

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL MEETING of the SWANSCOMBE & GREENHITHE TOWN COUNCIL held on THURSDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2024 at 7.00pm

**PRESENT:**

Councillor Peter Harman – Town Mayor  
Councillor Ann Duke – Deputy Town Mayor  
Councillor Anita Barham  
Councillor Emma Ben Moussa  
Councillor Peter Harris  
Councillor Lesley Howes  
Councillor Richard Lees  
Councillor Alan Reach  
Councillor Hazel Stephens  
Councillor Elizabeth Wickham

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Graham Blew – Town Clerk  
Martin Harding – ATC/RFO  
Councillor Carol Gale – Dartford Borough Council  
Greenhithe

**ABSENT:**

There were none

**402/23-24. ARRANGEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS REGARDING FILMING OR RECORDING THE MEETING.**

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

**403/23-24. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Claire Pearce, 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 Greenhithe Dartford Borough Councillor David Mote, due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was received from Revd. Charlie Lloyd-Evans, due to other commitments.

**RESOLVED:**

That the reason/s for absence, for the above Town Councillor(s), be formally accepted and approved.

**404/23-24. 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.***

**405/23-24. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING ON 17 JANUARY 2024**

**RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the Special Town Council Meeting held on 17 January 2024 be confirmed as a true record and be signed.

**406/23-24. ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE TOWN MAYOR / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND THEIR POSITION ON THE AGENDA.**

There were none.

**407/23-24. MINUTES OF THE RECREATION, LEISURE & AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 JANUARY 2024**

**RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the Recreation, Leisure & Amenities Committee Meeting held on 17 January 2024 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

**408/23-24. BUDGET STATEMENT**

Further to minute 412/22-23 Members were asked to agree the draft Budget Statement 2023 – 2024 which will be produced digitally, in the same way as in 2022 - 2023, with hard copies made available to members for distribution and placed at the Community Café and at Swanscombe Surgery.

**RESOLVED:**

That the draft Budget Statement 2023 – 2024 be agreed.

**409/23-24. BRITISH HEART FOUNDATION – DEFIBRILATOR.**

Further to minute 377/23-24 (RLA 17 January 2024) on behalf of the community groups the Town Council had successfully applied to the British Heart Foundation Defibrillator Scheme and a new defibrillator (in an unlocked heated external cabinet), had been delivered, and will shortly be installed in Swanscombe Park.

**RESOLVED:**

That the item be noted.

**410/23-24. GANG MOWING.**

Further to minutes 460/22-23 and 377/23-24 and in accordance with Financial Regulation 11.1 (iv) (and in consultation with the Chairman of Finance and General Purposes Committee) a continuation contract for gang mowing in 2024 had been signed.

**RESOLVED:**

That in accordance with Financial Regulation 11.1 (iv), the action in agreeing the contract for gang mowing of the Town Councils areas for 2024 be endorsed.

**411/23-24. TREE SURVEY 2024 – SPRING VALE.**

As members were aware, the Town Council are currently arranging for our periodic tree survey to be undertaken. Further to minute 381/23-24 the survey for Spring Vale was arranged to be completed as a priority.

Quotes are currently being sought to have the works undertaken and members were asked to delegate authority to the Town Clerk to have **all** the highlighted works undertaken using the best value quote received (subject to this being within the budget available).

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the results of the periodic tree survey 2024 for Spring Vale be noted.
2. That, in accordance with Financial Regulation 4.1, the Town Clerk be delegated authority to have **all** the highlighted works undertaken using the best value quote received subject to this being within the budget available from the Financial Risk Assessments allocated to the periodic tree survey.
3. That the Recreation, Leisure and Amenities Committee be asked to consider the level of risk of the areas included in the periodic tree survey.



**412/23-24. EXTERNAL FUNDING – SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION.**

The Town Council had successfully applied to the Parish Council Winter Support Grant which is funded by Kent County Council (KCC) and administered by the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC). The scheme is designed to support a diverse range of low-income households, including families with children, older individuals, unpaid caregivers, and those living with a disability.

Once the payment had been received by the Town Council these funds would be donated equally between the Mary Child Kent, Swanscombe Food Cellar, CAS Community Solutions (for their Warm Hub) and the Swanscombe Senior Lunch Club.

**RESOLVED:**

That the item be noted.

**413/23-24. PAVILION PROJECT - UPDATE.**

Further to minute 392/23-24 Members were provided with an update report which informed them that, following the Youth Investment Fund (YIF) panel meeting on 6 February 2024, YIF had made the decision to withdraw the offer of funding as the panel felt that the project was at too greater risk of not being able to deliver the building by the absolute deadline of March 2025.

