

Minutes of the Meeting of Faversham Town Council

Monday 6 July 2020, 7pm

Present:

The Mayor, Cllr A Reynolds	Cllr A Hook		Cllr J Irwin
Deputy Mayor, Cllr T Martin	Cllr C Jackson	Cllr H Perkin	Cllr D Knights
Cllr B J Martin	Cllr J Saunders	Cllr E Thomas	Cllr C Williams

In attendance:

Louise Bareham – Town Clerk

Adrienne Begent – Deputy Town Clerk

241. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Barker due to a holiday. It was proposed by the Mayor, Cllr Reynolds, and, on being put to the meeting, it was **RESOLVED to accept the apologies of Cllr Barker.**

242. **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

Cllr B J Martin – DPI – 251, 252, 253

Cllr Saunders – DNPI – 252

Cllr Jackson – DNPI – 253

243. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

It was proposed by Cllr Williams, seconded by the Deputy Mayor, Cllr T Martin and on being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of the Meeting dated 1 June 2020.**

244. **Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor noted how the community pulled together during the pandemic, but it wasn't over yet and there was still a need for social distancing to avoid a spike. She will be presenting many keyworkers and groups with a Mayoral Certificate of Thanks over the coming weeks.

244. **Minutes of the 20's Plenty Committee**

It was proposed by Cllr Thomas, seconded by Cllr Saunders and on being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED to accept the Minutes of the 20's Plenty Committee dated 4 June 2020**

245. **Policy and Finance Committee**

It was proposed by the Deputy Mayor, Cllr T Martin, seconded by Cllr Knights and on being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED to adopt the Standing Orders with no revisions and the Statement of Internal Control**

It was proposed by the Deputy Mayor, Cllr T Martin, seconded by Cllr Knights and on being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED to accept the Minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee dated 22 June 2020.**

246. **Heritage Working Group**

It was proposed by Cllr T Martin, seconded by Cllr Jackson and on being to the meeting it was **RESOLVED to co-opt Harold Goodwin, Chair of the Faversham Society to the Heritage Working Group**

247. **Annual Governance Statement**

It was proposed by the Mayor, Cllr Reynolds, seconded by the Deputy Mayor, Cllr T Martin and on being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED to approve Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/20 acknowledging responsibility for the Accounting Statements.**

248. **Accounting Statements**

It was proposed by the Mayor, Cllr Reynolds, seconded by the Deputy Mayor, Cllr T Martin and on being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED to approve Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/20**

249. **Town Centre Pedestrianisation**

Cllr Saunders withdrew his motion. Cllr Irwin proposed an amendment to the motion *that this Council makes recommendations to Swale Borough Council regarding mitigations to facilitate business during the period of temporary road closures to enable social distancing ,as suggested by Cllr Thomas including a barrier at Preston St/Stone Street, additional disabled parking, loading bays and waste removal.*

Cllr Thomas confirmed he was due to have a meeting at SBC regarding uses for the EU funding. He was concerned about social distancing, particularly for those coming out of shielding from 1st August. The pedestrian area, free from traffic was very essential and confirmed he would work to do what we could for traders, but shoppers must be kept safe.

Cllr T Martin noted there was space in Leslie Smith drive for lorries to remain for a period to enable multiple drops or queue to ensure all businesses could reopen and retain deliveries, which had been noted to him by a trader.

The Mayor, Cllr Reynolds proposed the amendment that the roads were quieter on a Monday and Wednesday and that the gate should be opened at 2pm to enable disabled drivers to use the banks. The amendment failed to gain a seconder.

Cllr Irwin confirmed he was available for the next few days to meet with businesses to discuss short term solutions to mitigate and plug the gap to individual issues. Cllr Perkin agreed that there were specific problems

which could impact on trade and thanked Cllr Thomas for the proposed mitigations. She was also happy to attend one to ones with traders. Cllr Perkin referred to comments on social media regarding the January Public Spaces Committee but confirmed that related to complaints of nuisance drivers she had received from businesses and pedestrians, it was not an attempt at long term pedestrianisation in disguise, but a reaction to the real threat of Covid-19 and safety concerns.

Cllr Hook supported the mitigations to help the problems and noted Cllr Irwin's well made dialogue, but it was an important and unavoidable decision made quickly, for something that usually would take months. He further acknowledged the need to evaluate the evidence to decide whether the road closure should be extended or modified and that a log should be kept of any issues, including from those who find the closure beneficial.

