

# Minutes of Romsey Forum

## 21st November 2012 held at Romsey Town Hall

**Present:** Eunice Hutchinson, Diane Hargreaves, Jean Russell, Julian Jones, Geoff Uglow, Janet Coppard, Peter Hurst, Cllr Martin Hatley, Cllr Roy Perry, Brian Palmer, Frank Akerman, Mary Akerman, Denise Amery, Judy Walker, Stuart Bannerman, John Welch, Sheridan Welch, Darren Virrav, Chris Maidens, Sheridan Tatham, Paul Tatham, Cheryl Collier, Mavis Sawdy, John Bennett, Ian Tripp, Graham Shawley, Mike Richardson.

**Speakers :** Steve Lees, Planning Policy, (TVBC); Cllr Martin Hatley (TVBC Planning Portfolio holder); Sandra Smith, Vice Chairman, Citizens Advice.

**Chair :** Mark Cooper **Minutes :** Carolyn Nixon

1 **Apologies:** Mary Hill, John Parker, Ian Bullivant, Glyn Darby, Gill Roberts, Ian Hibberd, Chris Amery, Sue Derbyshire, Roger Prescott, Janet Burnage; Mayor of Test Valley, Cllr Dorothy Baverstock.

### 2. Minutes of the Romsey Forum held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2012

The minutes had been circulated and were agreed as a correct record. Proposed: J Jones, Seconded: J Walker. The Chair complimented the Secretary on an excellent distillation of the discussion.

### 3. Matters Arising

Application by Tesco Plc : It was likely that the application would be going to the Southern Test Valley Planning Committee in February of next year. HCC Highways Dept had lodged their objection to the application and Romsey & District Society had submitted an additional objection regarding the figures to which Tesco were working for their traffic studies. The updated retail study by Nathaniel Litchfield was available on the TVBC website.

### 4. Planning Update : Steve Lees; Cllr Martin Hatley; Cllr Mark Cooper

#### Abbotswood Development / Road Improvements

Occupations had suddenly increased dramatically, passing the required 75 to trigger payments from the developers of S106 funding. This meant that work on the traffic lights at Cupernham Lane/Winchester Hill junction would begin immediately after Christmas. The lights would be programmed to allow continuous traffic on Winchester Hill, until vehicles are waiting in Cupernham Lane. The work was expected to take three months and would include two pedestrian crossings and re-surfacing of the carriageway. Later in the Spring, traffic calming measures would be installed at the Braishfield Rd/Woodley Rd junction and a pedestrian refuge provided on Braishfield Rd. The northern exit from School Road would be permanently closed to traffic later in 2013. Towards the end of the building period, improvements would be made to the Jermyns Lane junctions and the junction of Braishfield Rd with Winchester Hill. SL agreed to check what provision was being made for residents of The Crescent to cross to the Co-op store.

Consultations were taking place on the provision of cycleways through the Woodley Estate and on the extension of the 30 mph limit on Winchester Hill as far as Crampmoor.

The undeveloped part of the Abbotswood land would be adopted as a conservation area in Spring 2013. Concerns were raised at the meeting about current flooding on the site, which was also affecting properties in Cupernham Lane. Cllr Cooper agreed to investigate.

Of the 800 houses being built on the site, 40% would be available for shared ownership or other social housing and priority for these would be given to people living locally or with local connections.

Timsbury Bridge: It was expected that the re-building work would be completed before Christmas, as planned.

Oxlease Meadows housing application : a revised application had been received for 64 houses and would be considered in early 2013. Work still needed to be done on ensuring the best outcome for the preservation of the wetlands, which form part of the site.

Romsey Waterways : A partnership of various interested bodies, including Romsey & District Society, was intending to smarten up the waterways and increase the biodiversity. A public consultation would be taking place shortly.

Town Plan : TVBC was working with HCC to carry out a feasibility study into possible Town Centre improvements and proposals made by an expert working with the Romsey & District Society were being studied by the Town Council. The Test Valley Local Plan (Core Strategy) could not currently be proceeded with because of new Government decisions and the fact that the South East Plan had not yet been revoked. This had an impact on future housing numbers. TVBC always needed to demonstrate that there was sufficient housing stock coming forward to fulfil the stipulated 5-year requirement.

Council Offices, Duttons Road : Most of the staff, including the Planning Dept had now been moved to Andover. The building had to be marketed for six months as an employment site for purchase or rent. Any offer would need the approval of the full Council. Cllr Hatley thought that it might be possible for the time being for the parking to remain open to the public on weekends.

Former Magistrates' Court : This was now being purchased by TVBC and would house the Council's Customer Services Unit from February 2013. HCC would continue to use the first floor for its Adult Services local office and consideration was being given to both Citizens Advice and Test Valley Community Services being moved to the building at a later date.

#### **5. Romsey & District Citizens Advice Bureau : Sandra Smith**

The CABs were initially set up at the start of WW11, to assist the British civilian population in time of war. There are now 400 CABs in England and Wales delivering advice in 3500 locations.. They are all registered charities funded by grants and donations. Romsey CAB, which was set up in 1976, relies on its Local Authority funding, which is now being reduced. In its most recent audit, it was judged to be in the top 25% of CABs. It provides free, independent, impartial advice, in confidence. It can submit evidence to Government departments of any recurring problems seen to be as a result of Government policy. The staff at the Romsey office includes 26 trained advisers and 10 trustees all of whom give their time voluntarily, plus 4 part time paid staff. Last year, 1841 clients were seen, presenting with problems in the areas of benefits, debt, employment, relationships. There had been a doubling of consultations about problems with disability benefits, since the recent changes in Government policy.

People spoke from the floor in praise of the work carried out by Romsey Citizen's Advice. In thanking Sandra, the Chair stated that TVBC supported the work of Citizens Advice because it carried out work which otherwise would have to be provided by the Borough itself.

#### **6. Any Other Business**

Meetings in 2013 : Because the Court Room was no longer available on Wednesday evenings, it was put to the meeting that the Forum be held on Thursday evenings for the coming year. The only alternatives were to use the main Council Chamber, which was inaccessible to anyone with mobility problems or to move to the Crosfield Hall. It was therefore agreed that the dates for 2013 would be as follows : 28th March (not 21st March, as originally announced), 20th June, 26th Sept and 28th November.

#### **7. Date of Next Meeting : Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2013, 7.30pm, Romsey Town Hall**