

Notes from Faversham Future Forum 16th May 2019

Present: Geoff Wade (GW), Cllr Claire Belson (CCB), Claire Boraston ((Newton Place Practice (CB)), Paul Cumberland (PC), Alison Eardley (AE), Professor Harold Goodwin (HG), Mike Henderson (MH), Debbie Lawther (DL), Lawrie McMahon (LM), David Melville (DM), Maria Newman (MN), Chris Oswald-Jones (COJ), Jenny Reeves (JR), Amanda Russell (AR), Tim Stoner (TS), Cllr Jeff Tutt (JT), Helen Whately (HW), Cllr Chris Williams (CW), Professor Chris Wright (PCW)

In attendance: Miss Adrienne Begent (AB) - Deputy Town Clerk, FTC

Apologies: Sue Akhurst (SA), Cllr Sam Blair (SB), Killiara Burn (KB), Shiel Campbell (SC), Alistair Gould (AG), Cllr Ben J Martin (BJM), Cllr Hannah Perkin (HP), Cllr Julian Saunders (JS), Cllr Eddie Thomas (ET)

1. Welcome

1.1 GW welcomed everyone to the meeting. Important work is being undertaken by different groups in Faversham, the community, Town, Borough and County Council and the Government. This group is trying to tie up that work.

2. Notes from Meeting on 28th January and Matters Arising

2.1 Item 11: The Planning Guidelines were not sent to Swale Borough Council after the meeting on the 28th January because of Purdah. GW will send.

3. Election of Chair

3.1 Professor H Goodwin proposed Geoff Wade as Chair of Faversham Future Forum, Cllr Claire Belson seconded. A vote was taken, 11 in favour, none against and nine abstentions. GW accepts the Chair on condition that the Terms of Reference are acceptable.

4. Items for A.O.B

4.1 No items were raised.

5. Air Quality/Pollution

5.1 CW: Updated the Forum on the work being undertaken by the Faversham Society. They are 60% through the programme. Four months to complete the monitoring at seven sites, by five/six volunteers. The University of Kent is analysing the data. The preliminary results show high levels, which was known from the data collection Swale Borough Council has done, But, it is useful to calibrate the results.

Problem at Ospringe added to by low road, heavy traffic, school traffic and houses on road level.

Levels of Nitrogen Dioxide on Crescent Road and East Street are approaching the limits set by World Health Organisation and the issue needs to be addressed urgently.

A2 is the main source of pollution. The A2 will become the central spine with more pedestrians and cyclists. Further expansion of the town will result in far more people driving into town. Crossing the A2 is not pedestrian friendly, which will force people to drive in from new developments.

- 5.2 HW: Nationally air quality is the biggest environment health hazard for the Country. To address this planned electric car increase by 2040, phasing out petrol and diesel cars. The Government is researching into the effect HGV's and Vans are having on air quality.

The Government recently published a Clean Air Strategy, so this is a good time for the Faversham to be considering the issue. 20's Plenty is an important campaign group, as is campaigning for pedestrian crossing at Abbey School.

HW: is personally interested in promoting electric vehicle infrastructure and asked the Forum if it would be interested in infrastructure for electric charging? Government Funding is available for charging points in Carparks and Supermarkets etc.

Government scheme *Communal Charging Infrastructure* available, for collaborative work with Kent County Council and Swale Borough Council. The Ambitions of town would need to be to promote a clean carbon neutral town.

- 5.3 DL: This would be of interest to Faversham and would tie in with the work of the Plastic Free group.

- 5.4 AR: In Holland, this has been implemented for specific sites and in some cases there has been a 7% reduction in emissions. Hackney Council has piloted blocking of streets outside schools for 20min (disabled exempt), with interesting results.

The Beany in Canterbury held an exhibition, *Breathing Canterbury* ending in December 2018. As part of the exhibition there was a polluted air map of Canterbury, and display explaining where pollution comes from and possible solutions. Interesting exhibition which informed that air pollution build up in vehicles exposes the users to twice as much pollution as pedestrians and nine times as much as cyclists.

- 5.5 PC: Making any area carbon free is a good idea. Phasing in electric cars in Faversham will be difficult as most residents have to park a distance from their property. There are not many locations for the required 2/3 hour charge time.

- 5.6 GW: Asked HW what the National Policy is for charging points?

- 5.7 HW: RAPID charging points being installed at service stations on motorways and trunk roads. The Government's latest strategy is addressing provision of charging points for these that don't have own parking spaces, charging points in lampposts is one option but there are some technical problems. Provision of facilities in supermarkets is an option.

