

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL MEETING of the SWANSCOMBE & GREENHITHE TOWN COUNCIL held on THURSDAY 5 DECEMBER 2024 at 7.00pm

PRESENT:

Councillor Ann Duke – Town Mayor
Councillor Dawn Johnston – Deputy Town Mayor
Councillor Emma Ben Moussa
Councillor Lorna Cross
Councillor Peter Harris
Councillor Lesley Howes
Councillor Richard Lees
Councillor Hazel Stephens
Councillor Elizabeth Wickham

ALSO PRESENT:

Graham Blew – Town Clerk
Martin Harding – ATC/Responsible Financial Officer
Rev. Charlie Lloyd-Evans
Mr Michael Blandford
Mr Paul Parsons
Mr Graham Taylor
x4 Members of the public

ABSENT:

Councillor Alan Reach.

287/24-25. 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.

288/24-25. REVD. CHARLIE LLOYD-EVANS, PRIEST IN CHARGE AT ST MARY GREENHITHE & ST PETER AND ST PAUL SWANSCOMBE.

The Town Mayor welcomed Revd. Charlie Lloyd-Evans to the meeting, Revd. Lloyd-Evans thanked the Town Council for the invitation and led the Council in prayer.

289/24-25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Claire Pearce, due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was received from Greenhithe Dartford Borough Councillor David Mote.

An apology for absence was received from Greenhithe Dartford Borough Councillor Carol Gale.

An apology for lateness was received from Councillor Dawn Johnston.

RESOLVED:

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

290/24-25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.

Councillor Dawn Johnston declared a personal interest in agenda item 15 – Complaint, as she resides in close proximity to both individuals and has recently been appointed to one of the organisations named in the complaint.

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.

291/24-25. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 24 OCTOBER 2024.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 24 October 2024 be confirmed as a true record and be signed.

292/24-25. ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE TOWN MAYOR / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND THEIR POSITION ON THE AGENDA.

There were none.

293/24-25. MINUTES OF THE PLANNING, MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS, TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON 20 NOVEMBER 2024

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Planning, Major Developments, Transportation and Environment Committee Meeting held on 20 November 2024 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

294/24-25. MINUTES OF THE RECREATION, LEISURE & AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14 NOVEMBER 2024

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Recreation, Leisure & Amenities Committee Meeting held on 14 November 2024 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

295/24-25. MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 7 NOVEMBER 2024

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 7 November 2024 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

296/24-25. MINUTES OF THE ALLOTMENTS & CEMETERIES MEETING HELD ON 25 OCTOBER 2024.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Allotment & Cemeteries Meetings held on 25 October 2024 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

297/24-25. PAVILION WORKING GROUP

The Pavilion Working Group had met on the 7 November 2024 and Members considered the notes from that meeting which included recommendations and, in line with these, a draft publicity statement was also considered.

The Town Mayor detailed each of the four recommendations and it was agreed:

RESOLVED:

1. That work would continue to actively pursue funding for either the rebuild, in line with the planning consent, or refurbishment of the existing structure.
2. That specifications / quotations be sought for the installation of container style units to provide changing facilities and potentially a café. Which would include business plans for how they would operate.
3. That should funding not be in place for either a rebuild / refurb by January 2026, then an item be placed on the agenda to endorse the decision to pursue the demolition of the existing building and installation of container units, subject to funding.
4. That the publicity document, to update the public on the decisions made, be approved and be released via the Town Councils website and social media feeds, noticeboards, and other community locations following the meeting.

298/24-25. COMMUNITY EVENT WORKING GROUP

Members discussed the notes from the Community Event Working Group meeting held on the 7 November 2024.

RESOLVED:

1. That the actions undertaken to date by the Working Group in relation to the 2025 Summer Fair be noted.
2. That the Working Group be tasked with preparing the details for an event on the 26 May 2025, to honour St Augustine's Day.

299/24-25. **ESTIMATES 2025 – 2026**

Further to minute 228/24-25 (Town Council 24 October 2024) members discussed the summary report of key points along with the draft Estimates for 2025 – 2026.

RESOLVED:

That the draft Estimates 2025 – 2026, in line with minute 228/24-25, be noted

300/24-25. **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 Elizabeth Wickham is the Town Councils representative on the LRCHCLG who confirmed that no update was available at this time.

