

Minutes of Romsey Forum

20th March 2014 held at Romsey Town Hall

Present: Jean Russell, Janet Coppard, Stuart Bannerman, John Welch, Sheridan Tatham, Paul Tatham, John Bennett, Ian Bullivant, Glyn Darby, Roger Prescott, Dorothy Baverstock, John Stone, Jeff Hawksley, Geoff Morris, Chris Wesson, Mark Cooper, Chris Esplin-Jones, Sue Taylor, Kate Greatrix, Francis Pilkington, Sandra Smith, Janet Burnage, Paul Burnage, Lilian Brimelow, Rosemary Dawkins, Jan Haddon, Vera Brice, Richard Pratt, Elizabeth Pratt, Frank Stokes, David Stevens, Julian H Jones, Judy Walker, Simon Curtis, Richard Buss, Peter Hurst, Jackie Browne, Frances Sweeny, Brian Sweeny, Ray Jenkins, Dave Harris, Alison Perks, Mike Perks, Clive Collier, Jan Moody, Ian Tripp, Stephen Beasley, Richard Brazier, Cllr Jan Lovell (Deputy Mayor of Test Valley).

Speakers : Viv Messenger, Steve Lees, Andy Ferrier (TVBC); Dorothy Baverstock (Romsey Festival)

Chair : John Parker **Minutes :** Carolyn Nixon

1 **Apologies:** Roy Perry, Barbara Milburn, Ian Richards, Sandra Gidley, Frank Akerman, Gill Roberts, Richard Jordan-Baker, Anthony Hyde, Martin Hatley; Mayor of Test Valley, Cllr. Janet Whiteley

2. **Minutes of the Romsey Forum held on 28th November 2013**

The minutes had been circulated and were agreed as a correct record. Proposed: J Burnage, Seconded: R Pratt.

3. **Matters Arising**

Item 7 : Cllr Cooper reported that HCC was currently seeking tenders for the building of the 42 unit Extra Care facility on the Nightingale Lodge site.

4. **Church Street Improvements:** Viv Messenger (TVBC)

TVBC was in the middle of a consultation exercise involving HCC and local councillors to look at enhancing the town centre streetscape – including Market Street, Bell Street and Church Street. Street audits had highlighted the problems for pedestrians in negotiating pavements which were narrow and on differing levels and in coping with traffic at busy junctions. The street furniture in this area was also getting outdated.

Planners were mindful that the work done previously on Latimer Street, in making it one way and extending the pavement at its junction with The Hundred, had slowed traffic considerably at that point in the town centre and made it much easier for pedestrians to cross. These were the sort of measures advocated by the urban planner, Ben Hamilton Baillie, who had suggested the creation of shared space in Bell Street and Church Street.

A number of slides were shown to illustrate the type of level surface which was envisaged, for example, from the Market Place and along Church Street, as far as the Former Magistrate's Court (FMC), with ramps and pinch points at each end. A variety of paving materials was being considered, bearing in mind the fact that smaller stones are easily damaged by large vehicles. Different coloured tarmacs, such as that used in Winchester, was also being considered. It was proposed to create a square between the Tourist Information Centre and the Abbey precinct. Parking spaces outside the Post Office and in Abbey Place would be retained but restrictions imposed elsewhere in Church Street.

The plans could be viewed at the Former Magistrates Court or on the TVBC website.

In answer to questions :

Planners were mindful of the need to reduce the clutter of signage. It might be possible to have fewer signs referring to a larger area. There would be no double yellow lines, in keeping with the status of a conservation area.

Tactile paving would need to be retained at crossing points, as this gave a greater feeling of security to pedestrians with sight impairment.

Consideration had been given to uncovering the waterway outside the FMC but it would considerably restrict the available walking area and the costs of future maintenance would be prohibitive.

4. **Planning Update** : Steve Lees (TVBC)

In introducing the speaker, the chair thanked him, on behalf of the many residents who had been helped by him and his team during the recent floods.

