

Minutes of Romsey Forum

18th June 2008 held at **Romsey Town Hall**

Present: Sandra Smith, David Barker, John Parker, Tessa Parker, Gill Roberts, Cllr Roy Perry (HCC), Felicity Courtenay, Jane Brambley, Julian Jones, Cllr Sally Leach, Euan Russell, Sue Derbyshire, Mike Gray, Jan Gray, Steve Lees.

Speakers: Clive Collier, Dorothy Baverstock, Mark Miller, Ian Richards.

In the Chair: Jill Gethin. **Minutes:** Carolyn Nixon.

Item 1: Apologies:- Ian Bullivant, Cllr Mark Cooper, Dr Frank Akerman, Henry Maddick, John Mason, Phoebe Merrick, Cllr Caroline Nokes, Sandra Gidley MP, Cllr Mrs P Mutton, Mayor of Test Valley.

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

These had been circulated electronically and in hard copy at the meeting.
It was proposed by J Jones, seconded by D Barker that the minutes be approved. Carried

Item 3: Matters Arising. None

Item 4: Burma Aid - Clive Collier, Romsey Rotary Clubs

Cllr Clive Collier gave some background to the formation of the Rotary movement and listed the activities of the two Rotary clubs in Romsey : Rotary Club of Romsey and Romsey Test Rotary. It is the latter group which runs the Mayor's Picnic and raises funds for the Town.

He then spoke of the recent collection his members had been making in the town for Burma Aid, when they had raised £1300. This was to support the Rotary movement's ongoing project to supply emergency Aqua Boxes and Shelter Boxes to disaster areas. The Burmese government had allowed instant access on the ground to the charity which supplies the boxes and Rotarians had followed later to help in the distribution.

Item 5 : A Voice for Older People – Dorothy Baverstock, Diane Andrews

Cllr Dorothy Baverstock explained that she had convened a meeting of the various groups in Romsey which support older people, in order to discuss mutual problems and explore the possibility of setting up a representative forum to pursue issues with statutory bodies and other authorities. A steering group had been formed to take the proposal forward and the first open meeting would be held on 18 August. She then introduced Diane Andrews, from Eastleigh and Southern Parishes Older Person's Forum, which had been set up in 2000.

Diane Andrews then described the work of the Eastleigh Forum, which had 3000 members on its database and whose motto could be said to be "Nothing about us without us". The Forum provided a platform for concerns and a meeting point to talk. It was affiliated to the National Pensioners' Convention and had links with 'Help the Aged' and 'Speak up for the Elderly'. A newsletter was regularly posted to all members and full day open meetings held every other month. The group was operated on an entirely voluntary basis and was funded through raffles and some grants. It was working with other local groups to draw up an age-friendly action plan and was also involved in campaigning, lobbying and consultation on issues such as transport, housing and prescription drugs.

Item 6: Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership : Mark Miller

Mark Miller talked about the Partnership, which had been set up, with rail grants, to support the 'figure of 6' stations on the Salisbury / Chandler's Ford / Southampton route. The route was part of the SW Trains franchise, which had been awarded in December '07 for ten years. The aim of the Partnership was to ensure the long term survival of the service, by promoting a modal shift away from reliance on cars and promoting better public transport access to employment and leisure activities. Members of the Partnership included First Great Western, Southampton CC, Hampshire CC, Eastleigh BC and TVBC. Efforts were already bearing fruit, with an increase in rail usage of 15%.

He was busy promoting links with ferry and airport services, leisure walks and cycle routes and volunteer groups had adopted five stations to date. Romsey rail station group had already held two meetings and plans had been made to install hanging baskets (tended by NVQ students), to organise litter picks and safety briefings. A free, fully accessible, shuttle bus had been introduced to run every Sunday in the summer, from the station to Hillier's Arboretum and to Mottisfont Abbey, also picking up at Mottisfont/Dunbridge station. It was hoped to add Romsey Abbey and Broadlands to the route next year.

Other projects under consideration for the station included setting up a coffee stand, using the forecourt for various activities on Sundays and art exhibitions in the waiting room. HCC/TVBC were currently carrying out a feasibility study into the possibility of enabling full access to the north platform from outside the station.

In answering questions from the floor, Mark Miller suggested that improvements in reliability had been made by First Great Western but that they still needed to do more; agreed that more bike racks were needed at some stations and that the 'Bike About' scheme, as operating in Winchester, could be considered for Romsey; agreed that pricing anomalies needed to be investigated; was pleased to hear examples of fast, efficient journeys to/from London Waterloo and from Weston-Super-Mare.

Item 7 : Romsey Carnival – Ian Richards, Chair of Carnival Committee

Cllr Ian Richards spoke of the difficulties in continuing to run a successful Carnival, with a very small organising committee, and the need for new people to become involved. They were experimenting with a later date this year, on a Sunday afternoon, in the hopes of attracting more floats. As a result there had been more offers of involvement than in previous years. In order to meet the expenses of the procession, policing etc, the committee needed to raise funds throughout the year, by means of a regular Bingo Club at the Crosfield Hall and a quarterly quiz at the Comrades Club. Last year, the Carnival had raised £4,000 for local charities and it was hoped that this year would see an increase on that sum. The Carnival programme would be launched at the Mayor's Picnic and floats could be booked via the Carnival website.

Item 8 : Any Other Business

Nightingale centenary : Cllr Perry informed the meeting that 13 August 2010 would be the centenary of Florence Nightingale's death and that proposals were being considered to mark the occasion by holding a Victorian pageant.

Twinning anniversary : September 2010 would be the 50th anniversary of the town twinning with Paimpol.

Next meeting Wed 17 September 2008, 7.30pm, Romsey Town Hall