

Notes from the CAT meeting held on 24 November 2015

Those present:

Councillor Mrs P Bryant (Chairman)

Councillor J Bryant

Councillor P Latham (Hampshire County Council)

Councillor S D T Woodward

20 members of the public

The meeting was opened at 7pm by the Chairman who welcomed all present. She introduced Councillor Woodward, Executive Leader of Fareham Borough Council who gave a presentation on the Funtley Governance Review. Following the presentation, the chairman opened the floor for questions:

- a) Are you in favour of parish councils?  
Councillor Woodward explained that he was unable to answer that question as he, along with his fellow councillors will be making the decision at the end of the process in this instance. Generally, in dealing with parish councils which usually serve rural communities, they contributed to the upkeep of the area.
- b) Would lottery money be available if the parish meeting status was approved?  
Councillor Woodward did not know but would find out.
- c) Would comments from the parish council have more sway over planning applications?  
No, all comments are considered equally but a parish council would be a consultee in any applications made within the defined boundary.
- d) How would forming a parish council give value for money, for example in taking on grass cutting?  
If Fareham Borough Council agrees to delegate the grass cutting function to the parish council, they would pay for contractors and take responsibilities paid for by the precept.
- e) Can a parish council precept cause friction between those who voted for the creation of the parish v those against?  
If a parish council is created, every council tax payer will be required to pay the precept alongside their Council Tax to Fareham Borough Council, regardless of their preference. The only exceptions would be those who are exempt, for example, in receipt of housing benefit or single people would continue to receive a 25% reduction in their payment.
- f) If a parish council took over the running of the recreation ground, would Council tax go down?  
No, as this figure is paid to maintain the whole of the borough. Any precept paid would, however, only be used in Funtley.
- g) How is a parish council formed?  
An Order is made by Fareham Borough Council to constitute the parish, elections take place to appoint parish councillors and a public meeting must be

held annually. A parish clerk is usually appointed to deal with day to day matters. It should be noted that anyone can be nominated to become a parish councillor if they meet the criteria which includes living within 3 miles of the boundary of the parish.

- h) Are you aware of any good practice parish councils?  
One good example is Hambledon Parish Council which worked together with the local council during the floods last year, providing support for a localised problem. The council represents a large village which is situated within a countryside area.
- i) Does a parish council add another tier of beaurocracy which must be paid for by the community?  
Yes, the precept must be paid and the parish councillors will decide how to spend the money raised. Unlike the Borough Council, there is no cap on a parish precept which was demonstrated on a slide showing a parish charging £15 a year, which has now increased to £88 annually.
- j) How much will a parish clerk cost?  
It is for the parish to appoint someone, perhaps part time, or share with another parish but a general indication would be a salary of at least minimum wage, plus pension contributions, provision of an area to work, equipment and any other on-costs must be factored into the overall cost.
- k) As an alternative, are there any parish meetings (as opposed to parish councils) in Hampshire?  
None were known but the council can investigate. As demonstrated in the presentation, if a parish meeting is appointed, there is no precept paid.
- l) What criteria will be considered before Fareham Borough Council makes a decision?  
As part of the Community Governance Review, all representations will be taken into account and presented in a report to Council. A decision will be made based on the information provided and the three main factors which form the basis of the review:
- Impact on community cohesion
  - Size, population and boundaries
  - Benefits / drawbacks

As there were no further questions, the Chairman thanked Councillor Woodward and closed the meeting at 7.45pm.