

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL MEETING of the SWANSCOMBE & GREENHITHE TOWN COUNCIL held via ZOOM on THURSDAY 11 MARCH 2021 at 7.00 PM

PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Graham Blew – Town Clerk
Martin Harding – Assistant Town Clerk/RFO
PCSO Andrew Lewis
Revd. Charlie Lloyd-Evans
X2 Members of the Public

ABSENT:

There were none

228/20-21. 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.

229/20-21. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

An apology for absence was received from Dartford Borough Councillor (Greenhithe) David Mote who had provided a written report which would be read out at agenda item 27.

230/20-21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.

Councillor Sue Butterfill declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 30, Gravesham Community Leisure Limited (GCLL) – Update and Request, as she is a Director of GCLL.

Councillor Ann Duke declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 28, COVID-19 Financial Implications, 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.

A member of the public present raised concerns that the London Resort was a very complicated issue and that, were it to proceed, it would have significant impact on Swanscombe and Greenhithe and that these impacts should be compensated for in any Section 106 Agreement drawn up for the development.

231/20-21. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 FEBRUARY 2021.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 February 2021 be confirmed as a true record and be signed outside of this meeting.

232/20-21. ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE CHAIRMAN / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND THEIR POSITION ON THE AGENDA.

The Town Mayor advised that the Town had sadly lost two of its prominent community members recently in the sad passing of Mr Jack Needham (Frost Funeral Parlour) and Ms Kath Chapman (a regular of one of the Senior Lunch Clubs and local bingo groups).

233/20-21. LOCAL POLICE - MONTHLY UPDATE

Members were provided with January's monthly update.

PCSO Andrew Lewis updated members on the crimes of note provided as part of the January update. Members then took the opportunity to ask questions related to enforcement of speeding offences, the role of Speedwatch, feedback to the public and the investigation process.

The Town Mayor thanked PCSO Andrew Lewis for his attendance.

RESOLVED:

That PCSO Andrew Lewis be thanked for his report and the information be noted.

234/20-21. HEIGHT BARRIERS – GROVE CAR PARK AND SWANSCOMBE CENTRE CAR PARK.

Members considered the report regarding the current condition of the height barriers and, after discussion and being put to a vote it was agreed:

RESOLVED:

That Quotation 1 be used to replace the height barriers and that this be funded 50% from the Community Infrastructure Levy monies currently held by the Town Council and 50% from the Car parks Project Funds within the Financial Risk Assessments.

235/20-21. THE LONDON RESORT – ACCEPTED APPLICATION.

A letter from the Chief Executive, PY Gerbeau (16 February 2021) had been received, along with a Section 56 Planning Act 2008 notice notifying of the accepted application for a Development Control Order by the Secretary of State (reference number: BC080001).

Any representations were required to be received by the Inspectorate between 19 February 2021 and 11.59pm on 31 March 2021.

Members had been provided with this information on 18 February 2021.

After a lengthy debate members agreed for officers to try to arrange an informal meeting with the Dartford Borough Council Head of Planning Services to get a better understanding of what was involved and required at this stage. Whilst this was being undertaken Senior Officers would be delegated to compile a draft representation using the Town Council previous consultation response.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Head of Planning Services be invited to attend an informal meeting.
2. That Officers be delegated to compile a draft representation using the Town Councils previous consultation response.

236/20-21. DARTFORD DRAFT LOCAL PLAN

Further to minute 192/20-21 members were asked whether they wished to submit any comments on the Dartford Draft Local Plan. Members had previously commented on the Swanscombe section of the Draft Plan.

The deadline for comments is Friday 9 April 2021.

Members agreed that Dartford Borough Council had done everything they could to ensure the Local Plan was legally compliant, sound and compiles with the duty to co-operate and that the Town Council should respond as such.

RESOLVED:

That the response, as detailed, be finalised and submitted.

237/20-21. ANNUAL OPEN MEETING AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM).

Members were informed that the present 4 April 2020 Regulations (covering online and remote meetings) were due to cease on 6 May 2021.

The legal requirement is to hold the Annual Open Meeting between 1 March and 15 June whilst the AGM must be held in May (previously agreed for 13 May 2021). The situation, at this time, was that before 6 May 2021 these meetings must be held online.

