

Minutes of the Romsey Forum  
Romsey Town Hall, 7.30pm, 21 September 2017

Present: Denise Amery, John Bennett, Lilian Brimelow, A & D Chillingworth, Mark Cooper, Glyn Darby, Rosemary Dawkins, I & M Dickerson, Mark Edgerley, Mary Greggains, Stephen Homsley, R & L Hunt, Julian Jones, Diane Kingston, Steve Lees, Gordon Massie, Roy Perry, Stephen Smith, John Stone, B & F Sweeney, J & C Tilley, Ian Tripp, J Walker

Chair: John Parker. Minutes: Sandra Smith

**1. Apologies**

Chris Barrington Brown, Dorothy Baverstock, Vera Brice, Sue Derbyshire, Tom Hanslip, Jan Haddon, Simon Hayes, Tony Hyde, Carolyn Nixon, Franc Pilkington, E & R Pratt, Roger Prescott, Frank Stokes.

**2. Minutes of 13 July 2017**

These were accepted as a true record. Proposed John Tilley, seconded David Chillingworth.

**3. Matters Arising**

Item 5 Boundary Commission proposals. It was hoped Broadlands would remain in Romsey.

Item 7 HCC consultation – the results are not known yet.

**4. Election of Officers**

Chairman. John Parker would like to retire. No other candidate was forthcoming so JP agreed to stand for one more year, standing down in 2018.

Vice chair. Julian Jones agreed to stand for another year.

Secretary. The current joint secretaries, Carolyn Nixon and Sandra Smith, would not continue. There were no other candidates forthcoming. The Chair moved a vote of thanks to Carolyn and Sandra for their many years of service.

*Members are asked if any would be willing to act as Forum Secretary until one is elected. This entails taking minutes for the 4 meetings a year and mailing them to the Forum contact list, plus occasional other email contact about meetings or information.*

*Please email [romseyforum@gmail.com](mailto:romseyforum@gmail.com) if you would be willing to help.*

**5. Planning report. Written report from Graham Smith**

National Planning Guidance: Forum members may be interested to know that the Government has published a consultation document on how Councils should calculate their future housing requirement. It uses a new, simplified method to calculate local housing need with the aim of easing the housing crisis and building 266,000 homes a year across the country over the next decade - exceeding the current target of 200,000. The document was published on the 14<sup>th</sup> September with consultation running until early November. The Council is reviewing its content and will be responding in due course.

Planning Applications: The application on the Romsey Brewery site (app ref: 17/00966/OBLS) is still being considered. The applicant is seeking to modify the planning permission so that the affordable housing that was to be delivered would now be delivered as 'starter homes' on the basis of 'viability grounds'. The application and its evidence is being considered by the Council and external viability experts.

Appeals: The Inquiry into the Abbotsford, Braishfield Rd application for 46 dwellings will be heard between 3-5 October in the Crosfield Hall. This site sits between the Abbotswood development and Ganger Farm.

Improvements to Bell Street: Following a redesigned Church Street in 2016, work has now started in Bell Street to reduce vehicle speeds and provide a level surface to aid accessibility, with similar surfacing materials being used to those in Church Street. The first phase of the work started in September and will finish in November 2017, with a second phase of work beginning in January 2018 and finishing in spring 2018. The break over the winter will help minimise disruption to local businesses over the busy Christmas shopping period. Bell Street will be closed at times to through traffic, but access will be maintained for

residents, deliveries and emergency services. Newton Lane car park will remain open and the street will be open to pedestrians throughout the works to allow access to local shops and businesses.

SL amplified the section on National Guidance to add that the borough is one of the few authorities whose number is coming down.

MC added that the Government require 5 years housing land supply. Southern Test valley has 8 years. However if Hoe Lane and Whitenap do not come forward it could be a problem. JP added this was also true of the Brewery site with permission for 200 houses.

For Planning Applications JP explained that “affordable Housing” means houses which can be socially rented at an affordable rent, 80% of local market rents, or sold at below market cost. “Starter homes” are for people between 18 and 40 years with household income of less than £80,000. They sell at 20% less than market price. Starter homes can avoid the Community Infrastructure Levy, which for strategic developments can be zero. The developer is seeking to do this.

For other planning applications JP added that the field owned by Tom Hanslip north of the Oxlease development has permission for 40 dwellings and the developer is seeking to increase this to 94 on grounds of viability.

Under Appeals it was noted that the application for 40 houses south of Ganger Farm (not in an area scheduled for development) which was previously refused permission is going to appeal, 3 October, Crosfield Hall.

## **6. Town Centre Update. Mark Edgerley**

Romsey Festival had more events than previously – 160 events in 30 venues. The wash up meeting was not well attended but a new committee has come forward for the 2020 Festival.

Food Festival: There was heavy rain all day but traders were philosophical and will come back next year.

Film Festival: lower key than last year – 3 films in the Town Hall and one in King John’s House for £9 to include a cream tea. The festival includes the 1958 film Dunkirk, remastered.

