

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL MEETING of the SWANSCOMBE & GREENHITHE TOWN COUNCIL held on THURSDAY 9 DECEMBER 2021 at 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor Lesley Howes – Town Mayor
Councillor Lorna Cross – Deputy Town Mayor
Councillor Anita Barham
Councillor Sue Butterfill
Councillor Dr Jo Harman
Councillor Peter Harman
Councillor Peter Harris

ALSO PRESENT: Graham Blew – Town Clerk
Martin Harding – Assistant Town Clerk/RFO
x1 Member of the public

ABSENT: There were none

305/21-22. ARRANGEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS REGARDING FILMING OR RECORDING THE MEETING.

The Town Mayor explained the arrangements and constraints relating to the filming or recording of the meeting.

306/21-22. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Emma Ben Moussa, due to medical reasons.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Ann Duke, due to medical reasons.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Linda Hall, due to medical reasons.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor John Hayes, due to medical reasons.

Councillor Jay Shah had previously received dispensation from attending meetings for a six-month period commencing 24 June 2021 (minute 48/21-22).

Councillor Maurice Weet had previously received dispensation from attending meetings for a six-month period commencing 28 October 2021 (minute 251/21-22).

An apology for absence was received from Dartford Borough Councillor David Mote

RESOLVED:

That the reason for absence, for the above Town Councillors, be formally accepted and approved.

307/21-22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.

Councillor Lorna Cross declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 26. Request from Swanscombe and Greenhithe Local History Group as she is the Treasurer of the group.

Councillor Lesley Howes declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 26. Request from Swanscombe and Greenhithe Local History Group as she is the Secretary of the group and submitted the request.

As per Standing Order 34 c) the Chairman adjourned the meeting at this point to allow members of the public to address the meeting in relation to the business being transacted at the meeting.

308/21-22. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 28 OCTOBER 2021.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Special Town Council Meeting held on 28 October 2021 be confirmed as a true record and be signed.

309/21-22. ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE CHAIRMAN / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND THEIR POSITION ON THE AGENDA.

There were none.

310/21-22. MINUTES OF THE PLANNING, MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS, TRANSPORTATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2021, 3 NOVEMBER 2021 and 24 NOVEMBER 2021.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Planning, Major Developments, Transportation & Environment Committee Meetings held on 29 September 2021, 3 November 2021 and 24 November 2021 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

311/21-22. MINUTES OF THE RECREATION, LEISURE & AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 NOVEMBER 2021.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Recreation, Leisure & Amenities Committee Meeting held on 18 November 2021 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

312/21-22. MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 28 OCTOBER 2021.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 28 October 2021 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

313/21-22. MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 6 OCTOBER 2021.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Community Safety Committee Meeting held on 6 October 2021 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

314/21-22. MINUTES OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 23 NOVEMBER 2021.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting held on 23 November 2021 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

315/21-22. REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION FOR NON-ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS IN RESPECT OF COUNCILLOR JAY SHAH.

Further to minute 48/21-22 a request had been submitted for Members to consider extending the previously granted dispensation for possible non-attendance at Town Council meetings, due to ill health, that may give rise to disqualification without prior approval.

RESOLVED:

That the request to extend the previously granted dispensation for Councillor Jay Shah from attending meetings of the Town Council due to ill health, be approved for a further six-month period, to avoid ceasing being a member of the authority under Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.

316/21-22. FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENTS (FRA) FOR 2022 - 2023

Further to minute 245/21-22 (*Finance and General Purposes Committee 28 October 2021*) where members agreed the recommendation submitted by the FRA Working Group, members were asked to approve the draft FRA's 2022 - 2023 and agree their inclusion in the draft Estimates 2022 – 2023.

RESOLVED:

That the draft FRA's and LTM's 2022 – 2023 be approved and included in the draft Estimates 2022 – 2023.

317/21-22. DRAFT ANNUAL ESTIMATES – 2022 - 2023.

