

Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Faversham Town Council

Thursday 22nd November 2021, 7pm in the Guildhall

Present:

Deputy Mayor, Cllr T Martin
Cllr K Barker
Cllr A Hook

Cllr J Irwin
Cllr H Perkin
Cllr J Rowlands

Cllr J Saunders
Cllr E Thomas

In Attendance:

A Begent (Deputy Town Clerk)

484.	<p>Chairman</p> <p>In the absence of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor Cllr Trevor Martin Chaired the meeting.</p>
485.	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Apologies were received from Cllrs M Henderson, C Jackson, B J Martin, A Reynolds and C Williams</p>
486.	<p>Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests</p> <p>Cllr J Saunders (DNPI) – SBC Cabinet Member for Environment</p>
487.	<p>Town Council's Response to Regulation 18 – Swale Borough Council Local Plan</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr Irwin, seconded by Cllr Barker and on being put to the meeting it was <i>RESOLVED that Faversham Town Council is opposed to Swale Borough Council's favoured option in the Regulation 18 consultation, namely Option 3. Faversham Town Council feel that none of the options are appropriate in meeting our local housing need specifically, the need for affordable housing. Faversham cannot accept a greater volume of housing without mitigation of its significant constraints around:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Transport and Air Quality</i> • <i>Water and sewerage</i> • <i>Climate and biodiversity, including the use of BMV agricultural land</i> <p>It was proposed by Cllr J Rowlands, seconded by K Barker and on being put to the meeting it was <i>RESOLVED that Faversham Town Council delegates the development of the Council's full response to Regulation 18 to Cllrs Irwin and Barker.</i></p>

	<p>ACTION:</p> <p>It was agreed that a motion to write to Helen Whatley and Michael Gove regarding housing figures should be put on the Agenda for Town Council on 6th December HP/JI</p>
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ANNEX

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

C Goatham: Stated she does not consider the Regulation 18 consultation to be a full legal consultation with the electorate. Can Faversham Town Council raise this point with SBC?

Cllr K Barker: SBC have set a short response time for Regulation 18 to avoid a delay in the Local Plan, which developers could take advantage of. The Town Council would be happy to add to its response that 4 weeks was not long enough for the consultation. He urged the public to submit their own responses.

Cllr H Perkin: For the previous Regulation 19 SBC wrote to every electorate at a cost of 30K plus. She agreed that there had probably not been enough advertisement of Regulation 18 and that should be fed back in the TC's response.

Cllr J Irwin: Reiterated that the TC should comment that the time for responding had not been sufficient.

B. Geldof: Regulation 18 – Even if you do understand the document, you need to be very skilled to answer it. How can the TC vote on something the public has not fully engaged with?

Cllr J Saunders: Regulation 18 is a standard approach designed to satisfy the planning inspectorate, but it is not friendly for the public or councillors. SBC are back to Regulation 18, as large developers have questioned some of the assumptions on the previous Regulation 19. SBC are driven to get a plan in place as otherwise the district is open to development.

B Geldof: What are Liberal Democrats doing accepting large building on agriculture land – accepting the logic of the algorithm. 350 people to be housed in Faversham, why are the Liberal Democrats supporting the building of 5000 houses?

Cllr K Barker: The previous administration agreed 1,500 in Bearing Fruits. This meeting is to discuss the options in Regulation 18. The CPRE has given a clear and detailed response to Regulation 18.

B Geldof: Why doesn't the Town Council just say no?

Cllr K Barker: Some of the proposed houses are outside of the Parish Boundary (Boughton under Blean, Graveney with Goodnestone and Selling), those parishes also need to respond.

B Geldof: It is undemocratic

Cllr A Hook: The response from the Town Council will be our opportunity to express other factors including the inadequacy of the options offered.

A Birkin: Regulation 18 is a flawed document, but once it is the public domain will it be used by developers to their advantage.

Cllr K Barker: Agree there is not enough detail in the document, and that comment should be in the TC response.

B Geldof: The Town Council can say no. The Faversham Society can say no. Faversham has grown organically over a thousand years, these proposals will result in the town doubling in size in five years. There will be social disruption.

Cllr T Martin: The Town has always grown in spits and starts. Saying no opens the door, with no plan in place developers can go the Planning Inspectorate on any site.

When Bearing Fruits was adopted the Planning Inspectorate asked for and immediate review with balance across the borough.

Cllr J Irwin: Agree the evidence base is deeply flawed, the Sustainability proposal is inadequate and based on assumptions.

All consultation responses will be recorded and considered by the Planning Inspectorate.

B Geldof: We need to say this just doesn't work. Say no. The radical lead must come from this room and these people.

We need to look at the forecasts for the future, population, transport, amenities. Each house built deprives another house. There is an alternative, form a co-operative, 145 houses could be funded.

Cllr H Perkin: I have sympathy with disputing the housing figures with Micheal Gove.

There are examples of Councils fighting back. Canterbury City said no to 900 houses in Herne Bay with 30% affordable and the Planning Inspectorate have said yes with only 10% affordable.

Cllr T Martin: I understand how people feel. I objected to Perry Court, SBC said no but the Planning Inspectorate said yes. There is historical evidence that if you say no and the Planning Inspectorate says yes, the % of affordable housing goes down and biodiversity specifications get wiped out.