

Romsey Forum

Notes on meeting 17th November 2022, 7.30pm, Romsey Town Hall

Present: N Adams-King, F Akerman, M Arney, C Barrington Brown, V Brice, H Briers, M Bull, J Cairney, D Chillingworth, G Darby, C Davis-Hall, D Doulton, M Edgerley, C Esplin-Jones, D Hall, P Halliwell, D Hewett, J Jones, N Kearns, J Laffeaty, J Mason, V Messenger, F Pilkington, R & E Pratt, G Shawley, F Stokes, S & P Tatham, C & J Tilley, G Wilburn.

Chairman: John Parker Secretary Sandra Smith

1) Apologies were received from J Arden, S Bannerman, J Burnage, A Chillingworth, M Cooper, D Kingston, M Perks, S Shilling, J Walker

2) Minutes of the Romsey Forum meeting of 30th June 2022

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

3) Matters Arising

S Shilling cannot be here to report. World of Water still working on planning issues, still need around a million pounds. Revised local plan – more in June next year. Twinning – now up and running.

Edwina Mountbatten House – has closed and is sold, subject to contract, to a developer of flats for retired people.

4) Election of officers

Chair: Mark Edgerley (applauded for his agreeing to stand)

Vice Chair: John Parker

Secretary: Carolyn Nixson and Sandra Smith agreed to continue

5) Mark Miller presentation

Mark is Director of what was the Three Rivers Partnership and is now enlarged to form the Hampshire Community Rail Partnership, a community interest company covering all of Hampshire.

The company is taking on leases for redundant spaces and buildings which South West Rail has made available for not-for-profit community use at peppercorn rents. HCRP identifies spaces, seeks funding, and deals with architects, contractors, leases, risk assessment etc.

Mark then gave a presentation with slides showing different projects including Petersfield and Swaythling free shops, Woolston community garden, Romsey Station war memorial and the “jewel in the crown” refurbishment of Shawford. Where possible the historic Victorian and 1930s buildings are being restored and refurbished. Funding comes from various sources – SWR, The Railway Heritage Trust, the Community Infrastructure Levy, Community Rail network grants, devolved councilor grants and possibly Lottery funding.

The development at Romsey had a public consultation in February 2022. 152 people visited, 139 (91%) were in favour of the proposed development and 42 were willing to get involved.

Agreement between SWR, Network Rail and Three Rivers partnership will enable a tripartite lease for 12 years. The work now involves architects, contractors, designs, funding, and the risk assessment is to be submitted. South Western Railway is supporting through its social development fund. The café will reopen and possible uses for Station House were listed. Display boards showed the planned development of the Station House. Possible sources of funding were explained.

Question: Do you have to have all the funding available before you can start?

Answer: Yes, the lease cannot be signed until funding is in place.

Q: Lottery Funding?

A: The Lottery does not often fund heritage projects.

Q: What is the financial target?

A: £750 thousand

Q: From a trustee of the Building Preservation Trust. A plan to turn the house into 2 houses collapsed because funders want a lease without a break clause.

A: all HCRP leases have a break clause.

Q: Are you hoping to raise threequarters of a million from grants alone?

A: Yes, as much as possible. Commercial returns on these community schemes are unlikely.

Q: Are you prepared to put all this work in when schemes might collapse?

A: Yes. Network Rail are releasing themselves from a burden.
N Adams-King suggested bringing it to Romsey Future as a project

Other developments at Romsey Station.

There is a ticket and code of conduct scheme with Romsey School and SWR with lanyards to show pupils have paid.

Romsey School and Network Rail are involved in art in the underpass.

New planters have been built by the Men's Shed and will be planted and looked after by volunteers.

New Volunteers are always welcome.

6) Short Updates

JP gave a short update on Whitenap and showed the current plan. The Ashfield partnership have put in an application for access at 2 points, Whitenap Barns and St Barbe Close. There is a cycle path through Beggarspath woods. The Railway bridge is not shown as that strip of land is in different ownership. The planning application is not compliant with the local plan.

NAK outlined bus links into the development. There are possibly 2, St Barbe Close and Whitenap Lane. There is opposition and the bus companies and planners need to look at routes.

There were questions about how approval could be given on access without the whole plan being seen, including matter such as where the school should go, school parking, travel plans and pedestrian access.

JP briefly described the Community Governance Review. As of 31st March, the town boundaries expand so that the town wards align with the borough wards. Almost all of Romsey Extra moves into town wards. The Awbridge part of Romsey Extra goes into Awbridge Parish. Assets move to the Town Council. Elections will be in 2023 and every 4th year thereafter. Abbey will have 4 Councilors, Cupernham 6, Tadburn 4 and Romsey Extra will have 1.

Q: Will there be a review of Council Tax?

A: No but Romsey Extra residents will pay a little more when they move into Town wards.

Parliamentary Boundary Review: has been going on for years. Proposals were out for final consultation 8th November. We will still be Romsey and Southampton North with some key changes. R&SN gains Bellinger, Charlton, and Anna while Valley Park moves into Eastleigh.

7 Any Other Business

NAK gave information about the HCC plan for minerals and waste. There are 4 sites around Romsey and particular concern was expressed about the one with access from Gardeners Lane. Issues of road access, flooding and use of good agricultural land were described. Consultation is taking Place between 8 November 2022 and 31 January 2023.

Viv Messenger, Vice Chair of Romsey and District Society gave a brief update on the Society's activities. These included butterfly and bat surveys, green corridors, TVBC no mow sites, Footpath and Planning committees and building restoration. As time was constrained VM was invited to give more information at the next meeting. There is lots of information on the Society website.

Development at the former Abbey Hotel. The meeting was informed that the developer was opposing the tree preservation order.

8) Future meeting dates

These will be arranged with the new chair.

Suggestions for topics of interest or concern will be welcomed from members.

Future meeting dates have now been set for 2023 as 23 March, 29 June, 21 September and 30 November