Cllr T Martin noted the proviso that non-essential businesses can open, provided that social distancing can be maintained, acknowledging that the town centre does have tight spots. Cllr Williams agreed Cllr Thomas's mitigations and noted that it was not a one size fits all situation and these would help some. He was also happy to talk to businesses and wanted to continue to see through the consultation with SBC and supported Cllr Irwin's proposal.

Cllr Saunders supported the motion and suggested that we should be evaluating volumes and social distancing and times when the closure is not in place, such as the evenings. This needed to be done over the next few weeks, where pressure points were difficult.

Cllr B J Martin thanked everyone for their comments, recognising the united public health issue and the economic consequence.

Cllr Irwin accepted it was a fair representation to SBC. Road closures can be suspended at any time and SBC were carrying out regular reviews, as not all businesses were open yet it needed to be properly assessed and it was good to receive all residents' and businesses' feedback which should be directed to backtobusiness@swale.gov.uk. The Mayor noted that she had spoken to many businesses who were in favour of the road closures. It was proposed by Cllr Irwin, seconded Cllr Thomas and on being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED to make recommendations to SBC regarding mitigations to facilitate business during the period of temporary road closures to enable social distancing.**

250. **Black Lives Matter**

Cllr Irwin noted that he would ignore most things, however his friend's daughter's BLM banner was defaced, but had a positive outcome due to support from others.

Cllr Hook agreed that the Council had a role in this type of issue and should stand up to equality and diversity. Cllr Jackson also agreed and

drew attention to travellers who were still persecuted.

Cllr Perkin proposed an amendment that it was important to have a measurable action moving forward; perhaps involving the youth, screening films or having a library of information. Cllr Irwin agreed the amendment.

It was proposed by Cllr Irwin, seconded by Cllr Hook and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED that this Council (1) Applauds the role of the Black Lives Matter Movement in drawing focus to the issues of both systemic racism and individual unconscious bias directed against black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups in the UK. (2) Recognises the individual and collective privilege they enjoy and commit to listening to and learning from those who do not enjoy such privilege, on the basis of race or ethnicity, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identification or social and economic disadvantage. (3) Recognises the right of all members of our community to make their voice heard. We will work to support those who feel excluded or marginalised in finding their voice and do our utmost to ensure they are never silenced or talked over. (4) Agree a measurable action moving forward to involve the youth, screening of films or holding a library of information.***

Cllr B J Martin left the meeting at 20.17

251. **Covid-19 Peg Project**

It was proposed by Cllr Perkin, seconded by Cllr Williams and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED to support Faversham Sharing Community's peg project and display their peg project in the window of 12 Market Place***

252. **Public Spaces Protection Order**

Cllr Saunders noted it was a statutory requirement to review and it was unfortunate that SBC's Community Safety Unit has been busy during Covid to build on the consultation. He suggested that feedback was provided to the Town Clerk to prepare a response or Councillors could also respond individually.

It was proposed by Cllr Saunders, seconded by Cllr Jackson and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED to collate feedback and prepare a response.***

253. **Faversham Neighbourhood Plan**

Cllr Irwin noted the update meeting with Councillors the previous week and that they were conducting site appraisals to be completed by mid August, which was a substantial undertaking. He and Harold Goodwin had met with Ospringe Parish Council due to their significant location to Faversham.

Cllr B J Martin returned to the meeting at 20.28

254. **Receipts and Payments**

It was proposed by Cllr B J Martin, seconded by Cllr Williams and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED to accept the payments***

It was proposed by the Mayor, Cllr Reynolds and on being put to the meeting it was ***RESOLVED that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the commercially sensitive nature of the business to be transacted.***

255. **Creek Bridge**

It was agreed that no specific representative would be nominated and that it would be open to any councillor to attend meetings on the Creek Bridge, and that Cllr Ben A Martin (SBC Priory Ward Member) should also be invited to attend.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Trevor Fenitman

With the town now coming down to 20mph in the area as described and published, making it both safer and bring the air quality to a better level as stated, can both I and the public be furnished with the following so we know how you will measure the test period:

1, what were the recorded deaths and injuries caused by traffic for last year for the area that's now 30mph and will be trialled at 20mph.

2, what the air quality is for last year for the same area and where the air quality machines are within the new 20mph area.

This will allow Faversham Town Council and KCC to measure the improvement in both cases plus give confidence to the rate payer, that it's not a waste of taxpayers money as both requests must have been documented or you will have no benchmark to judge the success of the trial period.

