



ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM

Minutes of Meeting dated Thursday 28 January 2010

1. Present:

Daniel Bech (Telephone House Neighbours' Association), Betsey Dix (Calverley Park Crescent Freeholders' Association), Michael Doyle (Hawkenbury Village Association), Jane Fenwick (Calverley Park Association), Peter Gemmill (Albion Road Residents' Association), John Goodfellow (Banner Farm Residents' Association), Michael Holman (Tunbridge Wells Twinning & Friendship Association), George Lawson (Inner London Road Residents' Association), Ian Naismith (Hanover and Rock Villa Residents' Association), Peter Perry (Calverley Park Crescent Freeholders' Association), Kate Sergeant (Clarence Road Users Association), Simon Smith (Inner London Road Residents' Association), Alastair Tod (Royal Tunbridge Wells Civic Society), Mary Wardrop (Hawkenbury Village Association and Chair of Sherborne Close) and Philip Whitbourn (Beulah Road Residents' Association).

RTW Ward Councillors: Peter Crawford (Vice-Chairman) (Broadwater), Frank Williams (Sherwood) and Mrs Catherine Mayhew (Park).

Others in attendance: Dhanna Sharma (resident in Ramslye), Samantha Timms (Senior Committee Administrator), Victor Webb (resident of Molyneux Park Road) and Mary Harris (Courier).

2. Apologies:

Stuart Anderson (Beulah Road Residents' Association), Councillors Roy Bullock and Barry Edwards, John Higgs (Hanover and Rock Villa Residents' Association) and Christopher Thomas (The Chairman of the Town Forum and The Goodwins No's 1 & 2 Residents' Company/Woodbury Close Residents' Association).

(Councillor Peter Crawford in the Chair for the duration of the meeting.)

3. Membership Changes

4RRA (St John's) – Arthur Hutchins had stood down as Chair of the 4RRA due to him moving outside of the Borough. Confirmation of the new Chairman would be circulated in due course. David Stocker had also stood down as a 4RRA representative due to his ill health.

4. Minutes of Last Meetings Dated 26 November and 17 December 2009

The minutes were agreed.

Matters Arising: Daniel Bech gave members of the Town Forum an update on grot spots/street scene. He stated that Kent County Council would support volunteers to help in clearing the precinct flowers beds and roundabouts. A Bloom Committee had been established and Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom would be launched on 5 March 2010.

www.royaltunbridgewellsinbloom.org.uk.

The Town Forum noted that Kent County Council would soon have a new policy in place to assist in the placements of advertisement signs and A-boards; this would be of benefit. Daniel stated that street walks were taking place with Lene Beynon, Borough Engineer, to walk the streets in the town centre with main footfall and make notes of any unwanted/unnecessary street furniture and signage; this activity was on-going.

Members were informed that a 'street manual' had been drafted many years ago but was never approved as a final document; having spoken with Kent County Council, they had indicated that a street manual of some sort would be beneficial and that perhaps Alan Legg, Principal Design and Heritage Officer, could redevelop the manual.

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.

Action Completed from the Meeting dated 30 July 2009

- 8.1 Leonard Price (Culverden Ward) to inform Daniel Bech regarding answers to questions relating to the Cinema site and RTW Conservation Area at Risk (English Heritage Register 2009).

On 17 December 2009 Trevor Gasson, TWBC Interim Director Development & Planning, wrote a letter to Cllr Leonard Price / Daniel Bech answering the Questions concerning the Cinema site and RTW Conservation Area at Risk.

<http://www.townforum.org.uk/community/qa160709cinema-rtwcaatrisk-reply171209trevorgasson.pdf>

Actions Completed from the Meeting dated 29 October 2009

- 9.1 That Councillor Bullock undertake to find out what planning permission had been given for the Cinema Site hoarding.

Historic pictures of Tunbridge Wells that Daniel Bech supplied to the architects Panter Hudspith to use as a basis for display on the hoardings were fixed on the Cinema hoarding in the week commencing 14 December 2009.

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.
- 4.2 Robert Patterson to look again at the 'ticketing boundary' to investigate the viability of its extension to Pembury Hospital.

- 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.

Actions Completed from the Meeting dated 26 November 2009

- 3.1 That representations be made, either individually or collectively, on how best the Council can achieve further savings or cost reductions or even raise additional income.
- 4.4 Daniel Bech to send Graham Goddard a link to the 'mosaic' customer data information.
- 4.5 Peter Crawford was encouraged to contact Steve Phoenix, Chief Executive of the PCT, to lobby them into commissioning a replacement limb service at the new hospital.