Transport : The roundabout at Jermyns Lane/Braishfield Rd had now been completed and a speed limit of 30 mph would be introduced in April on Braishfield Road, from the roundabout to the junction with Winchester Road. When signals are installed at this junction, one end of School Road would be permanently closed.

The new footpath along Highwood Lane was now finished, including the removal of a telegraph pole from the path. This path now linked with a footpath across the fields at Halterworth, allowing for a pleasant circular walk.

On-street parking : There had been 200 responses to the consultation. A summary report was being prepared for TVBC councillors, which would then go out for further consultation. It was hoped to allow for more short stay parking in the town centre, while 98 new long stay spaces had now been provided at The Rapids. There would be no increase in charges until 2016 and all would be free after 4.00 pm. It was hoped that the footpath from The Rapids to the Bypass would be re-opened by April and it would be lit.

Waterways : Remedial work along the Barge Canal had been deferred until the autumn.

Borough Local Plan : There had been 2,200 responses to the consultation, of which 1400 had been received in the final week and 800 of which concerned the proposed designation of land for housing at Whitenap and Hoe Lane, N Baddesley. There would be a report back to Cabinet in June/July 2014.

Planning Applications : Steve Lees explained that councils had to regularly draw up a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and that the current version could be viewed at TVBC.

Housing development - at Oxlease Meadow : a new application had been submitted in February. – at Peel Close, Woodley : TVBC officers had turned this down; at Ganger Farm and Luzborough Farm – applications not yet submitted; - at Highwood Lane/Botley Rd : designs currently available to view.

Tesco superstore : the applicants had been told by HCC to use a different modelling approach for their traffic forecasts.

In answer to questions :

- the number of dwellings about to be provided in the town centre in the form of retirement apartments had now been taken into account in the calculations of housing need over the next five years.
- planning officers were not likely to be convinced of the need for indoor sports pitches, together with housing at the Highwood Lane/Botley Road site. They had suggested to the developers that they consider putting sports facilities at Nursling industrial site instead.

5. **Romsey Future – update** : Andy Ferrier (TVBC)

A community event had been held in November, which brought together local residents, councillors and TVBC officers to agree a collective vision for the development of Romsey town centre. This would then lead to an action plan. 7 work streams had been identified and volunteers attached to each working group. It was planned to engage with the wider community

through visits to schools and other groups and by using social media. A further open event was planned for the spring when the groups would report on their progress to date. Residents were still welcome to join any of the groups and could find out more on the TVBC website. As a result of the early discussions, thought was already being given by Cllr Hatley to the re-opening of the coach park at the Romsey Rapids.

6. **Romsey Festival** : Dorothy Baverstock

The 10th Romsey Festival is to be held this year between 4th and 20th July, with a wide variety of events covering the full range of Romsey's arts, culture and history. There will be a particular emphasis this year on the talents of younger residents and those who have since made a success elsewhere. Events to include several major concerts as well as a number of recitals, a series of talks in the Abbey and several events linked to the War Horse Memorial Project. A new venture will be the *Gastronomic Experience*, with several local restaurants giving demonstrations and special events. Competitions leading up to the Festival include a Romsey Sketchathon (thanks to Rums Eg) and a poetry competition for Junior Schools.

The full schedule of events will be publicised in a brochure to be delivered to every house in Romsey by local Scouts. Further details of all events are on the revamped Festival website - www.romseyfestival.org. Tickets for many of the events can be purchased in advance either via the website or through the Tourist Information Centre in Romsey.

7. **Any Other Business**

Flooding investigation : it had been reported that a formal investigation by consultants, CH2M (formerly Halcrow) was now being carried out. They were expected to report to HCC on 20th April and their recommendations should be made public in May.

Millennium sculpture : A member asked that consideration be given to either re-siting the sculpture in Abbey Place or attending to the tree which was causing massive discoloration to the piece.

Sandbags : Steve Lees announced that TVBC would be organising contractors to remove the thousands of sandbags which were currently protecting dwellings in the areas which had been recently flooded.

8. **Date of Next Meeting** : Thursday 26th June 2014, 7.30pm, Romsey Town Hall.