

MINUTES of the MEETING of the COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE held at THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, THE GROVE, SWANSCOMBE on WEDNESDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2024 at 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor Peter Harris - Chairman
Councillor Peter Harman - Vice-Chairman
Councillor Lorna Cross
Councillor Ann Duke
Councillor Dawn Johnston
Councillor Elizabeth Wickham

ALSO PRESENT: Graham Blew – Town Clerk
PCSO – Alan Mitchell

ABSENT: Councillor Anita Barham

425/23-24. ARRANGEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS REGARDING FILMING OR RECORDING THE MEETING.

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

426/23-24. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Lesley Howes, due to other commitments.

An apology for lateness was submitted by Councillor Elizabeth Wickham.

An apology for absence was submitted by PC Bayley – Cook, due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was submitted by Joanne Appleton – Kent County Council Community Warden, due to other commitments.

Recommended: That the reasons for absence, for the Councillors listed, be formally accepted, and approved.

427/23-24. SUBSTITUTES.

There were none.

428/23-24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.

There were none.

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.

429/23-24. ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE CHAIRMAN / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND THEIR POSITION ON THE AGENDA.

There were none.

43023-24. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 DECEMBER 2023

Recommended: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 December 2023 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

431/23-24. KENT POLICE REPORT.

The Chairman introduced and welcomed PCSO Alan Mitchell to the meeting.

PCSO Alan Mitchell outlined the current crime statistics and cases of note within the Town over the last few months which included:

A serious incident on the A2 on 17 February 2024 which had resulted in severe traffic congestion throughout Swanscombe and Greenhithe.

A foreign lorry had been stopped going through Swanscombe on 19 February 2024 and a Traffic Officer had been called who then issued a Fixed Roadside Penalty which had to be paid on the spot. PC Bayley – Cook would be contacting the company that owned / operated the lorry to advise them that their drivers were ignoring the signage and diversions.

Nuisance vehicles at Crossways – Dartford Borough Council had re-instated the ANPR camera and the Police were still carrying out patrols.

During a lengthy discussion Members expressed their deep concerns regarding the traffic congestion experienced on 17 February 2024 during the major incident on the A2. The roads had been gridlocked in Swanscombe and this had been made infinitely worse with the Galley Hill Road closure.

It was proposed, duly seconded and agreed unanimously that the Town Council should write a letter expressing their concerns and asking to be provided with a what plans or procedures the Police have in place (what if) for major incidents as currently it would not be possible for emergency services to get to anyone within Swanscombe and Greenhithe during an incident such as that on 17 February 2024. Members asked that the letter be sent to the Chief of Police and copied into the Leader of Kent County Council, Gareth Johnson MP and the local press.

Recommended:

1. That the report be noted, and PCSO Alan Mitchell be thanked for his attendance.
2. That a letter, as detailed above, be sent to the recipients listed.

432/23-24. KENT COUNTY COUNCIL (KCC) COMMUNITY WARDENS REPORT.

Unfortunately, the KCC Community Warden was unable to attend but, a written update had been submitted which included:

The area of Swanscombe and Greenhithe, is currently being covered by the Dartford and Gravesham Team, the area dissemination between the team members is to allow us, as a service, to continue in providing continuity to the community and our working partners.

- Adult Social Care and Partner referrals are undertaken by the Team leader.
- Groups/clubs, and food banks are attended by a KCC Community Warden Jo Appleton.
- Visual Presence / community engagement is undertaken by the team.

Recommended: That the report be noted.

433/23-24. COMMUNITY SAFETY LIAISON.

Kent Fire Service – A budget meeting had been held on 20 February 2025⁴ where a 4.99% tax increase had been agreed. There were concerns regarding lithium batteries being charged, for vehicles/scooters etc., and combusting.

Neighbourhood Watch – The Chairman confirmed that they were continuing to hold meetings and that crime seemed to be decreasing.

Community Speed Watch – The next session was scheduled to be held in March 2024.

Lorry Watch - Lead Member, Councillor Elizabeth Wickham, advised the meeting that they had been going out twice a week, weather permitting. There were currently 1x10 volunteers and 1 resident had recently supplied photos of a lorry which had then been passed onto the Police. The Police had set up a portal which allowed residents to report lorries online, including any photographs they may have.

Recommended: That those who provided reports be thanked and the information be noted.

434/23-24. **DETAILED ANALYSIS OF CRIME STATISTICS FOR SWANSCOMBE AND GREENHITHE.**

Members were provided with, and discussed, the up-to-date detailed analysis of crime figures for Swanscombe and Greenhithe.

Members were pleased to see that the stats for Swanscombe and for Greenhithe seemed to indicate a decline in crime.

Councillor Dawn Johnson advised that she had recently met the Police Community Liaison Officer, PSE Karen Sandland, who was more than happy to attend a future meeting to give details on her role.

Recommended:

1. That the information be noted.
2. That PSE Karen Sandland be contacted and invited to attend a future meeting.

There were no confidential items to be discussed.

There being no further business to transact, the Meeting closed at 8.05 pm.

Signed _____
Chairman Date