

Minutes of Romsey Forum

16 June 2010 held at Romsey Town Hall

Present: Chris Amery, David Barker, Neil Beasley, Ian Bullivant, Aidan Cooper, Cllr Mark Cooper, Peter Croft, Sarah-Jayne Croft, Robert Grime, Richard Jordan-Baker (Broadlands), Martin Keane, Cllr Sally Leach, Carolyn Nixson, Brian Palmer, Tessa Parker, Ian Richardson, Mike Richardson, Nikki Riches, Will Riches, Gill Roberts, Glen Stevens, Geoff Uglow

Speakers: Marje Kemish, Steve Lees (TVBC)

In the Chair: John Parker. **Minutes:** Sandra Smith

Item 1: Apologies: - Mayor of Test Valley, Dorothy Baverstock, John Blackmore, Sue & Aelred Derbyshire, Jill Gethin, Phoebe Merrick, Cllr Roy Perry, Caroline Nokes MP, Tim Sledge, Brian Stokes

Item 2: Minutes of the Romsey Forum

These had been circulated electronically and in hard copy at the meeting. Agreed, nem con.

Item 3: Matters Arising.

Illegal Parking on by-pass: DB reported that there was action for a few weeks but nothing since. A regularly parked van now parks further along on the verge.

A note had been received from Cllr Perry re.-

Housing: a lower housing total was hoped for from PUSH

Network Rail Bridge Proposals: it is hoped to protect the character of bridges round Romsey.

There was discussion about whether to write a letter in support of this. Views on both sides were expressed including a low opinion of the character of many of the bridges. No decision was made.

Item 4: Marje Kemish - Romsey Town Carnival

Programmes were nearly ready and the Carnival would be launched on Saturday. The carnival procession would be the last Saturday in July. MK outlined other events of carnival week including children's fancy dress and crowning of the Carnival Queen, who was chosen in April. (eligibility - age 16 -21, living in local, SO51, area).

There are only 6 on the carnival committee; volunteers would be welcome for the committee and to help at events. Fundraising takes place throughout the year. IR noted that insurance alone is over £1,000 and sponsorship is hard to get. The Carnival raises money for charity. More information can be found on the Romsey Carnival website.

Item 5: Steve Lees, TVBC. Update on planning matters.

Core Strategy: The government has indicated that it would scrap the SE plan. It has not said it would get rid of housing numbers. They may go back to original numbers and that would be only a small change. The Government nationally recognises the need for more houses. Cllr Perry's note indicates that there may be local debate on this. There have been some changes in advice to councils (e.g. on garden grabbing) but no change to the requirement for councils to ensure a 5 year supply of housing land. If this supply is not assured councils must look favourably on planning applications.

Points were raised on:-

The policy for using council tax as an incentive to build houses.

Decisions at local level rather than Winchester – SL: advice is different

Sudden unexpected applications – SL: if there is not a 5 year supply they should be looked on favourably is what Government guidance currently states.

Network Rail Bridge Improvements: Many containers are too big for some of the existing rail bridges. Also Network Rail need an alternative line from Southampton to London. This would be Southampton, Romsey, Salisbury and Andover and would require bridge improvements. Five bridges are affected, Ashfield, Four Lanes, Lee, Lee Lane and Coldharbour Lane. There will be another in Old Salisbury Lane requiring road closure.

These are all permitted works and planners can only object on specific grounds. Planners are waiting for more specific plans. The Romsey to Salisbury line is an early line dating from the 1840s and planners would like to protect the industrial heritage but recognise the national need for improvements to the rail network. If the Forum wished to write to Network Rail expressing concern for the character of the bridges it could be helpful with this. However the Port of Southampton is economically important.

Road closures will be dealt with by a traffic management team. The dates being considered are November 2011 to spring 2012.

Questions were raised about cycle ways, road crossings and widening the carriageway. SL replied that Network Rail has a narrow brief. The bridges would be replaced not widened and a cycleway would be expensive. The council may consider a road crossing, also a cycle tunnel which would be only a third of the cost.

Abbotswood: is now at a more detailed planning stage. Applications are coming in, 1 for a spine road and one for a parcel of houses with 4 more expected shortly out of the total of 12 parcels. For each phase of houses developers have to do improvements (roads, junctions etc.).

Developers have a licence to deal with great crested newts.

Planners will produce a summary outlining the works. There are additional sums of money for other traffic management matters in the locality (£577,000 in 3 phased payments). There will be a small exhibition on these proposals which affect School Road, Braishfield Road, Woodley Lane and the Short Hill area. There were a number of questions about these traffic management improvements including one on whether the trees on the corner of School Road were part of this. SL: they were not. Highways had advised the owner that the trees were unsafe.

As the development progresses more of this money will be released. Highwood Lane traffic calming would take place after 300 houses and Halterworth after 500 houses. There will be consultation with the public on future improvements. It was anticipated that the housing would be built over 6 or 7 years.

DB mentioned a suggestion that construction traffic should be banned between Brook Way and Braishfield Road. SL would look into the agreements with developers on approved routes.

Questions were raised about use of brown field sites and the brewery site. SL Drainage issues are now resolved. There is one outstanding pre works requirement – the road layout. The owner does not appear to be in a hurry to proceed.

BP asked about linking traffic lights at Cupernham Lane. SL: the phase may be tinkered with to help the Botley Road roundabout traffic.

JP would welcome a simple guide to what triggers what in the development process. SL: this was being prepared.

Item 6: An Orchard at Whitenap. Carrie Nixon

Transition Towns Romsey have had grants from the Landfill Trust and one from the Romsey and District Society for a community orchard. They are currently consulting on where it should be sited. There was a public meeting on the Whitenap site last Saturday but further comments would be welcome. CN can give contacts. The orchard would be fenced to protect it from rabbits and under planted with wild flowers. The fruit would be available to anyone.

Questions were raised about vandalism of young trees and the amount of space in the recreation ground which will be taken up. CN: sports use will not be affected. The planting would be on the borders of the grounds.

Item 7: Any Other Business

None.

Next meeting: Wednesday 15 September 2010, 7.30pm, Romsey Town Hall.

This will be the AGM and John Parker gave notice that he would be standing down as chairman. Last meeting of the year will be 17 November 2010