

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
17 MAY 2023

MINUTES of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the SWANSCOMBE & GREENHITHE TOWN COUNCIL held at THE COUNCIL OFFICES, THE GROVE, SWANSCOMBE on WEDNESDAY 17 MAY 2023 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Councillor Peter Harman – Town Mayor
Councillor Ann Duke – Deputy Town Mayor
Councillor Anita Barham
Councillor Emma Ben Moussa
Councillor Lorna Cross
Councillor Peter Harris
Councillor Richard Lees
Councillor Claire Pearce
Councillor Hazel Stephens
Councillor Elizabeth Wickham

ABSENT: There were none

ALSO PRESENT: Graham Blew – Town Clerk
Martin Harding – Assistant Town Clerk/RFO
Sandra Kelleher – Administration Assistant
Natalie Shoulder – Administration Assistant
Sue Hart – CAS Training
x3 Members of the Public

1/23-24. **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.

2/23-24. **ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR.**

The Town Mayor requested nominations for the position of Town Mayor for the forthcoming year.

MOVED by Councillor Ann Duke and seconded by Councillor Hazel Stephens.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Peter Harman be duly elected as Town Mayor for the ensuing year 2023- 2024.

3/23-24. **TOWN MAYOR'S DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE.**

Following his election, Councillor Peter Harman made his Declaration of Office and signed the Acceptance of Office form.

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4/23-24. **ELECTION OF DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR.**

MOVED by Councillor Lorna Cross and seconded by Councillor Peter Harris.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Ann Duke be duly elected as Deputy Town Mayor for the ensuing year 2023 - 2024.

5/23-24. **DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR'S DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE.**

Following her election, Councillor Ann Duke made her Declaration of Office and signed the Acceptance of Office form.

6/23-24. **VOTE OF THANKS.**

Councillor Peter Harman gave a vote of thanks to the outgoing Town Mayor, Councillor Lorna Cross.

7/23-24. **PAST MAYOR'S GIFT.**

Councillor Peter Harman presented the past Town Mayor, Councillor Lorna Cross with a past mayor's gift.

8/23-24. **RESPONSE BY COUNCILLOR LORNA CROSS.**

Councillor Lorna Cross thanked both Councillors Peter Harman and Ann Duke for their support during her term as Mayor.

The term had included the sad passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and ended with the Coronation of King Charles III.

This had been Councillor Cross's third time as Town Mayor and her most enjoyable.

Councillors Cross's final duties as Town Mayor had been to recently present awards to the winners of her children's poetry competition.

Councillor Cross wished both the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor the best of luck for the forthcoming year.

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9/22-22. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

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

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Dawn Johnston due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Alan Reach due to other commitments.

RESOLVED:

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

10/23-24. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST ON 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.

11/23-24. **TO APPOINT COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES.**

- a) Allotments & Cemeteries Sub-Committee.
- b) Community Safety Committee.
- c) Executive & Emergency Committee.
- d) Finance & General Purposes Committee.
- e) Heritage Sub-Committee.
- f) Leases & Legal Sub-Committee.
- g) Personnel Committee.
- h) Planning, Major Developments, Transport & Environment Committee.
- i) Regeneration & Quality Sub-Committee.
- j) Recreation, Leisure & Amenities Committee.

MOVED by Councillor Peter Harman and seconded by Councillor Anita Barham.

RESOLVED:

That the Appointment and Constitution of the Standing and Other Committees be adopted as per the tabled list.

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12/23-24. **TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES, AND INTERNAL AUDIT.**

Members were provided with the Terms of Reference of the Committees, Sub-Committees, and Internal Audit to be approved.

Following discussion, the following amendments were proposed, seconded and duly agreed:

1. That, where applicable, each committee or sub-committee change the phrase 'will submit a budget' to 'may submit a budget'.
2. That the Regeneration & Quality Sub-Committee change the phrase 'negotiate planning gain' to 'discuss planning gain'.
3. That the Allotments & Cemeteries Sub-Committee remove the paragraph referencing the cemetery maintained by Dartford Borough Council.

MOVED by Councillor Richard Lees and seconded by Councillor Anita Barham.

RESOLVED:

That the Terms of Reference of the Committees, Sub-Committees, and Internal Audit be approved, as per the annexed list, to include the x3 agreed amendments.

13/23-24. **DATES AND TIMES OF MEETINGS.**

- a) The Council
- b) Standing Committees

Following discussion, it was proposed, seconded and duly agreed that the Town Council meeting scheduled for Thursday 27 July 2023, be amended to Thursday 20 July 2023.

MOVED by Councillor Emma Ben Moussa and seconded by Councillor Claire Pearce.

RESOLVED:

That the dates and times of the above Meetings be approved as per the annexed list, to include the amendment to the July Town Council meeting as detailed.

