

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL MEETING of the SWANSCOMBE & GREENHITHE TOWN COUNCIL held via ZOOM on THURSDAY 15 OCTOBER 2020 at 7.00 PM

**PRESENT:** Councillor Peter Harman – Town Mayor  
Councillor Lesley Howes - Deputy Town Mayor  
Councillor Anita Barham  
Councillor Emma Ben Moussa  
Councillor Sue Butterfill  
Councillor Lorna Cross  
Councillor Ann Duke  
Councillor Linda Hall  
Councillor Peter Harris  
Councillor John Hayes  
Councillor Jay Shah  
Councillor Maurice Weet

**ALSO PRESENT:** Graham Blew – Town Clerk  
Martin Harding – Assistant Town Clerk/RFO

**ABSENT:** There were none

70/20-21. **ARRANGEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS REGARDING FILMING OR RECORDING THE MEETING.**

In the Town Mayors absence the Deputy Town Mayor explained the arrangements and constraints relating to the filming or recording of the meeting.

71/20-21. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Dr Jo Harman due to medical reasons.

An apology for lateness was submitted by Councillor Peter Harman.

**RESOLVED:**

That the reasons for absence, for all the Councillors' listed, be formally accepted and approved.

72/20-21. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.**

Councillor Emma Ben Moussa declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 27, Cygnets Pre-School - Update, as she is the Chairman and Trustee of Cygnets.

Councillor Sue Butterfill declared a prejudicial interest in agenda items 8 Capacity Building Fund (Dartford Borough Council (DBC)) – Draft Proposal, as she sits on the awarding panel for this scheme, and 26, Gravesham Community Leisure Limited (GCLL) - Update, as she is a Director of GCLL.

Councillor Ann Duke declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 18, Adaptations to the Heritage Community Hall – Request from Walk Tall, as she is the Chief Executive Officer of Walk Tall.

***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.***

**73/20-21. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 SEPTEMBER 2020.**

**RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the Meetings held on 15 September 2020 be confirmed as a true record and be signed outside of this meeting.

**74/20-21. ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE CHAIRMAN / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND THEIR POSITION ON THE AGENDA.**

The Town Clerk advised members that as per minute 33/20-21 an application had been submitted for funding to the Kent County Council Electric Vehicle Charging Point scheme on 9 October 2020.

The Town Clerk also confirmed that Dartford Borough Council had agreed to locate, maintain and regularly empty an additional litter/dog bin outside of Eagles Road Play Area.

**75/20-21. MINUTES OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 28 SEPTEMBER 2020.**

**RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting held on 28 September 2020 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

**76/20-21. REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION FOR NON-ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS IN RESPECT OF COUNCILLOR DR JO HARMAN.**

Further to minute 568/19-20 a request had been submitted for Members to consider extending the previously granted dispensation for possible non-attendance at Town Council meetings that may give rise to disqualification without prior approval. The Town Council was asked to consider the request, made due to ill health.

Members asked that their best wishes be passed onto Councillor Dr Jo Harman.

**RESOLVED:**

That the request to extend the previously granted dispensation for Councillor Dr Jo Harman 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.

**77/20-21. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) STRATEGY – PROJECT UPDATE.**

Further to minute 51/20-21, officers had arranged an initial meeting with local architects to consider the feasibility and budget requirements for the construction of a Museum / Archive within the Grove Hall. Members had previously identified this as the number one major project from within the Community Infrastructure Levy Strategy – Project List.

Member were provided with initial reports from the architects which identified:

- Potential build costs
- Legal and professional costs
- Scale of works

Members discussed both the build cost for the project and potential future use and ongoing costs to the Town Council. Members discussed and engaging with the community to validate the proposed project and gather further comment and suggestions.

**RESOLVED:**

That the project to construct a Museum / Archive at the Grove Hall, Swanscombe be consulted on with the public to validate the proposal and to seek comments / suggestions on the way it will be used,

The Town Mayor joined the meeting and chaired the meeting from this point.

*Having already declared a prejudicial interest Councillor Sue Butterfill left the meeting and took no part in the discussion or decision of the following item.*

**78/20-21. CAPACITY BUILDING FUND (DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL (DBC)) – DRAFT PROPOSAL.**

At its meeting on 13 January 2020 the DBC General Assembly of Council had agreed that they would continue to operate the Capacity Building Fund and make a contribution of £40,000 into the fund in 2020/21 (there are x8 parish councils).

Further to minutes 441/19-20 (RLA 30 January 2020) and 497/19-20 (Town Council 20 February 2020), members were provided with a draft application for the capacity building fund for match funding towards the initial access works to both the Community Garden and Picnic Area within Swanscombe Park identified by the Environmental Action Plan Working Group.

**RESOLVED:**

That the application form provided to members be submitted for the capacity building fund for match funding towards the initial access works to both the Community Garden and Picnic Area within Swanscombe Park.

