

**Items arising from Meeting held on 16 June 2008 between  
Sheila Wheeler, Chief Executive, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council  
and Christopher Thomas, Chairman, Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum**

Minutes	Replies by TWBC
<p>2. The demise of <b>Tunbridge Wells in Bloom</b> was discussed. We know this event was axed due to costs but I put forward the concept that something should be done in the Summer to engage residents and retailers. Sheila commented this was certainly a very good idea and suggested we run this idea in common with the Love Where we Live campaign. It was agreed that the Town Forum come back to Sheila with ideas as to how our concept of a competition could work and who we feel we could find who would be able to judge the competition(s). This would be for summer of 2009.</p>	<p>Tunbridge Wells in Bloom has been discussed as part of the Love Where You Live Campaign. We look forward to hearing from the Town Forum. Di Talbot would be the lead officer on this one.</p>
<p>3. The <b>Tourist Office</b> situation at the Pantiles was discussed and Sheila confirmed that no decision had been made at present. I did raise our support would be given to the concept of touch screen Info Points like the one in Hastings. I pointed out that this had been raised as an issue at a previous Town Forum meeting. Sheila did say that Cranbrook has a touch screen info point.</p>	<p>A review of the TIC will be completed later, by the end of the calendar year. As part of that review the use of Public Access Terminals will be considered and the lessons learnt from the first year of operation in Cranbrook taken on board. We aim to be in a position to publish ideas in September for consultation.</p>
<p>4. The <b>station refurbishment</b> was discussed. I advised we had discovered Southern Railways were responsible for the refurbishment and that we had secured an agreement by Southern Railways to consult with us. I did ask Sheila why it was that we had to discover for ourselves who was going to do the refurbishment while an Officer in the Council was already aware. Sheila did say that she did not get told everything herself, but could see why we were concerned that such a major building with such a large impact on the town was of concern to us. Further, she could see that major buildings of this nature would always be on our watch list and that she would have a word with officers who were the liaison with the rail operators to see that matters of this type involving buildings with impact be advised to us.</p>	<p>A number of these issues are discussed at the Public Transport Forum which Network Rail and South Eastern Railways attend as well as a range of local organisations.</p> <p>Will look at how the minutes of that meeting are circulated and if possible forward to Town Forum.</p>

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<p>5. The <b>tourist drums</b> around town, which are all out of date and not well maintained were discussed. I put forward the suggestion that these drums could be maintained by J C Decaux. They receive advertising revenue while the TWBC has a well-maintained information drum. I said that as we had been advised these drums were costly to maintain on a regular basis that the concept of J C Decaux maintaining them was sensible.</p>	<p>We will discuss this issue with J C Decaux. In the meantime we are arranging for the drums to be redecorated</p>
<p>6. The <b>100th anniversary</b> of the Royal prefix was discussed. In short, the council is bound by Royal protocol and security requirements. When further information can be provided it will be. However, Sheila said that we could put forward ideas as to how to mark this anniversary. I suggested a water feature would be appropriate, as the Spa at the Pantiles was the actual reason for such a prefix. I said we were working on such a concept at the Pantiles.</p>	<p>Noted and no doubt subject to conversations with Targetfollow.</p>
<p>6. As a natural follow on we then reflected upon the <b>Pantiles</b> in general and Targetfollow. I did say that we had attempted to get communication with Targetfollow and that I had liaised with Jeremy Aldous and that he had said he would like Andrew Gower to sit on our Vision and Arts Committee. I then had to say how Andrew Gower did not attend the meeting and failed to even consider contacting us. This was a disappointment I advised, as we could not discuss the Pantiles and ideas we have. Naturally, this would have included the Water Feature, possible cladding of Union House and blocking off the road which dissects the two areas. Sheila said that she would ask Robert Cottrill to follow up on this as the Council had good working relationship with Targetfollow and come back.</p>	<p>Rob Cottrill has raised this with Targetfollow following a conversation with Christopher at the Borough Clean up. Jeremy Aldous is aware of the meeting referred to and was very apologetic. He also did say that he wanted to work with the Town Forum and will be contacting the Chairman to attend a future meeting and seeking closer co-operation.</p>
<p>7. We discussed the <b>Cinema site</b> and the letter we had received from Network Rail advising us that they had only just become aware of any such activity to redevelop after the competition winner had been announced. Sheila did not concur with this statement from Network Rail so it was left at that. It was advised that at present everything was on target/time. (Credit Crunch dependent)</p>	<p>There has been contact with Network Rail previously, as there were two schemes from different architects which needed the information from Network Rail to get to the stage to which they were developed. The engineering contractors for the current owners have good contact with Network Rail and are working together to address the construction issues with regard to the tunnel. At present everything on target for an</p>

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	application and planning decision this calendar year.
<p>9. I did mention that our <b>membership</b> was also dependent upon not only ourselves, but also Councillors to promote the Town Forum. I asked Sheila if she was aware of any lists of groups that could be invited to join the Town Forum. Sheila did say she would have a look into this. She suggested that lists held by Diane Talbot and Nazeya Hussain might be a good starting point.</p>	<p>On a wider point about consultation, the Council ensures we consult and engage communities and feedback as appropriate. Key examples include Ward Walks, where we conduct face-to-face interviews with local residents about key issues and provide feedback on action through community feedback sessions. We are also drafting a consultation and engagement strategy which will be out to public consultation shortly.</p> <p>The suggestion for lists of groups is a good one although we need to get permission first to pass the details of the groups onto other parties. The Council works closely with Voluntary Action West Kent (an umbrella organisation for the voluntary sector), who are able to contact specific groups on behalf of partners.</p> <p>The Council has recently begun to develop close links with faith leaders across the borough and would be able to raise the issue at the next meeting and provide an opportunity for faith leaders to contact the Town Forum if they wanted further information.</p> <p>We shall contact Christopher once we have progressed these two areas.</p>
<p>12. I raised our concerns over the <b>paving of front gardens</b> and raised <b>Article 4</b> as a requirement not being used/insisted upon by Planning Dept, especially in the Village / places of architectural importance. Sheila took note.</p>	<p>We are expecting new national guidance on this matter that will encourage Local Councils to restrict the paving over of gardens, as recommended by Sir Michael Pitt's report of June 2008:</p> <p><a href="http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/thepittreview">http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/thepittreview</a></p> <p>The background is that the Government is concerned about water run-off from paved areas adding to flooding although new restrictions or powers could also of course be of benefit to other Planning objectives. Jim Kehoe and Rob Cottrill will discuss when they next meet Philip Whitbourn and Daniel Bech.</p>
<p>13. I did ask what <b>protocols</b> were held <b>between KCC and TWBC</b> and what was in them, as the Highways protocol had been ignored by KCC Highways. A fact confirmed by Cllr Mayhew at a Town Forum meeting.</p>	<p>We are exploring what protocols exist in relation to street furniture and highways works and will respond as soon as possible.</p>

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<p>14. <b>Grot Spots</b> were naturally mentioned as they cover various aspects above. I did put forward the concept of having a grot spot update on a regular basis, although understandably Sheila did say that Robert Cottrill had a vast amount of work on his plate at the moment and that time was tight for generating spontaneous lists of work completed.</p>	<p>We have an officer group in the Council that looks at and considers action to tackle Grot Spots on a regular basis. Rob Cottrill will find a way of updating the Town Forum following these meetings, e.g. circulating the minutes / key actions.</p>