

Minutes of the Romsey Forum held at Romsey Town Hall 17th March 2016

Present: J Adams, S Bannerman, N Beasley, J Bennett, L Brimelow, I Bullivant, A Chillingworth, M Cooper, R Dawkins, I & M Dickerson, J Haddon, R Hall, J Hawksley, P Hurst, A Hyde, K Jackson, J Jones, J Lafferty, B Milburn, G Morris, J Nestor, C Nixson, R Perry, F Pilkington, E & R Pratt, V Price, S Robinson, J Russell, M Sawdy, F Stokes, J Stone, B & F Sweeny, J Taylor, S Taylor, I Tripp, A & S Trowbridge, J Walker.

Speakers: Gemma Markham, V Messenger, Amanda Deeming, Mark Edgerley,

Chair: John Parker. Minutes: Sandra Smith.

1. **Apologies:** Frank Akerman, Sue Debyshire, Diane Kingston, J Prescott, Ian Rich, Chris Wesson.

2. **Minutes:** These were approved, proposed by Geoff Morris, seconded by Franc Pilkington

3. **Matters Arising:** Whitenap Post Office has been converted to retail style after some consultation. Several comments from the floor expressed the view that this was a disaster.

4. **Police update:** in a change to the Agenda the Chair introduced PCSO Gemma Markham to give an extra item from the Police. There is an organised gang operating in the area. It is happening across the county and CCTV images have been shown in the media. GM warned about distraction theft and purse theft. In Romsey Aldi and Waitrose have been affected and GM asked people to be vigilant when shopping and around cash machines. Call 101 and report anything suspicious.

5. **Bell St and Market Place plans.** Viv Messenger, Transport Planner HCC.

The consultation finishes 8th April. The project looks to improve access for people with disabilities and to give a better experience. In Bell Street the main issues are narrow footways, different levels and sloping pavements. The drawings and plans can be seen at the Former Magistrates Court and online. The start date is probably next year.

Plans of Bell Street were shown. The materials and colour will be similar to the Church Street scheme. Where there is scope the pavements will be widened. The level surface will make it easier for pushchairs and wheelchairs as well as pedestrians.

For the Market Place issues are more complex so more detailed designs will be done after the consultation. The intention is to enable the current vehicle movements except for going round the roundabout. A pedestrianised area would link the side from The Conservative Club to Smiths. There has been concern about parking which has been retained on the South and West sides plus the disabled parking spaces. Some concern was expressed about cars exiting from The Abbey.

Questioned about a previous plan which lost funding because it "did not comply" VM said The Hundred and Latimer Street were completed but plans for the Market Place and Bell Street had met more opposition. Questioned about Church Street traffic speeds VM said once the scheme has bedded down speeds will be checked to see if additions are needed. The overall aim is to change drivers' perceptions of the central area. Neil Beasley commented on a need for lines across the road to slow traffic – in Bell Street too.

There were further questions: HGVs – town centre businesses need deliveries and they and the Town Centre Manager are keen to find a solution. The Christmas tree - a place will be found for this.

VM noted that the scheme will have learned lessons about traffic management and will ensure that people know the businesses are open while work is being carried out.

6. **TVBC Planning update (notes from Graham Smith, Planning Policy Manager):**

Planning applications/ appeals: The appeal Highwood Lane/Botley Road (116 units) (14/00842/OUTS) has been withdrawn following the adoption of the local plan.

Ganger Farm (275 units) (14/01090/FULLS) – was reported back to southern area planning committee on 15th March as a number of material issues had changed since the application was first presented to committee. The committee this week resolved to grant planning permission.

Nightingale Lodge (54 extra care units with day care centre). Southern area planning committee this week granted permission subject to signing a legal agreement (15 /01261/FULLS).

Abbotsford House, Braishfield Lane outline application for 46 units (15/03137/OUTS)

Planning appeal at Fields Farm, Rownhams for 140 units and Roundabouts Copse, North Baddesley for 40 units are both due to be heard in September.

Neighbourhood Planning. TVBC successfully obtained a grant for £30,000 to help assist those parishes which have started on the neighbourhood plan process. The joint Romsey Town and Romsey Extra neighbourhood plan is one of the six parishes to benefit from this grant.

7. Romsey Riverwalk Project. Amanda Deeming

The Causeway is in a very poor state. Emergency repairs done after the floods are deteriorating. The community group is looking to restore it. There has been funding for an initial survey and concept design. The Environment Agency are giving support and fundraising is continuing looking to raise £45,000. See Romsey Riverwalk Restoration on Facebook.

AD explained the intention to improve the Sadler's Mill end and described in detail the system of revetment planned to restore the banks of the Causeway. The consortium which owns the causeway (bought for its fishing rights) is actively helping with the project. Following a question about flooding the Chairman said he would arrange a session on flooding at a future Forum.

8. Updates

Mark Edgerley showed the Arts in Romsey leaflet sponsored by David Wilson homes which covers events from March to December 2016. These include the Antiques Market in May, the Beggar's Fair 9th July, The Food Festival on 4th September and the Film Festival 24 September – 1st October.

Farmer's markets take place on the first Sunday of each month.

ME estimated that about £10 million of improvements were taking place in the town including The Abbey Hotel, The Phoenix, Kersey's and the William IV.

Three consultations which Forum members may wish to take part in were noted. These were - Proposals for developing a new Family Support Service; Post 16 transport policy and Changes to the Household Waste and Recycling Service. Information and a link would be sent to Forum Members. The Boundary Commission will have a draft report in September. Members can comment then.

JP updated the meeting on the "Romsey Pong". There has been little evidence for this over the winter. It is being monitored. JP asked if anyone notices the sulphurous smell please report to us. The Environment Agency want to know.

There was a brief update on Devolution – the Solent City bid may include an elected mayor. Test Valley and Romsey are not part of this but may see housing requirements driven by employment in Southampton. There is also a proposal for a Greater Hampshire Authority.

9. Any Other Business

The new headquarters for Youth in Romsey will be handed over next Monday.

10. Date of next meeting: 16 June 2016