

BOROUGH OF RUSHMOOR

MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL held at the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Farnborough on Thursday, 16th October, 2025 at 7.00 pm.

The Worshipful The Mayor (Cllr Calum Stewart (Chairman))
The Deputy Mayor (Cllr P.J. Cullum (Vice-Chair))

Cllr A. Adeola
Cllr Gaynor Austin
Cllr Leola Card
Cllr A.H. Crawford
Cllr Thomas Day
Cllr Peace Essien Igodifo
Cllr Lisa Greenway
Cllr Julie Hall
Cllr Halleh Koohestani
Cllr Nadia Martin
Cllr S.J. Masterson
Cllr Bill O'Donovan
Cllr M.J. Roberts
Cllr Sarah Spall
Cllr M.J. Tennant
Cllr Jacqui Vosper

Cllr Abe Allen
Cllr C.W. Card
Cllr Sue Carter
Cllr Jules Crossley
Cllr Keith Dibble
Cllr C.P. Grattan
Cllr Christine Guinness
Cllr Rhian Jones
Cllr G.B. Lyon
Cllr Mara Makunura
Cllr T.W. Mitchell
Cllr Sophie Porter
Cllr M.D. Smith
Cllr P.G. Taylor
Cllr S. Trussler
Cllr Gareth Williams

Honorary Alderman Diane Bedford
Honorary Alderman Terry Bridgeman

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr A.H. Gani, Cllr Steve Harden, Cllr Dhan Sarki, Cllr Ivan Whitmee and Cllr Becky Williams.

20. MINUTES

It was MOVED by Gareth Williams; SECONDED by Cllr Sophie Porter and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council on 10th July 2025 and the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council on 25th September 2025 (copies having been circulated previously), be taken as read, approved and signed as a correct record.

21. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor's Award for Service to the Community – Valerie Jenner

The Mayor advised that this was the first award of the newly reintroduced Mayor's Award for Service to the Community. The aim of the Award was to recognise people who went above and beyond for others and who had made a difference within the Rushmoor community over a period of time. It gave him great pleasure to announce

that the recipient of the first Award was Mrs Valerie Jenner. The Mayor welcomed Valerie Jenner to the Council Chamber, along with Roz Chadd, who had submitted the nomination.

Ms Chadd spoke to applaud Valerie for the significant contribution that she had made to Farnborough Girl Guiding over the past 37 years as a Brown Owl. Valerie had not only attended weekly meetings but had also given her time to help at many other guiding events over the years. Girl guiding cultivated values including friendship, care, kindness and consideration for others, and Valerie had helped to foster these values and empower young girls to challenge themselves. She had touched hundreds of lives over the past 37 years and was a well deserving recipient of the Award.

The Mayor agreed that Valerie had helped many young people to grow in confidence and self-belief, shaping a generation through her years of service to girl guiding.

Valerie responded with words of thanks and reflected on the past 37 years with girl guiding. She spoke of the positive impact it had had, not only for the young people, but also for herself. She was pleased for the opportunities it had opened. She took great pride in caring for the “most precious possessions” of families in the community.

Following the presentation of the Award, the Mayor congratulated Valerie and thanked her on behalf of the Council for everything she had done, and continued to do, within the community.

Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor placed on record the Council's condolences following the announcement, made by Buckingham Palace on 5th September, of the death of Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Kent.

The Mayor advised that Honorary Alderman John Marsh had recently taken ill and was currently recovering in hospital. He was improving slowly, and the Council's thoughts and best wishes were with John and his family.

The Mayor expressed his sadness that John Kavanagh, one of the Borough's last D-Day veterans, had passed away earlier in the month. John had joined the Council's Beacon Lighting events held to mark the 80th anniversaries of VE Day and VJ Day this year, and the Council's thoughts were with John's family at this sad time.

The Mayor reported upcoming dates for the diary, including Remembrance Sunday on 9th November. Should any Members wish to lay a wreath at one of the Remembrance Day events they were asked to contact the Mayor's Office. A quiz night would be held on 6th February, 2026, to help raise funds to support initiatives for Alderwood School.

22. QUESTIONS

(1) Standing Order 8 – Questions

The Mayor reported that no urgent questions had been submitted under Standing Order 8 (3).

