

Minutes of Romsey Forum

20th November 2014 held at Romsey Town Hall

Present: Neill Beasley, Ian Bullivant, Francis Pilkington, Jeff Hawksley, Geoff Morris, Barbara Milburn, Glyn Darby, Jan Haddon, Vera Brice, Rosemary Dawkins, John Bennett, Mark Edgerley, Mark Cooper, Frances Sweeny, Brian Sweeny, Mike Perks, Alison Perks, Frank Stokes, Shirley Dawson, Judy Walker, Stuart Bannerman, Janet Burnage, Dave Harris, Lynda Emery, Chris McCallion, Elizabeth Pratt, Paul Tatham, Gordon Massie, Nigel Allen, Lillian Brimelow, Jean Russell, Sally Leach, Denise Amery, Sue Taylor, John Salvi, Tom Hanslip (part meeting).

Speakers : David Tasker (TVBC); Cllr Ian Richards, Cllr Dorothy Baverstock

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

1 **Apologies:** John Stone, Anthony Hyde, Diane Hargreaves, Julian H Jones, Darren Paffey, Sandra Smith, Roger Prescott, Chris Amery, Steve Lees; Mayor of Test Valley, Cllr Jan Lovell

2. **Minutes of the Romsey Forum held on 18th September 2014**

Item 9 Flooding / Maintenance of gullies and ditches : *point of clarification* : clearance of roadside ditches is the responsibility of the land owner. The County Council can enforce compliance by landowner. With this addition, the minutes were agreed as a correct record.

3. **Matters Arising** : None

4. **Planning Update** : the Chair delivered a written report sent by Graham Smith (TVBC)

Revised Borough Local Plan : The Hearing sessions of the Examination by the Inspector, Philip Ware, would be starting on 11 December at Beech Hurst, Andover. These would deal with all general issues, including the housing requirement. Southern Test Valley allocations would be dealt with from 13 Jan 2015 at the Crosfield Hall, Romsey. The Hearings would be open to all members of the public but only those who had notified their intention to speak would be allowed to do so.

Romsey Town Access Plan: A strategy to improve access to facilities and services within Romsey. It identified the main transport issues and in particular any barriers to access and sought to address these. The Romsey TAP was last reviewed in 2011. There would be a public consultation in early 2015. The Test Valley Access Plan, covering areas other than the two town centres, was already out for consultation, with a closing date of 16 January. TVBC's Cycle Strategy was also currently out for consultation, with a closing date of 12 December.

Planning Applications :

Housing development

- at Highwood Lane/Botley Rd (116 dwellings) : **refused** by the Planning Committee;
- at Ganger Farm (275 dwellings & sports pitches) : no date yet set to go to committee;
- Wrens Corner, Cupernham Lane (18 dwellings) : LRM Holdings Ltd. Site is opposite entrance to Belbins Business Park. Problem with Japanese knotweed. No date yet set to be reported to committee
- Baroona, Cupernham Lane [east side] (39 dwellings) – Bargate Homes. No date yet set to be reported to committee
- Oxlease Farm (64 dwellings + nature reserve) – Committee resolution subject to completion of legal agreement. Management arrangements still needed to be sorted. Ongoing so no decision had yet been issued
- Land adjacent Luzborough Pub (58 dwellings) – No date yet set to be reported to committee
- Land at Hilliers Garden Centre, Botley Rd (40 units) - Revised application submitted. Same number of units but a smaller layout.

Both sites on Cupernham Lane were deemed to be in the countryside but there was no designation of 'Green Belt' in Test Valley.

In answer to questions :

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) : This levy on developers had been initiated by Government in order to create a general investment fund for improvements to be made to the local area as a whole. Developers were still subject to the S106 levy as well, the funding from which would be used for all the things needed to be done on a site such as that proposed at Whitenap, including a school, community centre, shops and junction improvements. However, in the case of large strategic sites, such as at Whitenap, it was likely that the cost of providing all those on-site facilities would be such that any additional levy for CIL would render the development unviable. It was therefore likely that a 0% levy would be applied. In spite of this, it was considered that an additional £7m would be raised for Test Valley by the CIL over the next 15 years.

