



# ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM

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Thursday 22 March 2018

**Attended:** Stuart Anderson, Sally Balcon, David Barnett, Adrian Berendt (Chairman), Lorna Blackmore, Mark Booker, Cllr Mrs Barbara Cobbold, John Cunningham, Irene Fairbairn, Jane Fenwick, Carolyn Gray, Tim Harper, Cllr Lawrence Heasman, Dorothea Holman, Dean Kenward, Kyrios Kyriacou, Linda Lewis, Brian Lippard, Katharina Mahler-Bech, Cllr Tracy Moore, Marguerita Morton, Altan Omer, Karen Pengelly, Cllr Catherine Rankin, David Scott, Cllr Don Sloan, Angus Stewart, Anne Stobo, Tim Tempest, Alastair Tod, David Wakefield (sub), Mary Wardrop, Denise Watts, Cllr Lynne Weatherly, Lucy Willis and Pat Wilson.

**TWBC officers present:** Jane Clarke (Head of Policy and Governance), Steve Baughen (Building Control and Planning Policy Manager), Hilary Smith (Economic Development Manager) and Mike McGeary (Democratic Services Officer)

**Also present:** Cllr David Jukes (Leader of the Council) and Cllr Joy Podbury

### 1. MICHAEL DOYLE

The Chairman began the meeting with a minute's silence, as a mark of respect for one of the Town Forum's long-standing and popular members, Michael Doyle, who sadly had passed away on 4 March.

Alastair Tod, who had worked closely with Michael on the Town Forum and as a fellow member of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Civic Society, read out a moving obituary, in which he captured Michael's strengths, character and charm.

### 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were reported from: Bill Acker, Caroline Auckland, Steve Bowser, David Bushell, Michael Holman, John de Lucy, Angela Phillips, Nick Pope and from Cllrs Peter Bulman and Chris Woodward.

### 3. MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Marguerita Morton advised that she had recently been appointed as the Chair of the St John's Road Residents' Association and would remain as its representative on the Town Forum.

### 4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

**(a) Location of next meeting** – The Chairman said that he would like to hold the next meeting at a different venue, in order to encourage local community interest. He added that he hoped that it might be possible to meet at the TN2 Centre in Sherwood, if this were available, and emphasised that plenty of notice would be given to members.

**(b) Community and social cohesion** – The Chairman said that the Town Forum Management Group would like to establish another working group, focusing on 'community and social cohesion', subject to the right level of support from the wider Forum membership. Denise Watts supported the initiative, adding that she would like

to see the replacement of lost wc facilities as a topic for consideration. Cllr Weatherly, Cabinet Portfolio-holder for Communities and Wellbeing, said she was willing to join the working group, as was Tim Tempest, who added that the group, once established, would be very welcome to come and visit the 'Men's Shed' initiative in Sherwood.

The Chairman said that he would arrange for the first meeting to be set up, to which all interested Forum members would be invited.

**(c) Items for future meetings** – The Chairman also invited Forum members to propose topics for future meetings, such suggestions to be made direct to him or to Mike McGeary.

**(d) Opening of cycle route, Tunbridge Wells to Tonbridge** – The Chairman announced that Greg Clark MP would be officially opening the new cycle route between Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge, alongside the new dualled A21, on 12 May. He added that there was to be a special summit meeting of the Tunbridge Wells Bicycle User Group on the previous day, taking place in the Town Hall.

## 5. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting dated 18 January 2018 were submitted for approval. It was noted that there were no specific action items requiring an update to be given.

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2018 be approved.

## 6. UPDATE FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Cllr David Jukes, the Leader of the Council, provided an update report on a number of issues of interest.

First, he advised that the Council had made representations to the Government on more than one occasion, to register its concerns about: (i) the continuing absence of confirmation from government of the ability of local government to **retain business rate income** generated through growth; and (ii) the continuing loss of business space, through the **conversion of offices to residential**. He said that the impact of the latter was particularly severe, with over 200,000 sq ft of office space lost, alongside no S106 developer funds being required and limited control over the provision – or lack of it – of associated parking.

In order to present the Council's case more strongly, Cllr Jukes said that he had been given the opportunity to meet with Sajid Javid, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, where he explained the extent of the difficulties being encountered locally. Cllr Jukes said that Tunbridge Wells would be part of only a small number of pilot schemes across the country where 75% of business rate income arising from growth could be retained within local government. Cllr Jukes added that the Government was still working towards 100% retention for local government.

