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# ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM

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## ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM

### Minutes of Meeting dated Thursday 30 September 2010

1. **Present:** Michael Doyle (Hawkenbury Village Association), Jane Fenwick (Calverley Park Association), John Goodfellow (Banner Farm Residents' Association), Christopher Thomas (The Chairman of the Town Forum and The Goodwins No's 1 & 2 Residents' Company/Woodbury Close Residents' Association), Mary Wardrop (Chair of Sherborne Close), Altan Omer (Benhall Mill Road Land Association), George Lawson (Inner London Road Residents' Association), John Hodge (Beulah Road Residents' Association), Betsey Dix, (Calverley Park Crescent Freeholders' Association), Alastair Tod (Royal Tunbridge Wells Civic Society), Michael Holman (Tunbridge Wells Twinning & Friendship Association), Katharina Mahler-Bech (Telephone House Neighbours Association), Lorna Blackmore (Grantley Court Residents' Association), Kate Sergeant (Clarence Road Users Association), David Morris (Rusthall Village Association), John Cunningham (Royal Tunbridge Wells Civic Society), David Wakefield (Royal British Legion, Friends of Tunbridge Wells Museum, Library and Art Galleries), Matt Goodwin (Chair, Tunbridge Wells Village Residents Association).

RTW Ward Councillors: Ronen Basu (Culverden), Peter Crawford (Broadwater), Lesley Herriot (St John's & Skinners, 6 Roads Residents Association) Peter Bulman (Park), Len Price (Culverden), James Scholes (Pantiles & St Marks), Tracy Moore (St John's), Catherine Mayhew (Park).

Others in attendance:

William Benson (Chief Executive TWBC), Jonathan MacDonald (Director of Regeneration and Sustainability), and Sue French (Committee Administrator); Roy Bullock (Leader of the Council).

Chief Inspector Martin Wilson (West Kent Police), Inspector Simon Wishaw (Tunbridge Wells Police),

Margaret Bailey (Observer) Angela Dewar, (Observer), Mrs MacNab (Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society), Mr H Watson (LG Rural Society), Jenna Pudelek (Kent on Saturday/Sunday) Patrick Moran (Observer), M Booker (Observer), Pat Micklewright (Chair of Tunbridge Wells Ladies Conservatives), Paul Harrison (Telephone House Neighbours Association), Barry Sillinge (Civic Society), Millicent Sillinge (Civic Society), Mrs M Thatcher (Civic Society), Christo Skelton (Civic Society), Robert O Callaghan (Residents First), Mr R Thatcher (Civic Society), Philip Whitbourn (Beulah Road Residents' Association),

**Apologies:** Peter Perry (Calverley Park Crescent Freeholders' Association), Michael Holman (Chair of Tunbridge Wells Twinning and Friendship Association); Councillor Neve (St James), Councillor Williams (Sherwood), Councillor Poile (St John's)

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### 1. Membership Changes

New member – Residents First represented by Jenina Pendry.

### 2. Minutes of Last Meeting Dated 29 July 2010

The minutes were agreed, subject to the following amendments:

***Amendment to minutes 'present'***

Mary Wardrop is Chair of Sherborne Close Management and not Christopher Thomas as stated previously in the minutes.

***Amendment to minutes 'apologies'***

Mary Wardrop was in fact present at the meeting.

***Amendment to minutes 'Road Traffic and Structural Ideas'***

Mr Michael Doyle apologised that he had misinformed Sue French (Committee Administrator) that his comment regarding the traffic plan for the junction of Forest Road should read Bayhall Road and not Bayham Road as stated in the minutes.