Members were provided with the Draft Annual Estimates 2022 – 2023, for information at this stage.

Members were reminded that officers would review the drafts over the festive period and the final copies would be submitted to the full Council meeting on 13 January 2022 to be agreed as required to set the Council Tax Rate for Band D.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the Draft Estimates and forecasts be noted ahead of the final figures being provided to full Council on 13 January 2022 for endorsement.

318/21-22. ADAPTIONS TO THE HERITAGE COMMUNITY HALL - REQUEST FROM WALK TALL.

Further to minute 88/20-21 and under the agreed terms of the Lease for The Heritage Community Hall, the Town Council had received a request from Walk Tall to make adaptations to the building.

Members considered the details of the proposed works by Walk Tall.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed adaptations to the Heritage Community Hall as detailed be agreed.

319/21-22. AGREED COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CiL) – PLAY EQUIPMENT.

Members considered the x4 designs for the previously agreed replacement of the wooden trim trail equipment at the Swanscombe Heritage Park contained within the report.

RESOLVED:

That design D be used for the installation at the Swanscombe Heritage Park.

320/21-22. PROPOSED BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS – PARKS MESS ROOM AND WORKSHOP.

Members were issued with a report detailing the proposed improvements to the Parks Mess Room and Workshop and the explanation as to how the finances for the works were available.

RESOLVED:

1. That a budget allocation of £5,000.00 be agreed for investment in improvements to the Parks Mess Room.
2. That this expenditure be funded from the FRA budget previously allocated for the Church Road Hall.

321/21-22. COMMUNITY EVENT WORKING GROUP UPDATE – “A RIGHT ROYAL CELEBRATION”.

The Working Group had submitted a recommendation to full Council and, to assist members the notes from the Working Group meeting/s and associated information were provided to members prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the proposal for a celebratory event, as detailed in the report, including the recommended financial contribution to form part of the 2022 – 2023 Estimates be agreed.

322/21-22. PUBLIC TOILETS IN OPEN SPACES AND PARKS.

A local football club, and a member, had requested that the Town Council consider the options of providing toilet facilities in the Town Councils open spaces and parks where there were significant numbers of users of all ages.

Members discussed this matter in depth and noted two issues for consideration:

1. A long-term solution to the provision of public toilets in open spaces and parks.
2. A short-term solution to the provision of toilets in relation to training sessions for girls' football in Swanscombe Park.

Members were aware of the level of detail needed to investigate any long-term solution and it was agreed that a Working Group would be the best option to undertake this.

To better understand the options and feasibility for any short-term solution it was agreed that a site meeting would be arranged in Swanscombe Park between officers and members of the Town Council along with the representative of the local football club who had raised this matter.

The result of this site meeting would be reported back to the Council and then a decision made regarding the membership and scope of works for a Working Group.

RESOLVED:

1. That a site meeting be arranged between officers and members of the Town Council and the representative of the local football club to investigate short-term solutions for toilet facilities at Swanscombe Park.
2. That the results of the site meeting be reported back to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.
3. That the Council consider forming a Working Group to investigate the feasibility of any long-term solution for the provision of public toilets in open spaces and parks.

323/21-22 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CiL), DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL (DBC).

Further to minutes 152/19-20 (*full Council 11 July 2019*) and 51/21-22 (*full Council 24 June 2021*) the Senior Infrastructure Planner (DBC) had written advising that a proportion of the CiL receipts received from development/s within the Town Council area, for period 1 April to 30 September 2021, have been received and apportioned accordingly.

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

324/21-22 AMENDMENT TO STANDING ORDER 23 (f) AND STANDING ORDER 43.

Members were sent amendments to Standing Orders that were suggested for clarity and to ensure Members were aware of the procedure for Dispensation relating to Interests.

As per Standing Order 41 (b) it was proposed, duly seconded, and agreed that the suggested amendments stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

RESOLVED:

As per Standing Order 41 (b) the suggested amendments to Standing Orders were proposed and seconded, and stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

325/21-22 ADDITIONAL ORCHARD, SWANSCOMBE PARK - UPDATE

Officers tabled a written update report, and provided a verbal update, to members following a recent site meeting with Dartford Borough Council.