In response to requests for children’s films in the Town Hall Beauty and the Beast is being shown. Viceroy’s House (includes Indian nibbles) is a sell-out.

Details of the Film Festival and Community Cinema can be found on the Facebook page.

Romsey Business Fair is on October 14<sup>th</sup> at the Crosfield Hall, 9.30 – 1.30.

On the same day the Environment Agency has an information event in the annex on the flood alleviation scheme. MC gave details. The Environment Agency event is on for 4 days – 11<sup>th</sup> October afternoon, 12<sup>th</sup> morning, 13<sup>th</sup> early evening and 14<sup>th</sup> morning. JP asked if the flood schemes were signed off and had funding. MC believes the funding is committed including from DEFRA. Middlebridge work is funded.

Antiques Fair: on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 10am-3pm, in 5 locations.

Visit Romsey website: a contract to produce this has gone out to a local (Chandlers Ford) company. It is expected just after Christmas.

Lantern Parade: Friday 8 December along with late night shopping. Mountbatten pupils on Art Award are working with Primary Schools on this. More stewards are needed on the night and helpers on the professional workshops also help assembling the lanterns at the Abbey Church Rooms. Details on Facebook. JT offered Romsey Shed help with stewarding.

Other Christmas events include the Christmas lights switch on, Carols in the Market Place, Farmers Market on 24 December and Classic Car meet on 26 December.

A question was asked about illegal parking by the Causeway and Burma Road during the Classic Car event. ME replied this is difficult to solve.

Question about teenage markets: ME stated take up had been lower than expected so these would be in collaboration with Salisbury in 2018, 3 in each. Romsey will have the Christmas one.

**Romsey Riverwalk Restoration update.** JP read the report from Mavis Sawdy and Amanda Deeming.

The main development for the RRR project is that it has now become a Community Interest Company, which will put the restoration work on a more sustainable footing. Romsey and District Society funded the

tree works done earlier this year. In the current year to date we have received the following grants and donations:

£4045 from the Grove Solar Farm Community Fund specifically for creating a Passing Place on The Causeway (thanks to Romsey Extra Parish Councillors for alerting us to this source).

£500 from the Aviva Community Fund

£2000 from Tesco Bags of Help Scheme, specifically for “the puddle project” which aims to reduce the puddle that forms on the footpath by the bridge at Sadlers Mill after heavy rain

£2000 from HCC Cllr Mark Cooper’s devolved budget

£100 from Curves

Revetment work has continued but had to be suspended for a time owing to anti-social behaviour. We have been working with the Police to find ways of addressing the problem, and were able to hold another Work Day in August to continue our progress. We are arranging another date for later this year with the Community Payback Scheme who will make a welcome return. The dog steps have been a great success and are very popular with local dog walkers.

The children’s book “Chloe’s Special Place – the Causeway, Romsey” continues to sell well with copies available from Rum’s Eg, The Tourist Information Centre and Organic Bliss.

We are looking forward to the River Test exhibition at Rum’s Eg starting in October, which will feature paintings by Pete Gilbert and photos by Hugh Lohan of the area between Stockbridge and Middlebridge. A draw is being organised for a Gilbert picture and a Lohan photograph, together with pictures by other artists of Sadlers Mill, which aims to raise money for both RRR and Rum’s Eg. A fundraising concert for RRR by local folk group Beggars Belief is also being held at Rum’s Eg on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> October, 2-4pm – free entry with donations will be the order of the day!

As ever, we are grateful to all those who have supported us and hope that community interest will remain central to our work to make the Riverwalk more attractive, accessible and safer for all.

## **7. Open Debate**

Alma Road: JW commented on the parking and described the difficulty in crossing the road at the Waitrose turn. MC offered to get the Highways Officer to look.

Bunny Lane Tip: There was discussion about the possible closure. Views expressed suggested small savings, especially if rubbish was dumped elsewhere. Cllr Perry responded explaining HCC needed to cope with financial pressures. The priority is the 1,000 children in HCC care. He hopes a solution would be found. The tip charge for non-householders had not resulted in more fly tipping. There were around 4 million usages of council tips in a year. A nominal charge, e.g. £1, would raise a significant amount. A show of hands totally supported such a nominal charge for householders.

Bus Service: It was noted that Wheelers has stopped the bus serving Woodley and Viney Avenue. This has a huge effect on Abbotswood. ME thinks the company gave up the battle with parked cars.

Signs for Railway station: AC commented on the lack of direction signs for the railway station. It would be useful for drivers to have them on every entry to the town. MC offered to pursue this, not with more signs but by adding the rail symbol to existing signage. ME noted that there are fingerposts for pedestrians. JP noted that there was no map of the town at the station. ME would like more maps around the town.

Abbey Hotel: JW asked if there was any news. JP responded there was none and no sign of work starting.

## **8. Any Other Business – none.**

Date of next meeting: 16 November 2017