

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
15 MAY 2024

MINUTES of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the SWANSCOMBE & GREENHITHE TOWN COUNCIL held at THE COUNCIL OFFICES, THE GROVE, SWANSCOMBE on WEDNESDAY 15 MAY 2024 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Councillor Ann Duke – Town Mayor
Councillor Dawn Johnston – Deputy Town Mayor
Councillor Lorna Cross
Councillor Peter Harman
Councillor Peter Harris
Councillor Richard Lees
Councillor Hazel Stephens
Councillor Elizabeth Wickham

ABSENT: There were none

ALSO PRESENT: Graham Blew – Town Clerk
Martin Harding – Assistant Town Clerk/RFO
Natalie Shoulder – Administration Assistant
x1 Member of the Public

1/24-25. 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.

2/24-25. ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR.

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

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

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Ann Duke be duly elected as Town Mayor for the ensuing year 2024- 2025.

3/24-25. 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.

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4/24-25. **ELECTION OF DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR.**

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

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Dawn Johnston be duly elected as Deputy Town Mayor for the ensuing year 2024 - 2025.

5/24-25. **DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR'S DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE.**

Following her election, Councillor Dawn Johnston made her Declaration of Office and signed the Acceptance of Office form.

6/24-25. **VOTE OF THANKS.**

Councillor Ann Duke gave a vote of thanks to the outgoing Town Mayor, Councillor Peter Harman.

7/24-25. **PAST MAYOR'S GIFT.**

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

8/24-25. **RESPONSE BY COUNCILLOR PETER HARMAN.**

Councillor Peter Harman thanked the Town Mayor for her kind vote of thanks.

The term had been both a good and hard year with the challenges faced by the Town Council over the last 12 months, not least the loss of funding towards the redevelopment of the Pavilion.

Councillor Harman thanked both his Councillor colleagues and the staff from the Town Council for the support that had been offered during his term.

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

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9/24-25. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Anita Barham, due to health reasons.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Emma Ben – Moussa, due to health reasons.

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

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Claire Pearce 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.

10/24-25. **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.

11/24-25. **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.

Members were informed that the following amendment had been made to the list supplied with the agenda: Councillor Alan Reach had been replaced by Councillor Dawn Johnston on the Personnel Committee

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

RESOLVED:

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

12/24-25. 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.

MOVED by Councillor Lorna Cross and seconded by Councillor Elizabeth Wickham.

RESOLVED:

That the Terms of Reference of the Committees, Sub-Committees, and Internal Audit be approved, as per the annexed list.

13/24-25. DATES AND TIMES OF MEETINGS.

- a) The Council
- b) Standing Committees

Members had been provided with an amended/updated schedule of dates and times of meetings.

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

RESOLVED:

That the dates and times of the above Meetings be approved as per the annexed list.

14/24-25. 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.

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- m) One Representative to serve on the Young People's Partnership Conversation
- n) One Representative to serve on the Youth Forum (DBC).

MOVED by Councillor Peter Harris and seconded by Councillor Dawn Johnston.

RESOLVED:

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

15/24-25. **BANK SIGNATORIES.**

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

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 Hazel Stephens	

16/24-25. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 APRIL 2025.**

MOVED by Councillor Richard Lees and seconded by Councillor Elizabeth Wickham.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 April 2024 be confirmed as a true record and signed outside of the meeting.

17/24-25. **REVIEW OF ACTION PLAN FOR 2024 - 2025.**

Members reviewed the Action Plan for 2024 - 2025.

MOVED by Councillor Richard Lees and seconded by Councillor Elizabeth Wickham.

RESOLVED:

That the Action Plan 2024 – 2025 be confirmed.

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18/24-25. REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS.

Members reviewed the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and the proposed amendment to the wording of Standing Order 22.

MOVED by Councillor Richard Lees and seconded by Councillor Hazel Stephens.

RESOLVED:

1. That Standing Orders and Financial Regulations be approved.
2. That as per Standing order 41 b) the proposed amendment to Standing Order 22 detailed stand adjourned, without discussion, to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

19/24-25. ANNUAL RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY AND INTERNAL CONTROLS REVIEW.

Members reviewed the Risk Management Policy and Internal Controls.

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

RESOLVED:

That the Risk Management Policy and Internal Controls be approved.

20/24-25. REVIEW OF COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.

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

MOVED by Councillor Lorna Cross and seconded by Councillor Elizabeth Wickham.

RESOLVED:

That the Policies and Procedures, as listed, be endorsed.

21/24-25. 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 Harman and seconded by Councillor Peter Harris.

RESOLVED:

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

22/24-25. 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 Richard Lees and seconded by Councillor Elizabeth Wickham.

RESOLVED:

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

23/24-25. 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 Elizabeth Wickham and seconded by Councillor Dawn Johnston.

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.

24/24-25. RE - APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT INTERNAL AUDITOR 2024 - 2025.

Members were asked to agree to the re-appointment of Mr Lionel Robbins as internal auditor for the year 2024 – 2025.

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

RESOLVED:

That Mr Lionel Robins be re-appointed as internal auditor for the year 2024 – 2025.

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25/24-25. **ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2023 – 2024.**

Members received the internal auditors report for 2023 - 2024.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

26/24-25. **ANNUAL RETURN FOR YEAR END 31 MARCH 2024 – 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 2024.

MOVED by Councillor Elizabeth Wickham and seconded by Councillor Richard Lees.

RESOLVED:

That Section 1 of the Annual Return – Governance Statement, for the year end 31 March 2024 be approved, and that a vote of thanks, for the hard work of Officer's involved in completing this, be given.

27/24-25. **ANNUAL RETURN FOR YEAR END 31 MARCH 2024 – ACCOUNTING STATEMENT.**

Members considered Section 2 of the Annual Return, the Accounting Statement requested by the External Auditor, for the year end 31 March 2024.

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

RESOLVED:

That Section 2 of the Annual Return – Accounting Statement, for the year end 31 March 2024 be approved.

28/24-25. **BALANCE SHEET FOR YEAR END 31 MARCH 2024.**

Members considered the balance sheet for the year end 31 March 2024 (as indicated this had been signed off by the Independent Internal Auditor, 25 April 2024).

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

RESOLVED:

That the balance sheet for the year end 31 March 2024 be approved.

29/24-25. **SWANSCOMBE AND GREENHITHE TOWN COUNCIL – RECOGNITION AWARD SCHEME PANEL 2024 – 2025.**

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 Peter Harman and seconded by Councillor Hazel Stephens.

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

RESOLVED:

That the Panel for 2024 - 2025 be made up of the Councillors as detailed above.

30/24-25. **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 Lorna Cross.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Dawn Johnston be appointed to undertake the verification of bank reconciliations.

31/24-245 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
- f. Pavilion Working Group

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

RESOLVED:

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

32/24-25. SUMMER ENTERTAINMENT 2024.

Members were issued with the calendar of activities that officers were currently preparing to deliver over the summer 2024 period. These included:

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

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.

33/24-25. EXTERNAL FUNDING – SUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS 2023 - 2024.

Members were sent a detailed report outlining the successful applications that have been made during the 2023 – 2024 financial year.

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted

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34/24-25. **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*), 51/21-22 (*full Council 24 June 2021*) and 36/23-24 (*AGM 17 May 2023*) 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 2023 to 31 March 2024, had been received and apportioned accordingly.

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

35/24-25. **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS.**

There were none.

There being no further business to transact the Meeting closed at 7.35 pm.

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

Signed: _____ Date: - _____
(Chairman)