Cllr Jukes said that he had raised other issues with the Secretary of State which were causing concern, such as the pace of house building but where **no added infrastructure** was taking place, e.g. no new water plants or sewage treatment works. Cllr Jukes also questioned where the number of **skilled tradespeople** would be found, to build the housing required by government. He also said that the stance being taken by **Wealden District Council**, who were raising an objection to any development in the Borough that might generate 'a single additional vehicle journey' which might have an adverse impact on the air quality of Ashdown Forest, was causing significant concern. Cllr Jukes said that, alongside other district councils affected, a letter was to be sent to the Secretary of State, asking him to step in and resolve the impasse.

On other matters, Cllr Jukes advised that contracts had now been exchanged for the transfer of the long leasehold of the **RVP** shopping centre. He added that, at this stage, it was not known when or whether the proposed extension of the centre, for which planning consent existed, would take place.

He also reported on the continuing impact of **London Boroughs decanting** people for whom they had accepted a homelessness responsibility to properties they have purchased in this and other districts in Kent. He said that two key aspects of concern were finding sufficient school places and medical provision. The matter had been raised in Parliament, Cllr Jukes added.

Dean Kenward asked whether the Borough Council could take any action to address concerns in **Hawkenbury** that the **new primary school** being built would be limited to just one-form entry, instead of the 'up to two-form entry' that was originally promised. Mr Kenward said that this had become clear in the current consultation being conducted by KCC. He added that this was against the backdrop of a large amount of additional housing being built within the Wealden District, adjacent to the border with Hawkenbury.

Cllr Jukes said that he was unaware of KCC's change of position and undertook to take the matter up with County Cllr Roger Gough. Mr Kenward said that he would forward the relevant consultation notice to Cllr Jukes.

Cllr Catherine Rankin added that it might be of value to have a map available for the discussion with County Cllr Gough, showing the extent and close proximity of the Wealden housing development taking place.

Cllr Joy Podbury was then invited to talk on the issue of **plastic waste**. She began by saying that the Conservative group on the Council was committed to greatly reducing the amount of plastic bottle and packaging within the Borough. Cllr Podbury said that the evidence was that less than 60% of plastic bottles disposed of in the Borough were recycled. She added that there might be an element of confusion amongst householders as to what could and what could not be recycled.

As a first step towards achieving a reduction in plastic use, Cllr Podbury said that the Borough Council was looking to end the use of plastic cups for staff and councillors within the Town Hall. She added that the Council would be seeking the support of community groups over the coming period through the use of the Local magazine and via social media and asked for the Town Forum's views.

The Chairman felt that this was an initiative that should be fully supported, adding that it also lent weight to the call for more public drinking fountains being provided. David Scott endorsed that view, which linked directly with one of the aims of the Water in the Wells Working Group.

Jane Fenwick noted that renovation work had started at the **Crescent Road car park**; she asked whether it was still the Council's intention to link this work with the proposed extension of the car park. Cllr Jukes advised that this was still the proposed intention. He said that (a) the renovation and repair work was scheduled to continue over an 18-month period and (b) planning consent was still required for the proposed extension. He added that further details and a timeframe would be provided for the Town Forum as soon as this was available.

Finally, Mr Kenward voiced thanks to the Council for the provision of the adult gym equipment which had been installed at Hawkenbury.

There were no action points arising from this update report.

## **6. RETAIL IN THE TOWN CENTRE**

Hilary Smith, TWBC's Economic Development Manager, and Karen Pengelly, the Town Centre Manager, responded to a request to discuss the current position regarding retail activity in the town centre.

Mrs Smith began by providing a summary of the retail trade position within the national context. She explained how a number of issues were impacting adversely on retail, such as: on-line shopping; rising inflation leading to falling spending; regulations such as the national living wage; structural changes leading to a market share 'squeeze'; and economic uncertainty, which was causing an increase in costs for suppliers. She added that there was a general move towards a greater number of food and beverage establishments.

Mrs Smith pointed to a number of positive aspects which were happening at a local level: the sale of the RVP shopping centre; the expected cultural and learning hub and a new theatre; new 'quality' arrivals in the town; a replacement Starbucks; a buoyant visitor economy; a greater number of events (music, food, ice rink etc); and the establishment of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Together initiative.

