



ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM

Minutes of Meeting dated Thursday 26 October 2006

1. Present:

Jenny Alexander (Rusthall Village Association), Daniel Bech (Telephone House Neighbours' Association), Jenny Blackburn (Rusthall Village Association), June Bridgeman (Soroptimist International of Tunbridge Wells and District), John Cunningham (Royal Tunbridge Wells Civic Society), Michael Doyle (Hawkenbury Village Association), Bruce Goodwin (Grove Hill Road Residents' Association), Matt Goodwin (Chairman Town Forum / Tunbridge Wells Village Residents' Association), Michael Hicks (Inner London Road Residents' Association), John Higgs (Hanover Road and Rock Villa Road Residents' Association), George Lawson (Friends of the Commons), Michael Larsen (Friends of the Grove), Caroline McCann (Beulah Road Residents' Association), Ian Naismith (Hanover Road & Rock Villa Road Residents' Association), Altan Omer (Benhall Mill Road Land Association), Keith Perry (Benhall Mill Road Land Association), Angela Swain (Culverden Square Residents' Association), Chris Thomas (The Goodwins No.1/No. 2 Residents' Companies), Grace Thomsett-Hill (Clarence Road Users' Association), Gill Twells (Royal Tunbridge Wells Civic Society), TWBC Mary Wardrop (Hawkenbury Village Association), David Webster (Clarence Road Users' Association), Philip Whitbourn (Beulah Road Residents' Association)

TWBC Cllr Peter Davies, TWBC Cllr Mrs Mayhew, TWBC Cllr David Wakefield, TWBC Cllr Frank Williams,

In attendance: TWBC Cllr Roy Bullock, Sam Timms (Senior Committee Administrator, TWBC)

2. Apologies:

Betsey Dix (Calverley Park Crescent Association), John Goodfellow (Banner Farm Residents' Association), Richard Gould (Calverley Park Crescent Association), Michael Holman (Tunbridge Wells Twinning and Friendship Association), Simon Joyce (Calverley Park Crescent Association), Patrick Shovelton (Inner London Road Residents' Association), Fred Sirman (Warwick Park Residents' Association), and Patricia Smith (The Goodwins No1/No. 2 Residents' Companies).

TWBC Cllr Peter Bulman, TWBC Cllr Peter Crawford, TWBC Cllr Adrian Ekins-Daukes, TWBC Cllr Leonard Price, TWBC Cllr James Scholes.

(Christopher Thomas took the Chair for the beginning of the meeting)

3. Membership Changes – None to report.

4. Minutes of Last Meeting Dated 28 September 2006

The minutes were agreed, subject to the following amendment to minute 10, item (ii), the vice-chairmen would be elected each year but neither *would* automatically become chairman.

5. Matters Arising/Actions Completed from the Meeting dated 28 September 2006

Actions outstanding:

- Action 6.2 – the decision to charge £25 per item for disposal was still outstanding and would be carried forward to a future Town Forum meeting.
- Action 7.1 – it was agreed that as the Transport Committee had not yet had their Terms of Reference adopted, that the matter would be discussed at a future meeting of the Committee and they would report back to the Town Forum in due course.
- Action 8.1 – Matt Goodwin agreed to follow up with Janet Naim on the job description for the Press Officer.
- Action 9.1 – the Town Forum agreed that Mr Bech should draft a short paper/letter and submit it to TWBC Lois Howell, Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services, to ascertain whether the wording was legally sound.
- Action 9.2 – Councillor Bullock informed the Town Forum that Mike McGeary was currently on annual leave and that the information requested had not been identified; he stated that this would be brought to the next Town Forum meeting in November.

- Action 12.1 – Matt Goodwin informed the Town Forum that he had met with the TWBC Director of Planning and Development, Mr Cottrill; he went on to say that he would be arranging a meeting with the other Directors in due course and would circulate the dates of his meetings as soon as possible.
- Action 13.3 – The Transport Committee as mentioned above had not had their Terms of Reference adopted when the request to consider whether the Town Forum should lobby Arriva; it was agreed that once the Terms of Reference were adopted, the Committee would take the action on board.

Actions:

- 5.1 Action 9.2 – Councillor Bullock to report back on land ownership at the Morrisons'/Railway Station site to the November Town Forum.
- 5.2 That the rest of the above outstanding actions be carried out as soon as practicable.

