

Minutes of the Romsey Forum

16th November 2017

Present:-

Lilian Brimelow, Tony Hyde, Dorothy Baverstock, Mark Edgerley, Roger Tetstall, Mark Miller, Maureen Flood, Nick Adams-King, Mary Greggains, Chris Barrington-Brown, Ann Chillingworth, Diane Kingston, Jan Inadon, Vera Brice, John Stone, Jeff Hawksley, Glyn Darby, Paul Tatham, Dick Hewett, Viv Messenger, Judy Walker, Roger Prescott, Anna Duignan, Chris Esplin-Jones, Richard Pratt, Mike Arney, Franc Pilkington, Rich House, Frank Stokes, Margaret Massie, Gordon Massie, Simon Hayes, Chris Wesson, Andy Carter, Carol McFarland, Roy Perry.

John Parker:- in the Chair.

Mark Cooper:- Clerk to the meeting.

In all 38 attendees.

1 Apologies:-

Sue Derbyshire, Diane Hargreaves, Mavis Sawdy, Sandra Smith, Carolyn Nixson, Marianne Piggan, Mike Perks, Julian Jones, Graham Smith, David Chillingworth, Frances Sweeney, Brian Sweeney, John Tilley, Cecily Tilley, Anne Meader, Stuart Bannerman, Elizabeth Pratt.

2 Minutes of the Romsey Forum held 21st September 2017 were agreed, but add apology from Stuart Bannerman.

3 Matters Arising:- None.

4 Town Centre Report from Town Centre Manager, Mark Edgerley. A leaflet outlining the key Christmas events was circulated. The Lantern Parade on 8th December will have 250 lanterns. A band is still to be confirmed. The Classic Car display is on 26th December. Last years raised £5,000 for prostate cancer charity. A Romsey French Market is scheduled for Sunday 25th March 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Romsey Twinning is involved. There will be at least 20 stalls. There will be Antiques' Fairs on 13th May and 21st October. There will be an Arts Trail on 1st July, the day of the Town Mayor's picnic. The Romsey News and Information Facebook page now has 6,500 members. Posters for Romsey events can be found on this site. The Visit Romsey Website is in construction and will also hold information about key Romsey events. ME was asked whether the Blood donation service was due in town as it was rumoured that there are none in the near future. ME will enquire.

5 Community Governance Review - presented by Roger Tetstall, TVBC Chief Executive.

The Boundary Commission had recently undertaken Borough Ward boundary reviews and the new Borough Wards will be used from May 2019. The CGR is about parish boundaries and is undertaken by the Borough and will also come into force in May 2019. Parish warding is not subject to the tyranny of electoral parity. The CGR will be guided by what residents and Parishes tell it. Maureen Flood is leading a Borough Councillors group which will make recommendations to full Council. The draft scheme will be at full council on 29th April 2018 and there will then be a second eight week, full consultation.

The Forum asked a number of questions about timing, staff costs and concerns were expressed about the unwelcome possibility of dividing Romsey Extra Parish into seven single member Parish Wards that would be very different in size.

The Chairman, John Parker, reminded the Forum that it was down to the parish councils and residents to have their say on the Governance Review. Test Valley is taking a neutral approach and will be guided by the representations they receive.

6 Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership - How it benefits Romsey:- presentation by Mark Miller. Three Rivers is a not-for-profit organisation. It does not work for the railways, but works with them. It covers the area between Salisbury and Bursledon, its aim being to prevent station closures, to grow the rail industry and to develop the relationship between communities, their stations and their railways. The 3R Partnership is run by a steering group who are mainly its funders; it is a member of ACoRP, the Association of Community Rail Partnerships, and depends heavily on volunteers. In Romsey volunteers have improved the station and its car park. The land is all owned by Network Rail but leased to 3RP. 3RP has campaigned for bus link services, funding a Romsey to Stockbridge and a Stockbridge to Andover link, following the old 'Spratt and Winkle' line with calls at Danebury Hill and the Hawk Conservancy. It has published a 'Station Walks' guide (£5) and is promoting the rail services and links at the Romsey Show and at the Christmas Mulled Wine event. 3RP is in discussion with GWR about taking a lease on the old Stationmasters House for use as a community hub. Fundamental changes were underway for SouthWestern Railway from December and if Forum members use the railway they need to respond to the consultation.

