

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL MEETING of the SWANSCOMBE & GREENHITHE TOWN COUNCIL held on THURSDAY 25 JULY 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 Lesley Howes  
Councillor Richard Lees  
Councillor Hazel Stephens

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Graham Blew – Town Clerk  
Martin Harding – ATC/RFO  
Glen Keeling – Consolidated Almshouses of Swanscombe

**ABSENT:**

There were none.

**106/24-25. 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.

**107/24-25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

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

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Emma Ben-Moussa, 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.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Elizabeth Wickham, 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 Greenhithe Dartford Borough Councillor Carol Gale, due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was received from Rev. Charlie Lloyd-Evans.

**RESOLVED:**

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

**108/24-25. 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.***

**109/24-25. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS 18 APRIL 2024 AND 15 MAY 2024.**

**RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the Town Council Meetings held on 18 April 2024 and 15 May 2024 be confirmed as a true record and be signed.

**110/24-25. ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE TOWN MAYOR / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND THEIR POSITION ON THE AGENDA.**

The Town Clerk informed members that one of the parks vans had been stolen on Monday 22 July 2024 whilst being used by a Groundsman / Gardener. The relevant authorities had been informed and this would now be subject to an insurance claim. The member of staff concerned was off work with a swollen leg but they had met the Town Clerk on the day of the incident and the day after and would hopefully be back at work soon.

**111/24-25. MINUTES OF THE PLANNING, MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS, TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON 22 MAY 2024, 12 JUNE 2024 AND 10 JULY 2024**

**RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the Planning, Major Developments, Transportation and Environment Committee Meetings held on 22 May 2024, 12 June 2024 and 10 July 2024 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

**112/24-25. MINUTES OF THE RECREATION, LEISURE & AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 27 JUNE 2024**

**RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the Recreation, Leisure & Amenities Committee Meeting held on 27 June 2024 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

**113/24-25. MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 19 JUNE 2024**

**RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 19 June 2024 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

**114/24-25. MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON 17 APRIL 2024 AND 3 JULY 2024**

**RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the Community Safety Committee Meetings held on 17 April 2024 and 3 July 2024 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

**115/24-25. MINUTES OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 30 APRIL 2024.**

**RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting held on 30 April 2024 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

**116/24-25. MINUTES OF THE HERITAGE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 30 APRIL 2024.**

**RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the Heritage Committee Meeting held on 30 April 2024 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

**117/24-25. AMENDMENT TO STANDING ORDER 22.**

As per minute 18/24-25 members were asked to consider the amendment to Standing Order 22.

**RESOLVED:**

That the amendment to Standing Order 22 be adopted.

**118/24-25. CLOSURE OF SWANSCOMBE METHODIST CHURCH AND HALL / SWANSCOMBE FOOD CELLAR.**

The North Kent Methodist Circuit have taken the decision to close the Swanscombe Methodist Church and Hall on 25 August 2024. The Methodist Church has been at the site on Milton Road since 1888.

Members were asked to consider what, if any, action the Town Council can take regarding this issue.

The Town Mayor updated members that she had been in discussion with the parties involvement from both the church itself and the wider Kent Methodist Circuit. All of the community groups operating from the venue had been relocated, with the Food Cellar planned to move to the Church Centre at St Peter & St Pauls Church, but with discussions ongoing about the small transition period between the church expected to close and when the new facilities will be ready.

After discussion it was agreed that the Town Council would look to submit an application to Dartford Borough Council to register the building as an Asset of Community Value.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Town Council would submit an application to Dartford Borough Council to register the building as an Asset of Community Value.

**119/24-25. TRAFFIC CONGESTION SWANSCOMBE AND GREENHITHE.**

Further to minute 500/23-24 members were sent the correspondences/responses received from the various agencies.

Members were disappointed with the lack of progress made in respect of forming a cohesive discussion on the issues faced.

It was agreed that a letter be sent to the new Secretary of State for Transport, along with the new Members of Parliament for Dartford and Gravesham to try and express the importance and need to both find a quick solution to the road closure at Galley Hill, and a jointly worked approach to traffic management when incidents occur within the wider road network.

**RESOLVED:**

That a letter be sent as detailed.

**120/24-25. COMMUNITY EVENT WORKING GROUP - UPDATE.**

Members were sent the notes from the Working Group meeting held on 27 June 2024.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That item be noted.
2. That it be agreed that the event be Summer/ Flower themed and would be held on Saturday 7 June 2025 from 12 noon to 4pm.

**121/24-25. PAVILION WORKING GROUP - UPDATE.**

Further to minute 501/23-24 the Working Group met on 16 April 2024 and the notes from the meeting were sent to members for consideration.

**RESOLVED:**

That the item be noted.

**122/24-25. ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION PLAN WORKING GROUP.**

The Working Group met on 3 July 2024 and the notes from that meeting, including a recommendation, are attached for members consideration.

It was discussed that a future review should be undertaken on the section relating to trees and hedges to widen this around all bio-diversity projects being undertaken and proposed to be undertaken within the Town. It was agreed that this would be put to the next meeting of the Working Group.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the item be noted.
2. That the draft Environmental Action Plan be adopted, subject to a further review of the section relating to trees and hedges as detailed.

**123/24-25. YOUTH SERVICES – UPDATE – CAS TRAINING.**

Further to minute 499/23-24. and as required by the contract, Members were sent an Interim Impact Report from CAS Training.

**RESOLVED:**

That the item be noted.

**124/24-25. EXTERNAL FUNDING – SUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS.**

The Town Council had successfully applied to the Sport England – The Movement Fund. This scheme is designed to help projects that encourage people to become more active. The Town Council are required to use this funding for its Summer of Sport 2024 programme which is providing x11 sessions for children to receive professional coaching covering x11 different sports.