Actions Completed:

- Action 7.2 – Councillor Bullock advised the Town Forum that copies of the relevant Joint Transportation Board minute had been given to Mr Higgs.
- Action 13.1 – Michael Larsen had written to the PCT and an acknowledgement had been received back. Matt Goodwin went on to say that if any Town Forum member would like to see the reply then they were to contact him direct.
- Action 13.2 – the Town Forum was informed that the Planning Committee (formerly Town Forum Strategy) had indeed submitted a response in relation to the Leisure Strategy. Philip Whitbourn stated that if any member of the Town Forum would like to see the response they were to contact him direct.

6. Election of Vice-Chairmen

It was agreed that Christopher Thomas (The Goodwins No.1/No. 2 Residents' Companies) and Jennifer Blackburn (Rusthall Village Association) both be appointed as the Town Forum Vice-Chairmen until November 2007.

7. Robert Cottrill, TWBC Director of Planning and Development

Robert Cottrill gave a detailed presentation to the Town Forum. He explained where he had worked in the past, the planning issues that he had worked on and the experience that he gained.

He went on to say that his youthful first impressions of Tunbridge Wells had been as a tourist that the Pantiles were impressive but that it took a long time to walk to the Pantiles from Royal Victoria Place. His renewed first impressions on starting work for Tunbridge Wells Borough Council were that the image of the town was good but he now observed more 'grot spots', particularly the cinema site and the train station.

Robert informed the Town Forum that Tunbridge Wells was declining compared to other towns in the region; in 2001 the town ranked 45th but had slipped by 2005 to 64th, compared with Crawley which ranked 60th and Maidstone of 62nd.

Robert said that he would be developing a long term vision and detailed plan for the town to combat decline and build for the future on which the Town Forum would be an important consultee. The Town Forum asked a number of questions but Robert also said that if members had further questions then they could put them in writing to Samantha Timms and she would forward them onto Robert.

The Town Forum thanked Robert for attending the meeting and felt that his presentation was very informative.

Action:

- 7.1 Samantha Timms to forward any further questions received onto Robert Cottrill.

8. 'Grot Spots'

Daniel Bech gave a short presentation that identified to members of the Town Forum 'grot spots' within Tunbridge Wells. Some of the buildings that Daniel had highlighted needed tidying and painting. This item was for the Town Forum's information.

(Matt Goodwin, took the chair at this point)

9. Vision for Tunbridge Wells Committee

John Cunningham presented the Town Forum with an overview paper of potential capital projects initiatives in the town which the Civic Society had developed and which would give some helpful context to the Town Forum as it seeks to develop ideas of its own on priorities for regeneration in the town.

10. Terms of References

Matt Goodwin asked members of the Town Forum to let him know directly if they wished to join one of the Committees.

Transport Committee – June Bridgeman briefed the Town Forum on the Transport Committee Terms of Reference. These were adopted by the Town Forum and the Committee was asked to develop some proposals for a way forward for the next meeting of the Town Forum.

Planning Committee (formerly Town Forum Strategy Committee) – Philip Whitbourn informed the Town Forum that the Committee had also met on 19 October and presented the Planning Committee's Terms of Reference. These were also adopted and the Committee was asked to submit their priorities to the next available Town Forum.

Townscape and Street Scene Committee – George Lawson described the Committee's Terms of Reference; these were adopted by the Town Forum.

Vision Committee – Michael Larsen informed the Town Forum that they had held their first meeting on Tuesday 24 October; they had outlined their Terms of Reference, which just needed a few minor alterations and that they would submit its Terms of Reference to the next Town Forum meeting. This Committee was also asked to submit their action plan and ideas to the next available Town Forum meeting.

Housing and Environmental – Matt Goodwin requested nominations to sit on this Committee.

Actions:

- 10.1 Nominations for Committees to be forwarded to Matt Goodwin.
- 10.2 Transport Committee to submit proposals for the way forward to the next Town Forum.
- 10.3 Planning Committee to submit their priorities to the next available Town Forum.
- 10.4 Vision Committee to submit their action plan and ideas to the next available Town Forum.

11. Dates of Future Meetings

Members of the Town Forum agreed the dates set out below but requested that time is set aside in the agenda for the November meeting agenda to consider whether full meetings should continue to be held monthly and their format. The currently agreed timetable for meetings is:

18 January 2007 - 22 March 2007 - 24 May 2007

Action:

- 11.1 Add item to the November agenda to consider frequency and format of future Forum meetings.

12. Date of next meeting – Thursday 23 November 2006 at 7.30pm.