Cllr Thomas confirmed the aims were to increase active travel, cycling and walking in a pleasant environment. KCC will measure prior and after the scheme through 6 to 18 months.

Chris Oswald Jones

" I deplore the abuse and accusation of being "A Liar" - Posted onto Public Access Media - against The Town Clerk. I ask that Members take this topic into Private Session (which is already scheduled) ;

It being Members' Decision whether The Town Clerk be in attendance, or not. "

I am aware that meetings have been held between representatives of Faversham Town Council and Admin to certain Media Facilities; Nevertheless, there is a trend for a select few, maybe only 6 or 7 regular, persistent commentators spreading abusive and inaccurate messages

Cllr B J Martin confirmed that abuse in general and threats to staff and councillors was unacceptable and he deployed the action of some. The toxicity in the political environment all had increased from last year. He acknowledged that everyone is human and treatment of elected members and staff could not continue, further abuse will not be tolerated and any threats to life and safety will be referred to the police for action. Any defamation will face legal action and will not be taken lightly

Tim Brown

Following our meeting at No.12 last Thursday, as discussed please would you take forward the concerns raised against blanket closure of the roads in central Faversham.

It is our (FTA) aim to reach a sensible town centre plan within 'The Reopening High Streets Safely' fund & Guidance therein.

James Somerville-Meikle sent the guidance notes to Louise in his email that evening & reiterated that there was nothing in the guidance to prevent some of the grant being used to pay for a 'manned gate' - some £4000 IF the restrictions stayed in place for the full term of six months.

This, along with extra signage & something along the lines of 'Evo' safety barriers or similar at certain points as necessary to protect pedestrians, would easily be within budget.

Please refer to Guidance notes 'Scope of the fund', section 1, paragraph 2

"It is not essential that a local authority develops these plans but in considering how to use this funding, all local authorities are encouraged to engage businesses, business organisations, lower tier authorities such as parish councils, and other relevant stakeholders when considering how to use this award. In addition, where temporary changes to the public realm are being proposed the respective local authority should work in partnership with public sector landowners as appropriate."

It is paramount to allow delivery access to the businesses that need it along with disabled driver access into town. Some businesses will definitely struggle to carry on without this. Suggested alternatives really aren't suitable for reasons including safety from untrained manual handling to disabled people not getting access to banks etc. as they aren't open outside of the closure times when access is available.

Please reconsider the current plan to achieve a suitable solution to the problems described. This needs to be implemented as quickly as the closures were put into place.

Please keep me informed regularly of progress & any decisions considered to save time & further problems.

There is middle ground to be achieved here to secure business services & pedestrian safety.

Cllr B J Martin responded that the Frequently Asked Questions states that town wardens, security staff could not be paid for out of the fund, ie manning the gates. He had a constructive meeting with Tim Brown and is committed to working safely with all businesses to preserve public safety.

Kevin Moon

Please find attached copies of signatures of general public unhappy with the road closures , these 180 signatures were collected from within a few affected shops over the period of three days .

I feel that this shows the strength of feeling against these severe restrictions , a large majority of these people were unaware of the closures , I would be grateful if these documents were presented to the council on Monday 6th July at the full council meeting where the restrictions are to be discussed.

Cllr B J Martin confirmed the petition had been forwarded to Swale Borough Council

David Taylor

Have the Council received any response at all from Southern Water Services regarding the foul sewage flows from the Perry Court Housing Development _ 310 , residential units, under ref 19/503002/SUB to discharge condition 21 foul drainage.

This is because these foul sewage flows will directly impact on the north eastern foul and combined surface water drainage catchment in Faversham by overloading the existing sewers in Whitstable Rd and Cyprus Rd which already run at capacity in storm conditions.

In the planning file, under letter ref Plan 028889, SWS's say they cannot recommend discharge of Condition 21 relating to foul drainage. This is because they have undertaken a desk study of the impact that the additional foul sewage flows from the development, will have on the existing public sewer network and there is an increased risk of flooding unless they reinforce their network.

Therefore given the current issues of highway flooding in Whitstable Rd and the historic issues of Cyprus Rd sewer flooding entering homes in 1994 and the at capacity Cyprus Rd flood relief scheme installed in 1996, will FTC ask SWS what their intended actions are to upgrade their sewer network with time scales to prevent internal sewer flooding of properties.

Cllr Perkin confirmed there were no updated and was awaiting confirmation of a meeting.