In respect of the Borough Council's strategic documents, Mrs Smith said that there had been a Retail and Leisure study undertaken in April last year, as part of the evidence base for the Local Plan. She added that the current review of the Local Plan would include an examination of the retail allocations within the Borough. Mrs Smith stressed that there would still be the same primary shopping areas in the town centre but greater flexibility of use would be allowed.

In addition, Mrs Smith pointed to three new retail trends: (i) a number of on-line businesses were looking to open stores; (ii) there was more sharing of under-utilised floor space, such as post office services within Smiths the stationers; and (iii) a growing focus on retail 'experiences' rather than the traditional shopping trip.

Karen Pengelly, the Town Centre Manager under the Royal Tunbridge Wells Together (RTWT) initiative, tabled a summary of what had been achieved by RTWT within its first year of operation. Ms Pengelly said that there were now 50 members of RTWT; she added that 45% of its membership were retail businesses, which she said compared with a figure of 80% for neighbouring Maidstone. Ms Pengelly provided a list of events, promotions and facilitating that had been organised for local businesses, covering networking and training as well as providing assistance to small businesses for business rate appeals.

Ms Pengelly said that RTWT's function was also to promote the town as a tourist destination; she listed a number of promotional events which had been attended and the work which was taking place with tour operators.

Ms Pengelly also tabled an explanation of proposals for the establishment of a 'business improvement district' (BID) for Tunbridge Wells. She said that a BID was a business-led, business-funded partnership, formed by a ballot, to improve a defined commercial and geographical area to benefit its members – with the emphasis being on what its membership agrees is wanted in the town centre.

Ms Pengelly said that some of the key issues raised by businesses in the town centre were: difficulties with the recruitment and retention of staff; car parking; transport and travel; and tourism/footfall.

Brian Lippard said that, historically, it had been difficult for traders from different areas of the town centre to work collaboratively, e.g. Camden Road and the High Street. He asked how such a situation might be overcome, for the common good. Ms Pengelly said that this was often the case within town centres, with little opportunity for traders to meet and talk across geographical divides. She said that part of her role was to overcome these obstacles, by encouraging more discussion amongst the different groups.

Ms Pengelly added that the initiative to explore the provision of drinking fountains in the town centre was one aspect which might help to encourage greater collaboration. She added that, on that topic, she had already had two meetings with Michael Holman and was now looking at possible designs and costs.

Denise Watts said that, amongst her Over Fifties Forum members, the issue of providing more wc facilities was a key issue. She added that this was also an important aspect in making the town a more appealing destination amongst older people. Ms Pengelly said that a number of traders on the Pantiles were assisting by allowing the public to use their toilets while the public facilities were out of action in this location.

Dorothea Holman said she welcomed the RTWT initiative, particularly the boost it might give to tourism. She sought further details on this aspect of the work. Ms Pengelly gave an indication of the type of engagement activity being undertaken, which included attending the Excursions Group Tourism show at Alexandra Palace, the purchase of an exhibition stand for all future tourism-related events, promotion of the town in the national press and the production of a hand-drawn town map etc. She added that she was also looking at promoting the town on digital display boards at rail stations.

Jane Fenwick asked what the RTWT budget was for active marketing of the town. Ms Pengelly said that this had not yet been defined, adding that the business community of the town was generally supportive of the initiative if the benefits were clearly set out.

Mrs Smith stressed that the work which RTWT had been undertaking in terms of destination marketing was, of course, supplemental to the significant work which the Borough Council was also carrying out, through the TIC and in conjunction with RTWT.

Cllr Jane March, as the Cabinet Portfolio-holder, said that there was an RTWT Board of Directors (comprising local businesses) in place, which determined how the RTWT budget would be spent. She added that a list of promotional projects for 2018/19 had been prepared and a decision on which of those would be followed up would be decided shortly.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Smith and Ms Pengelly, adding that if it were felt that the Town Forum could help with any of the RTWT initiatives, there was a willingness to do so.

There were no specific action points arising from this presentation.

## **7. LOCAL PLAN REVIEW**

Steve Baughen, TWBC's Building Control and Planning Policy Manager, provided an update on the review by the Borough Council of the Local Plan, covering the period from 2013 to 2033. He advised that the authority had undertaken a wide range of studies in order to provide the evidence base necessary, to plan for the Borough's development needs in terms of retail provision, economic development and housing numbers.

