

Minutes of Romsey Forum

17 September 2008 held at Romsey Town Hall

Present: Stuart Aiken, Denise Amery, Chris Amery, David Barker, Ian Bullivant, Mark Cooper, Diane Hargreaves, Mary Hill, Eunice Hutchison, Chris Maidens, Phoebe Merrick, Barbara Milburn, Carolyn Nixon, Brian Page, John Parker, Mike Richardson, Rita Sanchez, Hal Sanchez, Graham Smith, Pam Smith, Ian Tripp, Geoff Uglo.

Speakers: David Sutton, Inspector Bernadette Smith, Steve Lees, TVBC

In the Chair: Jill Gethin. **Minutes:** Sandra Smith.

Item 1: Apologies:- Dr Frank Akerman, Oliver Colville, Sandra Gidley MP, Cllr Julian Jones, Cllr Caroline Nokes, Cllr Roy Perry, Gill Roberts.

Item 2: Minutes of the Romsey Forum 12th June 2008

These had been circulated electronically and in hard copy at the meeting.

It was proposed by P Merrick, seconded by D Barker that the minutes be approved. Carried

Item 3: Matters Arising.

None, however at the request of Mr D Barker an explanation was made of the status of The Romsey Forum. The chair asked Cllr Cooper to explain what the Forum was and how it had been set up. The Forum was founded in 1995. It has no official status but allows members to express views on any topic and councillors to come and listen. The membership consists of representatives from local organisations plus anyone who lives in and around Romsey or who has an interest in Romsey matters. The organisation has an annual general meeting and three other meetings a year. There is a Chairman and Secretary. It applies to Romsey Town Council for a grant to cover hire of the Courtroom for meetings and for photocopying. There is no other funding. PM noted that Romsey Extra Parish Council used to make a contribution. JG will request one.

Item 4: Mr David Sutton, President of Romsey and District Scouts on the Dr Peter Johnson Community Project.

Mr Sutton outlined Dr Peter's contribution to Romsey life and to the scouting movement. The whole Romsey community has much to thank him for and at present the only public recognition is the Abbey South Garth gate. The local scouting movement wishes to create a District HQ building named after him. The buildings in Baden Powell way are old but the location is good and very central. A new building could be used by the community and to assess need a survey was done of local organisations. The response from groups who would like to use such a building was good. Mr Sutton showed current plans for the hall and outlined the management structure. An initial sum has been raised and the appeal is now going to sources of charitable funding, including the lottery, as well as continuing local fundraising. Work will start as soon as enough money has been raised for the basic build. Further funds can then be raised to equip the building. Mr Sutton asked for support from Forum members and outlined fundraising activities in the near future which include a dinner and a quiz night.

Item 5 : Look at Romsey.

Phoebe Merrick announced that the final version is now at the printers and will also be available on cd and on line. The launch will take place on 7th November in the Town Hall, 6-8pm.

Item 6 : Police Inspector Bernadette Smith. Out on the Beat: current policing policy in Romsey and the surrounding Districts.

Inspector smith has been here for 2 years and was previously in Romsey 15 years ago. Policing takes place in a constantly changing environment; the Law, Government policy, behaviour and

technology. She concentrated on the way the bigger picture affects Romsey. 2 years ago the Safer Neighbourhood Policing model came in. The public want an old style of policing. The area covered is from the Rownhams edge of Southampton up to Stockbridge. There are 2 teams. The Safer Neighbourhood Team consists of 2 sergeants, 10 officers, 7 community support officers plus admin support. The second team is the Targeted Patrol Team which responds to incidents. This was initially based in Eastleigh, then Andover. From the end of September there will be a team based in Romsey who will know the local area well and a 24 hour service.

Safer neighbourhood teams are aligned to specific areas; the Town Centre, Cupernham and Tadburn, Baddesley, Nursling and Rownhams, Romsey Extra and lastly the rural Areas. Rural areas have been neglected but from the end of September will have a team in place. Teams objectives are to target criminals and those involved in antisocial behaviour and to reduce crime. Strategies include early intervention to prevent crime, use of ASBOs to change behaviour and engagement with the community. There are concerns about use of alcohol by the young and the need to invest more in provision of things for young people to do. There is a wish for more Youth Service activity.

The Safer neighbourhood team is the best performing team in the Western Operational Command Unit, very professional with longstanding contacts in the community and a high level of reduction in crime.

Inspector Smith then outlined the Western Operational Command Unit (Test Valley and the Eastern New Forest) covering custody units, medical teams, legal teams, public protection unit, road policy unit and the major incident team.

Comments and questions included

"You don't see policemen" this was challenged by others in the audience and Inspector Smith stated that the team of 10 plus 7 community support officers have a target of 80% time on the streets but they go to areas where problems are.

Allotments - continuing problems of vandalism with very occasional police presence. Inspector Smith encouraged the forum members to keep calling with problems as officers go to where the incidents are.

An enquiry about Chiver's Field, Abbotswood, suggested that young people may be displaced there from the Town Centre and Woodley Green. It was noted that young people needed somewhere to go.

Item 7: Steve Lees – TVBC. Up date on the Test Valley Core Strategy, the implications of the revised draft of TVBC's housing policy.

The report is about to go to Cabinet and then to full council. It has been put on the website. If the council so decides the document will be published and consultation will start. The next meeting of the forum will probably be in the middle of the consultation period. Responses will go to an inspector. SL advised that responses should include what was liked, e.g. gap, not just objections. An enquiry is expected next summer and then the Inspector will write a report which, under the new system, will be binding on the council.

SL answered some questions.

Abbotswood: the planning application is in at present. There are amendments.

If the sewer system is inadequate will it stop development? No. developers can requisition access to sewers. The problems would be for Southern Water and OFWAT

Cllr Cooper stated that he was pencilling in 1600 dwelling at Whitenap.

Item 8 : Any Other Business

Carolyn Nixon had been given a paper on "Transition Towns" by the Chair of Friends of the Earth. Driven by concerns for climate change and oil supplies Transition Town seek to reduce dependency on oil. A first exploratory meeting has been set up.

D Evans stated that planting on the island looked neglected. Cllr Cooper informed that Test Valley does maintenance.

Next meeting: Wednesday 19 TH November 2008, 7.30pm in Romsey Town Hall