- 5.8 MH: Funding investment from government for charging infrastructure has previously been available, but not taken up by Swale Borough Council. The new council members may view this issue differently. Options for people to charge at home need to be explored. Queens Hall carpark is a possible site for all day charging.

Central Government has passed the problem of pollution to Local Government but without the necessary resources to solve the problem. Swale Borough Council is obliged to produce an Air Quality Area Management Plan, but now additional funding has been made available there may be new opportunities.

5.9 HW: £5.4million is available for charging infrastructure.

5.10 JR: In France charging points are sunk into the road, has this been explored?

Also one pollution hotspot is outside schools, there needs to be a change of behaviour to stop parents from leaving engines running. People won't use buses unless there is something in it for them (possibly working with traders), again need to change behaviour.

5.11 COJ: Need to explore the option of kiddie power to change behaviour. The Car parks in Faversham are controlled by Swale Borough Council, so will need to collaborate with them

5.12 DM: The cost of electric cars is also a stumbling block, same car model as an electric vehicle is 20-40% more. There is also a lack of private charging provision and charging at home is too slow. Nationally the growth in electric car use has slowed.

5.13 CB: Reiterated the need for change of behaviour. Need to raise awareness of the damage air pollution is causing. The money that the practices get for health prevention is a small proportion of the budget. Change could be promoted through workshops with schools/community groups but this needs funding.

5.14 HG: Questioned Government funding and policy. The application for Cleve Hill is a result of Government not influencing housing design.

5.16 CW: Replacing petrol/diesel cars with electric is not ideal. Need to be more flexible on the local level and look at reducing vehicle usage. Electric scooters are the fastest growing form of transport.

5.17 PC: Need to live closer to work and reduce journeys.

ACTION: GW will liaise with HW to explore her idea to develop an 'Green Action' environmental project that will bring the community together

6. Future Health and Community Care Needs

6.1 LM: Questioned how the new housing developments would get a health score. Good research has been undertaken into health provision for the next 5/10 years but this does not include properties that have planning permission. The rate of build and occupation is not included or the socio demographics of future occupants. The demand side is tricky to calculate.

There is a move for more to be done out of hospital and in the community. 50% of the work done in hospitals could be done at patient's homes.

Health of the population needs to be promoted, looking after health not just providing service.

ACTION: LM with the help of the CCG to draft a briefing paper exploring the implications of development on health-sewage- education.

The Forum should pressure Kent County Council and the CCG for health provision.

- 6.2 CB: A representative from the CCG was to attend this meeting, they are keen to come to the next meeting.

ACTION: Sub-group to discuss health formed. Members CB, LM, HG and GW to meet and report back to next forum meeting.

- 6.3 CB: An application has been submitted to the CCG to form a Primary Care Network, this will be a collaboration between Bank Street and Newton Road to provide services.

New contact from July, on the practices engage and what they do. This will include extended hours and improved access, allowing patients to use either practices at specific times.

- 6.4 HG: Questioned provision of health/mental health services for the homeless.

- 6.5 LM: SECAMB has new project providing care for the homeless.

- 6.6 CB: The charity Catching Lives does important work in this area.

- 6.7 MH: Homelessness is real problem in Swale.

- 6.8 CB: The practices in Faversham have problems with property restrictions, need improved infrastructure, the buildings are not nice places to work. But also problem recruiting and retraining staff.

- 6.9 HW: Has asked the CCG what they are doing to get prepared for the new developments. Awaiting response.

ACTION: HW and CB to discuss the long-term strategy.

7. Housing Developments

- 7.1 GW: FFF had voted to promote further talks with the Duchy. Post-election not sure of the situation at Swale.

- 7.2 MH: Likely that the new Swale Borough Council will halt the Garden Community Proposals. But the Duchy could still be welcomed, if 2500 built by them, Faversham could be protected ad hoc building around town.

- 7.3 HG: Serious concerns that Swale Borough Council members will stop work around Sittingbourne, including the new junction. Faversham is seriously at risk, the borough could allow ad hoc development around the town. Faversham is a very attractive place to build 3/4/5 bedroom houses. The need for a Neighbourhood plan has never been stronger.

James Freeman (Head of Planning) Swale Borough Council has confirmed that as allocated permissions have not been built the borough is being penalised and the number of houses it needs to build has increased.