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

326/21-22 **DELEGATED AUTHORITY – SECTION 101 – LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972.**

Further to minute 238/20-21 members considered agreeing a scheme of delegation granted to Officers should there be a further period of restricted activity due to Covid 19 which would enable continuity of service.

RESOLVED:

1. That, under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Town Clerk be delegated authority, in consultation with the Town Mayor, to ensure that the Town Council can fulfil its statutory and legal responsibilities to both residents and employees. Any decisions made to be reported to and endorsed by the full Council at the earliest opportunity.
2. In accordance with Financial Regulation 18.2 the Council waive Financial Regulation 6.4 which will enable officers, in consultation with the Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, to act as a single signatory for payments during any period of restricted activity, to be endorsed by the Finance and General Purposes Committee or full Council at the earliest opportunity. This will ensure the continued operation of this function, with an audit control, during a period of restricted activity.

327/21-22 **STAFF / MEMBER TRAINING – UPDATE**

The following training had been scheduled / undertaken: -

Cllr Lorna Cross	Kent Association of Local Councillors (KALC) – AGM (Zoom)	13 Nov 2021
Cllr Lesley Howes	Kent Association of Local Councillors (KALC) – AGM (Zoom)	13 Nov 2021
Cllr Anita Barham Cllr Emma Ben-Moussa Cllr Sue Butterfill Cllr Lorna Cross Cllr Ann Duke Cllr Linda Hall Cllr Peter Harris Cllr John Hayes Cllr Lesley Howes	Standing Orders – In-house	7 Oct 2021
Cllr Emma Ben-Moussa Cllr Ann Duke Cllr Linda Hall Cllr Peter Harris Cllr John Hayes Cllr Lesley Howes	GDPR and Data Protection – In-house	18 Nov 2021
Cllr Ann Duke Cllr Peter Harman Cllr Peter Harris Cllr Lesley Howes	Budget Setting and Precept – In-house	1 Dec 2021
Cllr Lesley Howes	Climate Change Conference – KALC (Zoom)	15 Dec 2021

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

328/21-22. **REPORTS OF OUTSIDE REPRESENTATIVES.**

Members were advised that this item provided an opportunity for Members appointed as representatives on outside bodies to provide a report at the meeting.

London Resort Company Holdings Ltd Community Liaison Group (LRCHCLG).

Councillor Peter Harman is the Town Councils representative on the LRCHCLG. As previously agreed, the Minutes from the 24 June 2021 and 14 October 2021 meetings were available for inspection.

North West Kent Volunteer Centre (NWKVC).

Councillor Sue Butterfill is the Town Councils representatives on the NWKVC

Councillor Sue Butterfill advised that the move to the new building at Fawkham was complete and that the AGM had been held this week via Zoom. A new chair had been appointed along with a full complement of directors. All services had resumed but that the service was still struggling with gardening provision. The centre had supported Gravesham Borough Council during the pandemic supporting approximately 420 clients with transport services.

Ingress Park (Greenhithe) Management Limited (IPGM).

IPGM had indicated that, although unable to provide documentation, they would like to submit verbal updates to the Town Council.

Councillors' Peter Harman and Peter Harris are the Council's representatives on IPGM.

Councillor Peter Harris gave an update which included:

The accounts for 2020 – 2021 were yet to be agreed and signed off due to ongoing disputes with Crest Nicholson and First Port.

Dartford Children's Partnership Conversation (DCPC).

Councillor Peter Harman is the Town Councils representatives on the DCPC. As previously agreed, the minutes from the 21 September 2021 meeting were available for inspection.

Bluewater Community Forum (BCF).

Councillor Lesley Howes is the Town Councils representative on the BCF and the last meeting had been held on 25 November 2021. The focus of the meeting had been on mental health which included several talks and presentations.