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14/23-24. **APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES.**

- a) Town Mayor or agreed substitute to serve on the Bluewater Forum.
- b) One Representative to serve on the Borough and Parish Forum, to be the Town Mayor (plus the Town Clerk).
- c) One Representative to serve on the Children's Partnership Conversation.
- d) One Representative to serve on the Ebbsfleet Water Management Group.
- e) One Representative to serve on the Elderly Forum (Dartford Borough Council).
- f) Two Representatives to serve on the Greenhithe Community Association.
- g) Two Representatives to sit on the Board of Directors of the Ingress Park Management (Greenhithe) Limited.
- h) Two Representatives to serve on the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) County Area Committee.
- i) Two Representatives to serve on the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) Dartford Area Committee.
- j) One Representative to serve on London Resort Company Holdings Ltd Community Liaison Group.
- k) One Representative to serve on the committee of the North West Kent Volunteer Centre (formerly the Dartford Volunteer Bureau).
- l) One Representative to serve on the Whitecliffe Community Liaison Committee.
- m) One Representative to serve on the Young People's Partnership Conversation

MOVED by Councillor Peter Harman and seconded by Councillor Lorna Cross.

RESOLVED:

That the appointment of representatives to outside bodies be approved as per the tabled list.

15/23-24. **BANK SIGNATORIES.**

MOVED by Councillor Hazel Stephens and seconded by Councillor Peter Harris.

RESOLVED:

That the following Members be appointed as signatories to authorise the payment of cheques.

Current Account	Town Mayor's Charity Account
1 Cllr Anita Barham	1. Town Clerk
2. Cllr Lorna Cross	2. Assistant Town Clerk/RFO
3. Cllr Peter Harman	
5 Cllr Peter Harris	
5 Cllr Lesley Howes	
6 Cllr Dawn Johnston	

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16/23-24. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 APRIL 2023.**

MOVED by Councillor Peter Harman and seconded by Councillor Lorna Cross.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2023 be confirmed as a true record and signed outside of the meeting.

17/23-24. **REVIEW OF ACTION PLAN FOR 2023 - 2024.**

Members reviewed the Action Plan for 2023 - 2024.

MOVED by Councillor Peter Harman and seconded by Councillor Lorna Cross.

RESOLVED:

That the Action Plan 2023 – 2024 be confirmed.

18/23-24. **REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS.**

Members reviewed the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

MOVED by Councillor Emma Ben Moussa and seconded by Councillor Lorna Cross.

RESOLVED:

That Standing Orders and Financial Regulations be approved.

19/23-24. **ANNUAL RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY.**

Members reviewed the Risk Management Policy.

MOVED by Councillor Lorna Cross and seconded by Councillor Ann Duke.

RESOLVED:

That the Risk Management Policy be approved.

20/23-24. **REVIEW OF COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.**

Members reviewed the current policies and procedures of the Town Council.

Members considered and agreed the additional paragraph proposed to be inserted into the Tree Management / Planting Policy in relation to the 'Unauthorised Cutting Down of Trees on Town Council Land'.

A further amendment to the policy was proposed, seconded and, after being voted on, it was agreed to change the 5th paragraph on page 1 to read:

The Council may, where replacement of new planting is required, encourage the planting of appropriate native species and, where tree felling is necessary, strive to replace trees or hedging whips for each tree removed and place them in an appropriate location.

MOVED by Councillor Emma Ben Moussa and seconded by Councillor Claire Pearce.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Policies and Procedures, as listed, be endorsed.
2. That the amendments, as detailed, to the Tree Management / Planting Policy be agreed.

21/23-24. **SUBSCRIPTIONS / MEMBERSHIPS.**

In accordance with Financial Regulation 5.6 members were provided with the list of subscriptions - memberships held by the Town Council.

MOVED by Councillor Peter Harris and seconded by Councillor Richard Lees.

RESOLVED:

That the continued subscriptions - memberships, as detailed, be approved.

22/23-24. **REGULAR PAYMENTS – DIRECT DEBITS AND BACS PAYMENTS.**

In accordance with Financial Regulations 5.6 and 6.9 members considered the list of organisations paid, on a regular basis, via Direct Debit or the BACS system.

MOVED by Councillor Lorna Cross and seconded by Councillor Peter Harris.

RESOLVED:

That the continued regular payments, as listed, be approved.

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23/23-24. REVIEW OF INTERNAL AUDIT.

Members reviewed the internal audit and confirmed they were satisfied the regulatory requirements were being met.

Regulation 6 requires that a council “*shall have maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the council’s accounting records and control systems*”

Members reviewed the legal requirements, regarding control objectives, which included an assessment of each of the following: the scope of internal audit, independence, competence, relationships, audit planning and reporting the council had to achieve throughout the financial year and agreed that the council had an adequate and effective system of internal audit.

MOVED by Councillor Ann Duke and seconded by Councillor Peter Harris.