After a lengthy discussion in which members expressed their shock and anger at the YIF panel decision it was proposed, duly seconded, and agreed:

**RESOLVED:**

1. The attached statement be released to inform the public.
2. The Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor contact Gareth Johnson MP to arrange to discuss this issue.
3. A Special Town Council meeting be held at 7.00pm on Thursday 15 February 2024 to begin formulating the strategy for the building going forward.

414/23-24. **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. Councillor Harman had submitted his apologies for absence, and no update had been provided.

- NB. In response to an enquiry, LRCHCLG have confirmed that they are happy to accept a substitute representative, if the current cannot attend, but this must be done in advance, with the substitute members contact details being provided.

Ingress Park (Greenhithe) Management Limited (IPGM).

Councillors' Peter Harman and Peter Harris are the Council's representatives on IPGM. IPGM had indicated that, although unable to provide documentation, they would like to submit verbal updates to the Town Council.

Councillor Peter Harris reported that the AGM had been held on 7 February 2024 where it had been agreed, for financial reasons, to suspend the repairs on 2 of the 14 follies with minimal repairs being made to adhere to Health and Safety issues.

Sandbags had also been installed as flood defence until it was possible to extend the flood defence wall.

Dartford Young People's Partnership Conversation (DYPPC)

Councillor Lesley Howes is the Town Councils representative on the DYPPC. The last meeting had been held via Zoom on 24 January 2024.

Bluewater Forum (BF)

The Town Mayor is the Town Councils representative on the BF. The last meeting had been held on 25 January 2024 with the main focus being volunteers.

Whitecliffe Community Liaison Group (WCLG).

Councillor Peter Harman is the Town Councils representative on the WCLG. As previously agreed, the Agenda and Planning and Progress Report from the 17 January meeting were available for inspection.

Dartford Children's Partnership Conversation (DCPC)

Councillor Emma Ben-Moussa is the Town Councils representative on the DCPC. As previously agreed, the minutes from the meeting on the 30 January 2024 were available for inspection.

**415/23-24. REPORT FROM KENT COUNTY COUNCILLOR.**

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

The last planning meeting had been cancelled due to a lack of business.  
The budget meeting was scheduled to be held on 20 February 2024.

**RESOLVED:**

That the item be noted.

**416/23-24. REPORT FROM DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCILLORS.**

The Dartford Borough Councillors updated members which included:

A Cabinet Advisory Panel (CAP) meeting had been held and had included a Domestic Abuse Strategy and a Homeless and Rough Sleepers Strategy.

Work had taken place with PC Bayley – Cook to try and get increased traffic enforcement from DBC at the High Street and Manor Road, Swanscombe.

The new DBC properties due for construction at Gilbert Close were still pending archaeological reports.

The recent plaque unveiling at The Sir John Franklin PH had provided the opportunity to arrange for veterans to have a day at the Maritime Museum.

A Budget Consultation had/was been undertaken and a 2% increase was being proposed for this year.

Disabled Access swings were being installed at Buccaneer Bay in Central Park as well as other sites.

The Corporate Plan was currently out for consultation.

Citizens Advice had begun operating their Digital Hubs / Video Kiosks.

Lovers Lane, Greenhithe had had a chalk fall.

DBC Councillor Cally Gale had been appointed to the new Cabinet Portfolio role covering Climate Change, Planet Dartford, Net Zero

A Charity Fashion Show was being arranged with details to follow.

**RESOLVED:**

That the item be noted.



**417/23-24. SEALING OF DOCUMENTS.**

Members were advised that the following document had been received from the Solicitors acting for the Town Council for signing and sealing:

- Deed of Easement – Land at rear of No.4 Orchard Road, Swanscombe.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That, in accordance with Standing Order 21 a) and b), the Town Mayor and Town Clerk be authorised to sign and seal the document.
2. That the remaining Deeds of Easement for this project can be signed in accordance with Standing Order 21, a) and b) as and when they are received.

**418/23-24. TOWN MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

The Town Mayor advised the meeting that the date for Civic Night had been set as Saturday 20 April 2024.

**419/23-24. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC.**

MOVED BY Councillor Richard Lees 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.

**420/23-24. REQUEST REGARDING CHURCH ROAD HALL.**

Members considered the confidential report and after discussion it was agreed.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Town Council would be better serving the community with the current use of the hall and that the last response sent by the Town Council be endorsed.

There being no further business to transact the Meeting closed at 8.35 pm.

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