Forest Park Implementation Strategy : this concerned a large wooded area south of Romsey and adjacent to Lord's Hill, which it was hoped to open up for recreation, in order to take some pressure off the New Forest. The Strategy did not make clear what the current landowners would receive in compensation for releasing land from their estate.

5. **Future Management of Fishlake Meadows** :David Tasker (Head of Community & Leisure, TVBC)

TVBC was keen to engage the public in determining how best to use the site and, although the transfer of the land had not yet been completed, the current landowner had agreed that those interested would be able to access the site on guided walks early in the New Year. The Romsey Waterways Partnership would be working closely with council officers on this. The Council needed to accommodate the various expectations for the site, including flood attenuation and the development of an important nature reserve. Conservation needed to be balanced with access rights and TVBC was asking residents to send in their comments on how they saw the site developing. A formal management plan would be drafted after the site visits had taken place. There would be other ways of engaging with the public, including taking a stall in the town centre.

In answer to questions :

- A sandy beach could be a possibility
- World of Water would be involved with the development and could well be assisting with car park provision.
- The site visits would be advertised in the press.
- A full survey of the site could take up to two years and a management plan could not be finalised until many other reports had been completed. This would then go out for formal consultation.
- Once the site came into public ownership, additional funding could be sought from various sources.

6. **Youth in Romsey's proposed new facility** : Cllr Ian Richards

The organisation, Youth in Romsey, had been set up in 1992 by Romsey Town Council and local churches, in answer to a recognised need for a meeting place for youngsters in the town centre. In 1998, rooms were acquired at 23, Bell Street and a Drop-In centre set up, with additional funding from the Lottery. The centre, now a registered charity, is currently open every weekday and aims to be a one-stop shop for young people from age 12 – 25. A wide spectrum of need has been identified and currently about 300 contacts per month are registered. Subjects covered include housing, jobs, sexual health and other counselling. 2 full time youth workers and 3 part time workers, who also work in schools, are employed on the project. The Youth Council is also run from there by the young people themselves, who raise separate funds for its activities.

Funding of £350k had now been obtained from HCC/TVBC to design and build a youth centre at Romsey Sports Centre, next to The Rapids. It would be easily accessible on foot from the town and it was hoped to be ready to open in summer 2015. However, because of budget cuts, the organisation was threatened with a 70% cut in its revenue funding. This would mean that YIR

would only be able to afford 7.5 hours of salaried service from HCC Youth Services team. Trustees were urging members of the public to contribute to HCC's consultation on the proposals for youth services in Romsey. <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/yssconsultation>

7. Memorial Park improvements : Cllr Dorothy Baverstock

There had been a public consultation on proposals to re-design the entrance to the park, in order to best accommodate the commissioned war horse memorial statue. The statue itself had now been cast and the chosen design for the gardens would be going out to tender shortly. It was hoped that the statue would be installed in April 2015. A calendar was available with images of the statue, as were bronze maquettes of the statue itself. LTVAS had produced a book about the Romsey Remount Camp and a banner commemorating the Camp was on show in the Abbey.

Neill Beasley registered the regret of some that the chosen re-design of the entrance area did not take into account the designs for the proposed new café. He felt that the layout lacked a concept and failed in its purpose to draw in the visitor to a shared leisure facility. Cllr Baverstock felt that the feedback received in general from the consultation justified the choice of the project group.

8. Dates for 2015

These were agreed as follows : 19th March, 25th June, 17th September, 19th November

9. Any Other Business :

Re-organisation of policing structure in Test Valley : Inspector Willson would shortly be moving from Romsey and her post would not be filled. In future there would be one Inspector post and one Chief Inspector post for the whole of Test Valley. The number of PCs would remain the same and two more PCSOs would be appointed. It was suggested that the Forum invite a speaker from the police authority to a future meeting.

10. Date of Next Meeting : Thursday 19th March 2015, 7.30pm, Romsey Town Hall.

For information :

The TVBC website has a page which lists all its current consultations:

<http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/aboutyourcouncil/consultation-portal/>