**79/20-21. TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES IT AND TELEPHONY SYSTEMS.**

As previously agreed, minute 57/20-21, work had begun on upgrading the Town Council Offices IT and telephony systems.

The office based phone system had been completed and was in operation with the mobile systems currently being installed and tested.

The new IT equipment was scheduled to be installed on 19 October 2020 and members were advised that this could result in short periods of downtime, on the day, but every effort would be made to ensure any disruption was kept to a minimum.

**RESOLVED:**

That the item be noted.

**80/20-21. COMPUTER EQUIPMENT TO SUPPORT TOWN COUNCILLORS.**

Officers had been asked to consider options for providing IT equipment that could be loaned to Councillors on an “as and when” required basis to enable them to undertake any function required of them as a Town Councillor.

Members were provided with a report that outlined the proposed options, along with the financial considerations.

Members discussed the need, specification and the terms and conditions with which any IT equipment would be loaned to members.

Members agreed the purchase of a tablet for members to use, when required, and that the draft Swanscombe and Greenhithe Town Council Acceptable IT Usage Policy be adopted, and would cover the necessary terms and conditions.

Members also agreed that a time limit be specified for the loan of equipment for one month, which could be extended if no further request for a loan had been submitted.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Town Council purchase a tablet, as detailed in the report, to be loaned to members as and when required.
2. That the Swanscombe and Greenhithe Town Council Acceptable IT Usage Policy be adopted for both staff and members.
3. That the loan of equipment be for a period of one month, which may be extended should no further request for the equipment be received.

81/20-21. **CORPORATE TREE PLANTING – UPDATE.**

Further to minute 21/20-21, the date for the corporate tree planting, being undertaken in partnership with North Kent Countryside Partnership and Optimum Power Solutions, had been scheduled for Friday 27 November 2020.

This would be to plant 55 large whips of the same mix of tree previously planted in 2019.

The activity had been risk assessed and would meet all current guidelines for gathering, social distancing and cleaning.

Members were assured that the planting was in line with the ecology of the site.

**RESOLVED:**

That the item be noted.

**82/20-21. COUNCIL OFFICE AND CAFÉ CHRISTMAS OPENING ARRANGEMENTS.**

Members had been provided with a calendar for the Council Offices and Café over the Christmas and New Year. Members were asked to consider when they wished the office and café to be closed over the festive period. Officers had been consulted and had no objection to using annual leave entitlement to cover any periods of closure.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Council Offices and Café be closed on 29, 30 and 31 December 2020 with a notice being displayed, in advance, advising Members of the Public of the closures. As per previous years a relevant message would also be recorded for the Council Office answer machine for this period.

**83/20-21. MONTHLY BANK RECONCILIATION.**

In accordance with Financial Regulation 2.2, a member of the council other than the Town Mayor or a cheque signatory is required to be appointed to verify the bank reconciliations produced by the RFO for all the council's accounts on a regular basis. Councillor Jay Shah was appointed under minute 32/19-20.

**RESOLVED:**

That the bank reconciliations for September 2020, and verified by Councillor Jay Shah, be noted.

**84/20-21 BANK TRANSFERS.**

In accordance with Financial Regulation 5.5 (c) Members were provided with a list of bank transfers between April and September 2020 for approval.

**RESOLVED:**

That the bank transfers undertaken between April and September 2020 be approved.

**85/20-21 TO RECEIVE FINANCE STATEMENTS AND PASS ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT.**

In accordance with Financial Regulation 5.5 (a) Members were provided with details of all receipts and payments for authorisation for September 2020 for approval.

**RESOLVED:**

That the receipts and payments for September 2020, as per the annexed list, be approved.

86/20-21 **SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS.**

Members were provided with details of the Flex-Budget Report balanced to 30 September 2020.

**RESOLVED:**

That the summary of accounts up to 30 September 2020 be noted.

87/20-21 **DECISIONS & RESPONSES.**

Members were provided with the decisions and planning responses using the previously approved delegated authority, under Section 101(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, during the period of lockdown and since the previous meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

That the decisions and planning responses using the previously approved delegated authority, under Section 101(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, during the period of lockdown, and since the previous meeting, be noted and endorsed.

*Having already declared a prejudicial interest Councillor Ann Duke left the meeting and took no part in the discussion or decision of the following item.*

88/20-21 **ADAPTATIONS TO THE HERITAGE COMMUNITY HALL – REQUEST FROM WALK TALL.**

Members were advised that under the agreed terms for the Lease for the Heritage Community Hall, the Town Council have received a request from Walk Tall to make adaptations to the building.

Members had been provided with a report that outlined the proposed adaptations and were given confirmation that Walk Tall had responded and agreed to the conditions raised by the Town Council.

**RESOLVED:**

That the adaptations to the Heritage Community Hall, proposed by Walk Tall, be agreed.