RESOLVED:

That, after assessing the process for the internal audit, specifically: the scope of internal audit, independence, competence, relationships, audit planning and reporting; the effectiveness of the council’s internal controls were deemed adequate and that these ensured the regulatory requirements regarding control objectives were being met.

24/23-24. RE-APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT INTERNAL AUDITOR 2023 - 2024.

Members were asked to agree to the re-appointment of Mr Lionel Robbins as internal auditor for the year 2023 – 2024.

MOVED by Councillor Lorna Cross and seconded by Councillor Claire Pearce.

RESOLVED:

That Mr Lionel Robins be re-appointed as internal auditor for the year 2023 – 2024.

25/23-24. ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2022 – 2023.

Members received the internal auditors report for 2022 - 2023.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

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26/23-24. **ANNUAL RETURN FOR YEAR END 31 MARCH 2023 – GOVERNANCE STATEMENT.**

Members considered Section 1 of the Annual Return, the Annual Governance Statement requested by the External Auditor (Mazars), for the year end 31 March 2023.

MOVED by Councillor Richard Lees and seconded by Councillor Lorna Cross.

RESOLVED:

That Section 1 of the Annual Return – Governance Statement, for the year end 31 March 2023 be approved, and that a vote of thanks, for the hard work of Officer's involved in completing this, be given.

27/23-24. **ANNUAL RETURN FOR YEAR END 31 MARCH 2023 – ACCOUNTING STATEMENT.**

Members considered Section 2 of the Annual Return, the Accounting Statement requested by the External Auditor, for the year end 31 March 2023

MOVED by Councillor Lorna Cross and seconded by Councillor Peter Harris.

RESOLVED:

That Section 2 of the Annual Return – Accounting Statement, for the year end 31 March 2023 be approved.

28/23-24. **BALANCE SHEET FOR YEAR END 31 MARCH 2023.**

Members considered the balance sheet for the year end 31 March 2023 (as indicated this had been signed off by the Independent Internal Auditor, 17 April 2023).

MOVED by Councillor Peter Harris and seconded by Councillor Elizabeth Wickham.

RESOLVED:

That the balance sheet for the year end 31 March 2023 be approved.

29/23-24. **SWANSCOMBE AND GREENHITHE TOWN COUNCIL – RECOGNITION AWARD SCHEME PANEL 2023 – 2024.**

Further to minute 444/14-15 Members discussed, and agreed, with x1 abstention, the three Town Councillors to make up the Panel along with the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor (ensuring this resulted in one Member from each of the three wards).

MOVED by Councillor Elizabeth Wickham and seconded by Councillor Ann Duke.

1. Councillor Peter Harman (Town Mayor) – Greenhithe
2. Councillor Ann Duke (Deputy Town Mayor) – Swanscombe Ward
3. Councillor Lorna Cross – Swanscombe Ward
4. Councillor Peter Harris – Knockhall Ward
5. Councillor Hazel Stephens – Greenhithe Ward

RESOLVED:

That the Panel for 2023 - 2024 be made up of the Councillors as detailed above.

30/23-24. **MONTHLY BANK RECONCILIATION.**

In accordance with Financial Regulation 2.2, a member of the council other than the Town Mayor or a cheque signatory needs to be appointed to verify the bank reconciliations produced by the RFO for all the council's accounts on a regular basis.

MOVED by Councillor Peter Harman and seconded by Councillor Hazel Stephens.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Ann Duke be appointed to undertake the verification of bank reconciliations.

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31/23-24. **MEMBERSHIPS OF WORKING GROUPS.**

As per Standing Order 25 (a) each working group should have a membership of between 3 – 5 members with the quorum for a meeting to take place being 3.

- a. Community Event Working Group
- b. Environmental Action Plan Working Group
- c. Financial Risk Assessment Working Group
- d. Grove Car Park Working Group
- e. Ingress Park Community Centre Working Group

MOVED by Councillor Lorna Cross and seconded by Councillor Peter Harris.

RESOLVED:

That the memberships of the Working Groups, as detailed, be confirmed.

32/23-24. **SUMMER ENTERTAINMENT 2023.**

Members were issued with the calendar of activities that officers were currently preparing to deliver over the summer 2023 period. These included:

- Children's Summer Entertainment
- Summer of Sports – Taster Classes

Additional funding applications were pending which, if successful, would be used to increase the number of activities on offer.

Promotional material would be placed on the Town Councils noticeboards, website, and social media feeds nearer the time.

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

33/23-24. **GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCY (GPC).**

The Town Council are required to formally resolve that it still meets the eligibility criteria for a council to qualify to use the GPC.

MOVED by Councillor Richard Lees and seconded by Councillor Claire Pearce.

RESOLVED:

That the Town Council meets the criteria set by the Secretary of State (Localism Act 2011 s8) and set out in the Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012.