The Town Council had also successfully applied to the KCC Combined Members Grant Scheme and has received funding towards this year's x2 Open Air Cinemas.

**RESOLVED:**

That the item be noted.

**125/24-25. STAFF / MEMBER TRAINING – UPDATE.**

The following training has been scheduled / undertaken: -

|                    |                                                                                            |               |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Cllr Dawn Johnston | Mastering Planning Application Responses – Training for Local Councils – 12 September 2024 | KALC – Online |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|

**RESOLVED:**

That the item be noted.

**123/24-25. ESTIMATES 2025 - 2026.**

The Estimates for 2025 – 2026 will be presented to members at the Town Council meeting on 5 December 2024, along with the Financial Risk Assessments (FRA) for review. These will then be placed on the agenda for endorsement at the Special Town Council Meeting on the 9 January 2025.

Given the current financial climate, and position of the Town Council, a report will be placed on the agenda for the meeting on the 24 October 2024 to enable a discussion to be held on the current financial risks and options available for members to consider and feed into the Estimates process as detailed above.

**RESOLVED:**

That the item be noted.

127/24-25. **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 confirmed that whilst no meetings had occurred, he would like to continue as representative to ensure that should anything change the item would be available for discussion.

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 Harris confirmed that a new Regional and Development Manager had been appointed for First Port.

Kent Association of Local Councils Dartford Area Committee (KALCDAC).  
The Town Mayor and Town Clerk are the Town Councils representatives on the KALCDAC). As previously agreed, the agenda for the 15 July 2024 meeting is available for inspection.

Bluewater Forum (BF)  
The Town Mayor is the Town Councils representative on the BF. The last meeting had been held on 30 May 2024 with the main focus being rescue and resilience with a presentation from the Air Ambulance. The Forum had also held a summer event at Arrow Riding school.

Whitecliffe Community Liaison Group (WCLG).  
Councillor Peter Harman is the Town Councils representative on the WCLG. As previously agreed, the agenda and minutes from the 28 May 2024 meeting and the agenda for the 16 July 2024 were available for inspection.

Joint Transportation Board, Dartford Borough Council (JTB).  
Councillor Lesley Howes is one of the x2 Parish Representatives on the JTB. The last meeting was held on 11 June 2024.

Councillor Howes confirmed that the issue of ticketing at Greenhithe Station had been raised and agreed to take forward to future meetings a concern regarding the safety gap between the platform and train, also at Greenhithe Station.

**128/24-25. REPORT FROM KENT COUNTY COUNCILLOR.**

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

A works order had been raised for the removal of the raised table / informal crossing on Southfleet Road for later this year. This was now being reviewed to determine whether it should remain.

The report expected from the survey works for Galley Hill was hoped to be ready for late August / early September.

**RESOLVED:**

That the item be noted.

**129/24-25. REPORT FROM DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCILLORS.**

The Dartford Borough Councillors updated members which included:

A General Assembly of the Council was scheduled for Monday 29 July 2024.

Cabinet Advisory Committee had recently considered an update on the works to the Orchard Theatre.

An update was provided on the sustainability works to the car park area at Fairfield Leisure Centre to add in a solar panel canopy.

**RESOLVED:**

That the item be noted.

**130/24-25. SEALING OF DOCUMENTS.**

The Town Clerk advised that the Freehold Transfer for Keary Road allotment site had been received after the agenda for the meeting had been dispatched.

**RESOLVED:**

That, in accordance with Standing Order 21 b), the Freehold Transfer for Keary Road allotments be signed by the Town Mayor, outside of this meeting.

**131/24-25. TOWN MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

The Town Mayor advised that a Civic Service, followed by a community brunch, would be held at St Peter & St Pauls Church on Sunday 18 August 2024.

On Wednesday 21 August 2024, at 1pm at the Council Offices, the Town Mayor would be hosting a Tai Chi with the Town Mayor event to help promote the new club being formed by Dragon Spirit Martial Arts and promote exercise for adults.



**132/24-25. 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 would consult with the Chairman and Town Mayor, if appropriate, before any business was transacted.

**RESOLVED:**

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

**133/24-25. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC.**

MOVED BY Councillor Richard Lees and seconded by Councillor Dawn Johnston.

**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.

**134/24-25. CONSOLIDATED ALMSHOUSE CHARITY OF SWANSCOMBE (CACOS) – PRESENTATION ON FUTURE PROPOSALS.**

CACOS had contacted the Town Council and requested the opportunity to give a presentation on possible future proposals.

Glen Keeling, from CACOS, gave a short presentation, and answered members questions before leaving the meeting.

The Town Council agreed to support the concept as detailed in the proposal and looked forward to receiving further detail. The Town would also ask CACOS to be mindful of previous comments made on other planning applications they have submitted,

**RESOLVED:**

That the Town Council would respond to the proposal as detailed.

135/24-25. **INGRESS PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE - UPDATE**

Further to the update provided at the 27 June 2024 Recreation, Leisure and Amenities Committee meeting (minute 79/24-25) officers were made aware on 11 July 2024 that a new set of revised drawings had been submitted to EDC by Crest Nicholson for the provision of the car park at the Ingress Park Community Centre.

The Technical Director & Deputy Managing Director Eastern Crest Nicholson has advised that “the works to the car parking will need to be tendered post planning and then works booked in. I agree need to be carried out ASAP but only after planning can this be agreed / programme of works issued.”

Crest also need to discharge the conditions, relating to the sound limiting device, to Dartford Borough Council Planning and correspondences regarding this are enclosed.

**RESOLVED:**

That the update be noted.

There being no further business to transact the Meeting closed at 9.15 pm.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

(Chairman)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_