

ROMSEY FORUM
Minutes of the meeting at Romsey Town Hall
Wednesday November 22nd 2006

Present: Kate Allen, Chris Amery, Denise Amery, Neil Beasley, Ian Bullivant, Oliver Colville, Mark Cooper. Diana Hargreaves, Julian Jones, Barbara Milburn, Helen Murray, Brian Palmer, John Parker, Tessa Parker, Roy Perry, Jennie Polybank, Gill Roberts, Shirley Rogers, Evan Russell. Rod Simpson, Mark Viney, Alan Wiltshire,
Speakers: Steven Dennett, Steve Lees, Phoebe Merrick, Ian Tripp,

1. Apologies: Frank Akerman, David Barker, Dorothy Baverstock, Christine Cole, Sandra Gidley, Sally Leach, John Mason, Geoff and Val Morris, Caroline Nokes, Peter Phillips, Mike Richardson, Hal Sanchez.

2. Minutes of the Romsey Forum held on September 20th 2006

Proposed by J Jones, seconded by R Simpson the minutes were accepted.

Mr Colin Jelley had expressed the view that the minutes had not fully covered his comments in the discussion on the proposed new HWRC and had wanted clarification on two further points. Notes additional to the minutes were made available to the meeting.

3. Matters Arising

HWRC Proposal: A meeting was held with the HCC Legal officer on 5 December. Romsey Extra Parish Council has registered objections. Romsey Town Council has not.

4. Steven Dennett – Romsey Allotments

An application has been made to Gardener's Question Time for Charter Year 2007 with support from the Mayor, the Town Council and the Forum.

The Society is introducing a schools programme next year. SD outlined the plans which would link with local schools and introduce children to allotment gardening techniques.

More information can be found on the website romseyallotments.org.uk

SD thanked Broadlands for allowing allotments on the site and the society was congratulated on its new signboard.

5. Steve Lees – TVBC: Preparing the new Planning Policies for Romsey and Southern Test Valley 2006 - 2026

SL distributed the TVBC Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper, November 2006 and a Core Strategy Questionnaire. Council's submissions on the South East plan will go in shortly and there will be a Panel report by next autumn. There is a need to accommodate 3910 houses in Southern Test Valley. Some will come from current planned housing and identified brownfield sites but there remain about 2,500 houses to be placed. The Core Strategy will be the key document setting out broad policies. Community consultation has already started and the Issues and Options paper contains comments already received. TVBC must plan where new housing would and would not be acceptable. After comments a Preferred Options document will be produced in the summer or autumn of 2007. The final version of the submission is planned for 2008. Objections can be made to this. In a change from the previous adversarial system Inspectors will identify broad topics and the public will be invited to discuss these.

A question from JP concerned the HWRC plans and gravel extraction. These are not considered by the same inspector but attempts would be made to co-ordinate.

Cllr. Perry noted that HCC is consulted but has no strategic planning powers. It is challenging the projected growth figures. SEDA does not agree with the County position

and wants the SE to be one of 10 great areas of growth in Europe. Eastleigh is singled out as a very high growth area.

Anyone who would like a copy of the Paper or Questionnaire please contact Steve.

6. Debbie Pike – Testway Housing: Testway – A Business in the Community.

DP gave an outline background to Testway Housing and what it does.. It is not part of the local authority but is an independent company and a charity whose work extends as far west as Shepton Mallet. There is a board with 12 members and 125 employees. The company plans to build 100 houses a year and some building projects were shown. Testway also commits to community projects for all ages to reduce juvenile nuisance, encourage personal development and promote social inclusion. In reply to questions DP described how the choice based letting system works and that Testway tries to create different products for different parts of the market including shared ownership schemes. However the waiting list is growing especially among young people.

7. Ian Tripp – Flood Risk Mapping & Data Management Team Leader

IT outlined the structure and responsibilities of the Environment Agency which was formed in 1996 by merging several other agencies. It is sponsored by DEFRA with a small amount coming from a local levy on the council tax. The agency's responsibilities include land drainage, flood defences, river and sea defences and the 24 hour flood warning service.

IT Explained where flooding comes from and showed the Romsey Flood Risk map.

Flooding on the Test and the Tadburn has different causes but climate change could lead to both wetter winters and more intense rainstorms in the drier summers. Further works in Romsey are unlikely as the cost/benefit is not sufficiently high.

Questions asked included one on building on flood plains. PPS25 meant that this should be avoided but in the SE of 80,000 houses planned 10,000 may need to go in the coastal flood plain. Steve Lees noted that there is already local development in the flood plain and infill in these sites will not make much difference. Balancing ponds are being used e.g. in Valley Park.

8. Phoebe Merrick – Look at Romsey

PM gave a brief update, a full report would be made at a later meeting. The last reports have gone to TVBC. They will be subject to a sustainability report and consultation then will go to the Executive for adoption as supplementary Planning Guidance. At that stage the documents will be finally laid out and printed. The Look at Romsey project was sponsored by Romsey and District Society. PM expressed thanks to TVBC, HCC, Romsey Town Council and Romsey Extra Parish Council, all of whom supported the project with funding and to Tony Baron for help with printing.

Cllr. Cooper commented on the amount of work that had gone into the project, almost all of which went through Phoebe's hands, and on behalf of the Forum thanked her for her work

9. Any Other Business: none

10. Date of Next Meeting:

Wednesday March 14th 2007 at 7.30 pm