



ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM

Minutes of Meeting dated Thursday 31 July 2008

1. Present:

Sheila Armitage (Norfolk Grange), Daniel Bech (Telephone House Neighbours' Association), Grahame Bell (The Pantiles Traders' Association), Jenny Blackburn (Rusthall Village Association), June Bridgeman (Soroptimist International), John Cunningham (Royal Tunbridge Wells Civic Society), Michael Doyle (Hawkenbury Village Association), John Goodfellow (Banner Farm Residents' Association), Bruce Goodwin (Grovehill Road Residents' Association), Matt Goodwin (Tunbridge Wells Village Residents' Association), John Higgs (Hanover & Rock Villa Residents' Association), Michael Holman (TW Twinning and Friendship Association), Michael Larsen (Friends of the Grove), George Lawson, (Inner London Road Residents' Association), Jim McGrath (Norfolk Grange), Ian Naismith (Hanover and Rock Villa Residents' Association), Altan Omer (Benhall Mill Road Land Association), Keith Perry (Benhall Mill Road Land Association), Kate Sergeant (Clarence Road Users' Association), Christopher Thomas (The Chairman of the Town Forum / The Goodwins No's 1 & 2 Residents' Company / Woodbury Close Residents' Association), Alastair Tod (RTW Civic Society), Mary Wardrop (Hawkenbury Village Association) David Webster (Clarence Road Users' Association) and Philip Whitbourn (Beulah Road Residents' Association).

Councillors: Robert Atwood (Rusthall), Ronan Basu (Culverden), Peter Crawford (Broadwater), Barry Edwards (Rusthall), Frank Williams (Sherwood) and Chris Woodward (St John's).

Other Councillors in attendance: Joe Simmons (Southborough/High Brooms)

Others in attendance: Claire Cromie (Courier Newspaper); Catherine Staniland (Kings College London); - Samantha Timms (Town Forum Secretary); Jane Gould (South East Water, Communications Manager); Lea James (Morgan Est. Operations Manager Utilities); Graeme Mellor (South East Water, Senior Engineer); Alison Ogden (Morgan Est. Planning & Customer Care Manager); Darren Ogden (Morgan Est.); Niall Tierney (Morgan Est. Construction Manager); Graham Webb (South East Water, Infrastructure Development Manager)

2. Apologies:

Betsey Dix (Calverley Park Crescent Freeholders Assoc.),

Councillors: Roy Bullock (Leader), Mrs Catherine Mayhew (Park), John Miller (Culverden), Mrs Tracy Moore (St John's) and James Scholes (Pantiles/St Mark's).

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

3. Membership Changes

Jonathan Wright, Camden Road Traders' Association, has now joined the Town Forum.
Peter Gemmill, Albion Road, has also joined the Town Forum.

4. Minutes of Last Meeting Dated 15 May 2008

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

Matters Arising: None received.

5. Matters Arising/Actions Completed from the Meeting dated 10 April 2008

Matters Arising: Minute 10, Zone C Residents' Parking Update

On 13 June the Council had formally advertised the proposed changes that had been developing in consultation with local residents to the Zone C Residents' Parking Zone and the extension of enforcement to single yellow line no waiting restrictions to include Sundays in various town centre roads.

The changes proposed by the Zone C amendment order would have to be held in abeyance until the objections that the Council had received to the Order to extend the single yellow line restrictions to include Sundays were considered and determined at the next meeting of the Joint Transportation Board on 13 October.

The Zone C Order had not received any objections but the Council was not in a position to implement the changes at this stage. KCC had advised the Council that the contents of the two Orders was interrelated and that the extension to single yellow line restrictions to incorporate Sundays needs to be implemented at the same item as the changes to Zone C.

Please do not hesitate to contact Gary Stevenson for any further information/clarification.

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 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.

Actions Completed from 15 January 2008 meeting:

- 9.1 That Councillor Bullock reply to Christopher Thomas' letter/report regarding the role and performance of the Town Forum in 2006/07 and key residents' challenges to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council dated 14 December 2007. Christopher Thomas informed the Town Forum that he had received a reply from Councillor Bullock.