Romsey Station is still very much on the up with 600,000 users passing through the station. Questions followed about opening new stations and halts. The issue was mainly financial and a business case had to be made.

7 Planning Update from TVBC's Graham Smith.

(i) Planning Applications

At the previous Forum reference had been made to an application on the Romsey Brewery site (app ref: 17/00966/OBLS) where the applicant was seeking to modify the planning permission so that the affordable housing that was to be delivered would now be delivered as 'starter homes'. This application was made on the basis that the provision of affordable housing makes the development unviable. The Council's viability consultants have reviewed the application and its evidence and have disagreed with the assumptions put forward by the applicant. As such the application has been refused.

(ii) Appeals

The Inquiry into the Abbotsford, Braishfield Rd application for 46 dwellings was heard between 3rd - 5th October in the Crosfield Hall. This site sits between the Abbotswood development and Ganger Farm. The Planning Inspectorate have confirmed that a decision will be issued on or before the 27th November. At the time of writing the Council has yet to receive the decision.

(iii) Local Government Association Grant – Romsey Brewery.

The Council has been successful in receiving a grant of £14,000 for bespoke expert planning and legal advice to explore ways of unlocking development on the remainder of the Brewery site. The funding has come from the Local Government Association's Housing Advisers programme, which was designed to support authorities to deliver projects that help meet the housing need of its local area.

(iv) Bell Street enhancements - 2nd phase of works.

Colas has been appointed as the contractor for the scheme in Bell Street, and work commenced on Monday 4 September 2017. The road has been closed to through traffic since then but access has been maintained for businesses, deliveries, residents and emergency services, and Newton Lane car park has remained open. Hampshire County Council's archaeology team are working alongside the contractor to identify and log any notable findings. They have made archaeological recordings of the foundations of an old mill which were discovered close to Duke's Mill entrance. The work is to be split into two phases, with the first phase finishing by 24th November 2017, when Bell Street will be re-opened.

The break over the winter is to help minimise disruption to local businesses over the busy Christmas shopping period. The second phase will start in January 2018 and finish in Spring 2018.

(v) Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment.

The Council is producing a Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). This is a requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework. The SHELAA will be a technical document which will provide information on sites for potential housing, economic development, Gypsy and Travelling Showpeople, Self Build housing etc in relation to their suitability, availability and achievability. This information will help the Council produce the next local plan and parishes produce their neighbourhood plans. The SHELAA will only identify sites which have been promoted to the Council, it does not allocate sites. The inclusion of the site in the SHELAA does not imply that the Council would necessarily grant planning permission. The deadline for submitting information was the 20th October and officers are currently collating all the information. This will be published in full at the end of the year with all parish councils receiving a 'headline' list of the submitted sites by the end of November.

(iv) Local Plan The Council needs to commence work on reviewing the local plan. The first step is understanding what the issues are that we face; what the evidence tells us; and what the Government requires us to do; and then working out what realistic options we have. This will be called an Issues and Options document. The Government's proposed changes within national guidance make it difficult to be certain what the content of the next local plan will be. This has meant that there has been a delay in completing and consulting on the document.

8 Dates of 2018 Forum meetings.

29th March (This will be the 100th Romsey Forum);
26th June; 6th September; and 15th November

9 Any other business.

Judy Walker, the Chief Executive of Age Concern, Hampshire expressed her concern about the HCC consultation on the future of Masters House which is proposed for closure. It offers valuable day care facilities and there aren't sufficient resources available to offer replacement services