

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL MEETING of the SWANSCOMBE & GREENHITHE TOWN COUNCIL held on THURSDAY 24 JUNE 2021 at 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor Lesley Howes – Town Mayor
Councillor Lorna Cross – Deputy Town Mayor
Councillor Anita Barham
Councillor Linda Hall
Councillor Peter Harman
Councillor Peter Harris

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

ABSENT: There were none

43/21-22. 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.

44/21-22. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Emma Ben Moussa, due to other commitments. Councillor Ben Moussa had provided a written report which would be read out at agenda item 22.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Sue Butterfill, due to other commitments. Councillor Butterfill had provided written reports which would be read out at agenda items 9, 20 and 22.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Ann Duke, due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Dr Jo Harman, due to other commitments.

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

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Jay Shah, due to medical reasons.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Maurice Weet, due to medical reasons.

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 22.

RESOLVED:

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

45/21-22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.

Councillor Lesley Howes declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 17, Consultation – Draft Stone Neighbourhood Plan, as she is a Member of Stone Parish Council.

Councillor Lesley Howes declared a personal interest in agenda item 14, Happy to Chat / Contact Bench, as she is a Member of the Northfleet, Ebbsfleet & Swanscombe Lions Club.

Councillor Lorna Cross declared a personal interest in agenda item 14, Happy to Chat / Contact Bench, as she is a Member of the Northfleet, Ebbsfleet & Swanscombe Lions Club.

The Town Clerk advised members that, in accordance with Standing Order 43 (3) (i) (ii), dispensation was granted in relation to agenda item 7, Requests to use Town Council Parks / Open Spaces, to those Councillors that were members of the Swanscombe and Greenhithe Residents Association.

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.

46/21-22. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 5 MAY 2021.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 5 May 2021 be confirmed as a true record and be signed outside of this meeting.

47/21-22. ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE CHAIRMAN / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND THEIR POSITION ON THE AGENDA.

There were none.

48/21-22. REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION FOR NON-ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS IN RESPECT OF COUNCILLOR JAY SHAH.

A request had been submitted for Members to consider granting 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 Jay Shah.

RESOLVED:

That the Town Council approve a dispensation for Councillor Jay Shah from attending meetings of the Town Council due to ill health, for a six month period commencing 24 June 2021, to avoid ceasing being a member of the authority under Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.

49/21-22. FOOTBALL PITCH ALLOCATION.

Further to minute 569/17-18 (Recreation, Leisure & Amenities Committee 22 March 2018) members had been supplied with a copy of the football pitch allocations for 2021 – 2022 football season.

Members were informed that whilst happy to try and accommodate the teams that had requested pitch allocations there were concerns that the volume of games may have a detrimental effect on the condition of the pitches. With this in mind Members agreed that the current suggested allocation be agreed and set as a maximum with no further increase in the number of teams using the pitches.

RESOLVED:

That the pitch allocations for 2021 - 2022 be noted and this be set as a maximum with no further increase in the number of teams using the pitches.

50/21-22. REQUESTS TO USE TOWN COUNCIL PARKS / OPEN SPACES

Members considered a request that had been received from Swanscombe Tigers FC to use the designated area of Broomfield Park for a Family Fun Day on 25 July 2021.

RESOLVED:

That the application be granted subject to the appropriate Public Liability Insurance being provided and that only the designated area being used.

51/21-22. **COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL), DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL (DBC).**

Further to minutes 152/19-20 (full Council 11 July 2019) and 352/18-19 (full Council 13 December 2018) the Infrastructure Delivery Officer (DBC) had written advising that a proportion of the CIL receipts received from development within the Town Council area, for the period 1 October 2020 to 31 March 2021, have been received and apportioned accordingly.

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

52/21-22. **NATIONAL LOTTERY FUNDING (NLF) – SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION.**

The Town Councils application to the NLF for its Community Green & Open Spaces Project had been confirmed as successful. This would enable the previously agreed designs for the x2 areas to be completed as proposed (minute 36/21-22).

