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NOTICE OF MEETING



RURAL FORUM

will meet on

WEDNESDAY, 4TH NOVEMBER, 2015

At 5.30 pm

in the

COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL,

TO: MEMBERS OF THE RURAL FORUM

COUNCILLORS CHRISTINE BATESON (CHAIRMAN), DAVID COPPINGER,
DAVID EVANS (VICE-CHAIRMAN), DAVID HILTON, RICHARD KELLAWAY AND
COLIN RAYNER

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

COUNCILLORS SAYONARA LUXTON, GERRY CLARK, DR LILLY EVANS,
JESSE GREY, MAUREEN HUNT AND JOHN LENTON

Karen Shepherd - Democratic Services Manager - Issued: Date Not Specified

Members of the Press and Public are welcome to attend Part I of this meeting. The agenda is available on the Council's web site at www.rbwm.gov.uk or contact the Panel Administrator

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AGENDA

PART I

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>PAGE NO</u>
1.	<u>CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION</u>	
2.	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> To receive any apologies for absence.	
3.	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u> To receive Declarations of Interests from Members of the Panel in respect of any item to be considered at the meeting.	
4.	<u>MINUTES</u> To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2015.	5 - 8
5.	<u>UPDATE FROM THE FARMING COMMUNITY</u> To receive an update on issues affecting the farming community.	
6.	<u>RURAL CRIME</u> To receive an update from Inspector Rachel Jinks.	
7.	<u>BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN AND STRUCTURE OF THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT</u> To receive a verbal update from Peter Lerner, Interim Planning Policy Manager and Simon Rowberry, Interim Borough Planning Manager regarding the Borough Local Plan and Structure of Planning Department.	
8.	<u>BROADBAND INTERNET</u> To receive a verbal update from Harjit Hunjan, Community Partnership Manager, on behalf of Superfast Berkshire.	
9.	<u>BERKSHIRE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE</u> To receive a verbal update from Amanda Gee on how the college is progressing.	
10.	<u>UPDATE REGARDING THE RURAL WALK</u> To receive an update from Paul and Simon Rinder regarding the upcoming Rural Walk.	
11.	<u>DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS</u>	

The dates of the Rural Forum's future meetings are:

- 3 March 2016 at 6pm in The Guildhall, Windsor

RURAL FORUM

9 MARCH 2015

Present: Councillors Christine Bateson (Chairman), David Hilton (Vice-Chairman), Peter Comber, Wisdom Da Costa and John Lenton.

Francis Batt, James Copas, John Emmett, William Emmett, Alan Keene, Annie Keene, Nick Philp, Andrew Randall and Parish Councillor Barbara Story Russell Watts.

Officers: Terry Baldwin, Rob Cowan, Harjit Hunjan, Tony Robinson and Chris Wheeler.

PART I

14/14 CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and those present introduced themselves.

It was noted that the meeting was recorded and the audio recording was available on the RBWM website.

15/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Peter Lawless, Councillor Colin Rayner, Jane Jennings, Tim Parry and Sarah Ball.

16/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

17/14 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2014 were approved subject to the following amendment:

- Page vi regarding the Rural Walk: the sentence "the Rural Walk which took place on 3 July 2013" be amended to read "the Rural Walk which took place on 3 July 2014".

It was noted that Superintendent Kate Ford, Thames Valley Police, had responded to Harjit Hunjan, Business and Community Partnerships Manager, stating the rural crime update was still produced but was only circulated internally within the police as it contained personal information.

18/14 UPDATE FROM THE FARMING COMMUNITY

The Forum received an update regarding the farming community from Andrew

Randall. Members noted that crops were better than they had been however pigeon grazing had been a problem. The use of nitrogen on effected areas was used to encourage growth. It was noted however that the financial returns of farming were poor and that a long term look at farming needed to be taken. The need to have a diverse portfolio was emphasised.