**Matters Arising:**

None

**Previous Minutes**

The minutes were agreed

**3. On-going Action Outstanding from meeting dated 27 May 2010**

<b>Action:</b>	Councillor Mayhew mentioned that as of 30 September 2010 Town Forum meeting regarding boundary issues in Meadow Road. She is still awaiting clarification as to where the legal boundary of TWBC lay and will inform the Town Forum when she receives the information.
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<b>Action:</b>	Graham Goddard to find out if the hospital is to be named 'Acute or General'
<b>Action:</b>	Graham Goddard to investigate whereabouts of neurological unit in new hospital

<b>Action:</b>	That Alan Hewitt reports back to the Town Forum updates on bus provision for the new hospital
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<b>Action:</b>	Debbie Stock, Strategic Commissioning Manager for West Kent PCT to look at possible sourcing/funding to encourage more interest in training up specialists for the Tunbridge Wells area – still awaiting reply.
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**On-going Action Outstanding from meeting dated 24 June 2010**

<b>Action:</b>	Linda Chamberlain will report back to the Forum with the comments received from clients requesting services from the CAB
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**4. Facing Economic Challenge and the Police – Presentation by Chief Inspector Martin Wilson, West Kent Police representing the Community Safety Partnership.**

West Kent area comprises of 3 areas:- Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge & Malling and Seven oaks.

Chief Inspector Wilson informed members of the Forum that the budget for the Police force for the country is around £6 billion a year. Kent County is allocated about £270 million a year. Tunbridge Wells Police Station is owned by the police force and is an old building of which less than half of its capacity is used. It also lacks disabled access. Chief Inspector Wilson feels the town is in need of front office access. The courts at the station are not in use now other than as an occasional Coroner's Court. The cells are also not used anymore. Nearest

cells now used for prisoners is based in Tonbridge Police Station. This station is now the headquarters for West Kent. Having cells based here is a much more efficient option for the Force. The Forum was informed that there will be significant cuts in the police force and at present he had no idea as to quite what they would be. Chief Inspector Wilson has been trained in project and lean management and explained that Kent Police have been in the process of streamlining its resources for quite some time. Some examples of the cost cutting measures were:- Kent and Essex Police force jointly share a helicopter, boats and IT procurement. This significantly reduces costs and out-goings for both forces. Mobile police officers in cars complete with mobile computers significantly speeds up the time to get to an event, this is normally within 12 minutes of the crime reported. Murder Squad investigation teams are effectively shared as well. Recruitment has been slowed down and co-working with other agencies has been actively encouraged. One of the co-working partners, Community Safety Partnership has recently moved into offices within the Town Hall, this again will reduce running costs.

David Morris (Rusthall Village Association) asked if the Force used Special Constables in Tunbridge Wells? The force uses a number of volunteers including Special Constables in the West Kent area. Volunteers assist the Force with many duties including amongst others administration and gardening. Volunteering within the community is actively encouraged within West Kent Police.

Jenina Pendry (Residents First) asked Chief Inspector Wilson how bad behaviour and disruption in the town centre with late night bars/clubs is managed. He explained there have been a number of complaints about a certain bar in the town. The bar owners agreed to meet with Chief Inspector Wilson who reported the complaints and discussed the way forward with them as to how to minimise residents disturbance. The bar owners have now reduced the type of events which cause the most disruption/noise to the local residents. Generally, town revellers have been encouraged to drink more safely recently by drinking a glass of water between alcoholic drinks to slow down the effect of alcohol. They are also given lollypops as they exit clubs and bars to reduce excess noise!

Mr Doyle (Hawkenbury Village Association) asked if there was a possibility of re-locating the police station? If the option was offered in the future, it would certainly be looked at and considered by the police force.

Mary Wardrop (Chair of Sherborne Close) thanked Chief Inspector Wilson of West Kent police for keeping residents well informed of the changes that relate to the police station via the local newspapers. Christopher Thomas thanked Chief Inspector Wilson and Inspector Simon Wilshaw for attending and speaking to the Town Forum.

## **5. Facing Economic Challenge – Presentation by William Benson, Chief Executive of Tunbridge Wells Council.**

Before the presentation, William Benson assured all Town Forum members that there will be full consultations upon the future of the Town Hall. He mentioned there had been a lot of confusion regarding the regeneration, much information which had been published by the local press was untrue. Nothing has been bought, paid for or moved. The impact of the recession meant there had to be a restructure in TWBC. £1million has been saved through this. Further savings need to be saved for KCC and TWBC, hence the bid for Land Registry. More information will be available to the public in October and November 2010.

William Benson invited questions from the Town Forum members.