Mr Baughen said that the Government's revised housing number methodology meant that the target for the Borough up until 2033 was now 13,840 homes. With approximately 6,000 new homes either having been provided since 2013 or 'in the pipeline', this left a balance of almost 8,000 to be delivered.

Mr Baughen advised that, following a two-stage 'call for sites' process, 404 sites had been proposed for possible housing, all of which had been assessed for their suitability. Arising from that assessment, Mr Baughen said that 128 were at this point considered unsuitable, 80 fell within the Green Belt and a further 89 were in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Mr Baughen added that, at this stage, the potential strategy to accommodate the identified need had more of a focus on sites within the villages and rural parts of the Borough, rather than on Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough, where much of the more recent development had taken place.

Mr Baughen also said that a consultant's study had shown that the most likely area for any new 'garden settlement' was in the northern part of the Borough.

As for the timetable for the completion of the review of the Local Plan, Mr Baughen said that the next stage – involving the formal consultation on the authority's 'preferred draft Local Plan' – was being revised, adding that further details would be circulated shortly.

Mr Baughen also said that the provision of additional or improved infrastructure, such as highways, sewage treatment works, drainage etc, was potentially to be through a new method known as Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) as opposed solely to the traditional Section 106 developer contributions, although work was still being carried out on this.

David Wakefield expressed the hope that the review of the Local Plan would be seen as an opportunity to meet the housing needs of the Borough. He therefore asked if consideration was being given to housing for key workers and the age group that this suggested. Mr Baughen said that one of the evidence bases being used was the latest housing needs study, which he said covered exactly the issue raised by Mr Wakefield.

Dean Kenward pursued the point. He said that recent evidence, such as the Berkeley Homes development in Hawkenbury and the plans for significant housing provision in Paddock Wood, showed that approximately 60% of the homes were in the three-bed or larger category. He asked if there was anything within the authority's planning strategies that would result in homes being built 'for the town' and not purely for profit.

Mr Baughen said that the housing needs study had identified that a balanced approach was required, which would be reflected in the authority's planning policy work, which would need to take account of the outcome of the Government's latest consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The Chairman picked up on the Government's NPPF consultation, partly because of its emphasis on sustainability and also because of its reference to a needs assessment in relation to affordable housing. Mr Baughen advised that, within the Tunbridge Wells Borough, the housing needs study indicated a high figure. He stressed, however, that the key aspect was to achieve the right balance between the provision of affordable housing and the viability of development schemes. In that respect, Mr Baughen said that it was important to note that much of the land coming forward for possible housing development was categorised as 'greenfield' rather than 'brownfield', the significance of which was that it would, mostly, not require remedial treatment to make it suitable for housing. He said that this was likely to allow for an

increase in the 35% affordable housing provision without impacting adversely on the viability of schemes.

Mark Booker raised a number of detailed points on housing. He said that there was currently planning permission for 1,670 new homes which were not yet under construction, with a further 1,570 which had not yet come forward; he asked whether pressure could be applied to speed these up and also asked how these affected the authority's overall housing numbers. Mr Booker also asked for clarification of the Government's reference within its NPPF consultation of housing numbers being determined on an 'annual basis'. Finally, Mr Booker said that, if the bulk of new affordable housing were to be provided away from Tunbridge Wells town centre (which was still to be confirmed), what would be the practical and environmental consequences of residents needing to travel to the town for their employment.

On the first point, Mr Baughen emphasised that the housing figures quoted represented a 'snapshot' at that particular stage, adding that the picture changed constantly and was updated yearly. He also said that the number of completions had noticeably increased over the last two year period.

Mr Baughen explained the reference to housing numbers being on an 'annual basis'. He said that the current Government requirements were that local authorities had to be able to demonstrate that they had a five-year supply of housing. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council was not quite at that stage, but intended to be under the review of the Local Plan. He added that local authorities could choose to fix their housing supply number year by year but that, if they did, there was a requirement to have a supply figure 20% higher than under the five-year approach.

Mr Baughen said that it was not really appropriate to comment on Mr Booker's third point.