Councillor Sue Butterfill had supplied a report advising that... *“as requested by SGTC, I have personally requested for the proposed Community Orchard at Swanscombe Park to be placed on the next Planet Dartford Working Group agenda, at Dartford Borough Council (DBC). I will feedback to SGTC in due course.”*

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

53/21-22. **ACCESS ROAD GULLIES – SWANSCOMBE CENTRE.**

Further to minute 269/20-21 (8 April 2021 full Council), members considered the report regarding the x2 options for resolving the issue of the blocked gullies in the access road.

Photographs of recent flooding in the access road were tabled to members.

After discussion members agreed that Option 2 was the most appropriate.

RESOLVED:

That Option 2 be used to proceed with the works to attempt to resolve the issue of the flooding in the access road.

54/21-22. DEDICATION OF TREES.

At the previous meeting members had requested that this item be placed on the agenda to consider the possible dedication of trees in the x2 community areas within Swanscombe Park.

Members had been provided with a copy of the Town Councils Memorial Policy.

Members agreed that the x2 trees being purchased for the Community Orchard be dedicated.

RESOLVED:

Members agreed that the x2 fruit trees being purchased by the Town Council for the Community Orchard within the picnic area be dedicated to Capt. Sir Tom Moore and, provided his family approved, former Town Councillor Bryan Read.

55/21-22. QUEENS GREEN CANOPY (QGC).

The QGC is a unique tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 which invites people from across the UK to "Plant a Tree for the Jubilee".

The idea is to create a legacy in honour of The Queen's leadership of the Nation, which will benefit future generations.

From October, you can add your Jubilee tree to The QGC map. Her Majesty and The Prince of Wales planted the first Jubilee tree in the grounds of Windsor Castle in March, to mark the launch of the QGC

RESOLVED:

To agree to take part in the QGC and dedicate the whole of the Community Orchard in the picnic area in Swanscombe Park to the QGC.

56/21-22. ADDITIONAL BENCHES AND BIN.

Further to minutes 270/20-21 and 37/21-22 the additional benches at Broomfield and Swanscombe Play Areas had been installed as well as the additional litter bin in The Heritage Park.

The additional benches for Eagles Road Play Area, Greenhithe, Saxon Court Play Area, Greenhithe and Valley View Play Area, Greenhithe were on order.

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

Having already declared a personal interest Councillors' Lorna Cross and Lesley Howes took no part in the decision of the following item.

57/21-22. HAPPY TO CHAT / CONTACT BENCH.

The Northfleet, Ebbsfleet & Swanscombe Lions Club had approached the Town Council with an offer to supply a Happy to Chat / Contact Bench to be installed within Swanscombe.

To assist members examples of the bench were attached along with suggested options for locating the bench.

RESOLVED:

To agree to the proposal and for the bench to be located outside the Council Offices (location 1).

58/21-22. BENCH AREAS ON PROW DS6.

- Bench 2 of 3.

Further to Minute 38/21-22 officers had looked at feasibility of moving bench 2 of 3 which was not thought to be appropriate. As an alternative solution the shrubbery, on both sides, of the area's which lead up to the bench area had been cut back so that people on the path, and those using the seating area, could now see each other long before they actually got to the bench.

- Bench 1 of 3.

Since the last meeting the local Police (PCSO's) and the Kent County Council Community Warden have been patrolling the footpath and neither had reported any incidents of ASB. The resident that raised this issue had kindly agreed to record any incidents of ASB and had advised:

"There have only been two late night disturbances since your last email (6 May 2021) so comparatively very quiet to what it was a couple of years ago. Perhaps I overestimated the impact that lockdown easing would have on the unsociable noise levels close to the residential areas."

After discussion members agreed that no further action was required at this time.

RESOLVED:

That no further action be taken.