Councillor Price commented that several Councillors including himself have attempted to obtain information from the Regeneration Company but so far to no avail, it was agreed that Councillors could obtain information that was to be published for the public domain prior to it being released.

Philip Whitbourn referred to a public document that lists the building of houses, shops and offices. He stated there has been little consultation with the residents of Tunbridge Wells. He asked why have a consultation if you are not intending to move out of the Town Hall?

William Benson explained there are a number of suggestions to be reviewed and the Council is taking advice from the Regeneration Company, all suggestions have to be considered.

Jane Fenwick asked about the running costs of TWBC. £10 million is spent on staff, however, he was unable to give running costs and property services figures during the meeting. The Council is currently reviewing energy costs and researching new ways of conserving energy. There is a possibility of working in conjunction with Town and Country to reduce these costs.

Mary Wardrop (Chair of Sherborne Close) asked if there was a TWBC representative responsible for the communications from the Regeneration Company. William Benson explained that the Communications team had recently reduced in numbers due to the re-structure. He agreed that there is a need for a representative from Communications Team to update, meet the public, and outside agencies, whilst the future of the Town Hall is being reviewed.

Christopher Thomas thanked William Benson, Chief Executive of TWBC for his attendance and presentation to the Town Forum.

Further to the presentation, Christopher Thomas announced that there are now 5 working groups who would welcome Town Forum members' views and input on the future of the town centre civic complex. The groups would be looking at each of the services provided in the complex. These groups consist of:-

- Katharina Mahler-Bech (Telephone House Neighbours Association) – Assembly Hall
- Mary Wardrop (Chair Sherborne Close) – Adult Education
- Altan Omer (Benhall Mill Road Land Association) – Museum
- Jane Fenwick (Calverley Park Association) – Library

Christopher Thomas will work and liaise with all groups.

Jane Fenwick mentioned that John Delussi, Head of The British Library has been in contact with her and hopes to assist and work with Jane on her group.

The above group leads would then come up with a response to the consultation on the Town Hall itself.

It was further agreed that Jenina Pendry (Residents First) would be lead on a review into the strange concept, noted within the TCAAP, of splitting the town centre into four quarters, which forgot the fact that residents actually lived in the town too.

Please make contact with the people above if you are interested in giving input into these groups, which have the intention of looking at all options, what is happening nationally and what is felt best for the town, borough and community at large. There could be more than one solution and they all need to be put forward. **Get your ideas put forward and get involved.**

## **6. Reports from Councillors**

There were none

## **7. Any Other Business**

Mr Goodfellow (Banner Farm Residents Association) spoke about Kent & Sussex hospital future. There will be a presentation at the hospital this week for the public to view. With the loss of the hospital in the town, he felt there is a need for a community hospital, perhaps in the grounds of the old hospital? In view of the vast changes within the NHS, he would like to set up a working group for views and suggestions for the Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone Primary Care Trust.

Further to the future of the hospital, John Cunningham (Royal Tunbridge Wells Civic Society) had received a letter from Graham Goddard referring to the public consultation, which was

received via the Chairman of the Town Forum. Mr Cunningham stated the notice (less than a week) was too short and the period of consultation with the public was again too short. Mr Cunningham said that communication from the NHS Trust was appalling.

David Morris (Rusthall Village Association) mentioned that the Town Forum should have a view on GP services. All members should air their views and suggestions at the consultation.

**Meeting closed at 8.25pm, - a tour of the Town Hall and Police Station followed.**

### ***Dates of next meetings of the Town Forum***

#### **2010**

- 28 October 2010 at 6.30pm
  - Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair.
  - Briefing on the museum,
  - in attendance: Paul Taylor, Director of Change and Communities, TWBC
- 25 November 2010 at 6.30pm
  - Chief Superintendent Tony Thomas of West Kent Police and Elaine Bolton from Kent Police Authority on changes to the Police Authority and how these will affect the Kent Region.
  - Briefing on the Library, Des Crilley and Sue Sparkes, from Kent County Council
- 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
  - Briefing on the Assembly Hall,
  - in attendance: Paul Taylor, Director of Change and Communities, TWBC
- 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