

11 October 2010

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Fleet Town Centre Manager steps down**

Paul Doughty stepped down as Fleet Town Centre Manager on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2010 following the expiration of his contract. Doughty's contract with Hart District Council was extended from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 for a period of 18 months.

This comprised a year to work with the newly formed Fleet Shadow Council followed by an additional six months of support during the transition period when Fleet Town Council became an official local authority. All budgets for the management of Fleet Town Centre were transferred from Hart District Council to the recently formed Fleet Town Council with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010.

At the end of August, Fleet Town Council stated that it felt that unable to offer any further contract to Doughty although it did offer to continue the relationship on a rolling month-by-month basis. There also appeared to be a lack of clarity within the Town Council over the role and the duties of the post holder.

Notes Doughty, "I fully accept that the role needed to be re-evaluated following the formation of Fleet Town Council, however, a rolling agreement was unlikely to enhance business confidence in the post holder at a time when businesses are suffering from the prolonged downturn. It was also unsatisfactory from a personal perspective."

Doughty had a meeting last Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> October, with Cllr Bob Schofield, leader of Fleet Town Council, to discuss the developments. Comments Doughty, "I felt it was a good positive discussion and that we covered a lot of ground. However, I subsequently realised that there was still a great deal of confusion over the Town Centre Manager's position which confirmed my decision."

Doughty adds "Sadly, I increasingly felt that the lack of clarity about my role, contract and reporting lines were barriers in what has always been a stressful position. Personally I regret that my time as Town Centre Manager has ended in such a fashion but – 18 months after the Shadow Council formed – I felt I had finally reached my limits and stepped down on the expiration of my contract."

*Paul Doughty*  
*Ex Fleet Town Centre Manager*  
*Fleet*  
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In addition Doughty, who has recently started a degree in Humanistic Counselling at Guildford College, felt that he needed to spend more time focusing on other activities of personal interest including his family and personal relationships. Doughty says, "I have given four years to the role and hope that I have contributed positively in some small way to the community. Fleet continues to face many challenges and it is time that a single authority, such as the Town Council, provides the lead in the town's future development."

Doughty has consulted fully with the Fleet Festivities Partnership over his decision to stand down. He says, "The best option was to ask for help from the Fleet Festivities team. They responded magnificently and I met with them on Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> October, for a detailed discussion and to hand over all relevant material about the Festivities. I am extremely grateful to them for their unconditional support and willingness to take on this challenging task."

Doughty has also consulted with members of Fleet Forward to ascertain their feelings. Members of Fleet Forward are scheduled to meet next Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> October, to discuss the funding of the Fleet Festivities.

**ENDS**