

Notes from Faversham Future Forum 27th June 2019

Present: Chair Geoff Wade (GW), Frances Beaumont (FB), Janice Ely (JE), Roger Ely (RE), Harold Goodwin (HG), Alister Gould (AG), Finlay Macdonald (FM), David Melville (DM), Cllr Hannah Perkins (HP), Amanda Russell (AR), Dr Vanessa Short (VS), Tim Stonor (TS), Cllr Eddie Thomas (ET), Helen Whately (HW), Cllr Chris Williams (CCW), Chris Wright (CW)

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

Apologies: Trevor Abram, Sue Akhurst (SA), Shiel Campbell (SC), Chris Oswald Jones (COJ), Debbie Lawther (DL), Maria Newman (MN), Jeeny Reeves (JR), Cllr Julian Saunders (JS), Janet Turner (JT), Cllr Jeff Tutt (CJT),

1. Welcome

1.1 GW welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Notes from Meeting on 16th May and Matters Arising

2.1 The minutes from the meeting on 16th May were approved with the following amendments:

5.1 "Are double the limit" amended to read "approaching the limits".

9.1 "The Town should have a bridge by 2022" amended to read "by 2020"

16.1 "This will be start of the public consultation" amended to read "This will be an informal event".

3. Items for A.O.B

3.1 The situation at Ordnance Wharf was raised as an Item for A.O.B.

4. Neighborhood Plan

4.1 ET: Confirmed that Swale Borough Council had put the Garden Village concept on hold. There is still housing need to be met, the previous administration had been considering garden villages but the new administration will reconsider.

4.2 GW: This group had proposed to work closely with the Duchy to promote community involvement. the Garden Villages concept is not going to be taken further another way of promoting community involvement would be a Neighborhood Plan, which was raised at the Annual Town Meeting.

4.3 HG: It is the Faversham Society View that the only way that the town can influence traffic and development is to have a Neighborhood Plan in place within two years.

4.4 AG: The new administration at Swale considers that the Garden Villages handed control over to the developers. A Neighborhood Plan would enable the town to influence decisions.

- 4.5 CW: The rate of growth, expansion and change in the area has never been greater. Without a Neighborhood Plan there will be no hope of having a structure which makes sense.
- 4.6 HG: Swale Borough Council has not managed the estates in the Borough well.
- 4.7 AG: The Government sets high housing figures which challenging for the Borough Council to meet.
- 4.8 HW: Doesn't see a change in National Policy. The Government still sees a housing shortage. The market will react if the wrong size of house is built.
- 4.9 HP: Tenure is important. At Perry Court everything is over £400,000. No one who works in Faversham can possibly live there.
- 4.10 AG: Housing prizes are forcing people to commute for work, with the associated environmental costs.
- 4.11 HW: Not enough houses have been built in London. There is a need to build higher and around railway stations where the infrastructure is already in place. Building on Green Belt land is another option but not straight forward.
- Anything we can do to control what is built here is important.
- 4.12 HG: Builders will only build houses where they can sell them. They won't build to quickly so as to control the housing market, therefore not meeting housing figures. Swale Borough Council should be building houses.
- 4.13 HW: If developers slow down building, land becomes more affordable for Councils to build. The sale of executive homes is declining. Councils can borrow at a better rate than developers.
- 4.14 DM: Land value is part of the equation driving houses prices up. If land values are controlled for housing, might get more affordable housing built.
- Land is 1/3 of cost house, building and profit are all a third each.
- 4.15 Kent County Council owns a lot of land, why can't this be used for affordable housing?
- 4.16 GW: Has previously had meeting with James Freeman and is happy to continue the conversation at Swale.
- 4.17 HP: Cllrs Ben Martin and Mike Baldock need to be brought into the conversation.

ACTION: CCW/ ET/HP to ask the Town Council to start a Neighborhood Plan.

ACTION: HW to ask Parliament for local people to have more control on what is built

ACTION: HG to update the parishes regarding the Neighborhood Plan, who need to be working in parallel, particularly Oare and Ospringe.

5. Fire Safety in new builds around Faversham

- 5.1 HG: We need to seek assurance from Swale Borough Council that the new developments being built around Faversham are fire compliant.

ACTION: CCW/ET/HP to raise the question directly with Swale Officers.

6. Future Health and Community Care Need

- 6.1 HG: Need to look at future demand to plan.
- 6.2 VS: Thanet are using software that can generate future health needs. Once the future need is worked out it can be fed into the Neighborhood Plan. If new health facilities aren't built on residential sites then there needs to be a bus service from developments to existing services.
- National Association of Primary Care looking at mapping health needs. Assessing the health needs for the local population and providing services that fit the need.
- Both practices in Faversham will work together to meet the needs of the local population.
- 6.3 GW: It would be great for Faversham if we can champion this mapping/projection. Asks HW if support/funding is available?
- 6.4 VS: There is funding available and also the practices can work with the voluntary sector.
- 6.5 DM: The new medical school in Canterbury will focus on primary care. In time these new qualified doctors will be looking for work locally.
- 6.6 AG: Public Transport and infrastructure is crucial. Faversham will never have all facilities and patients will need to travel out of town.
- 6.6 HP: Swale Borough Council has created the post of Health Officer to look at social prescribing. They are presently recruiting.