(2) Public Questions

Further to the new scheme for public questions at full Council meetings, the questions that had been accepted had been circulated to Members in advance. Each question was received as set out below, and the Mayor invited a response to each in turn:

- (1) W. Doody – Cove and Southwood Ward - **Rushmoor Pension Fund ESG Investment** - I've looked through the Hampshire Pension Fund's 2023/24 Annual Report and its Responsible Investment policy but can't find any clear breakdown showing how much of Rushmoor's pension contributions are invested under ESG or 'responsible investment' criteria. Given that ESG investment appetite is possibly now wavering, can you please disclose, for the record, how much of Rushmoor's share is currently invested in ESG linked companies or funds, which organisations those investments are with, how long those commitments last, and under whose oversight this was approved?

Cllr Gaynor Austin, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources advised that the information was technical by its nature, and the question had been referred to the Hampshire Pensions Fund for consideration. The response would be published as soon as it had been received.

- (2) G. Bailey – Cherrywood Ward – **Event Spend** - Could the council please advise the public on how much was spent by the council on the following in 2024/25?

- 1) The Pride Parade
- 2) The Rushmoor Eco Festival
- 3) The Rushmoor cultural day

Cllr Sophie Porter, Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities and Active Lives, advised that £1,147 had been spent on the Pride Parade, £1,500 on the Rushmoor Eco Festival and £0 on the Rushmoor Cultural Day.

- (3) M. Goodacre – Manor Park Ward - **Flags** - Flags are now being put up in front of people's houses and windows. Where will it end? Please confirm what steps the Council is taking to limit the number of flags per road.

Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council, advised that he noted, with concern, reported incidents where residents have been harassed and filmed when asking not to have flags outside their own property, and even council staff placing Remembrance poppies had been questioned. It was clear that, for some, the installation of the flags went beyond simple patriotism and had become an opportunity to intimidate and bully those whose opinions differ from their own, thus removing their voice.

The flags were almost all attached to lamp columns and street furniture owned by Hampshire County Council, and Rushmoor had no power to remove them, even if they have been attached without seeking permission from the owner.

The Council was in discussion with Hampshire to ascertain their position on the matter, but residents could write directly to their County Councillor or contact Hampshire County Council directly, via their website, to request the removal of any objects they believe to be dangerous or threatening. Incidents of threats or intimidation should be reported to the police.

- (4) J. Peckham – Cherrywood Ward – **Unpaid Council Tax** – What is the current sum outstanding in unpaid Council Tax, and what are the council doing to recover the debt and at what further cost to the local taxpayer?

Cllr Gaynor Austin, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources, advised that for the full Council Tax year of 2024/25 the Council issued bills totalling £70.4m. During that year just short of £69m had been paid, leaving £1.5m outstanding at 31st March 2025. This represented a payment rate of 98%. This was a similar rate of payment to previous years. The Council had continued to work with those residents who still owed money, taking Court action where appropriate. Council Tax that remained outstanding from earlier years currently amounted to £5.3m. The cost to collect the Council Tax each year was around £308k at the current year's value.

- (5) V. Graham-Green – Cove and Southwood Ward – **Walk this Waste** - Could the Leader of the Council please state what evaluation has taken place of the 'Walk this Waste Skips' pilot and what were the results on the success or failure of the pilot. Further could he make public the full cost including officer time of the pilot compared with the original costings including officer time and whether fly tipping has been reduced as a result of it."

Cllr Christine Guinness, Portfolio holder for Pride in Place and Neighbourhood Services, advised that the Walk this Waste trials had been a fantastic success. While the main aim had been to see if the initiative could reduce fly-tipping, the real achievement had been the incredible amount of bulky waste collected and the excellent response from residents. Across the nine events, 8 tonnes of bulky household items had been collected from 178 residents — a huge amount of waste that might otherwise have been left around properties or fly-tipped.

The trials cost around £5,700 to run, and every pound was well spent on helping residents dispose of their unwanted items responsibly, keeping our neighbourhoods cleaner and tidier.

She stated that the feedback had been amazing. Residents told us how much they appreciated the service, how easy it was to use, and how friendly and helpful the staff were. Social media posts reached thousands of people, with some of the highest engagement we've ever had and so many positive comments about how much residents loved the trial.

Even though the data didn't show a direct reduction in fly-tipping, the trials clearly made a positive difference in our communities — helping people take pride in their local areas, promoting responsible disposal, and showing that there's real enthusiasm for this kind of community-focused service.