Actions Completed from 15 May 2008 meeting:

- 7.1 Should any Town Forum member wish to ask Councillors Crookall and Randall any further question to contact them direct:
tom.crookall@talk21.com
peter@bombazine.wanadoo.co.uk
- 8.1 Town Forum Members to think about ways to improve the environment ready for the Environment Workshop on 19 June 2008.
- 9.1 That Councillor Scholes speak with the Director of Planning and Development to ensure that the Town Forum would be consulted with regarding planning matters, in particular the Urban Strategy. Robert Cottrill had confirmed that the Town Forum would be consulted upon regarding planning matters.
- 10.1 That Christopher Thomas submits a letter of objection to Southern Railways and that he contacts the Courier and Kent Messenger regarding the closure of the Gatwick train service. Completed.

- 10.2 That Councillor Scholes reports back with regards to the updating of the Information Drums. The Town Forum noted that this was in progress and would be included in the Council's budget 2009/2010.
- 10.3 That Christopher Thomas emails Samantha Timms a scanned copy of the Network Rail letter to enable distribution to all Town Forum Members. Completed.

6. Reports from Borough Councillors

None received.

7. South East Water

Following earlier discussions regarding the water mains renewals on the A26 London Road, Southborough, Town Forum members agreed that a representative from South East Water should attend the July meeting to explain the work's programme and to give details of what works would be carried out - The Town Forum was introduced to Graham Webb, the Infrastructure Development Manager of South East Water.

Mr Webb explained that South East Water (SEW) was replacing the water main along the A26 London Road in Southborough. The strategic water main for Tunbridge Wells serves 15,000 customers in the east side of the town and that SEW was responsible for ensuring that continuous water was supplied.

The Town Forum noted that the water main in question was laid 40 years ago and was routed along this busy stretch of road, which now carried approximately 22,000 vehicles per day. Mr Webb went on to say that the section of renewal would comprise of approximately 1km long section of water main between the junction of Victoria Road and Bidborough Corner. The contractors would be laying the main in 150m long sections so only short sections of the road would be affected by the construction work and the necessary temporary traffic lights.

Mr Webb concluded by stating that the programme of works would originally take 18 weeks, however, after discussions with Kent Highway Services, this had been reduced to 15 weeks and the working hours would be from 7.30am until 5.30pm Monday to Saturday.

Councillor Simmons and other Town Forum members were still concerned of the length of time that these works were going to take. Councillor Simmons asked why SEW were not going to consider working on Sundays - Jane Gould, Communications Manager for SEW, stated that the 15 weeks was the length of time that the works would take and could not shorten it anymore. With regard to Sunday working, this was not considered as appropriate as the construction workers would be working six days 7.30am until 5.30pm. Jane Gould invited Councillor Simmons and any other Town Forum member to attend a site visit; this would allow them to view the problems that SEW face.

The Town Forum thanked the representatives from South East Water and Morgan Est. for their attendance and in-depth presentation and answering questions.

NOTE: Subsequent to the meeting taking place, it was noted that on page 4 of the Kent and Sussex Courier Newspaper, "Kent Highway Services had announced that a survey would be conducted to ask residents if they would allow Sunday working, which was normally banned by the Borough Council, although Kent Highway Services could not say when or how the survey or residents would be carried out."

Action:

7.1 Should any Forum member have any further questions to send them direct to Jane Gould or Graham Webb:
jane.gould@southeastwater.co.uk - graham.webb@southeastwater.co.uk

8. Norfolk Grange Presentation

James McGrath, Norfolk Grange representative, sought the Town Forum's views on having a cycle path around the Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall commons providing safe cycling. He also stated that Tunbridge Wells could support the National cycle route system by linking certain routes together.

Although, the majority of Town Forum members were encouraged about a cycle path, others had concerns that a) if a cycle path was introduced along the commons, it would not get used; and b) the traffic.

The Town Forum agreed that Town Forum members' views be submitted, outlining pros and cons of such a system, those comments would then be forwarded to the Vision Committee for consideration.

Action:

8.1 That Forum members should they have any views/comments/concerns relating to an introduction of a cycle path around Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Common, to submit them to Christopher Thomas and also Michael Larsen.

9. Joint Transportation Board Getting Around Tunbridge Wells – Residents' Views and South East Water works on A26 London Road, Southborough

The Town Forum noted the progress being made with the Town Forum's Getting Around Tunbridge Wells – Residents' Views report and thanked June Bridgman for her hard work with the document.