7. Highways – A2 Mall/Ashford Road Junction

- 7.1 AG: JTB had looked at options for the A2 Mall/Ashford Road Junction. The preferred option was traffic lights. But this does need to be made pedestrian/cyclist friendly.
- 7.2 ET: Had the impression that developers were keen on the traffic light option.
- 7.3 CW: Perry Court can't sell houses until the road improvements have been made.
- At the Faversham Society meeting KCC officers said they would share the road traffic data that had been used for the options.
- 7.4. TS: Spoke at the JTB, the roundabout option is appalling, the design of the traffic light option not good, with the only pedestrian crossing on the eastern side, not across the Mall or outside Abbey School.

Watling Street from the Western Link to Brenley Corner needs to be thought about, not just sections. A new group working collectively with members for Town, Borough, County Councils, Government, Faversham Society and Abby School.

- 7.5 HG: Yes. This is the whole point of a Neighborhood Plan to enable joint up thinking.

ACTION: TS/CW to meet officers at KCC to access road traffic data and report back.

8. Sewerage Treatment Capacity, inc. Creek Discharge

- 8.1 HG: It has been reported in the media that Southern Water has been fined for causing pollution at 300 sites. It is not known if Faversham Creek is one of these sites.

Issues have previously been reported to the Environment Agency with no action. On this area there has been a complete breakdown of governance.

- 8.2 The report concerning Southern Water is very worrying. Is making queries to find out if Faversham was one of these sites. DEFRA should take this up.

- 8.3 FB: The new developments should include porous surfaces not solid driveways, to allow natural drainage

- 8.4 AG: Both Central Government and Local Council have Building Regulations that must be met by developers. We can ask developers to do more than the regulations stipulate but not make.

- 8.5 HG: On Isle of Sheppey some developers are putting solar panels on roofs and selling electricity to the national grid.

ACTION: ET to take the issue of pollution in Faversham Creek forward at Swale.

9 Creek and Oare Heritage Harbour Project

- 9.1 DM: Talks are still going forward. Have spoken to the Town Clerk about Coastal Communities, as a possible source of funding.

Have had a positive and supportive response from Lord Boyce.

10. Heritage Hub

- 10.1 HG: Reported that more exhibitions were booked into 12 Market Place, including GREAT, The Faversham Society and Faversham Natural History.

The mapping project is presently on hold.

11. Community Green Action Environment Project

- 11.1 HW: A green action day is proposed in Faversham. The initial idea has been well received, but there is a lot of work to be done.

The day needs the support of the Town Council to make it happen.

- 11.2 FB: Tree planting could take place in the Autumn.
- 11.3 CCW: The Town Council has set up a Climate and Biodiversity Committee; The first meeting was very productive. The Annual Action Plan will be presented to Town Council on 8th July.

12. Community Land Trust

- 12.1 HG: The response to the launch of the Community Land Trust has been good, there are now 160 members. The AGM has been delayed until the Autumn as a larger venue will be needed.

Applying to Swale Community Land Project for £10,000. The trust is keen to start building.

13. 20's Plenty

- 13.1 AR: A Town wide scheme was approved at JTB, subject to public consultation.

KCC have made policy revisions as a direct result of the Faversham groups research and campaigning, and has relaxed the requirements for calming, amending the threshold.

Mike Whiting has suggested going back to KCC.

Funding for the implantation of the project has not been identified. Have mad enquiries about S106 funding.

- 13.2 HW: S106 funding would be available for the crossing at the Abbey School.

- 13.3 AR: Need to know what revisions have been made to the scheme to cost.

- 13.4 HG: Pressure needs to be on for the delivery of the scheme.

- 13.5 Cllr Mike Whiting (KCC Cabinet Member for Transport) is connected to the project.

Need community support to implement.

Faversham First Responders are verbal objectors on social media, have tried to meet them for face to face discussion, but not succeeded to date. Need help getting both national and local representatives to the table.

- 13.6 AG: What is the next step? What help is needed?

- 13.7 AR: The Faversham Society is asking it's members for help with the public consultation.

Need to get the scheme looked at in light of the recent policy revisions made by KCC.

- 13.8 TS: Need pledges of support from individuals and organisations.

S106 Funding may be available for the Abbey Crossing as it is on the A2 (fits Swale policy). 20's plenty as a project doesn't fit the policy.

Death/serious injury evidence had to be included, but this has been changed in the policy amendments at KCC.

- 13.9 AG: A list of organisations to consult should be created, consulting beyond the Faversham Society to widened the demographic. Schools and surgeries should be included.
- 13.10 CW: Once 20's plenty is implemented the increase in journey time from the Town Centre to extreme of Faversham will be 75seconds.

14. Cleve Hill

- 14.1 DM: The hearings start on 16th July.

There have been a large number of written submissions.,

Still need to raise public awareness, many members of the public in Faversham are unaware of the enormously of the scheme.

There are no plans for traffic mitigation in Graveney.

GREAT plans to hold events with schools to raise awareness.

There is a national need for alternative power but Cleve Hill is not the way to meet the need.

- 14.2 HG: The written representation from Swale is superb.

15. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of FFF will be held on Thursday 8th August 2019.