

COUNCIL MEETING – 19TH MARCH 2026

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 (2) - PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No	Question from	Question	Response from	Response
1	Sean Wellington Ward	Armed Forces Champion Rushmoor is the home of the British Army and previously had an Armed Forces Champion. Can the Council explain why this role is currently vacant, how long it has been unfilled, and whether the Council will commit to appointing a new Armed Forces Champion?	Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities and Active Lives Cllr Sophie Porter	It was advised that the Armed Forces Champion was Cllr Nadia Martin, and later in the meeting during item 7.3 the Council will debate changes to the role to become a Council appointed role for two years. During the time of the post being vacant, I (Cllr Porter) have overseen the role. During this time the Council has submitted an application for the Gold Employment Recognition Scheme, hosted the first Armed Forces Covenant Conference and won the bid to host the National Armed Forces Day (NAFD). The NAFD event would bring together the whole community to thank our Armed Forces for protecting us as a country and community. Earlier on 19th March 2026, the Council and its partners came together to celebrate the 100-day countdown until the event in June 2026. In addition, the Council have also looked at the housing policies for the Armed Forces community, strengthened ties with local Cadet units and connected with many associated organisations. The Armed Forces community were very important to the current administration, and they would continue to develop close ties with the community, ensuring they do not face disadvantage. The strategic priorities for the Armed Forces Covenant Champion will be set by this Council.

No	Question from	Question	Response from	Response
2	Mr Bailey Empress Ward	Unauthorised and Illegal Attachments HCC has allowed unauthorised and illegal attachments to street lighting throughout Rushmoor for the past seven months. Does RBC accept that these have undermined community cohesion, are divisive by design, politically provocative and been accompanied by abuse, intimidation and threats of violence and thereby undermine its core values of social cohesion, diversity, equality and inclusion?	Leader of the Council Cllr Gareth Williams	As was recorded in the Leaders reply to Cllr Crawford's question from the last meeting in February, it was understood how the display of flags without consultation within the communities where they have been installed had left some residents feeling intimidated and less safe. Given the rude and intimidatory behaviour of some who have attended this council meeting, who have identified themselves in part as responsible for the flags, the Leader could certainly empathise with those feelings. On the other hand, not everyone supporting the displays perhaps understood the background and worrying historical precedent this movement reminded many of us of and believed them to be a simple expression of national pride. The Leader had made it clear previously that, collectively, we needed to ensure pride in our nation was not exclusive to any one group or community, and he was determined that this Council continued to demonstrate its commitment to social cohesion, equality and inclusion, through positive action and communications to residents. This would include the promotion and celebration of our diverse community as part of Armed Forces Day 2026, which was now just 100 days away, and would be the occasion to display our national flag in a fit and proper manner, on behalf of the whole community.

No	Question from	Question	Response from	Response
3	Resident of Cove and Southwood Ward	Farnborough Leisure Centre Can you please explain what is going on with our promised leisure centre, wasteland sat empty for months on end and not one bulldozer in sight... Surely the costs are going to spiral out of control before it's even started.	Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities and Active Lives Cllr Sophie Porter	It was advised that planning permission for the new leisure centre in Farnborough town centre had been approved, subject to S106 legal agreement. Work was due to start on site in the summer of 2026 with the new centre opening in late 2027.
4	Peter Crerar Manor Park Ward	Vape Shops / Lithium-ion batteries A 175 year old listed building in Glasgow's historic City Centre that survived Luftwaffe air raids and Modernist city centre redevelopment was destroyed by lithium-ion batteries in a Vape Shop. The growing number of lithium-ion pose a threat to people's lives and historic buildings that form our rich architectural heritage. Lithium-ion batteries are found in Vapes, e-bikes, e-scooters laptops and smart phones and cause rapid, intense fires, toxic fumes and explosions. What action is Rushmoor Borough Council taking to manage the growing numbers of dangerous lithium-ion batteries...many being in counterfeit sub-standard devices and keeping our residents and historic buildings safe?	Portfolio Holder for Pride in Place and Neighbourhood Services Cllr Christine Guinness The Leader of the Council responded to the question in the absence of Cllr Guinness	It was advised that Hampshire Trading Standards governed the matter of poor quality, imported or counterfeit goods. Whilst Rushmoor did not have a direct remit, the Council's Officers do work closely with colleagues at Hampshire County Council and with the Fire service on a range of related issues and will and do pass on intelligence that comes to Officers attention in the course of other duties.

No	Question from	Question	Response from	Response
5	Stirling Robertson Knellwood Ward	Speeding Vehicles When is there going to be action taken with regards to speeding drivers on our roads, particularly on Boundary Road which now sounds like a racetrack?	Portfolio Holder for Pride in Place and Neighbourhood Services Cllr Christine Guinness The Leader of the Council responded to the question in the absence of Cllr Guinness	It was advised that keeping roads safe across the Borough remained everybody's business whether it be driving safely, reporting concerns and offences or by taking more formal approaches to design out or enforce road traffic offences. The primary agency with the delegated power to address offences on the Borough's roads was the police and these should be reported direct to them. The Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire and IOW promoted road safety on her website and provided links to different themes within road safety as well as a specific link to report dangerous driving. Hampshire County Council also had some enforcement powers and maintained the majority of the roads in the Borough. Residents could report a number of road related problems directly to them (Hampshire County Council Highways). The Council did not have any powers to stop drivers of vehicles on the highway acting either dangerously or in an antisocial manner, however the Council worked closely with partner agencies to improve road safety where the opportunity presented, this included placement of SIDS (Speed Indicator Devices) and sharing the results on the Council's website and with Hampshire County Council colleagues.

No	Question from	Question	Response from	Response
6	Derek Middleton Empress Ward	Farnborough Leisure Centre Will your plan for the new Farnborough Leisure Centre include courts for the fastest (currently) growing sports in the world i.e. Pickle and Padel ?	Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities and Active Lives Cllr Sophie Porter	It was advised that there were no plans to include any provision for Padel or Pickleball within the current scheme. The funding available for the scheme meant that the Council could not provide all the activities local people might want within the new Leisure Centre. However, the Council are investigating options to provide additional facilities at the Aldershot Indoor Pools and Lido, which might include Padel in the future. In the meantime, there were multiple sports halls and activity halls available for community use within the Borough with sufficient capacity.
7	Arezoo Gholizadeh Business Owner Empress / Knellwood Ward	Farnborough Town Centre Promotion Why do all my local clients say Farnborough town centre is so bad and they prefer to go to other towns to spend their time with friends or to go shopping - could the Council promote the quality of businesses, shops and services in Farnborough, more?	Portfolio Holder for Economy, Skills and Regeneration Cllr Julie Hall	It was advised that Farnborough, like many town centres nationally, had faced challenges in recent years with changes in shopping habits which had seen the closure of national retail and hospitality chains. The Council was actively supporting and promoting the great businesses and services that were present in Farnborough. It was noted that vacancy rates in Farnborough were lower than the national average (9% vs 14%) but the Council were working hard to fill empty units and drive rates lower. The Council worked closely with local traders and centre managers to run and promote events, encourage footfall and, through the Council's Communications channels (Town Centre Facebook pages), highlighted what Farnborough had to offer. Upcoming events included a Young Business Showcase (28 March), a free Easter Story Trail (29 March) and Farnborough Craft Fayre with over 30 local traders (4 April). This was a small sample of the upcoming events in the town centre and the Council encouraged residents to populate and promote the

No	Question from	Question	Response from	Response
				Council's new events calendar (What's on in Aldershot and Farnborough) which would help to demonstrate all the activities that take place in our towns and community. Looking forward, the new Aldershot and Farnborough Growth Partnership would help take this even further by bringing together the Council, businesses and other partners to actively champion the town and attract new investment and activity. Significant regeneration was also underway, which would further improve the town centre experience: • The new Loungers restaurant would bring a popular national brand into the town • The new Farnborough Leisure Centre, would provide high quality facilities and a major draw for families, young people and local residents. • Bringing forward the empty development site adjacent to the Meads. These investments, alongside ongoing partnership work with local businesses, aimed to improve the overall experience in the town centre and encourage more people to choose Farnborough as a place to meet friends, shop and spend leisure time. While challenges remained, the Council were working hard with partners to promote Farnborough and deliver the improvements that would make it a more vibrant and attractive place to spend time.

No	Question from	Question	Response from	Response
8	Resident of Manor Park	Naming of future Landmarks Following public consultation, the Bank of England has recently taken the decision to replace historical British figures on banknotes with wildlife including Otters, as per the practice adopted by Scottish banks. While there has been much discussion in the media about this being Woke its preferable to historical figures being replaced by other historical figures whom suite the diametrically opposed political agenda. Will Rushmoor be adopting a similar policy by removing all politicians from future local landmarks and that in new housing developments people will not find themselves living in Gareth Williams Street or Gareth Lyon Avenue?	Leader of the Council Cllr Gareth Williams	It was advised by the Leader that he was not clear what agenda was advanced previously on banknotes by the use of images of Jane Austen, Michael Faraday, Charles Dickens or Charles Darwin, to name a few from memory, or what politics they had in common. However, as far as Rushmoor was concerned the long-standing policy was to not name streets after living persons. The Leader thought however, that it was reasonable to wish to honour those who had given long and distinguished service to the Borough or the country when an opportunity arose, as had happened occasionally in the past, and that he couldn't fetter any future authority on its choices.
9	Madeleine Peck Fernhill Ward	Farnborough Leisure Centre Please can you advise on the facilities mix for the new Farnborough Leisure Centre and when we can expect the facility to be open to the public?	Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities and Active Lives Cllr Sophie Porter	It was advised that the new centre would offer a 25-metre swimming pool and learner pool with moveable floor, a gym with more than 100 fitness stations and specialist power-assisted exercise equipment for people who were less mobile, studio space, a spin studio, soft play area and a café. Start on site was due to begin in the summer (2026) with the new centre opening in late 2027.