Altan Omer said that Wealden District Council had given planning consent for the building of 49 new homes, adjacent to the Tunbridge Wells/Kent border. He added that, originally, it was a planning requirement to achieve 26% affordable units, but due to more land remedial works than first thought, the developer had requested to reduce that figure to 19%, in order to retain the scheme's viability. He said that, not only was this an example of failure to deliver the number of affordable homes needed but showed that the process was essentially developer-led.

Mr Baughen reiterated that, with more 'greenfield' sites coming through the 'call for sites' process, there was a genuine belief that there would be a noticeable increase in the delivery of affordable homes within the Borough. He added that the Government had recognised the need to address the viability issue and was intending to strengthen the requirement for local authorities to cover this point within their local plans, thus reducing the chances of it being successfully challenged by developers at a later stage.

Mr Omer remained concerned at the extent of Wealden's push towards greater numbers of homes being built right on the border of Tunbridge Wells, because of the added pressure it will bring on the town's infrastructure. Mr Baughen said that, in recognition of this issue, TWBC was working with its other neighbouring authorities to be part of a pilot scheme, under which 'statements of common ground' would identify relevant cross-boundary strategic priorities and evidence of joint working would need to be provided. He added that such cross-boundary issues will include housing need and distribution and proposals for meeting any shortfalls.

Cllr Catherine Rankin said that the emerging Local Plan was good news for the Royal Tunbridge Wells area. She said that, over the last 18 months, she had worked continuously to try and achieve a fairer balance of housing provision across the Borough, rather than to see a continuation of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough taking by far the largest proportion of new homes.

The Chairman thanked Mr Baughen for his informative update; he also reiterated his support for the emphasis given to sustainability by the Government's in the latest NPPF consultation.

There were no specific action points arising from this report.

## 8. TWAANG – AN UPDATE REPORT

Irene Fairbairn and Angus Stewart, from the Tunbridge Wells Anti-Aircraft Noise Group (TWAANG), provided an informative update from the Gatwick Noise Management Group, covering five distinct topic areas:

- (a) **Modification of the A320 aircraft engine**, to reduce the engine noise. Mrs Fairbairn said that the technical solution to this on-going problem had been successful and this particular issue had been resolved.
- (b) **Dispersal across the arrivals swathe**, which Mrs Fairbairn said had been only partially successful, with Langton Green and Rusthall still, in part, affected. She added that NATS (formerly National Air Traffic Services) were to investigate the greater use of 'holding areas', to achieve an improved dispersal.
- (c) **London Airspace Management Programme (LAMP2)**, where Mrs Fairbairn advised that there was to be a redesign of airspace above 9,000 ft, to improve efficiency – but not until 2024, she added. Mrs Fairbairn explained that, after that, the airspace below 9,000 ft would be examined, which was an issue which was of much greater relevance to the Tunbridge Wells Borough.
- (d) **Growth in noise**, an issue which Mrs Fairbairn said was poorly regulated in the UK. She said that it was an obvious fact that airport activity created noise and air pollution; she added that further government legislation was needed to balance the commercial interests of airports and the needs of local communities.
- (e) **Reduced night noise trial**, the purpose of which, Mrs Fairbairn said, was to measure what benefits would be gained from using 'performance based navigation' flight management techniques, to reduce noise levels. She explained that the potential gain from the trial would be that flights would stay at a higher altitude for a longer period, which would be of particular interest in the Langton Green area, which was still affected by one of the concentrated routes. Mrs Fairbairn added that this was of relevance in respect of between 3 and 12 flights per night between the hours of 1.30 and 5am.

Dorothea Holman asked how the trial would be conducted. Mrs Fairbairn said that NATS would place noise monitors at various locations on the ground. By comparing the recorded noise levels from both before and during the trial, Mrs Fairbairn said that NATS would be able to judge what benefits have been gained.

Jane Fenwick asked what the impact would be if aircraft entered the 'joining point' – set at 10 miles – at a greater distance and followed a circling pattern away from Tunbridge Wells town centre. Mrs Fairbairn said that she did not believe the trial would lead to that option; she added that what was planned was a sophisticated analysis, using 'tracks' that showed population densities.

Mrs Fenwick said that she believed that Heathrow had a night-time flight ban and asked what its restricted hours were. Angus Stewart said that he believed that some night-time arrivals did occur at Heathrow, although these were less than at Gatwick.