Actions from the Meeting dated 26 17 December 2009

- There were no actions arising from 17 December 2009 Town Forum meeting.

6. Reports from Borough Councillors

There were no reports from Borough Councillors, although Councillor Crawford urged that more Councillors attend Town Forum meetings as this was a way to communicate with each other.

7. Town Forum's Aims and Objectives Review

Daniel Bech introduced this item. Outlined to the members were the Town Forum's current aims and objectives as shown below:

1. Royal Tunbridge Wells is becoming clear of grot spots.
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. A quality supermarket is reintroduced at the former Morrison's site, Station Approach.
5. Adequate and appropriate leisure facilities are available for ALL ages.
6. Royal Tunbridge Wells is promoted as a centre for Art and Culture.

Members were also reminded that the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum was a partnership between Residents' representatives and ward councillors in the town of Royal Tunbridge Wells, the unparished area of the Borough of Tunbridge Wells, Kent. It was formed in July 2005 with the purpose of addressing local issues.

Philip Whitbourn gave a short presentation to explain that more should be focussed on Conservation Areas, Michael Holman's comments shown below concur with this. He went on to say that in 2007, a survey had taken place between the Town Forum and the Civic Society and a walk was carried out around the conservation areas and buildings that were not listed but were within the conservation area were identified. At this point, Alastair Tod explained what an Article 4 Direction was.

Michael Holman and Jane Fenwick, representing Town Forum members, Tunbridge Wells Twinning & Friendship Association and Calverley Park Association, had both submitted comments regarding the aims and objectives and these were distributed to members for their information, summaries of their comments are as follows:

- Michael Holman's main additions were to add to number 1. above the words 'with priority on the Ritz Cinema Site Building by 2010' and the additional 7. Being 'The Royal Tunbridge Wells Conservation area be actively defended.'
- Jane Fenwick's main suggestion was that the Town Forum's objectives needed to be more broadly drawn, and offer the opportunity to be more than proactive than reactive as had been practice in the past. This would be more flexible and should help the councillors understand the Town Forum's interests and would provide more opportunities to work together to be effective.

Mr Webb, visiting resident, stated that there were far too many potholes in Tunbridge Wells and would like to see pressures put on Kent Highway Services to make the condition of the roads satisfactory.

Michael Doyle made a comment that perhaps the Morrison's site could be used for another facility, such as a training centre. However, Councillor Mrs Mayhew informed the Town Forum that Morrisons had a further six years on their lease and were quite happy not to have anything in the building. It was agreed that the word 'supermarket' be removed and replaced with 'Trading be'. The Town Forum also agreed that the word area in number 7 be capitalised.

Town Forum members after due consideration agreed that the aims and objectives be re-written, to include both Michael Holman, Philip Whitbourn and Jane Fenwick's suggestions and that the final set of the Town Forum's aims and objectives be agreed at their next meeting.

The revised aims and objectives would be as follows:

To work with TWBC, elected Ward councillors and officers to contribute to consultation on policies relating to the un-parished areas of the borough, and to work ensure that Royal Tunbridge Wells is a community that people want to live, work and do business in now and in the future.

Town Forum's Objectives:

- Improve the town's streetscape and maintaining 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 by 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.

The above would be re-submitted to the Town Forum on 25 February 2010 for final approval.

Agreed: That the revised Town Forum's aims and objectives be resubmitted to 25 February 2010 meeting of the Town Forum for approval.

8. Reports from Champions/Vision Committee

Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom 2010 – Website: www.royaltunbridgewellsinbloom.org.uk

This would be launched on 5 March 2010 and possible sponsorship was being sought from Targetfollow.

Minutes dated 30 November 2009 and 11 January 2010 were noted by the Town Forum.

'Bloom' Minutes: <http://www.townforum.org.uk/vision/rtwbloom2010-meeting301109.pdf>

'Bloom' Minutes: <http://www.townforum.org.uk/vision/rtwbloom2010-meeting110110.pdf>

Local Development Framework (LDF) - Core Strategy Hearing Session - Matter:

"Royal Tunbridge Wells" – Philip Whitbourn stated that a small success had occurred.

He reminded members that at 17 December 2009 meeting of the Town Forum he had attended a Core Strategy Hearing. Subsequent to that meeting, on 22 December 2009, Philip had received a letter from the Inspector's Programme Officer, which stated that the Inspector had agreed to reduce from 15 to 10 to align with the threshold. Philip had responded to the letter by stating his approval of the reduction and he looked forward to the proposed amendments to the Core Strategy being reflected in the Inspector's report being published by 5 February 2010.

