



ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM

Minutes of Meeting dated Thursday 30 April 2009

1. Present:

Stuart Anderson (Beulah Road Residents' Association), Daniel Bech (Telephone House Neighbours' Association), Graham Bell (Pantiles Traders' Association), June Bridgeman (Sorooptimists International), Michael Doyle (Hawkenbury Village Association), Arthur Hutchins (4 Roads Residents' Association), Jane Fenwick (Calverley Park Association), George Lawson (Inner London Road Residents' Association), Altan Omer (Benhall Mill Road Land Association), Peter Perry (Calverley Park Crescent Freeholders' Association), Kate Sergeant (Clarence Road Users' Association), David Stocker (4 Roads Residents' Association), Christopher Thomas (The Chairman of the Forum and The Goodwins No's 1 & 2 Residents' Company/Woodbury Close Residents' Association), Alastair Tod (RTW Civic Society) and Mary Wardrop (Hawkenbury Village Association).

Councillors: Ronen Basu (Culverden), Peter Bulman (Park), Peter Crawford (Vice-Chairman / Broadwater), Barry Edwards (Rusthall), Mrs Catherine Mayhew (Park), John Miller (Culverden) and Mrs Tracy Moore (St John's).

Others in attendance: Alan Legg (Principal Design and Heritage Officer) and Samantha Timms (Senior Committee Administrator).

2. Apologies:

Betsy Dix (Calverley Park Crescent Freeholders' Association), John Goodfellow (Banner Farm Residents' Association), John Higgs (Hanover and Rock Villa Residents' Association), Michael Holman (Tunbridge Wells Twinning and Friendship Association),
Councillors: Colin Bothwell (Southborough), Lesley Herriot (St John's), John Smith (Cranbrook), Frank Williams (Sherwood) and Chris Woodward (St John's).

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

3. Membership Changes

- The Chairman of Beulah Road Residents' Association was now Jonathan Hodge.
- Jane Fenwick, a new representative of the Calverley Park Association has re-joined the Town Forum.
- Keith Perry, Benhall Mill Road Land Association, has resigned from the Town Forum.

4. Minutes of Last Meeting Dated 26 March 2009

The minutes were agreed, subject to the following amendment:

- Amendment to minute 1 'Present', third line down and to minute 6 'Reports from Borough Councillors' second paragraph, first and second sentences

Remove the word 'the' before Soroptimists.

- Amendment to minute 10 'Any Other Business' The 'Cubitt' of Tunbridge Wells

This change and spelling also relates to the action point 10.1.

Change the title and spelling to 'William Willicombe - The "Cubitt" of Tunbridge Wells'.

Matters Arising: None.

5. Action Outstanding from the Meeting dated 31 July 2008

ON GOING ACTION

- 9.3 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 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 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 Outstanding from the Meeting dated 25 September 2008

- 10.1 That Christopher Thomas write a letter to the Clerk of the Common, Rodney Stone, to seek clarification on the Private Parking Contract.

Update - Christopher Thomas stated that he had researched the car parking contract and had been advised the income from this arrangement was put back into the Commons. If this income was not coming then the Commons precept would have been higher. Christopher therefore suggested that the Town Forum invite the Commons Conservators to attend a future meeting to explain what the Commons Conservators do and to make the Town Forum aware of their expenses and figures. The Town Forum agreed this action.

- 10.1.1 That Christopher Thomas invite the Commons Conservators to a future meeting of the Town Forum to provide awareness of their work and expenses.

Christopher Thomas informed the Town Forum that some dates for the Commons Conservators to attend a future Town Forum meeting had been given. Christopher would keep members informed of when a date had been agreed.

Action Outstanding from 26 March 2009 meeting:

- 7.1 That the Town Forum submit a response to the Core Strategy and questionnaire once published (April 2009).
- 8.1 John Goodfellow to update the Town Forum at their next meeting on the outcome of the Select Committee's meeting dated 6 April.

Action Completed from 29 January 2009 meeting:

- 9.1 That a small working party be established to consider options, the Council's budget etc.

Update - The Town Forum was informed that a working party had been established with regards to the Council's budget. The Chairman had contacted William Benson, Director of Change and Business Support and Lee Colyer, Finance Manager, who had agreed to meet with the working party to discuss the 2009/2010 budget. This meeting would take place after the closing of the accounts 2008/2009 in July/August. At present, the working party consists of Matt Goodwin, John Goodfellow, Daniel Bech and Christopher Thomas.

Actions Completed from 26 March 2009 meeting:

- 6.1 Should any Town Forum member wish to submit any ideas/suggestions relating to the 'Greener and Cleaner Town' project, to contact Councillor Basu direct.
- 10.1 Anyone wishing to purchase William Willicombe's book of life entitled 'The Cubit of Tunbridge Wells' to contact June Bridgman direct.