- (6) K. Lynch – Resident of North Town – **Community Cohesion Fund** – Can I ask the council what became of the £50k allocated purely to facilitate the voices of those in the Rushmoor community that felt they were (are) unheard? Where was this money spent? Who spent it, who received it and what for? Is there any left, how much and where is that destined?

Cllr Sophie Porter, Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities and Active Lives, advised that in August 2024, councillors had agreed to work together to address residents' concerns arising from increased community tensions. A budget of £50,000 was approved to support this work, with expenditure overseen and agreed by a cross-party working group.

The Group unanimously agreed to commission the Belong Network to deliver a programme of activities and support. Over the past year, the Council has worked in partnership with Belong to deliver a range of initiatives, including the facilitation of community events and meetings known as Rushmoor Voices, the delivery of workshops and training sessions for community groups and leaders, and support and expertise to consider the development of a Council cohesion plan.

To date, £32,300 of the £50,000 allocation has been spent. The remaining £17,700 would be utilised over the next year to build on Rushmoor Voices and facilitate and deliver local community place meetings for residents, aimed at continuing to build cohesion and strengthen communities.

- (7) G. Olivier – Wellington Ward – **Homeless People** – Why does the Council fail to remove homeless people that are sleeping in military estates, in areas where small children regularly play. I reported an incident earlier this year and all the Council did was leave a note and water in the tent. Why not remove the belongings and then leave a note saying if you want your stuff back come and get it? By not taking decisive action, you are prioritising an adult drug users rights above the safety of our children.

Cllr Keith Dibble, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning, advised that the Council had a statutory duty to support individuals who are homeless. The Council's outreach team worked proactively to engage with people sleeping rough, offering support and encouraging them to come off the streets. If someone was not present during a visit, we leave a calling card with contact details, so they know how to reach us. In hot weather, we may also leave bottled water to help safeguard their wellbeing. Where tents or personal belongings are placed on military land or private property, it is the responsibility of the landowner to decide whether and how to address their removal.

Anti-social behaviour, including drug use, was a matter for the police. However, we work closely with the police and other partner agencies to respond to street homelessness and any associated issues in a coordinated and compassionate way.

- (8) P. Crerar – Manor Park Ward – **Local Government Reorganisation** – Please can the Council confirm why Rushmoor residents were never consulted on whether they did or did not want Rushmoor Borough Council abolished? We have been given absolutely no say in this issue when so many residents are strongly against losing our local council.

Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council, responded that the reasoning was the same that the Conservative Government under Margaret Thatcher applied when abolishing the Greater London Council without consulting London residents, i.e. the structures of local government are delegated from Parliament and cannot be decided by a minority of subjects who wish to assert their independence.

Cllr Williams stated that the Council had been asked to submit a proposal for new unitary councils, not whether it agreed with the policy, adding that the alternative to engaging with the process would have been to accept the Conservative-led County Council proposal to merge Rushmoor with a group of 5 councils and create an authority stretching almost to the South Coast. Residents have had the opportunity to have their say on the Council's proposals by responding to our surveys, and the government would consult further on this later in the year.

- (9) D. Fowdar – Knellwood Ward – **Asylum Hotel** – What about that Migration Hotel in Farnborough, are they still going to be used, or closed down gradually? Where will the migrants move to?

Cllr Gareth Williams Leader of the Council, advised that Rushmoor currently had one contingency hotel within the Borough, operated by the Home Office. While the Government had committed to reducing its reliance on hotels for accommodating asylum seekers, the Council had not yet received confirmation regarding the future closure or timeline for this facility.

- (10) S. Kavanagh – Manor Park Ward – **Housing** – As a military town, can you tell us how many homeless veterans have been housed and for comparison can you tell us the number of asylum seekers that have been housed in social housing

Cllr Gareth Williams, Leader of the Council, advised that the Council records information on veterans applying for housing; however, the data was not considered robust. This was because it relied on applicants voluntarily stating their veteran status on the housing application form, and the field was not mandatory. In many cases, individuals applied for housing years after leaving the armed forces and may not disclose their service background. As a result, the data may underrepresent the actual number of veterans seeking housing support.

The Council did not record the number of asylum seekers rehoused into social housing. However, data was collected on applicants rehoused by ethnicity.