Tim Tempest asked whether it was just arrivals that were to be featured in the trial. Mrs Fairbairn confirmed this was the case.

Cllr Lawrence Heasman thanked Mrs Fairbairn and Mr Stewart for their informative presentation. He added that he welcomed the trial taking place, which he said would produce some important fact-based evidence. Cllr Heasman said that, for those residents affected within the Western area of the Borough, there were very few rights available, in their search for a reduction in the noise impact of aircraft.

Mrs Fairbairn acknowledged the point. She said that the ideal solution for the town would be to have arrivals at a higher altitude, adding that it would not take a huge change for flight paths to move further east.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Fairbairn and Mr Stewart for such an interesting and helpful presentation and for explaining a number of technical matters in such an easily-understood way.

There were no specific action points arising from this presentation.

## 9. REPORT OF THE TRANSPORT STRATEGY WORKING GROUP

Jane Fenwick, Chairman of this Working Group, explained that they had only met two days ago, so the update report would be circulated with the minutes of this meeting.

Mrs Fenwick drew attention to two key issues: (a) **A26 cycle route**, work on which would start in April; and (b) **Zone A residents' parking**, where the Working Group felt that the latest proposals were insufficient; a comprehensive review was necessary, Mrs Fenwick added.

Dorothea Holman drew attention to the loss of two key members of staff in TWBC's parking team, including the manager; she asked whether it was known when replacement staff would be in post and able to progress these issues. Cllr Rankin said that, while no permanent replacements had yet been made, a member of staff from Kent Highways would be joining TWBC shortly on a temporary basis.

The Chairman added that there was a significant lack of data on what car parking spaces were being used and where; he added that the Town Forum had been reassured in the past that a new system was being purchased to address this issue. He asked if the Working Group could pursue this matter.

Beyond that last issue, there were no further action points.

## 10. REPORT OF THE CULTURE WORKING GROUP

Linda Lewis, Chairman of this Working Group, said that the most recent focus had been in assisting towards a Town Forum response to TWBC's civic complex plans. She added that TWBC had also just announced that the name of the proposed cultural and learning hub would be linked to Amelia Scott. (Miss Scott worked tirelessly within Tunbridge Wells on a wide range of community projects, actively participated in cultural and political transformation by which the Poor Law gave way to the Welfare State, was a local councillor and a suffrage activist.)

There were no specific action points arising.

**11. REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKING GROUP**

Mark Booker had circulated an update report on the recent activity of this Working Group, the key focus of which, he explained, was linked to the earlier presentation on the review of the Local Plan. Mr Booker added that the current timescale for the next phase of the Local Plan review was for formal public consultation to take place during the summer period. He said that the Working Group would invite residents' association and other Town Forum groups to submit their views at that stage.

Another section of the Working Group's update report related to the Government's review of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Chairman of the Town Forum urged members to read this consultation document, adding that it was important that the Forum submitted an informed response.

There were no other specific action points arising from this update.

**12. REPORT OF THE WATER IN THE WELLS WORKING GROUP**

In the absence of Michael Holman, the Chairman of this Working Group – who had provided a written report – Jane Fenwick drew attention to one particular aspect, namely the Chalybeate Spring. She said that the Dippers' season would begin on 30 March and TWBC was inviting volunteers to help. The contact details for those interested are: tel. 554164, e-mail [stephanie.cavey@tunbridgewells.gov.uk](mailto:stephanie.cavey@tunbridgewells.gov.uk)

Mrs Fenwick added that the Borough Council had 'spruced up the building' and that the water – which had been certified as fit to drink – was flowing once more. However, it was understood that TWBC was planning to reduce support for the Spring, which was considered to be a significant retrograde step.

The Chairman said that the Town Forum was fully supportive of tourism and wished to see the Borough Council's commitment increased, not reduced.

**13. REPORT OF THE FINANCE AND OTHER ISSUES WORKING GROUP**

David Wakefield, Chairman of this Working Group, said that there were no specific issues he wished to draw the Forum's attention to.

**14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

(a) **Borough Council elections, 3 May** – the key dates leading up to this year's Borough Council elections were read out. Further details can be found by following this link: <http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/council/voting-and-elections/future-elections>

**15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 10 May 2018 at 6.30pm. (Please look for update e-mails as to the location of this meeting.)

The meeting concluded at 8.40pm.