



ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 27 November 2014

Attended: Cllr Bob Backhouse, Sally Balcon, David Barnett, Lorna Blackmore, Mark Booker, Stephen Bowser, June Bridgeman, Cllr Peter Bulman, David Bushell (sub), Cllr Ben Chapelard, John Cunningham, Michael Doyle, Helen Featherstone, Jane Fenwick, Allan Gooda, Alex Green, Michaela van Halewyn, Tim Harper, Dorothea Holman, Michael Holman, Sue Kaner, Kyrios Kyriacou, Katharina Mahler-Bech, David Morris, Marguerita Morton, Ken Norman (sub), Peter Perry (sub), Nick Pope, Cllr James Scholes, Cllr Don Sloan, Anne Stobo, Alastair Tod, David Wakefield (Chairman), Mary Wardrop, Denise Watts, Cllr Lynne Weatherly and Philip Whitbourn (sub)

TWBC officers present: Adam Chalmers (Democratic and Community Engagement Manager), Lee Colyer (Finance Director) and Mike McGeary (Democratic Services Officer)

Also present: Will Farmer (Community Engagement Officer, KCC) and Cllr Jane March (TWBC Cabinet Portfolio-holder for Tourism, Leisure and Economic Development)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were reported from: the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jukes, and from Altan Omer, Angela Phillips, Cllr David Scott and Cllr Frank Williams.

2. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS ENTITLED TO VOTE

The Democratic Services Officer had circulated a list of organisations which had achieved the required level of attendance at meetings to be able to vote at the AGM, as determined by the Town Forum's Constitution. (This had been amended in advance of the meeting to add the Camden Road Guild as eligible to vote.)

3. MINUTES OF THE 2013 AGM

The minutes of the 2013 AGM, held on 28 November 2013, were submitted. It was noted that these had been presented to the January 2014 meeting, where they had been approved.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the AGM, held on 28 November 2013, be noted.

4. REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN ON THE TOWN FORUM'S ACTIVITIES OVER THE PAST YEAR

The Chairman of the Town Forum for 2013/14, David Wakefield, summarised his report on the work of the Forum over the past year, which was a requirement of its Constitution.

Mr Wakefield thanked the chairmen of the five Town Forum working groups and acknowledged how fortunate the town was to have people of such quality leading these as well as having others with the ability, commitment and keen interest to play such an active role in their work.

As for the future of the Town Forum, Mr Wakefield expressed the hope that its role and influence would grow. He felt there were plenty of obvious opportunities to allow this to happen, e.g. the proposals for the Cultural and Learning Hub as well as the 'localism' initiative under which treasured land or buildings could become 'assets of community value'. Mr Wakefield believed the Town Forum had an important role to play in helping to co-ordinate the efforts of different interest groups, including fund-raising, in achieving these objectives.

Mr Wakefield welcomed the election of a new Chairman (see minutes 6 below), confident that the Town Forum was now a well-structured, cohesive and effective group.

RESOLVED – That the Chairman's report on the work of the Town Forum for 2013/14 be accepted.

5. PROPOSED CHANGE TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Chairman introduced a report, in which the Forum's agreement was sought to amend the Constitution in order to be able to elect at least one of the Deputy Chair posts from a wider group of members than currently specified within the Constitution. This, it was stressed, would bring the criteria in line with that for the election of the Chairman of the Town Forum, which had been agreed at an extraordinary meeting, held on 29 May.

RESOLVED – That the Town Forum's Constitution be amended as proposed, to enable at least one of the Deputy Chairmen to be elected from amongst the member organisations.

6. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE FOR 2014/15

The Chairman summarised a report, which set out the nomination process for the election of a Chairman and two Deputy Chairmen of the Town Forum.

Mr Wakefield explained that there had been one nomination for the position of Chairman and two for the Deputy Chairmen positions, as follows: Chairman – Alastair Tod; Deputy Chairmen – Cllr Bob Backhouse and Alex Green. These nominations were endorsed unanimously.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That Alastair Tod be formally declared elected to serve as Chairman for 2014/15, until the date of the 2015 AGM;
- (2) That Alex Green and Cllr Bob Backhouse be elected to serve as Deputy Chairmen for 2014/15, until the date of the 2015 AGM;

Alastair Tod took up the Chairman's position at this point. He paid tribute to the three-year chairmanship of David Wakefield, drawing attention to the transition Mr Wakefield had achieved in steering the Forum away from a period of turmoil to become a flourishing, productive group.

Mr Tod felt that, in a time of significant change, both nationally and locally, it was even more important for the town to have a distinct body which could articulate the views of its residents. He firmly believed that the strength of the Town Forum lay in the active role of its working groups. He added that the Town Forum should welcome the occasional 'talking shop' label it was given, provided that such discussion developed into outcomes of substance.

Michael Holman welcomed Alastair Tod's appointment. He also paid tribute to the chairmanship of David Wakefield, voicing gratitude for his huge contribution since being elected in 2011. Mr Holman felt that David had led the transformation into much greater order and increasingly constructive dialogue, helping the Town Forum become a model for debating and sharing initiatives.

On behalf of all Town Forum members, Mr Holman expressed a heart-felt debt of gratitude to David Wakefield for his patient, courteous and calm chairmanship.

The meeting concluded at 6.45pm.