

Minutes of the Romsey Forum

Romsey Town Hall, 6th September 2018, 7.30pm

Present:

N Adams-King, J Arden, L Askey, D & W Baish, C Barrington Brown, K Becker, J Bennett, R Biffen, Jackie Bignell, John Bignell, L Brimelow, I Bullivant, A Chillingworth, G Darby, J Darby, I & M Dickerson, C Esplin Jones, A Ferrier, J & P Godwin, A & M Fry, K Greenham, P Hancock, D Hargreaves, J Hawksley, S & S Hayes, C Hughes, E Hull, L & R Hunt, A Johnston, R Jordan-Baker, P Kerridge, D Kingston, S Lees, P Marshall, V Messenger, R & V Perry, M Piggin, F Pilkington, R & E Pratt, R Prescott, M & R Robinson, J Russell, G Shawley, F Stokes, J Stone, B & F Sweeney, J Willery + 1 other.

Speakers: Robert Chapman, Mark Edgerley,
In the Chair John Parker. Secretary Sandra Smith

1 **Apologies:** M Arney, N Bailey, S Bannerman, D Baverstock, N Beasley, J Brambley, V Brice, J Burnage, D Chillingworth, M Cooper, J Haddon, A Hyde, J Jones, J Mason, B Milburn, C Nixson, M Perks, J & C Tilley, J Walker, J Whiteley.

2 **Minutes of the Forum 26 July 2018** were approved as a true record.

3 **Matters arising**

Item 3: demolition of Nightingale Lodge is underway.

Item 3: The new town website has the same address as the previous one.

Item 4: Waitrose developments will start in September. During the work the toilets will be closed. There was a question about parking congestion. NA-K outlined some possible solutions and reported that HCC has been in talks with Waitrose who confirm that some changes are underway.

Item 5: Consultation on the local plan ends 14 September, see Test Valley website for issues and options.

Item 7: policing vacancies. A review is taking place so there will be no immediate changes.

4 **Election of Officers**

Chair: Richard Jordan Baker was proposed by Chris Esplin Jones, seconded by Alison Johnson. There being no other candidates he was elected.

Vice Chair: Elizabeth Pratt asked if John Parker would stand. There being no other candidate he was elected.

Secretary: No candidate came forward. John Parker asked if the current joint secretaries would be willing to continue. RJB offered Secretarial support. It was agreed the joint secretaries continue while options are explored.

5 **Fishlake Meadows Nature Reserve**

Presentation by Bob Chapman for the Hampshire and IOW Wildlife Trust

Bob gave a brief history of the site. With the development at Oxlease Meadows the opportunity came for TVBC to create the nature reserve with a contribution from the developer (S106). It will be managed by the Wildlife Trust who started work in November.

There are new or improved paths East-West at the top of the site, North-South through the middle of the site and along the canal path. Some willows have been cleared and tree works are planned (pollarding) both for safety and to open up views. There are now 5 cattle on the north of the site. A large group of local volunteers are taking on many responsibilities.

The main body of the reserve is under Trust management, other parts are still with Test Valley or Bellway, yet to be transferred. The main part of the reserve has no official designation but the canal is a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

R Prescott asked about the Bellway Car Park. RC explained that when the transfer is complete the car park and work store will be reorganised.

There were questions about the water levels which are low, and speculation that fisheries may be getting priority. The Environment Agency will be involved in discussions. Flood plans will contribute. Water levels have been lowered pending works e.g. on Foxmill sluice. Levels will be brought up when the work is done. In response to a question on what can be seen - there was an osprey there up to 10 days ago, there are two local white egrets and there has been a hobby. There are lots of dragonflies. Bob suggested visiting

www.testvalley.gov.uk/communityandleisure/fishlake-meadows-nature-reserve/fishlake-meadows-nature-reserve to find a film of Fishlake meadows taken by drone. There are some excellent photos on Facebook and more information on the Trust's site www.hiwwt.org.uk/fishlake-meadows

6 **Planning: south of town centre**

The Romsey Future project has commissioned Nexus Planning and Perkins and Will architects to lead a consultation and create a plan for the area south of the town centre. The consultants were not in attendance but had given J Parker a presentation. The consultation has already begun and will continue to the end of October. The area, which includes the Crosfield Hall and the bus station, could be more attractive and useful. Cllr Nick Adams-King, chair of Romsey Future, said that the aim is to work up a shared vision and an aspirational and viable plan for area. The Crosfield Hall is in the wrong location but a large hall is needed. The bus station may move. The plan could be the basis of a supplementary planning document. There was a question about where the bus station would go if the area is redeveloped but there is no plan at present. The website www.romseyfuture.org.uk has more information.

The Test Valley website has additional information on the District Council involvement.

On Twitter see #romseyfuture and #romseysotc

The contact for the project office is romseyfuture@testvalley.gov.uk

7 **Town Centre report.** *Mark Edgerley, Town Centre Manager*

Sunday's Food Festival was hugely successful, the weather helped. Many stallholders sold out. Next year's food festival will be on 1 September. The Chamber of Commerce thought the event could not take more people. There were comments on the lack of publicity for the Food Festival in the Romsey Advertiser. Newsquest is syndicated and has more coverage of Winchester. They welcome contributions on Romsey but have no photographer. If words and pictures are sent in the right format they will often print them.

The Romsey Show on Saturday will encourage people to engage with local businesses. The Beggars Fair are running one sound stage and repeating the popular "Busk stops".

ME wants to transfer some spend from out of town into town centre businesses. The vacancy rate is less than 5% but J&P Butchers and Sundae's Child are not viable and will close. There is concern about some negative posts on Facebook which are untrue.

The next Romsey Festival will be on 14 – 19 July 2020

Park runs, 5km runs, will be starting soon based at the Mountbatten School. Use the green tokens at Waitrose to support Park Run to raise funds to set it up.

The Antiques Fair will be here in October.

Saturday 10 November 11am there will be a ceremony at the poppy memorial by the railway station. Sunday 11 will be the Remembrance parade.

Christmas: the tree is ordered from Norfolk. Saturday 24 November is the Christmas lights switch on and the winter carnival. Friday 7 December is Lantern Parade at 5.30 and late night shopping. Santa will be there.

Monday 17 December will be carols in the Market Place. 23 December will be the Christmas Farmers Market. On Boxing Day is the Classic Car and Bike Meet. There were questions about parking. AF noted that there is a report on parking as part of the local plan work.

Romsey Town Council website has the list of dates for 2019. www.romseytc.org.uk/whats-on-in-romsey

On other matters we have a new PCSO but have lost one to another area.

Hants & IOW Wildlife Trust and the Environment Agency have taken over Manor Farm south of the town and it will become saltmarsh grazing.

Advance notice – from 22:00 Friday 28 September to 05:00 Monday 1 October the M 27 between junctions 3 and 4 will be closed for work on the Romsey Road Bridge. The A 3057 in Upton will also be closed. Local roads will be very busy. There will be 2 further closures in 2019.

For information on diversions see www.highways.gov.uk/M27romseyroad

8 **Any Other Business.**

Richard Jordan Baker thanked John Parker for his work for the Romsey Forum over many years.

9 **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Romsey Forum will be on 15th November, 7.30pm and Romsey Town Hall.