.30pm
- August – no meeting
- 30 September 2010 at 6.30pm
- 28 October 2010 at 6.30pm
- 25 November 2010 at 6.30pm
- 16 December 2010 meeting – provisional,
there is a possibility of holding this meeting in a different venue and at a different time.

2011

- 27 January 2011 at 6.30pm
- 24 February 2011 at 6.30pm
- 31 March 2011 at 6.30pm
- 28 April 2011 at 6.30pm
- 26 May 2011 at 6.30pm
- 30 June 2011 at 6.30pm
- 28 July 2011 at 6.30pm
- August – no meeting
- 29 September 2011 at 6.30pm
- 27 October 2011 at 6.30pm
- 24 November 2011 at 6.30pm
- 15 December 2011 at 6.30pm

22 April 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 6 April 2010.

(NOTE: Councillor Mrs Moore left the meeting during the discussion on minute 8 (7.59pm). The meeting came to a close at 8.18pm.)

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES 2010/2011

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