59/21-22. **CHRISTMAS TREE.**

The Town Council is the only parish within the borough that provide festive lights each year in both the High Streets (Greenhithe and Swanscombe). The Town Mayor had requested that this item be placed on the agenda to consider having a Christmas Tree in the Town.

Members were provided with some possible options of designs and sizes along with pictures which gave an indication of possible locations on or around the Council Offices.

Whilst the merits of the idea were recognised members agreed that the x2 sets of festive lights provided by the Town Council in Greenhithe and Swanscombe High Street were sufficient.

RESOLVED:

That no action be taken.

Having already declared a prejudicial interest Councillor Lesley Howes left the chamber and took part in the discussion or decision of the following item.

60/21-22. **CONSULTATION – DRAFT STONE NEIGHBOURHOOD.**

This consultation runs from 4pm on 14 May until 4pm on 25 June 2021.

Members were provided with the details for the consultation, by email on 14 May 2021.

Members were asked to consider whether they wished to respond to the consultation.

RESOLVED:

That no response be made.

61/21-22 **DECISIONS & RESPONSES**

Members were provided with the decision and planning responses using the previously approved delegated authority, under Section 101 (10) 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 approved.

62/21-22 **STAFF / MEMBER TRAINING – UPDATE**

The following training has been scheduled / undertaken: -

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|--------------|
| Cllr Sue Butterfill | Code of Conduct – Dartford Borough Council. | 16 June 2021 |
| Town Clerk | Code of Conduct – Dartford Borough Council. | 16 June 2021 |
| Administration Assistant | KALC Writing Press Releases for Good Local Coverage | 17 June 2021 |

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

63/21-22. **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 agenda for the 24 June 2021 meeting was available for inspection.

The LRCHCL had confirmed that a substitute could attend meetings but that this must be done in advance with the substitutes contact details being provided.

Councillor Peter Harman advised that the meeting had covered items which included :
Photos of proposed attractions;
The planning Inspectorate would begin the examination in late September /October and that there were 28,000 pages of information;
Gate 1 was due to be open in 2024 and Gate 2 in 2029;
One entrance would be opposite the George and Dragon PH;
Cycle paths, updating public footpaths;
Park and Glide service from Tilbury;
None of the local businesses had signed up to relocate;
15% of traffic would be by river (meaning 85% would be by road, train).

Further to the update members agreed that the Town Council should write a letter to London Resort (cc the Planning Inspectorate) asking for details regarding the parking proposals for the resort.

North West Kent Volunteer Centre (NWKVC).

In her absence Councillor Sue Butterfill supplied a written reporting informing.... *“NWK Volunteers Centre is continuing to operate a ‘scaled down’ service due to the Covid – 19 restrictions. The Trustees meet on a regular basis and are planning on increasing and developing their services for the community, as soon as the Government finally agree to the lockdown being lifted.”*

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: There would be a face to face meeting of the Board on the 9 September 2021 followed the Annual General Meeting on the 14 September 2021.

Young Peoples Partnership Conversation (YPPC).

Councillor Lesley Howes is the Town Councils representatives on the YPPC. As previously agreed, the agenda for the 9 June 2021 meeting is available for inspection.

Whitecliffe Community Liaison Group (WCLG).

Councillor Peter Harman is the Town Councils representatives on the WCLG. As previously agreed, the minutes from the 11 May 2021 meeting are available for inspection. The next meeting was scheduled for 13 July 2021.

64/21-22

REPORT FROM KENT COUNTY COUNCILLOR.

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

The Annual General Meeting had been held face to face at Maidstone Leisure Centre: He had attended a Kent Fire & Rescue Pension Meeting and Planning Meeting; There was no further update regarding the replacement traffic signs at Ingress Park Avenue;

A new style entrance gate on the PRoW from Betsham Road to Castle Hill was due for installation;

The damaged belisha beacon outside the petrol station on London Road had been replaced;

A defibrillator was being sourced for Castlehill Community Centre.