89/20-21 **EBBSFLEET INLAND BORDER FACILITY – LOCAL ENGAGEMENT (p).**

Members were provided with a letter that had been distributed by Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) to residents of Ebbsfleet. The deadline for responses was 21 October 2020.

Members considered the questions contained and formulated the responses as detailed.

**RESOLVED:**

That the responses, as detailed, be endorsed and submitted.

90/20-21 **STAFF / MEMBER TRAINING – UPDATE.**

The following training had been scheduled / undertaken:-

Cllr Lorna Cross	Reactive Local Council. Effective Working in a Virtual World	18 June 2020
Cllr Lorna Cross	LGA Draft Model Member Code of Conduct	17 September 2020
Cllr Lorna Cross	KALC Annual Finance Conference	14 October 2020
Cllr Lesley Howes	Reactive Local Council. Effective Working in a Virtual World	18 June 2020
Cllr Lesley Howes	KALC Annual Finance Conference	14 October 2020
Cllr Maurice Weet	KALC Annual Finance Conference	14 October 2020
Admin Assistant	Supporting Wellbeing & Mental Health Post Covid19	3 September 2020
Town Clerk	Performance Appraisal Training	27 August 2020
Town Clerk	Stress Awareness in the Workplace	8 September 2020
Town Clerk	Effective Comms and Engagement in a post lockdown world	15 September 2020

**RESOLVED:**

That the item be noted.



91/20-21. **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.

Whitecliffe Community Liaison Group (WCLG)

Councillor Peter Harman is the Town Councils representative on the WCLG. As previously agreed the agenda/update from the 22 September 2020 meeting was available for inspection. Councillor Peter Harman advised that the next meeting was scheduled for the following week.

North West Kent Volunteer Centre (NWKVC).

Councillor Sue Butterfill is the Town Councils representative on the NWKVC, and gave a verbal update which confirmed that, due to the current pandemic, there was no update to report.

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 an update which included:

That Crest had not been engaging and that liaison had been undertaken with DBC on the legal position should Crest walk away from the site and not meet their obligations.

**RESOLVED:**

That the item be noted.

92/20-21. **REPORT FROM KENT COUNTY COUNCILLOR (KCC).**

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

No items had come up on recent planning meetings affecting the Town, but that all meetings were being conducted via Microsoft Teams.

Work and liaison was still ongoing with Thames Water to both resolve the water pressure issues, and finish the installation of the new water main on Stanhope / Southfleet Road.

Correspondence was ongoing with residents regarding aggregate that had been deposit on the roundabout adjacent to Asda Greenhithe, further enquiries were being undertaken.

The parking situation in Swanscombe High Street was being regularly monitored following the installation of the pedestrian barriers and further works were planned for both entrances to Swanscombe Station to make access safer.

**RESOLVED:**

That the item be noted.

93/20-21 **REPORT FROM DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCILLORS.**

The Dartford Borough Councillors on the Town Council reported on the following matters:

A summary was provided on the recent General Assembly of the Council and it was confirmed that a review was being undertaken of senior officer roles following the death of the Chief Executive.

All meetings at DBC were being conducted via Zoom with planning meetings focusing on those items drawn down by members requests.

A question had been raised on enforcement levels at DBC but with the emphasis being on re-education on parking rather than further enforcement.

Black History Month had been launched and was being celebrated virtually.

**RESOLVED:**

That the item be noted.

94/20-21. **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC.**

MOVED BY Councillor Sue Butterfill and seconded by Councillor John Hayes;

**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.

95/20-21. **COVID 19 – FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND REQUESTS.**

Members considered and discussed the contents of the confidential report, which included a request from the Pavilion Community Sports and Social Club and, after being proposed and duly seconded it was unanimously agreed:

**RESOLVED:**

That the requested assistance, as detailed in the confidential report, be granted for a fixed period of 3 months and on condition that a monthly update report be provided by The Pavilion Committee to the Town Council via its x3 representatives on the Pavilion Committee.

*Having already declared a prejudicial interest Councillor Sue Butterfill left the meeting and took no part in the discussion or decision of the following item.*

96/20-21. **GRAVESHAM COMMUNITY LEISURE LIMITED (GCLL) – UPDATE.**

Members considered the confidential report provided by GCLL.

**RESOLVED:**

Members noted the report and thanked GCLL for providing the report along with the level of detail included.

*Having already declared a prejudicial interest Councillor Emma Ben Moussa left the meeting and took no part in the discussion or decision of the following item.*

97/20-21. **CYGNETS PRE-SCHOOL – UPDATE.**

Members considered the confidential report and repayment plan included.

**RESOLVED:**

Members agreed to the repayment plan put forward by Cygnets Pre-School and would like to show thanks for the efficiency with resolving this.

There being no further business to transact the Meeting closed at 9.45pm.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:- \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairman)