

Romsey Forum. Notes on the meeting 23 March 2023, Romsey Town Hall, 7.30pm

Present: N Adams-King, F Akerman, M Arney, M Blake, J Brambley, V Brice, A & J Chillingworth, M Cooper, G Darby, C Davis-Hall, K Edmonds, C & L Esplin-Jones, D Hall, R Harrison, J H Jones, D Kingston, S Lees, G McFadyen, V Messenger, J Parker, F Pilkington, S Schilling, F Stokes, C Tilley, C Watkins
Chair: Mark Edgerley, Notes: S Smith

1. Apologies:

S Bannerman, N Beasley, I Bullivant, N Daas, C Nixon, E & R Pratt, M & R Robinson, F & B Sweeney, J Tilley, J Walker

2. Minutes of the Forum 17th November 2022

The minutes were agreed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

3. Viv Messenger, Chair Romsey and District Society.

Recent projects were outlined. The Society had been looking at The Hundred and possible improvements for pedestrians. Temporary closure during the pandemic had been unsatisfactory and had pushed traffic to other less suitable roads. The society was looking at the possibility of shared space at the lower end offering more space for pedestrians while still allowing passage for cars and delivery vehicles. More information is on the RDS website. There were questions about traffic speeds. VM said design can help slow speeds. MC quoted a study showing traffic speed by Boots averaging 11mph. He would like a 20mph limit in the central area but designing to slow speeds is better.

The Natural Environment committee had carried out surveys during lockdown. Bat numbers have increased in Tadburn meadows. The Fishlake and Abbotswood reserves are managed to increase biodiversity. A slide showed ancient and other woodland, nature reserves and SSSIs. The Society wants wildlife corridors to link these areas. The committee concerned with footpaths and cycleways was looking at routes and paths around the town, rides to the countryside and circular rides. See the website for more information.

RDS is linked to the Building Preservation Trust which has just restored the historic Bargain farmhouse at Nursling. There will be an open day.

4 Cllr Nick Adams King

County Councilor and Cabinet Member gave a quick quiz on numbers e.g. Hampshire has 5500 miles of carriageway, 4200 miles of footway, 1750 bridges, 590 traffic lights. *Nick's slides will be circulated.*

Major works coming up are weather dependent and cannot be done in cold or wet. Straight Mile, Castle Lane and Greatbridge to Kings Somborne will be finished. Avon Crescent, Highwood Lane, bits of the A27, Dean Road West Dean, Foxes Lane West Wellow will be rebuilt. Winchester Road carriageway will be rebuilt from the Plaza to the Co-op. The busy roads will be rebuilt at night, not at weekends or in school holidays. The footpaths along the bypass will be resurfaced and work will be done for the flooding in Old Salisbury Lane
In the Budget HCC got an extra £6 million for roads. Priority will be given to sections needing resurfacing where potholes keep recurring.

NAK asked **If you see a pothole please report it.** Ring 0300 555 1388 or use the HCC website www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblems/potholes/report-pothole

Since half term for the first time this winter the number of repairs had exceeded the number of reports!
In response to questions the plan is to extend the market place scheme down the Hundred. Possible cost £2million.

Utility companies have the right to dig up roads. Most of their work, 80%, is planned. Only 20% is for emergencies. Southern Water is the other way round.

Questions followed on several HCC topics.

Poor pavements and broken street light? Report them.

Who deals with dead deer on the road? Test Valley

Is Edwina Mountbatten house included in the South of Town Centre Plan? No. It has been bought by Churchill homes to be rebuilt. JP says the design is a "pastiche" and may be revised before planning permission is sought.

Why was Nightingale Lodge respite area closed? MC it wasn't used enough but possibly wasn't advertised enough.

Why has the coloured tarmac has been repaired in black? Red needs to be made in quantities of a ton or more. When enough areas need it red will be laid. The firm have 6 months to cover the black.

New recycling plans delay? NAK said TVBC collects waste and HCC processes it. HCC are building a new processing plant. Next year households will get new bins for plastics, and a food caddy. There will be a 3 weekly rota for black, brown, and blue bins while nappies and medical waste will be collected weekly. Test valley is ahead of the rest of the country. No waste in Hampshire is sent abroad. Currently around 36% is recycled, the rest goes to incinerators in Basingstoke, Marchwood and Portsmouth. The ash is used in landfill. Food waste will go to an anaerobic digester. Some plastics may go abroad but HCC does not want this. Household collection of glass may come later. The big glass recycling banks will remain.

5 Suzi Schilling reported Romsey is 7th on the list of best towns to live in Hampshire. Tickets for the mayor's grand draw are now on sale with lots of great prizes. Shopwatch, an initiative to reduce shoplifting in the town, started in November. The volunteer fair in January was well attended with lots of organisations and attractions exchanging information. There will be a volunteer event as part of the Coronation celebrations. The walking app is now online with 5 walks. More on history, poetry and wildlife are coming. The hedge laying at Fishlake looks brutal but will be wonderful for wildlife. ME reminded the Forum that the Beggars' Fair and Romsey Festival take place this July. For details see romseyfestival.org

6 John Parker on Planning

The revised Local Plan has been delayed again as the Government has changed the rules. It will establish planning policies and identify sites for development. Housing numbers and locations should come out in the 3rd quarter of this year, a finalized version in 2024 and the plan should be adopted in 2026 (government permitting). The plan will run up to 2040.

Housing numbers will not be as high as before and the aim is to have smaller developments. Southern Test Valley will go up as far as Stockbridge.

The Whitenap development: the outline planning application went in last year. The immediate reaction was that it did not comply with the local plan. Negotiations have taken place between the Planning dept and the Ashfield partnership in the hope that it could align more closely. The revised outline plan may be in October.

South of the town centre: a study of the area around the bus station will come out soon. Another will be about the Crosfield hall relocation.

The brewery site: there are rumours of progress but nothing yet.

Oxlease meadows: There is a proposal for 40 more houses on the northern part. There have been objections to this but no date for a decision.

There is a proposal for 400 more houses in the King's Chase development but no actual application yet.

Abbey Hotel: Applications for 2 dwellings, felling sycamore tree and 1 dwelling were all refused. Another application will be for a building on the previous foundations.

7 Mark Edgerley, new Chair of the Romsey Forum

ME asked Forum members to say what local issues they want to hear about. There is concern about the number of shops closing in Romsey so the Chamber of Commerce will be invited to the June Forum meeting.

8 Any Other Business

There was a question about how to get BT Openreach into Woodley. NAK commented that the challenge will come when the old phone lines are closed. Virgin is already there. ME noted that BT Openreach must share their conduits but not vice versa. There is some concern about a Virgin monopoly. There are similar problems at Whitenap. There is no obligation for Openreach to put cable in and they will only do so if they can see sufficient demand for other than Virgin broadband.

JP stated thar Romsey Extra Parish Council will become part of the extended Romsey Town Council at the end of the month.

Next Meeting will be June 29th.