7.4 HW: There is a push nationally for lorry parking and big infrastructure such as the Lower Thames Crossing.

7.5 COJ: Locally Kent County Council and Highways England are in talks about lorry parking at Brenley corner.

ACTION: The FFF to assert pressure on the Town Council to start work immediately on a Neighbourhood Plan

7.6 GW: Has seen plans for the new “sausage about” on the A251/A2. Need to be in a position to respond to the plans with positive feedback at the appropriate time.

7.7 TS: This design is an old age solution. History had taught that more roads equals more cars. The problems at this junction support the need for a Neighbourhood Plan.

Alternative solutions to traffic problems need to be found. A neighbourhood plan could give a firm steer on how the town moves forward. Watling Street potentially could become the new street, it could be a great resource, an ecological site used to slow traffic etc.

7.8 GW: Once the plans for the junction have been submitted, we don't want to hold up the process whilst alternatives to the proposed design are investigated. The Residents on the Ashford Road are keen for the work to be started/completed.

7.9 TS: Phil Jones (Enquiry by design) could bring everyone together. There needs to be a creative conversation about the proposal.

7.10 COJ: Raises the need for pedestrian crossing of the A2.

7.11 JT: It should be noted that the Duchy land is in part in Boughton.

7.12 CW: Informed that meeting that the Faversham Society was hosting a meeting Faversham and Traffic with KCC Highways on 17th June, Mike Whiting will be the guest speaker, which may be of interest to members of this group.

Further, there will be a reduction in traffic in 20 years, fuel costs will force this. There is no need to expand the road network as it will go into decline.

8. Highways and Ospringe By Pass

8.1 This item was delayed until after the Faversham Society Meeting on June 17th discussing Faversham and Traffic.

9. Creek Heritage Harbour Project

- 9.1 DM: The Creek Heritage Harbour Project membership includes Faversham Creek Trust, Where is our Bridge, Kent County Council, Swale Borough Council and the Town Council.

The objective is to be part of the National Network of Heritage Harbours. This is also the intention of Oare and Medway, but Faversham is ahead as the groups are already working together.

The Creek Bridge is one of the priorities for the group. Paul Carter has indicated that the Town should have a bridge by 2020, he is open to meeting with the group.

There is a basin sub group, Brian Payne is talking to BMM Weston about development of their site which gives the frontage over to maritime use.

Heritage is important but so are tourism and employment.

- 9.2 PC: The Creek/tourism could be promoted by a circular walk of the town, including Standard Quay.

ACTION: Creek Heritage Harbour Project to be added to FFF agenda

10. Heritage Hub

- 10.1 HG: Twenty groups are involved in the Heritage Hub. The maps to be used on the project will shortly be scanned and should be on display by the summer. Need to get the next generation involved, through use of technology and collaboration with schools.

The scanned maps will be updated to include the proposed developments around the town. They will be a useful tool for popular planning.

11. Discharge into the creek from sewage works and houseboats

- 11.1 HG: Sewage should be included in a Neighbourhood Plan.
- 11.2 DM: The long term maintenance of the creek is the responsibility of Peel Ports, they have not fulfilled their obligations thus far.
- 11.3 GW: The Heritage Harbour Project has the expertise to consider the problems.

The operational side of discharge into the creek should be addressed by the Town Council.

- 11.4 HG: There are two factors that affect the discharge into the creek, firstly heavy rainfall causing the system to overflow and secondly the discharge from boats moored on the creek.

The capacity of the sewage works must be taken into account when considering new homes.

ACTION : HG to forward his correspondence concerning sewage to HW.

12. Public Transport and Bus Routes

12.1 Discussion of this item was postponed.

13. East Kent Recycling

13.1 Discussion of this item was postponed.

14. Cleve Hill Solar Park

14.1 It was confirmed that HW, the Faversham Society and the Town Council have registered to participate in the Public Inquiry.

15. Community Land Trust

15.1 HG: Faversham Community Land Trust has 100+ members, so it can start working

16. 20's Plenty, Roads and Congestion

16.1 AR: The proposals will need community support in order to be adopted. Depending on which options are agreed there may be a requirement for fundraising in the community.

The official report has been submitted to Kent County Council and are waiting for feedback.

During the Transport Weekend a Public Engagement Event will be held at the Town Hall. Phil Jones will be on duty to answer questions. This will be an information event and in part will be investigating how people want to be consulted.

17. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of FFF will be held on Thursday 27th June 2019.