

Minutes of the Romsey Forum

29th March 2018

Present:-

Dorothy Baverstock, Mark Edgerley, Nick Adams-King, Chris Barrington-Brown, John Stone, David Chillingworth, Jan Haddon, Vera Brice, Jeff Hawksley, Glyn Darby, Judy Walker, Stuart Bannerman, Franc Pilkington, Frank Stokes, Sandra Smith, Marianne Piggan, Frances Sweeney, Brian Sweeney, Julian H Jones, Ian Tripp, Janet Whiteley, Janet Burnage, Paul Burnage, John Mason, Kate Jackson, Rosemary Dawkins, Mark Cooper, Margaret Robinson, Rod Robinson, Ian Bullivant, Neill Beasley, Sue Taylor, Steve Beasley.

Chair : John Parker

Minutes : Carolyn Nixon

Speaker : Jo Topley, Romsey Food Bank

1 Apologies:- Roy Perry, Diane Kingston, Mike Arney, Graham Smith, Sue Derbyshire, Ann Chillingworth, John Tilley, Cecily Tilley, Richard & Elizabeth Pratt, Barbara Milburn.

2 Minutes of the Romsey Forum held 16th November 2017 were agreed, with amendment that Ian Bullivant and Neill Beasley had also been present.

3 Matters Arising:- Item 9 : there had been very few responses to the planned closure of the Master's House Day Centre, which was now going ahead. Cllr Cooper reported that there would be a new Day Centre from Autumn 2019 within the new Extra Care apartments complex (54 flats, of which 38 'affordable') in Greatwell Drive. Demolition of the old buildings was about to start.

4 Town Centre Report: Mark Edgerley (Town Centre Manager. The visit of the BBC's Any Questions? team to the Crosfield Hall in March had been very successful, with the producer complimenting both the venue and its organisers. The French Market had attracted crowds into the town for 3-4 hours on Sunday 25th March, in spite of there still being some issues with the Bell Street improvements scheme.

The Antiques Fair on 13th May will be centred on 5 venues. Inside Out Art Trail on Sunday, 1st July, the same day as the Mayor's Picnic the aim being to keep people circulating round the town.

The Town Hall Cinema was proving very popular, with two showings of each film. The Romsey Town Council website had been simplified and brought in-house.

To questions, ME explained the allocation of tickets for the Any Questions ? broadcast, in line with BBC requirements for a balanced audience. He also

regretted the closure of the Rum's Eg art gallery and said that he hoped to be providing facilities for 'pop-up' art exhibitions in the Town Hall.

5 Romsey Food Bank : Jo Topley, Manager

Although there was a perception that Romsey could not possibly need such a facility, the Food Bank had been set up 2 years ago and demand had increased by 68% from the first to second year. They now had a permanent site at Unit 20, Greatbridge Industrial Estate, which could be accessed by the public on Wednesdays. Those in need of assistance are given vouchers, via a variety of agencies, including schools, Family Support and Citizens Advice. No family should need more than 3 vouchers in a month. The objective is to help sort the problems which have led to the need. Recurrent users can be tracked and given additional assistance.

The food boxes are made up by volunteers, with the guidance of a nutritionist, and contain enough meals for 3 days. It is not possible to provide fresh food because of the limitations of the premises but food allergies/special diets can be taken into account.

In 2017, 390 vouchers were issued, helping 527 adults and 531 children, living in the area between North Baddesley and Stockbridge. Reasons for the need included domestic violence, sudden cessation of wages due to sickness and, particularly, the changes in the benefit system. At holiday time, some families found it difficult to cope without free school meals. The demand was still increasing and the need was genuine.

The Romsey community had been very supportive, with the Men's Shed helping to set up the premises and residents donating (2017) over 116,000 kgs of food via Waitrose and Romsey/N Baddesley churches. It is hoped that Romsey Library may also become a collection point in the future. Non-food items, such as household cleaning and sanitary products were also welcomed.

Volunteers were always needed and cash donations/grants were being sought, in order to buy a van to distribute to rural areas.

Further info : <https://romsey.foodbank.org.uk>

6 Planning Update from TVBC's Graham Smith.

(i) Romsey Town Centre (South) project : A Romsey Future project group and the Council will shortly be tendering for consultants to undertake large scale community engagement exercise. The outcome of this would be to create a masterplan to guide future redevelopment in the area of the Bus Station/Aldi/Edwina Mountbatten Home . This could include retail, leisure, community facilities, residential and car parking. A range of engagement events is

proposed over a three month period in summer / early autumn 2018.

(ii) Residential Areas of Special Character : Through the current local plan certain areas of the Borough have been given special designations recognising their character of large properties set in large gardens. This includes areas of Winchester Hill and Southampton Road in Romsey. TVBC will be publishing a draft supplementary planning document for consultation in May. This consultation will include character appraisals for the site and highlight those factors which make the character of these areas special. It will not revisit the principle or the areas covered. Once the consultation is complete and responses considered and necessary changes made, the Council will adopt the Supplementary Planning Document. This will inform the determination of any future relevant planning applications.

iii) Draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The Government is currently consulting on the new draft NPPF. This is the Government's guidance on how authorities should produce their Local Plans and determine planning applications. The draft continues the Government's position of being pro-growth and delivering more homes. The consultation closes on 10th May 2018. TVBC is considering the content and how this may impact on the next Local Plan.

iv) Borough Local Plan

TVBC will be looking to publish the first step in the review of the Local Plan in the Summer. This stage will focus on the issues that we face; what the evidence tells us; and what the Government requires us to do and then working out what are the realistic options. As part of this the Council is reviewing its evidence base, including looking at its town centres; impacts on the New Forest and landscape character.

From the floor, Cllr Adams-King explained that the draft NPPF would give a new formula to calculate housing numbers, putting greater weight on the differential between income and housing cost. However, TVBC had calculated that this would have very little difference on the number of properties it was required to provide. This was reliant on neighbouring authorities having their plans accepted and new development sites in Romsey being started when planned.

The 200 dwellings planned for the Brewery site could still not be included in the housing numbers. TVBC had been granted further funding to obtain further specialist advice regarding a compulsory purchase order but planning permission could not be deemed

to have lapsed as footings had been dug. Poole Council was having a similar problem with a site owned by the same developer and TVBC was in discussions with the MP for West Dorset, Oliver Letwin.

Questions were asked about the planning of new estates, in the light of problems with emergency access at Abbotswood. John Parker explained that, of the 3 developers of the site, Taylor Wimpey had insisted on narrower roads and there was nothing in planning law to force them to work in concert with the other two. Parking had become a big issue on the estate because owners preferred not to use designated parking areas. The conversion of garages to living space had been prohibited.

Vehicular access to/from Abbotswood via Woodley Lane had been blocked at the wish of residents in Woodley Lane.

Cllr Adams-King reported that councillors would be meeting with the developer of the new estate at Whitenap in the coming month and would be seeking a major public consultation exercise. It was hoped that the next Local Plan would include the need to keep the local vernacular in housing developments and measures to mitigate against parking problems.

8 Any Other Business.

Road closures : Botley Road, between the Luzborough pub and Northlands Rd would shortly be closed at certain times for re-surfacing. Details would be sent to members in advance of the minutes.

Braishfield Rd junction : this was now open and the traffic lights in operation.

Yarn bombing : Bollards in the town centre had once again been decorated with colourful and imaginative covers reflecting the theme of spring time. Thanks were due to the many volunteers involved.

9 Date of next Forum meetings 26th July.

Then 6th September, 15th November 2018