10. Reports from the Vision Committee and Working Groups

Vision and Arts Committee – Michael Larsen updated the Town Forum on their meeting that took place on 23 July 2008. Various subjects arose from the meeting, namely:

The Celebration of the Centenary – The concept introduced by Altan Omer that a 'water feature' along the lines of the one constructed in Cardiff would be most appropriate way of commemorating the Centenary. It was considered appropriate, as Tunbridge Wells was known as a Spa town.

Possibility of working with the Tunbridge Wells Planning Department – It was hoped that there would be a possibility of working with Tunbridge Wells Planning Department to screen new planning applications for construction of new homes and conversions. It was felt that in the past, numerous bad planning decisions had been made to the detriment of the appearance of the Town.

The Committee also discussed updates relating to The Pantiles; closing Five-Ways to traffic; construction of residential properties on flood plains and in areas of water insufficiency; the Communities in Control White Paper; the re-introduction of Tunbridge Wells in Bloom; and the 20th Anniversary of the twinning of Royal Tunbridge Wells with Wiesbaden.

The Town Forum agreed that the Chairman write to the Council and encourage them to re-consider entering into next year's Britain in Bloom competition. The Town Forum also agreed with the Committee's recommendations.

Various Planning Matters – Philip Whitbourn updated the Town Forum on their recent meeting. It was noted that the Council had written to the working group on 24 June inviting submission of suggestions of sites that ‘we’ believe may be suitable for housing to be returned by 25 July. A paper indicating 6 tentative suggestions was submitted. It was stated that due to the timescale and the date of the Town Forum, which should the Town Forum wish to make any changes to the paper, then this of course could be done – no changes were made.

Philip also informed the Town Forum that he gave evidence on behalf of the Town Forum, in support of the Council relating to the Public Inquiry regarding the appeal concerning Sunrise Senior Living, adjacent to Dunorlan Park. The appeal was dismissed.

The Town Forum thanked both Daniel Bech and Philip Whitbourn for their dedication and hard work.

Action:

10.1 That Christopher Thomas write a letter to the Council asking for them to re-consider entering into the Britain in Bloom competition next year.

11. Any Other Business

Green Flags - The Chairman informed the Town Forum that Woodbury Cemetery, The Grove and Dunorlan Park had received Green Flag awards. Congratulations to all concerned.

Green Pendants Award – Councillor Edwards stated that Rusthall had received its 7th Green Pendants Award. Congratulations to all concerned.

Pedestrianisation of Five-Ways – George Lawson asked the Town Forum’s views relating to the pedestrianisation of Five-Ways. George stated that he thought Five-Ways should be closed off to vehicles completely. The Town Forum was split and it was decided that a working group be established to look at the pros and cons of pedestrianising Five-Ways.

Faith Forum – David Webster reported that the Tunbridge Wells Faith Forum had met three times and most who attend do so from the same area. It was encouraged that member involvement in the Faith Forums take place at future meetings. Mr Webster stated that Councillor Bullock had stressed that the Council wish to work with Faith Leaders in various ways including assisting shaping changes in Council Services particularly with regard to older people and young people where the churches often play an important role recognised by the Council.

Heritage Open Day – John Cunningham informed the group that the Heritage Open Day would take place on 14 September 2008, dates and times would be circulated in due course. He went on to say that a leaflet giving all the necessary information would be disseminated with the Courier, Royal Mail and hand delivery.

Action:

11.1 That a Five-Ways working group be established to consider the pros and cons of pedestrianising Five-Ways.

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

- Thursday 25 September 2008 at 7.30pm LINK in attendance
- Thursday 30 October 2008 at 7.30pm – NHS Trust in attendance, Linda Summerfield
- Thursday 27 November 2008 at 7.30pm
 - Sheila Wheeler in attendance talking about acknowledging the work of the Forum.
 - Ailsa Paton of Town & Country Housing Association to give a talk on Domestic Abuse.
- Thursday 18 December 2008 at 7.30pm
(3rd week in December due to last week being Christmas day)
- 29 January 2009 at 7.30pm
- 26 February 2009 at 7.30pm
- 26 March 2009 at 7.30pm
- 30 April 2009 at 7.30pm

25 September 2008 next full Town Forum - Any reports/short papers to be emailed/posted to Samantha Timms by no later than 10am on Thursday 18 September 2008.

13. The meeting closed at: 9.20pm

(NOTE:

Councillor Simmons left the meeting during minute 10 (8.50pm); and

Councillor Woodward left the meeting during consideration of minute 10 (9.02pm).)