Approaches for rehousing from contingency hotels were low, as most individuals were single and, once granted the legal right to remain, often relocated to join family or established communities in other areas, typically London or other major cities.

When asylum seekers approach the Council for housing advice and assistance, they are assessed in the same way as any other applicant. If eligible for housing due to specific circumstances, they are typically placed into temporary hostel accommodation while being supported to secure alternative long-term housing. No preferential treatment was given.

- (11) N. Ashwood – Empress Ward – **Illegal Activities** - Over the last 2yrs I've reported many illegal activities being carried out by illegal immigrants, and nothing has been done by the police, not even when suspected terrorist activity is going on. What is the Council doing about this issue?

Cllr Christine Guinness, Portfolio Holder for Pride in Place and Neighbourhood Services, advised that whilst the Council met regularly with constabulary colleagues to discuss issues, complaints about policing decisions, deployment or delivery should be directed to our policing colleagues by calling 101, visiting a police station, online or by letter. The Council did not act as a point of contact for complaints in relation to policing. The IOPC (Independent Office for Police Conduct) were also able to take complaints; they would then forward any complaint to the relevant police force or Police and Crime Commissioner on the complainant's behalf.

23. **NOTICE OF MOTION - TOWN CENTRE PARKING**

With the consent of the Council, under Standing Order 14(9), the Council considered an altered Notice of Motion submitted by Cllr Sue Carter on Town Centre Parking, as set out below:

"This Council:

- Recognises the huge challenges facing local businesses, particularly those in our town centres.
- Acknowledges that with alternative shopping options available in other town centres, as well as the growth of online shopping, parking charges may discourage people from visiting Farnborough and Aldershot.
- Observes that forthcoming option of setting up town councils could lead to changes which allow for more support to be provided to town centres and local economies, making consideration of the matter timely.
- Believes that any discussions or consultations on this issue need to be informed by detailed evidence.
- Recognises the heavy workload placed upon Council Officers and the desirability to avoid duplication of effort.

Therefore, this Council:

- Requests officers, under guidance from PPAB, to develop a suitable method of consulting residents, local businesses and potential investors about the likely impact of free or discounted parking and how it could work best.
- Requests the Portfolio Holder to present the findings of feasibility investigations to PPAB to allow it to make recommendations to the Cabinet in time for next year's budget."

In PROPOSING the altered Motion, Cllr Carter highlighted the pressures small businesses were under and the financial struggles residents were facing. By offering free or discounted parking, it was hoped that this would encourage more shoppers to visit and businesses to consider locating in our town centres. Through the Policy and Project Advisory Board, the impacts could be investigated and reported in time for the 2026/27 budget. In SECONDING the altered Motion, Cllr Taylor felt that shoppers needed to be encouraged daily to visit our towns and funding pots, and the UKSPF fund could help with this.

During discussion, it was noted that action was already being taken to encourage shoppers into the town centres through events and activities, and data had shown that these actions had already had a positive impact on footfall. Free parking was also being offered on 7th, 14th and 21st December to encourage shoppers in the run up to Christmas. It was also felt that by offering free or discounted parking, the Council would be sending a strong message of support to local businesses by finding and supporting a practical solution to benefit everyone.

In addition, it was suggested that consideration could be given to the option of 20-30 minutes free parking for those visiting the town centres to make a quick collection or drop off, or set all day parking fees. Also, to consider what support could be given to those that don't drive and use public transport to visit the town centres, and to blue badge holders.

However, it was noted that it was important to understand the financial implications and the effect it would have on the budget. The point was raised as whether the funds could be spent elsewhere to support small businesses and attract shoppers to the town centres.

The altered Motion was put to the meeting. There voted FOR: 34; AGAINST: 0; ABSTAIN: 0 and the altered Motion was **DECLARED CARRIED** unanimously.

24. **RECOMMENDATION OF THE CABINET**

Variation to the Capital Programme - Aldershot Crematorium Refurbishment

Cllr Christine Guinness, Portfolio Holder for Pride in Place and Neighbourhood Services introduced the Report, which set out a recommendation to approve an additional capital allocation for the crematorium refurbishment project.