Members were asked to consider holding the meetings via Zoom on the following dates:

Annual Open Meeting – Tuesday 4 May at 7pm

Annual General Meeting – Wednesday 5 May at 7pm

RESOLVED:

That, subject to any change in the current legislation:

The Annual Open Meeting be held via Zoom on Tuesday 4 May at 7pm

The Annual General Meeting be held via Zoom on Wednesday 5 May at 7pm

238/20-21. DELEGATED AUTHORITY – SECTION 101 – LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972.

Members were asked to consider an extension to the delegated authority previously granted to Officers at the beginning of the Covid 19 crisis.

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 is able to 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.

239/20-21. QUEENS PLATINUM JUBILEE - 2022.

Queen Elizabeth II platinum jubilee will be celebrated in 2022 once the 70th year has been completed. The government has already announced a double bank holiday on 2 and 3 May 2022 to make a four-day weekend.

Members were asked if they wished the Community Event Working Group to meet to formulate any proposals, they wish the Council to consider ahead of this occasion.

The Community Events Working Group is currently made up of:

1. Councillor Anita Barham
2. Councillor Emma Ben-Moussa
3. Councillor Lorna Cross
4. Councillor Peter Harman
5. Councillor Lesley Howes

RESOLVED:

That the Community Event Working Group to meet to formulate any proposals they wished the Council to consider for an event to mark this occasion.

240/20-21. FLAG SCHEDULE.

Members had been provided with a draft flag schedule. Members asked that the Union Flag also be flown on the Queens actual birthday, 21 April.

RESOLVED:

That the flag schedule, with the addition of the Queens actual birthday (21 April) be agreed.

241/20-21. ENVIROMENTAL ACTION PLAN WORKING GROUP.

Members noted the update report, including photographs, on the progress to the new community areas within Swanscombe Park.

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

242/20-21. STAFF / MEMBER TRAINING UPDATE.

The following training had been scheduled / undertaken: -

Cllr Lorna Cross	KALC Annual Planning Conference (Zoom)	17 March 2021
Cllr Lesley Howes	KALC Annual Planning Conference (Zoom)	17 March 2021

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

243/20-21. INSURANCE CLAIM/S – UPDATE.

The following claim/s have now been settled: -

- a) Claim Ref: 27210000010 – Damaged fence at Knockhall (Storm Bella), this claim incurred a £100.00 excess.

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

244/20-21. VALLEY VIEW – NEW PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT.

Members considered the report, including x5 options, regarding the installation of a new piece of play equipment at the Valley View Children’s Play Area, Greenhithe. A funding application to the Kent County Council Members Grant Scheme had been successful with £4,890.88 having been awarded.

RESOLVED:

That Option 5 be selected.

245/20-21. CAS TRAINING – HOMEWORK HELPER CLUB.

The Town Council had previously agreed to support the Homework Helper Club (minute 183/20-21) and CAS Training had provided an update report on the impact of the scheme thus far.

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

246/20-21. REQUEST FROM BELLWAY.

Further to minutes 131/20-21 and 173/20-21 correspondences were exchanged with the Operations Manager, GCLL, Bellway and the MP for Dartford who had kindly agreed to contact Bellway regarding the issue. A response had been received from Gareth Johnson MP in which Bellway advised that the alternative parking site would be available from 8 March 2021.

As part of the discussions, it was agreed that KCC Member Peter Harman be requested to investigate the addition of bollards to the grass area located alongside the children’s nursery and just before the viaduct on Craylands Lane (there were already bollards present on the adjacent tarmac area)

RESOLVED:

1. That Gareth Johnson MP be thanked for responding to the Town Councils request for assistance in this matter.
2. That the item be noted.

247/20-21. PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL STREET LIGHTING IN ALLEY FROM GROVE CAR PARK TO SWANSCOMBE HIGH STREET.

In August 2020 the Town Council agreed to work with KCC Member Peter Harman and Dartford Borough Council to arrange for x2 additional streetlights to be installed in the alley (minute 34/20-21). This work had now been completed and the column were operational from 24 February 2021.

KCC Member Peter Harman was thanked for arranging and undertaking this project.

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

248/20-21. 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 up to and including February 2021 be noted.

249/20-21 BANK TRANSFERS.