Action:

- 5.1 That should any Town Forum member wish to join the budget working party to contact Christopher Thomas direct.

6. Reports from Borough Councillors

Councillor Mrs Mayhew – informed the Town Forum that the Core Strategy and Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) had been submitted to Cabinet on 16 April 2009. Town Forum members were encouraged to read the document and identify if any of the mentioned plots were situated within their areas. Cllr Mayhew stressed that the document identifies land that could be developed, but is not setting out which of the plots will be included in the Local Development Framework as land which will be allocated for development.

The links below take members to the Core Strategy, appendices A-C of the Cabinet report.

<http://www.twbc-apps.co.uk/committee/cabinet/agendas/08-09/16april09/CAB006%20Appendix%20A.pdf>
<http://www.twbc-apps.co.uk/committee/cabinet/agendas/08-09/16april09/CAB006%20Appendix%20B.pdf>
<http://www.twbc-apps.co.uk/committee/cabinet/agendas/08-9/16april09/CAB006%20Appendix%20C.pdf>

The Town Forum noted that the Town Centres Area Action Plan DPD and Allocations DPD Early Engagement Consultation document addressed issues in the heart of Royal Tunbridge Wells.

Members were also encouraged to read this document.

<http://www.twbc-apps.co.uk/committee/cabinet/agendas/08-09/16april09/CAB008%20Appendix%20A.pdf>

The Local Economy & Housing Select Committee had submitted a report to the 16 April Cabinet meeting concerning road safety. Various issues had been raised and Cabinet agreed to try and resolve the issues.

Section 106 Agreements – Councillor Mrs Mayhew drew the attention of the Town Forum to the fact that when a Section 106 Agreement had been granted, the monies for play area facilities/improvements were not necessarily spent in the immediate area where it was raised.

It was agreed that Councillor Mrs Mayhew would contact the Planning and Leisure Departments and ask them to create a table that states all the 106 Agreements, together with what the monies had been spent on. Members also asked that the 106 Agreement criteria be circulated also.

Action:

- 6.1 That Councillor Mrs Mayhew, in conjunction with Planning and Leisure Services Departments, create a table that lists the 106 Agreements and what the monies had been spent on. The table and the criteria for 106 Agreements be circulated to the Town Forum in due course.

Councillor Williams – In Councillor William’s absence, the Vice-Chairman informed members that Sherwood had submitted their application for Village Green status to Kent County Council as registration authority. He went on to say that it would be at least six months before the application was processed. Councillor Williams would keep the Town Forum updated in due course.

Councillor Crawford – Informed members that Showfields and Ramslye had established a Committee to suggest ideas to help ensure that youngsters were engaged to attend fun and productive activities outside of school hours. He stated that a football club had been established and in Hunters Way, a hard standing court was available for use as a basketball court. Every Tuesday evening at the No.1 Community Centre, a Boxing Club took place.

The Town Forum was also informed that the Ramslye/Ropers Gate application for two takeaways had been approved.

Councillor Mrs Moore – Stated that the Cycle Schemes previously discussed had featured on the Joint Transportation Board’s agenda dated 20 April. The resolution of the Board was to gather information and focus on school to school cycle routes (campus link scheme). The results of the ‘Links to School’ study would be reported to the July meeting of the Board. The Town Forum was also advised that the A26 would be resurfaced on 15 June over a period of six weeks.

8. Reports from Champions/Vision Committee

The Chairman stated that Philip Whitebourn (Planning) and Alastair Tod (Heritage) were no longer Champions. The Chairman went onto say that Champions relied upon active input from members and their representatives.

Should any Town Forum member have any information/ideas where the Council could save money, they would need to feed that information to the Chairman or relevant Champion.

The 20th Anniversary of the Signing of our Twinning Charter with Wiesbaden in Germany – The Chairman, in Michael Holman's absence, informed members of the Town Forum that Tunbridge Wells was expecting a number of high officials to be visiting Tunbridge Wells in May 2009. Herr Dr Helmut Müller, the Lord Mayor of Wiesbaden, and his wife, Dr Dorothea Friedrich, would be in Tunbridge Wells at the invitation of the Mayor from the 19 to 21 May 2009. Dr Müller would be attending the Council's Mayor Making on the 20 May. His visit was being co-ordinated by the Mayor's Office.

The Head of Wiesbaden's Department for Cultural Affairs, Herr Jörg-Uwe Funk and Frau Rita Thies, the elected Wiesbaden Councillor with responsibility for Cultural Affairs, the Environment and Street Scene, together with the Director of Wiesbaden Music Academy, Herr Christoph Nielbock, would be visiting Tunbridge Wells from the 21 until 25 May. The visit was being co-ordinated by the Twinning and Friendship Association, in conjunction with Mike McGeary, Democratic Manager. A small lunchtime reception would be held on Friday 22 May for Frau Thies and Herr Funk.

The Quintet of the Wiesbaden Symphonic Brass Ensemble would also be visiting Tunbridge Wells from the 19 to 25 May on the invitation of the Twinning and Friendship Association. The Quintet would be playing for Mayor-Making on the morning of the 20 May and would also be playing at Rusthall Lodge and Claremont Primary School. On the evening of the 21 May, the remainder of the Ensemble would join them, totalling some 30 musicians. They would also be performing on The Pantiles on the Friday 22 May afternoon and choirs from local schools, would be performing at St John's Church on the evening of Saturday 23 May.

The new Town entry signs had now been manufactured and were now installed. Christopher Thomas thanked Councillor Paul Barrington-King and also Lene Beynon for the work they had undertaken to ensure the signs were up on time.

Various Planning Matters – No matters arising.

Vision and Arts Committee – No matters arising.

Environment – Kate Sergeant updated the Town Forum

- a) Transition Tunbridge Wells (TTW) - A public meeting would take place on 20 May 2009 at the Friends Meeting House 7.30pm to explore the potential for local projects to get practical support via the Sustainable Communities Act;
- b) A 'Garden Share' project was in development in partnership with Town and Country Housing; and
- c) An update on potential energy projects would be provided at the next Town Forum meeting.

Transport Matters – No matters arising.

7. Characterisation of Tunbridge Wells

Alan Legg, Principal Design and Heritage Officer, attended the Town Forum at the invitation of the Chairman, to provide a background to characterisation.

The Town Forum was informed that the spatial planning was increasingly using characterisation as a technique for describing the environment and planning for its future. 'Character' was the Council's attempt to bring together as many aspects of a place as possible in order to appreciate and understand it better and to understand the experience of being in it.

Alan went on to say that characterisation studies could operate at many scales, some, such as the Kent Habitat Survey, covered the whole country, others focused on a whole Borough, such as Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's Borough Landscape Character Areas, this provided a structure to more local environments.

It was noted that towns were being looked at in more detail, many from historical / archaeological perspective. Tunbridge Wells' own Typical Urban Character Areas looked at the borough's settlements with defined limits to built development. There were also examples of parts of or specific areas, such as the ongoing work in preparing Conservation Area Appraisals. Others were based on particular topics such as farmsteads. It was stressed that they were all a planning tool to help understand the local distinctiveness which then informed policy formulation and practice.

Outlined were the objectives that all the studies had in common, namely:

- i) to define context, or place, in its other sense of how buildings or landscape or habitats relate to each other and to other aspects of the historic and natural environment;
- ii) to understand the past, the trajectory of change and/or continuity, which had brought the environment to the state that had been inherited and which provided the springboard for future change; and
- iii) to provide a big picture, which could serve as a base for future environment, a frame into which others could add their perceptions and views.

Alan described how the character areas had been defined through attributes such as building type, age, density sense of place etc. Also the various sources of information used, such as historic mapping, local history publications on urban development even Second World War aerial photographs. Extensive fieldwork was still necessary as well.

He went on to briefly illustrate one of the uses of the characterisation work whereby since 2001 housing completions in the town had been plotted against the character areas. This showed the distribution and extent on new housing by conversion, infill or redevelopment.

The Town Forum thanked Alan for his attendance, his presentation and answering questions. A particular concern, as stated by Peter Perry, was the lack of information relating to traffic and capacity in relevant areas.

The link below takes you to the relevant information regarding Urban Characterisation.
http://www2.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/pdf/PP_EVBA_TUCA_Appraisal_Apr09.pdf

8. Any Other Business

There was no any other business reported.

9. Dates of next meetings of the Forum – The Town Forum agreed to the following:

- o 25 June 2009 at 7.30pm
- o 30 July 2009 at 7.30pm
- o 24 September 2009 at 7.30pm
- o 29 October 2009 at 7.30pm
- o 26 November 2009 at 7.30pm
- o 17 December 2009 at 7.30pm - provisional

25 June 2009 is the next full Town Forum - Any reports/short papers to be emailed/posted to Samantha Timms by no later than 10am on Monday 8 June 2009.

12. The meeting closed at: 9.15pm.

(NOTE: Councillor Bulman left the meeting during minute 7 (8.29pm) and Councillor Mrs Moore left the meeting during minute 7 (9.00pm)).