It was noted that a new computer administration system was in place for farmers to comply with the Common Agricultural Policy. There had been problems with registering for the system.

The rural community expressed continued dissatisfaction with the state of rural roads. Night time visitors caused damage and vandalism to gates and fencing. Overhanging vegetation reduced visibility and made it more difficult to transport large farming machinery. Overhanging vegetation also damaged the machinery which cost farmers both time and money to repair or replace. Litter was also highlighted as an issue, especially when overhanging vegetation was eventually cut back.

19/14 RURAL ROADS, TRAFFIC AND DITCH CLEARING

The Forum held a question and answer session regarding rural roads, traffic and ditch clearing with answers provided by Christopher Wheeler, Strategic Assets – Business Improvement Principal, and Tony Robinson, Streetcare Officer.

It was noted that schemes such as cutting back vegetation and litter clearing were prioritised in the Capital Budget. It was noted that ahead of the Budget (January), Councillors walked along the streets and noted what needed to be done. However Members of the rural community believed Councillors needed to walk around the streets in July or August when the vegetation was at its worst.

ACTION: Officers to increase the amount of times vegetation is cut back each year.

20/14 OVERHANGING VEGETATION

The Forum received an update from Tony Robinson, Streetcare Officer, regarding overhanging vegetation. It was noted that since the previous meeting no issues had been reported.

It was noted that when issues were raised the matter was not resolved. Communication was identified as a problem. It was noted that a similar system to reporting potholes was in place. Residents reporting overhanging vegetation were encouraged to take a reference number so the matter could be identified and tracked.

21/14 BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

The Forum was scheduled to receive an update from Sarah Ball, Team

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Manager – Strategy and Plans, however Ms Ball had given her apologies. The item was deferred to the next meeting.

ACTION: The Borough Local Plan be brought as an item to the next Rural Forum.

22/14 CHANGES TO RBWM IN THE RECENT RESTRUCTURE

The Forum received a presentation from Terry Baldwin, Head of Human Resources regarding the RBWM restructure.

It was noted that the Managing Director role had been introduced in 2012, replacing the Chief Executive role. The MD was the first among equals of the 4 strategic directors. The strategic directors were Richard Ellis (Corporate Services), Christabel Shawcross (Adult and Community Services), Alison Alexander (Children’s Services). The strategic director of operations post was currently vacant. Christabel Shawcross was the acting MD.

As of January 2015, the planning service came under the remit of Chris Hilton, the Regeneration and Economic Development Director (effectively a head of service, not a strategic director). Building control services were shared with Wokingham Borough Council. The Regeneration and Economic Development Director managed planning infrastructure and regeneration, development and property, visitor management, town management, development control, planning support and planning policy. It was noted that Mr Hilton would be assessing the structure of the planning department.

ACTION: The structure of the planning department be brought as an item to the next Rural Forum.

Harjit Hunjan, Business and Community Partnership Manager, provided the Forum with an update regarding the devolution of services. It was noted that service delivery was central but Parishes were being given further influence on how services were delivered.

Parish Councillor Barbara Story suggested the protection of trees be a service on the menu, for example a list of all the trees protected by TPOs in a Parish area could be provided to the relevant Parish.

23/14 UPDATE REGARDING THE RURAL WALK

The Forum noted the annual rural walk would take place at the end of June or in early July 2015. Paul Rinder of Stroud Farm, Holyport had agreed to host the walk.

24/14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

ACTION: The policing of dog waste collection be brought as an item to the next Rural Forum.

ACTION: Broadband internet in rural areas be brought as an item to the next Rural Forum.

25/14 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that future meetings would take place on the following dates:

- 4 November 2015 at 6pm in the Council Chamber, Maidenhead Town Hall
- 3 March 2016 at 6pm in the Guildhall, Windsor

26/14 MEETING

The meeting, which began at 6.00pm, ended at 7.50pm.

CHAIRMAN

DATE