

Minutes of the Romsey Forum

21st November 2019

Present:-

J Walker, D Chillingworth, D Doulton, M Arney, J Cairney, E/R Pratt, F/B Sweeny, J Russell, P Wolstencroft, J Haddon, V Brice, M Tse, S Smith, C Ransom, J Stone, J Hawksley, L/P Blow, JH Jones, R House, P Joyce, R Prescott, F Pilkington, S Bannerman, G Darby, M/A Perks, C/J Tilley, L Brimelow, A/M Fry, F Stokes, M Cooper, R Perry, J Parker, I Bullivant.

Chair: John Parker (Vice Chair)

Minutes: Carolyn Nixson

Speakers: Andy Ferrier, Anton Page,
Mark Edgerley

1 Apologies: Richard Jordan-Baker, A Hyde, A Chillingworth, P/J Godwin, D Hargreaves, S Hayes, J Brambley, S Derbyshire, D Baverstock, M Piggin, Cllr N Daas, C Wise.

2 Minutes of the Romsey Forum held 19th September 2019 were agreed. (Prop: G Darby; sec: J Haddon)

3 Matters Arising

(3) TPOs at Whitenap site: it was explained that the Tree Preservation Orders granted for the site covered all the trees presently there, in 10 groups.

(6.4) River Walk restoration: Installation of the new bridges had been postponed due to ground being too wet. It was hoped to complete the work by mid-December although with temporary railings.

4. Election of Officers

As all current officers had indicated their willingness to continue and there being no other nominations or volunteers, it was agreed that the following should serve for a further year:

Chair: Richard Jordan-Baker; Vice Chair: John Parker;
Joint Secretaries: Carolyn Nixson and Sandra Smith

5. TVBC Declaration of Climate Emergency

Anton Page (Test Valley Friends of the Earth) full presentation attached

Having been one of the first members of FoE, when it was set up in the 1970s, Anton had also gone on the first march in London, campaigning against non-returnable bottles. The focus of the organisation then was to warn of and try to prevent the dangers of climate change. These dangers are now all too obvious. The ten warmest years ever recorded in the world have occurred since 2002, and the ice caps are

melting by 13% each decade. On 8th Nov 2019, there were 121 flood warnings in the UK.

The UK has committed to zero emissions by 2050 but it needs to be by 2030. Carbon emissions have been reduced by 40% (over 1990 levels) but not if you count the emissions of consumer imports.

The declaration of a climate emergency by TVBC was to be welcomed but the lack of targets and definition of sustainability was regretted. Fossil fuels should be left in the ground. Burning of waste was preferable to using landfill but there should be more emphasis on reduction. The Government has to play a central role in reducing waste from packaging.

In discussion: (AP) None of the political parties had adequate policies for the environment, other than the Green Party, whose policies should be examined closely. Extinction Rebellion's activities have the effect of making the public take notice.

Cllr Roy Perry stated that HCC was assured of the environmentally sound operation of the 3 incinerators in the county. There was currently no alternative but he did not feel that a further, much larger incinerator was appropriate at Barton Stacey.

(AP) Some councils have adopted the Merton Rule, whereby any new building had to incorporate 10% of renewables. TVBC should adopt this. Developers will not incorporate solar heating unless they are made to do so. It was suggested that councillors be lobbied to include the Merton Rule in the next Borough Local Plan.

Andy Ferrier (Corporate Director, TVBC)
full presentation attached

In passing the emergency resolution, TVBC was being committed to investigate clear and effective options to become carbon neutral. It had already set up the Test Valley Resilience Forum in 2014, with action plans for communities. It was important to understand how best to encourage residents to accept changes, using nudge techniques, rather than being restrictive.

Internally, the focus was on digital working and alternative methods of transport.

Electric charging points were currently being installed in local car parks and it was hoped to introduce grants to improve energy efficiency in community halls.

They would be developing an informed action plan, working with communities. Targets would be introduced after 6 months of discussion.

AP: TVBC could start now by introducing a higher standard of building regulations; by doubling tree cover in Test Valley and by funding Housing Associations to retrofit energy saving measures.

AF: Building regulations are a matter for Government. Trees are being planted and Fishlake Meadows has been saved and adopted. The environmental team has been augmented. TVBC would like to look at providing sustainable energy locally but it is easier for urban areas such as Southampton to have its own energy providing scheme.

Looking at kerbside collection of food waste but this might just encourage further waste. TVBC recycles as much from bottle banks as other authorities do from kerbside collections.

Cllrs Cooper and Parker pointed out how much local authorities were constrained in their planning policies by control from central government, particularly with regard to number and type of housing. The Government needed to lead on sustainability. Privatisation has also affected public transport, so that buses will only follow routes which are profitable.

Residents were urged to contribute to discussions on the next Local Plan, in order to show the support for sustainability measures.

6. Planning

JP reported that, because of rules about nitrate neutrality in the ground, many building developments, such as that at Hoe Lane, were currently on hold.

7. Town Centre report: Mark Edgerley (*circulated earlier*)

Christmas events would include various markets, the Winter Carnival, Santa's arrival at the Late Night Shopping, the Lantern Parade and Carol Singing in the Market Place on 23rd.

The Christmas lights were now all LED and the Tree would be coming from Norfolk, along with the one for Andover.

Community cinema: a new, more advanced projector had been purchased for the regular shows in the Town Hall. Details of the programme could be seen on the Town Hall website and tickets can be purchased on-line or at the door.

Film about Romsey: ME then showed a short film, made by Kate Jackson, featuring many local townspeople. It was a tongue-in-cheek depiction of the history of Romsey and is available to view on YouTube ("Romsey the Movie")

8. Dates of meetings 2020

19 March, 25 June, 17 September, 19 November.