In accordance with Financial Regulation 5.5 (c) Members were provided with a list of bank transfers undertaken for February 2021 for approval.

RESOLVED:

That the bank transfers undertaken for February 2021 be approved.

250/20-21 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 February 2021 for approval.

RESOLVED:

That the receipts and payments for February 2021 be approved.

251/20-21 SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS.

Members were provided with details of the Flex-Budget Report balanced to 28 February 2021.

RESOLVED:

That the summary of accounts up to 28 February 2021 be noted.

252/20-21. 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.

253/20-21. 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.

North West Kent Volunteer Centre (NWKVC).

Councillor Sue Butterfill is the Town Councils representative on the NWKVC and provided an update which included: notice had been served to vacate the office and the organisation were currently in discussions with a venue for their new "home". A new Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Treasurer had recently been elected.

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: a tree survey had recently been undertaken and works from this had begun. Next year's estimates had been drafted and sent to Directors for their comments. The repairs to the Heritage Trail fence had begun. The spring bulbs planted had begun to flower with daffodils and crocuses coming out. Crest had been approached and it was hoped to hold the September AGM in the Ingress Pak Community Centre.

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

Councillor Peter Harman is the Town Councils representative on the LRCHCLG. As previously agreed, the Agenda for the 25 February 2021 meeting was available for inspection.

Whitecliffe Community Liaison Group (WCLG).

Councillor Peter Harman is the Town Councils representative on the WCLG and, as previously agreed the agenda and minutes for the 23 February 2021 meeting, including the minutes from the 1 February 2021 meeting were available for inspection.

254/20-21. REPORT FROM KENT COUNTY COUNCILLOR (KCC).

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

A planning meeting had been held on Tuesday and another was scheduled for next week.

Full Council meeting had taken place today.

The land bridge at Craylands Gorge was due to be open today or tomorrow.

The process for Mumford Drive becoming one way was underway.

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

255/20-21 REPORT FROM DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCILLORS.

The Dartford Borough Councillors reported on the following matters:

Feedback was provided which included:

The General Assembly of Council (Budget) had been held where the budget was set and had resulted in the Dartford Borough Council part of the Council Tax being frozen.

Swanscombe would be receiving additional Enforcement.

The work carried out by Council contractors on the cliff face, at the end of Maritime Close, to remove the overhanging foliage and install catch netting to stabilise the chalk had been completed without incident and the Ecology Team overseeing the work had signed off the project.

The MP had become involved with the issue regarding car racers in Greenhithe and as a result the Police were now taking action.

Charges to car parks would be re-instated in April.

Talks were being held with the Police regarding the issue of pavement parking.

Following the sad passing of Graham Harris and the retirement of Sheri Green a new senior management team comprising of Sarah Martin, Peter Dosad and a third new director, joining from Canterbury City Council in May will be installed.

The public space opposite the dentist on The Avenue, Greenhithe is currently being landscaped and this will include two benches and a waste bin. The Town Council has been asked about the possibility of installing a notice board here.

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

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.

256/20-21. COVID 19 - FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS.

Members considered the report which detailed the financial implication for the Town Council as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic.

RESOLVED:

That the information contained be noted.

257/20-21. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC.

MOVED BY Councillor Peter Harman and seconded by Councillor Lorna Cross;

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.

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.

258/20-21. GRAVESHAM COMMUNITY LEISURE LIMITED (GCLL).

Members considered the confidential report for this item.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted, and that a letter from the Town Mayor to the DBC Communities and Leisure Officer be sent thanking them for their assistance in obtaining the National Leisure Recovery Funding for GCLL in regard to The Swanscombe Centre.

259/20-21. PAVILION COMMUNITY SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB – UPDATE.

Members discussed the contents of the update.

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

260/20-21. PAVILION WORKING GROUP.

The Working Group had met on 9 February and 26 February 2021 and Members were provided with the confidential notes from those Working Group meetings. Members agreed that the confidential notes from the Working Group contained positive recommendations for the site and these were endorsed.

RESOLVED:

That the two recommendations in the report from the Working Group be agreed and endorsed.

261/20-21. FLYTIPPING.

Members considered the correspondence received from Dartford Borough Council regarding fly tipping.

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

There being no further business to transact the Meeting closed at 9.50pm.

Signed: _____ Date:- _____
(Chairman)