

**MINUTES AND REPORT OF THE POLICY & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
HELD ON 13 MARCH 2025**

L Councillor Follows – Chair
* Councillor Weightman – Vice Chair

* Councillor Adam	* Councillor Holliday
0 Councillor Clayton	* Councillor Kiehl
* Councillor Crooks	* Councillor Martin
* Councillor Crowe	* Councillor PMA Rivers
* Councillor C Downey	0 Councillor Steel
* Councillor S Downey	* Councillor Thomson
0 Councillor Duce	* Councillor Williams
0 Councillor Heagin	

* Present # Absent & No Apology Received 0 Apology for Absence L Late

540. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2025, having been previously circulated were signed by the Chair as a true record.

541. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and recorded as above.

542. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER REGISTERABLE INTERESTS

Members made no declarations of interest in relation to any item on the agenda for this meeting, which is required to be disclosed by the Localism Act 2011 and the Godalming Members' Code of Conduct.

543. PETITIONS/STATEMENTS/QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Question received from Mr Guy Gumbrell, a resident of Godalming and others as indicated below.

On behalf of myself and the undersigned local schools and charities, I am writing to you concerning the Godalming High Street 'Charities, Schools and Voluntary Groups Street Market' that used to take place in early December each year.

Until 2020 there had been a long tradition in Godalming of holding a 'charities only' street market in the town. Originally, this was organised and publicised by residents, with support from the Town Council. It apparently coincided with a procession of local schools to the Pepperpot for a 'blessing of the crib' ceremony.

In 2019, the Town Council took over the organisation of the event which was held that December. Since then, the street market has been discontinued though I am unable to discover why this has happened and on whose authority.

I would be very grateful if you could, at your earliest convenience, bring before the Town Council two questions relating to the Charities Street Market:

1. What was the reason for discontinuing this event?

2. Would the Council be willing to support the restoration of this particular street market?

In connection to the second question, we would like to make the following remarks. Many excellent community events and street markets continue in Godalming but we believe that this event, held on just one day each year, had a unique character and value:

- Taking place in the High Street it showcased a broad range of schools, charities and voluntary groups. By taking place where it did, the market demonstrated that these groups are a part of Godalming's **daily** life, culture, diversity and compassion.
- The High Street setting provided good, much-needed scope for fundraising, especially as the pitch fee was very low (£10). This was important as a typical stall might be selling homemade low-cost items. A pitch fee of £50 or more (such as that for the Summer Bury's Field Fair) makes fundraising of this nature a much harder prospect.
- The venue raised the charity or school's profile in the general community, supporting their own fundraising such as raffles or summer fairs.

Yours sincerely,

Guy Gumbrell

Elizabeth Higgins, Headteacher, St Edmund's Catholic Primary School, Godalming

Zoe Bray, Headteacher, The Wharf Nursery School, Godalming

Rachel Dodd, Manager, The Dog's Trust, Godalming

Lucy Miguda, Head of Fundraising, The Meath Epilepsy Charity, Godalming

Godalming Town Council's Response:

GTC would like to thank you for your question as it has allowed it to reflect on how the Council supports local charities, voluntary organisations and schools, which are so important in creating and supporting a caring and inclusive community.

In response, the first point to make is that whilst GTC did indeed support the various iterations of 'Town Day' or 'Christmas Together' as it was latterly known, it was never a Town Council organised event. Therefore, any decision to discontinue running the event was not a decision of this Council.

For many years, Town Day was primarily organised by Churches Together in Godalming & Villages and was led, with others, by Mrs Jacky Tickner and Mr Edouard Le Maistre, who have both sadly since passed away.

The last Town Day was held in 2019 and like some other events, including the St John's Spring Fayre on The Burys Field, it did not re-emerge from the Covid lockdown period.

So, in answer to the first question, the reason for the event's demise is because no one has come forward since 2019 to organise and manage the event.

In considering the second question, which is whether the Council would be willing to support the restoration of this particular street market, the Council wishes to put its response into context.

Since 2019, the number of events and markets supported by GTC around November and early December has increased. November already sees four road closures of the High Street out of the five weekends in that month and it is unknown whether the High Street retailers would be willing to support a fifth road closure within such a short period.

Likewise, assuming any new event was held over the first weekend in December, it is unknown whether town centre residents who are unable to gain vehicular access to their properties when the road is closed, would be supportive of five closures over a six-weekend

period. Additionally, as GTC also supports the Farncombe Lights Switch-on event and Christmas Market, which are held on the Friday and Saturday of the first weekend in December, GTC could not be able to provide any personnel to support another event that weekend.

Between 2006 until its demise, Town Day required a subsidy of about £500 a year from the Council as the pitch fees were insufficient to cover the fixed cost of the event.

Since the last 'Town Day' in 2019, GTC organised events and markets have supported 19 different local charities, voluntary organisations or schools who between them have received a share of the £19,590 generated by the promotional Estate Agent advertising boards. Additionally, GTC has also provided two free places at each of its main street festivals and markets. This has directly benefited nine different Godalming-based charities and voluntary organisations in raising awareness and funds. Local charities wishing to benefit from GTC events should contact community@godalming-tc.gov.uk

The support generated and provided by GTC-run events and markets is in addition to the £344,351 that the Council has provided to local charities, voluntary organisations and schools through its grants programme and the extra £328,669 provided to local schools and voluntary organisations through Neighbourhood CIL funds since 2019.

To reintroduce this event, there would need to be support from the Godalming Business Improvement District board of directors, the Godalming & District Chambers of Commerce and town centre residents and due to existing commitments GTC would not be able to provide logistical or personnel support.

So, whilst GTC would not seek to prevent others organising a similar event to Town Day, it believes that local charities, voluntary organisations and schools are better served by and would encourage them to use, the existing support available from GTC.

544. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

No questions from Councillors were submitted in accordance with Standing Order 6.

545. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION – UPDATE

Devolution Task & Finish Group – Terms of Reference

Members received an update on the Local Government reorganisation (LGR) in Surrey from Cllr Follows as leader of Waverley Borough Council.

In considering how LGR might affect Godalming and its residents, Members agreed the following actions:

- a. In order to maintain a commonality of language across all levels of local government in Surrey, the GTC Devolution Task & Finish Group is to be renamed as the 'Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Task & Finish Group' to be shortened to 'GTC's LGR Group'.
- b. GTC's LGR Group terms of reference are:
 - i. To review the challenges faced by, and opportunities available to Godalming Town Council and the residents of the Civil Parish of Godalming, resulting from LGR in Surrey.
 - ii. To seek information or assistance from stakeholders, including WBC and SCC relating to LGR, including delivery of existing services or ownership of public assets within the parish of Godalming.

- iii. Consider methods for engagement with residents through this process.
- iv. Consider options for the future delivery of services and the safeguarding of community assets arising from changes resulting from LGR.
- v. Make recommendations to P&M for resident engagement and/or transfer of assets or services to GTC.

To support the work of the LGR T&F group,

- c. The Town Clerk, in consultation with GTC's LGR Group chair, is authorised to incur expenditure against the professional fees budget in order to access information or provide additional HR capacity in support of GTC's LGR group's work. Such expenditure to be reported at the next scheduled P&M meeting
- d. The Town Clerk is to write to the Chief Executive of WBC to request:
 - i. WBC nominate a Senior Officer to act as a single point of contact for Town & Parish Clerks within Waverley borough requesting information from WBC in support of LGR.
 - ii. That if point i. above is agreed, the nominated Officer co-ordinates information requests, follows up those requests within WBC in a timely manner, and disseminates responses to the enquirer. Additionally, it is suggested that WBC maintains a FAQ log to support similar enquiries from other towns and parishes. It is believed the last point would negate duplication of effort, streamline information flow and help reduce areas of potential frustration on the part of both WBC and the towns/parishes.
- e. The Town Clerk is to write to the Leader of WBC to request:
 - i. WBC Executive supports the nomination of a Senior Officer within WBC as requested of Waverley's CEO.
 - ii. WBC notes GTC's concerns regarding the perceived lack of progress relating to the Expressions of Interest submitted in November 2024 by GTC under WBC Community Asset Transfer Policy.
 - iii. Confirmation that it has the capacity to manage multiple requests for Community Asset Transfers across the existing borough within the shortened timeframes presented by the LGR in Surrey, given the apparent difficulties in responding to the relatively modest requests made to date. If WBC is lacking capacity, what support, if any, would WBC require from GTC to expedite the process?

Additionally, Members agreed that the Chair of the LGR T&F group should phrase (e iii) as a question to the 1 April meeting of the Waverley Borough Council Executive.

In agreeing to send letters to the CEO and Leader of WBC, as well as putting down a question to the WBC Executive, Members wish to emphasise to WBC and to any future successor authority taking over from WBC, that a request from GTC for consideration that ownership of existing land or property assets within Godalming should be transferred to the town should not be considered as an attempt to 'asset strip' the new authority by a Town Council. The reason for such a request being made would be:

- a. The land or property asset in question may have been either gifted or purchased by WBC's predecessor authority i.e. Godalming Borough Council.
- b. Residents may consider the land or property in question to be a truly local asset, which should be held and managed at the lowest accountable level of local government.

Members also noted the letter (attached to the record minutes) sent by the Surrey Association of Local Councils letter dated 20 February 2025 entitled '**Surrey Association of Local Council's (SALC) recommendation on the role of Parish, Town & Community (PTC) Councils within Surrey's proposed strategic unitary local government structure**'.

546. ACCOUNTS PAID SINCE LAST MEETING & SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

£

Godalming Town Council	
Accounts paid from 20 February to 12 March 2025	135,662.37
Receipts received from 20 February to 12 March 2025	46,340.38
Balance held in HSBC Current Account	
Balance at 12 March 2025	54,162.73
Balance held in the HSBC Business Deposit Account	
Balance at 12 March 2025	657,600.20
CCLA Deposit Account	
Balance at 12 March 2025	1,050,000.00

A schedule of the accounts paid was tabled for the information of Members and a copy is attached to record minutes. The vouchers relating to these payments were also tabled at the meeting for inspection. All payments made were in line with the agreed budget or other resolution of this Committee or Full Council.

Members agreed that the Chair should sign the schedule of accounts paid.

547. BUDGET MONITORING

Members noted the budget monitoring report to 28 February 2025 (detailed report attached to record minutes).

548. 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF TWINNING BETWEEN JOIGNY AND GODALMING – INVITATION

Members considered an invitation received from the Mayor of Joigny, Mr Nicolas Soret, inviting the Mayor and a delegation from Godalming on the 20, 21 and 22 June to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of twinning between our two towns (letter and translation attached to the record minutes). In considering the invitation, Members resolved to agree that in the current uncertain times GTC is committed to maintaining its friendship with its European twinning towns.

GTC has been informed by the Godalming Joigny Friendship Association (GJFA) that it is engaging with local businesses as well as musical events (Godalming Choral Society and Music-in-the-Park) and the classic car show to celebrate the town's friendship with Joigny and France. In correspondence with GTC, the Chair of the GJFA has said "***Given the importance of entente cordial in these very uncertain times, I trust that GTC continues to be supportive of these events.***"

Although names cannot be confirmed until such time as this Council elects a Mayor for the 2025/26 civic year, Members agreed the intention would be for The Mayor and Consort (or their representatives) and the Town Clerk + 1 represent the Council and people of Godalming at the 40th anniversary of the Twinning of Joigny and Godalming and that the Town Clerk inform the Mayor of Joigny's office. In doing so, Members resolved to agree that the travel and accommodation of the official delegation to be met by the Council.

The Town Clerk asked Members to inform him whether any other councillors would wish to join the delegation, any additions to the delegation would be required to fund their own travel and accommodation.

Members noted that the date of the civic service, which was agreed by Full Council when it approved this year's Schedule of Meetings, falls on Sunday, 22 June, is the same weekend as this 40th Anniversary Celebration and agreed that the date of the civic service should be changed.

549. GROUPS MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT

Members considered a New Project Proposal (attached to the record minutes) and resolved to agree the purchase of a Toro, Z-Master® 4000 132cm zero turn HDX lawnmower (774053TE) and trailer at a cost of up to £16,000 excluding VAT.

550. OPENING OF THE OCKFORD & AARONS HILL HUB

Members noted that the GTC maintenance team has completed works at the Ockford & Aarons Hill Hub to create an accessible WC and fit out the hall ready for use. Members agreed that the building should be 'officially' opened by the Mayor at 3.00pm on Saturday, 29 March. An open invite will be distributed to residents in the immediate vicinity to view their new Hall between 2.00pm and 3.30pm, Light refreshments to be provided.

551. UPCOMING EVENTS

Members noted the following upcoming event(s):

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
Saturday, 5 April	Spring Festival

552. TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATION ON EXTERNAL BODIES

Members received the following updates:

Councillor Holliday gave an update on the work of the Chamber of Commerce, including this year's Summer Food Festival, Classic car Show and the monthly networking meetings.

Cllr Crowe and Cllr Thomson provided Members with an update on the unexpected and short noticed reduction in future grant funding for the Farncombe Day Centre that has resulted in a significant shortfall in revenue. Whilst Members were informed that services continue to be delivered, the challenges being faced cannot be overstated.

Cllr Rivers suggested the ward councillors for the Farncombe Day Centre consider bringing forward a Motion on Notice in support of the Day Centre.

Members considered a request for the Council to appoint a representative to 'WhatNext?'; on the proposal of Cllr Williams and seconded by Cllr Follows Members agreed that Full Council should be asked to ratify the nomination of Cllr Crooks.

553. COMMUNICATIONS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING

Members identified no matters from this meeting requiring additional communications.

554. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Policy & Management Committee is scheduled to be held in the Council Chamber on Thursday, 24 April 2025 at 7.00pm or at the conclusion of the preceding Environment & Planning Committee meeting, whichever is later.

555. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.