Borough and Parish Forum (BPF).

The Town Mayor and Town Clerk are the Town Council representatives on the BPF. As previously agreed the agenda for the 12 October 2021 was available for inspection.

Whitecliffe Community Liaison Group (WCLG).

Councillor Peter Harman is the Town Council's representative on the WCLG. As previously agreed, the minutes from the 13 July and 14 September 2021 meetings were available for inspection.

Councillor Peter Harman updated members that a new PCSO for Castle Hill and Ebbsfleet Green was due to be appointed but he had a concern this may affect the number of PCSOs allocated to the Swanscombe and Greenhithe area.

Updates were also provided on street lighting, bollards and Christmas arrangements.

329/21-22 REPORT FROM KENT COUNTY COUNCILLOR.

Kent County Councillor Mr Peter M Harman gave an update which included:

The next meeting was scheduled for 16 December 2021.

He had attended a Planning Committee and Health Reform & Public Health Meeting which had raised the question of GP provision across Kent and had prompted a letter to be sent to the NHS raising the Committee's concerns.

An update was provided on bus provision within the area including new buses for the Fastrack route and issues with the Amazon buses.

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

330/21-22 REPORT FROM DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCILLORS.

The Dartford Borough Councillors reported on the following matters:

The General Assembly would be held on Monday 13 December 2021.

A recent meeting of the Development Control Board had voted on and refused an application for development on the land north of Station Road, Greenhithe. This had been on the grounds of its effect on the street scene of the surrounding area.

The Borough Council's festive activities had started with Santa touring the borough on the vintage fire engine.

The new developments at Milton Road and Keary Road were expected to be handed back to the Council on 31 January 2022 subject to all service connections being completed. Boreholes were scheduled for early on the new year at the Gilbert Close site to determine what options the Council has for that site.

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

331/21-22. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Town Mayors Christmas Celebration had taken place on 4 December with carols in the High Street followed by stalls in the Town Council Offices Community Hall. This had been well attended with activities and hot chocolate provided by AJ Celebrations on the High Street then all stall holders reporting a successful day.

The Town Mayor had attended both the carol service at St Peter & St Pauls Church Swanscombe and the thanksgiving service for Marys Child at St Mary's Church, Greenhithe.

332/21-22. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC.

MOVED BY Councillor Peter Harris and seconded by Councillor Peter Harman.

RESOLVED:

That, pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, that because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during consideration of the following item(s).

No members of the press or public were present during discussion of the following items of business.

333/21-22. GROVE CAR PARK – UPDATE.

Members considered the Confidential report.

Dartford Borough Council had contacted the Town Council regarding a possible issue with the Grove Car Park payment systems and this was detailed in the Confidential report.

RESOLVED:

That the possible issue, as detailed in the confidential report, be monitored and reported back to the Council if required.

334/21-22. PAVILION WORKING GROUP - UPDATE.

It had previously been agreed, minutes 253/21-22 (28 October 2021 Special Town Council) and 230/21-22 (7 October 2021 Town Council), that a standing item be included on future Town Council agendas so that all members are aware of how the project is proceeding.

Members considered the confidential update provided

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted

Having already declared a prejudicial interest Councillor Lorna Cross left the chamber and took no part in the discussion or decision of the following items.

Having already declared a prejudicial interest Councillor Lesley Howes left the chamber and took no part in the discussion or decision of the following items.

335/21-22. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN.

It was proposed, duly seconded, and agreed:

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Peter Harris be elected as Chairman for the following item.

336/21-22. REQUEST FROM SWANSCOMBE AND GREENHITHE LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Members were provided with a confidential report detailing the request. Members asked that section 5.2 of the draft Tenancy at Will be deleted as this was not required.

RESOLVED:

That the draft Tenancy at Will provided within the confidential report and amended as above, be sent to Dartford Borough Council for consideration, prior to agreement with the Local History Group.

There being no further business to transact the Meeting closed at 8.45pm.

Signed: _____

(Chairman)

Date:- _____