It was MOVED by Cllr Christine Guinness; SECONDED by Cllr Gareth Williams - that the Council be recommended to approve an additional allocation totalling the sum set out in Exempt Report No. OS2513 for the crematorium refurbishment project, over and above the £5,519,430 already agreed as part of the existing Capital Programme, funded by borrowing to be factored into the 2025/26 estimates, with the 2025/26 Treasury Management and Capital Strategies being adjusted accordingly.

In PROPOSING the recommendation, Cllr Guinness advised that the variation was needed due to an unforeseen technical issue, and all efforts had been taken to reduce cost drivers. All necessary and proportionate action would be taken in the

future to ensure continued improvements from lessons learnt during this project. In SECONDING the recommendation, Cllr Williams advised that this would be the final variation requested for the project and a full audit report would be considered by the Audit and Governance Committee in due course. The Cabinet were also monitoring the project closely.

There voted FOR: 32; AGAINST: 0; ABSTAINED 2 and the Recommendation was **DECLARED CARRIED**.

25. **QUESTIONS FOR THE CABINET**

- (1) Cllr G.B. Lyon had submitted a question for response by the Pride in Place and Neighbourhood Services Portfolio Holder, (Cllr Christine Guinness) on the number of fines that had been issued for littering and dog fouling in the last twelve months, with a breakdown by ward.

Cllr Guinness advised that no fines had been issued for littering and dog fouling in the past twelve months. It was noted that the focus had been on the four E's, Engagement, Education, Encouragement and Enforcement. Although enforcement was an option available, priority had been given to engagement and education through "Poo Patrols", "Scope that Poop" and "Bag it and Bin it" initiatives. It was advised however that, lots of fines had been issued for incidents of fly-tipping.

Cllr Lyon asked a supplementary question regarding the ruling out of external support on enforcement.

Cllr Guinness advised that the initiative previously in place with East Hants District Council around enforcement support would not be reinstated and the four E's approach would be utilised going forward.

- (2) Cllr Thomas Day had submitted a question for response by the Housing and Planning Portfolio Holder (Cllr Keith Dibble) on the current status with Clayton Court.

Cllr Dibble advised that progress had been made at Clayton Court following a number of concerns raised by residents. It was noted that the Housing Association involvement had ended in the summer, and the Society of St James were now running the facility and working with the Council to make necessary improvements. A programme of refurbishments had been completed, and the site would continue to be maintained. In addition, the Housing Team had made visits to the facility and listened to residents to help support their needs.

- (3) Cllr Lisa Greenway had submitted a question for response by the Housing and Planning Portfolio Holder (Cllr Keith Dibble) on the current occupation status of the 82 affordable homes for key sector workers at Union Yard.

Cllr Dibble advised that it had been a policy decision to allocate the 82 units for key sector workers and the delay in finalising the agreement had caused some frustration. Work was underway to address outstanding matters to ensure completion happened as soon as possible. It was noted that 66 units would be allocated for

Integrated Care Workers and the remaining 16 units would be used for key sector workers already identified on the Rushmoor Housing Register.

- (4) Cllr G.B. Lyon had submitted a question for response by the Healthy Communities and Active Lives Portfolio Holder (Cllr Sophie Porter) on progress with the continued engagement with local Christian and Church Leaders.

Cllr Porter advised that she was keen to work with Members on this matter to help engage as many faith leaders as possible. A meeting, which took place in September, had considered street preaching and showcased grants available to support work to address issues/concerns and a further meeting was to be held in November with Cllr Guinness, the Executive Head of Operations, Faith Leaders and the Community Safety Team.

Aldershot Churches Together worked well, and work was underway to replicate this format in Farnborough. The Team continued to encourage conversations and engage as many faith leaders as possible to ensure there were no gaps. Members were encouraged to reach out to the Community Team should they have other contacts who may wish to get involved.

26. **REPORTS OF CABINET AND COMMITTEES**

RESOLVED: that the Reports of the following meetings be received:

Cabinet

8th July 2025
5th August 2025
16th September 2025

Committees

Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards	2nd July 2025
Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards	23rd July 2025
Development Management Committee	30th July 2025
Development Management Committee	12th August 2025
Development Management Committee	10th September 2025
Corporate Governance, Audit and Standards	24th September 2025

27. **REPORTS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND POLICY AND PROJECT ADVISORY BOARD**

RESOLVED: that the Reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 31st July, 4th September and 18th September 2025, and the Policy and Project Advisory Board meetings held on 22nd July and 17th September 2025 be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.46 pm.