Comments:

<http://www.townforum.org.uk/consultation/ldfcorepolicy6housing-comments14012010.pdf>

Meeting with Targetfollow - Daniel Bech circulated to members notes of the meeting which took place with Targetfollow. Possible sponsorship from Targetfollow was being discussed to assist with Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom 2010. The possibility of a Weinfest / Wein Fair in Royal Tunbridge Wells was discussed as well.

Notes: <http://www.townforum.org.uk/vision/meeting-rtwtf-targetfollow21012010.pdf>

Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom Sponsorship Opportunities 2010 (draft)

www.royaltunbridgewellsinbloom.org.uk/sponsors2010/rtwinbloom-sponsorshipopps-draftmh200110.pdf

Transport and Health – John Goodfellow stated that he had attended a Public Transport Forum on Wednesday 27 January where the new hospital was discussed. He went on to say that a planning application had been prepared for a further 100 car parking spaces, it was noted that the application had not yet been submitted, it was not yet known when it would be submitted. John had at the meeting, suggested that the application be submitted as soon as possible. It was now realised that private and public transport would need to be used and that should any Town Forum member wish to be involved in any transport discussion to contact him direct.

Action:

- 8.1 Any Forum member wishing to be involved in any future discussions regarding the Pembury Hospital transport/parking to contact John Goodfellow.
johnvgtw@tinyworld.co.uk

9. Any Other Business

Wheel Clamping – At the invite of Councillor Crawford, Mr Sharma attended the Town Forum. He explained that his vehicle had recently been wheel clamped in Ramslye, he felt that it was truly unfair as he was only parked for a couple of minutes and was clamped and had to pay £155 to release his vehicle. He asked whether or not road markings could be painted on the road to indicate to the driver that they were now on private land? The signage indicating the wheel clamping area was not satisfactorily either.

Councillor Mrs Mayhew suggested contacting the Town and Country Housing Group as it was likely to be their land and inform them that the signage was not visible, Councillor Crawford assured Mr Sharma that he would contact the Housing Group as a matter of urgency and would inform Mr Sharma of the response given.

John Goodfellow also raised concern over this and stated that Farmcombe Lane was a good example of how correct signage and road marking were used.

The Town Forum thanked Mr Sharma for attending the Town Forum and for bringing the matter to their attention.

Commons Conservators' Meeting – Daniel Bech informed members that he attended the Commons Conservators' meeting as observer for the Town Forum. He informed the Town Forum that the precept for the Common was paid out of Special Expenses and had risen now to almost £125,000. It was suggested that the Common's precept be incorporated in the whole of the borough's council tax and not just paid for out of Special Expenses of the unparished areas of the borough. Why should the unparished area, Royal Tunbridge Wells, alone pay for the Common being open to everyone. Councillor Mrs Mayhew added that if Royal Tunbridge Wells had a parish council, they would fix the precept and not the Conservators just asking monies from the Council.

Daniel also stated that Rodney Stone, Clerk to the Commons Conservators, had reported back to his colleagues the good work that the Town Forum undertakes and that co-operation between the two bodies was desirable.

Limb Service – Councillor Crawford stated that he was having discussions with Graham Goddard regarding a Limb Service facility to be based at the new Pembury hospital once-twice per week. Councillor Crawford would keep the Town Forum informed of any developments.

Public Benches in Royal Tunbridge Wells – Kate Sergeant stated that a survey was currently being undertaken regarding the siting and condition of benches throughout the town centre. She asked that should any Town Forum member have any ideas of where new benches could be located to please contact her directly via email (k.sergeant@yahoo.co.uk).

Actions:

- 9.1 Councillor Crawford to contact the Town and Country Housing Group regarding wheel clamping and inform Mr Sharma of the response; and
- 9.2 Should any Forum member have any ideas for locations of new benches throughout the town to contact Kate Sergeant direct (k.sergeant@yahoo.co.uk).

10. Dates of next meetings of the Town Forum

2010

- 25 February 2010 at 6.30pm – Gateway presentation update
 - introduction by Mary Wardrop (Hawkenbury Village Association)
 - William Benson (Chief Executive, TWBC) and Denise Shortall (Customer Service Manager, TWBC)
- 25 March 2010 at 6.30pm
- 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
- 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.

25 February 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 9 February 2010.

(NOTE: Michael Holman arrived at the meeting during item 7 (7.30pm).
The meeting came to a close at 8.15pm.)