65/21-22 **REPORT FROM DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCILLORS.**

In their absence Dartford Borough Councillors' Emma Ben Moussa, Sue Butterfill and David Mote had provided written reports.

The Dartford Borough Councillors reported on the following matters:

Feedback was provided which included:

Property Conversion Policy, this outlines DBC proposals to convert smaller sized void properties into larger sized dwellings to meet the identified shortfall.

Flexible Tenancies Review, this review is to ensure the best use of DBC housing stock with a lifetime tenancy. This policy is reflected in the Housing Allocation Policy.

Local Plan – this is work in progress.

DBC TRO's – officers have advised members that Kent County Council (KCC) have started the process to replace Fastrack Busways - Traffic Regulation Order's (TRO's) to Dartford and Gravesham Borough Council; allowing only Fastrack buses and vehicles with exemptions to use the busways. More information is available from the Principal Fastrack Development Planner at DBC.

DBC has been invited to appoint a member to serve on the Board of the Ebbsfleet Garden City Trust. The Trust had been created to provide the necessary legal framework for the ownership of assets and responsibility for resources and to ensure strong management and service delivery on an ongoing basis to local residents. He recommended to Cabinet that Councillor Nicklen should be the Council's nominee to serve on the ECGT Board.

DBC has been awarded £1,300,000 of funding from the Government's Decarbonisation Scheme to help fund the installation of energy efficient measures to a number of its public buildings, including the Civic Centre, Acacia Gym, the Mansion House, Manor Gate House and the Tree Community Centre.

The ability of local authorities to hold Member meetings remotely, or in hybrid formats, via virtual platforms, ended when the emergency Regulations introduced in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic expired on 7 May 2021. DBC intends to continue to conduct its statutory and decision-making meetings in-person, at a physical location.

The Keary and Milton Road council properties should be ready for handover in August and November respectively, and construction work on the Gilbert Road project should start in September.

CCTV was due to be installed at Keary Road and Swanscombe Street to monitor anti-social parking with a dedicated staff member to monitor.

Bushfields Garden (Gunn Road) to be opened with improvement works to be undertaken utilising local volunteers.

A request had been made for more cuts at Swanscombe Cemetery.

The service delivery by Urbaser in Swanscombe is being called down for review.

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

66/21-22. **TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

It was hoped that the Electric Vehicle Charging Points in the Grove Car Park would be able to be officially opened on 19 June 2021.

A volunteer's group was being formed for residents to carry out voluntary work for largely DBC tenants on their gardens. A meeting was scheduled for 9 July at the St Peter & St Pauls Church Centre.

NHS Big Tea event was scheduled to take place at the Old Fire Station Community Café on 19 July 2021.

A Flower & Produce Show was being held at the Heritage Community Hall on 25 September 2021.

An open mic event was going to be held at The Pavilion on 20 November 2021.

67/21-22. **DELEGATION TO CONDUCT NORMAL BUSINESS DURING RECESS PERIOD.**

Members were requested to delegate authority to the Town Clerk, in accordance with section 101 (1) (a) of the Local Government Act 1972, to conduct the normal business of the Council during the recess period. The Town Clerk will consult with the Town Mayor, if appropriate, before any business is transacted. If any emergencies do occur during this time the Executive & Emergency Committee would be convened.

RESOLVED:

That, in accordance with section 101 (1) (a) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Town Clerk be delegated authority to conduct the normal business of the Council during the recess period.

68/21-22. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC.

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

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.

69/21-22. PAVILION WORKING GROUP.

Members discussed the contents of the confidential notes from the 11 June 2021 meeting of the Working Group.

Councillor Peter Harman asked those members present that were not on the Working Group for their views regarding the contents of the confidential notes.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

There being no further business to transact the Meeting closed at 9.20pm.

Signed: _____

(Chairman)

Date:- _____