34/23-24. **YOUTH SERVICES – CAS TRAINING REQUEST.**

Further to minute 514/21-22 (Town Council 21 April 2022) where the Town Council agreed the expenditure to recommission CAS Training for youth provision, members were asked to consider the detailed report for proposed Youth provision for 2023 - 2024.

Sue Hart from CAS Training gave a brief overview of the proposal and answered members questions in relation to demographics and publicity before leaving the chamber whilst the item was discussed.

Members were advised that a budget of £4,000 was put in place for the 2023 – 2024 financial year under Cost Centre 245 – Miscellaneous Expenditure. In addition, Members were directed to item 34 on the agenda where the Town Council had been allocated £2,862.94 in CIL funds, yet to be allocated to a project for the Town Council.

Members discussed the importance of ensuring this project was sustainably funded going forward and to ensure this a requirement of the contract for any funding must include that a written update report be provided to each full Town Council meeting during the next 12 months.

Councillor Peter Harman in his role as Kent County Council Member for Swanscombe and Greenhithe pledged £1,391 towards the project.

After discussion Members agreed that the Town Council would support the full package of youth provision proposed by CAS Training (Option 1), with the funding to be sourced from the donation by KCC Member Peter Harman, the £4,000 currently allocated, with the balance to be funded from the Town Councils CIL allocation.

MOVED by Councillor Emma Ben Moussa and seconded by Councillor Richard Lees

RESOLVED:

1. That the Town Council agree to commission CAS Training to provide youth services for the 2023 – 2024 year as detailed within Option 1 from the report.
2. That the youth services be funded as detailed above.
3. That the contract to provide these services include the stipulation that written update reports must be provided to each full Town Council meeting throughout the year.

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35/23-24. **EXTERNAL FUNDING – SUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS 2022 - 2023.**

Members were sent a detailed report outlining the successful applications that have been made during the 2022 – 2023 financial year.

Most recently the Town Council were awarded funding from both the National Lottery and Dartford Borough Council towards the Right Royal Celebration II Event being held on 10 June 2023. These funds would be used to enhance the activities available to the public on the day.

The Town Council had also applied for, and successfully gained, a Parish Council Community Cost of Living Grant. This scheme was funded from Kent County Council and administered by the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC). Once payment had been received the funds would be donated equally between the x2 Food Banks that operate within the Town.

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted

36/23-24. **COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL), DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL (DBC).**

Further to minutes 329/22-23 (*full Council 8 December 2022*), 323/21-22 (*full Council 9 December 2021*), 152/19-20 (*full Council 11 July 2019*) and 51/21-22 (*full Council 24 June 2021*), Members were informed that 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 October 2022 to 31 March 2023, had been received and apportioned accordingly.

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

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37/23-24. **MEMBERS TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES.**

Code of Conduct Training.

DBC were providing x2 opportunities for Members to attend Code of Conduct training sessions. These had been designed to give an overview of the Code of Conduct and ethical governance.

Tuesday 16 May 2023	18.00 hours	Council Chamber, DBC Civic Centre.
Monday 22 May 2023	18.00 hours	Council Chamber, DBC Civic Centre.

- ❖ *Members were made aware that they were required to contact DBC directly and arrange their attendance at one of the options and to let the Council Office know to keep the Member Training records updated.*

38/23-24. **DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE (LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, s83 (4)).**

Members were reminded that each Councillor must sign their Declaration of Acceptance of Office at or before the first meeting after they are elected unless the council, at that meeting, permits the declaration to be made at, or before, a later meeting.

Declarations are to be made in the presence of the council's proper officer, if the declaration is not executed at the proper time, a casual vacancy automatically arises.

MOVED by Councillor Hazel Stephens and seconded by Councillor Lorna Cross.

RESOLVED:

That permission be granted for Councillor Dawn Johnston and Councillor Alan Reach to sign their Declaration of Acceptance of Office at, or before the next full Council meeting.

39/23-24. **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS.**

There were none.

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40/23-24. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC.**

MOVED by Councillor Richard Lees and seconded by Councillor Emma Ben Moussa.

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 press and public leave the meeting during consideration of the following item.

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

41/23-24. **PAVILION PROJECT - UPDATE.**

The RFO detailed the contents of the confidential report and after discussion it was

MOVED by Councillor Lorna Cross and seconded by Councillor Richard Lees.

RESOLVED:

1. That the update on the background and timeline for the project be noted.
2. That the update on the planning process and the work undertaken be noted.
3. That the update on the funding for the project, and the decision to enter into a grant agreement, be endorsed.
4. That the Town Council use the procurement framework offered by Fusion 21 to secure the main contractor for the construction of the new Community Hub.

There being no further business to transact the Meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

Members were invited to join the Mayor Elect for refreshments after the Meeting.

Signed: _____ Date:- _____
(Chairman)