Ingress Park (Greenhithe) Management Limited (IPGM).
Councillor Peter Harris and Councillor Dawn Johnston are the Town Councils representatives on IPGM. IPGM have indicated that, although unable to supply any documentation, they would like a verbal update to be submitted to the Council.

Councillor Harris confirmed that the recently appointed Development Manager had resigned and Firstport were undertaking the replacement process.

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 draft minutes from the 7 October 2024 meeting were available for inspection.

Dartford Elders Forum (DEF).
Councillor Lesley Howes is the Town Council representative on the DEF. The last meeting was held on 4 November 2024. Unfortunately, Councillor Howes had been unable to attend.

Bluewater Forum (BF)
The Town Mayor is the Town Councils representatives on the BF. The last meeting was scheduled to take place on 28 November 2024, which included a presentation from the RNLI, along with Dartford Borough Councils Urban Design Team and Policy Planners.

Whitecliffe Community Liaison Group (WCLG).
Councillor Peter Harris was the Town Councils representative on the WCLG but, due to the meetings being held via Teams he had asked to step down from this role and Councillor Dawn Johnston had been substituting for him in the interim.

Members agreed that Councillor Dawn Johnston be the Town Councils representative on the WCLG for the remainder of the 2024 – 2025 municipal year.

As previously agreed, the Agenda and Minutes from the 19 November 2024 meeting were available for inspection.

Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) County Area Committee (KALCCAC).

Councillor Lorna Cross and Councillor Lesley Howes are the Town Councils representatives on KALCCAC, and the AGM was held on 30 November 2024. The meeting had included a motion put forward by Councillor Howes for KALC to add pressure to Kent County Council in relation to the loss of key services, including the reduction in the Community Wardens.

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 3 December 2024. The last meeting had included updates on parking, the new Fastrack service and the replacement of bus shelters.

Greenhithe Community Association (GCA).

Councillor Lesley Howes and Councillor Dawn Johnston are the Town Councils representatives on the GCA. The last meeting was scheduled to take place on 15 November 2024. It was confirmed that work was underway to recruit new trustees following the resignation of the Chairman.

301/24-25. REPORT FROM KENT COUNTY COUNCILLOR.

This item gave the Kent County Councillor for Swanscombe and Greenhithe the opportunity to submit a verbal report on relevant news or issues from Kent County Council.

At the recent by election Mr Thomas Mallon had been elected as the Kent County Councillor for the Swanscombe and Greenhithe Division.

The Town Clerk informed members that he had been in communication with Mr Mallon who had indicated that he hoped to be able to attend the 30 January 2025 meeting and that they were attempting to arrange an informal meeting in the interim.

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

302/24-25. REPORT FROM DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCILLORS.

This item gave the x5 Dartford Borough Councillors representing Swanscombe and Greenhithe the opportunity to submit a verbal report on any relevant news or developments at Dartford Borough Council (DBC).

At the recent by election Mr Michael Brown had been elected as the Dartford Borough Councillor for Greenhithe and Knockhall Ward.

Attempts had been made to contact Mr Brown but, to date, it had not possible to obtain a response.

DBC Councillor Ben Moussa updated the meeting on the following:

At the recent JTB meeting Kent Highways had confirmed that they were discussing the parking issues at Darent Valley Hospital with the MP for Dartford.

A motion had been put forward to remove fast food advertising on bus shelters, but this had not carried.

That the regular monthly members update meeting with KCC regarding the temporary Galley Hill Road closure had been cancelled pending discussion with the newly elected County Councillor.

The General Assembly of the Council (GAC) would be held on Monday 9 December 2024, which would include tributes to the late Councillor Peter Harman.

Following the closure of the flats at Leonard Avenue due to subsidence, the bin store had now been removed and site hoarding was expected pending a decision on the future use of the site.

A question would be raised at GAC to the Cabinet Member for Community Safety regarding the levels of additional parking enforcement that had occurred in Swanscombe High Street following the closure of Galley Hill.

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

303/24-25. SEALING OF DOCUMENTS.

There were none.

304/24-25. TOWN MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Town Mayor advised that a Christmas Fair would be held on Saturday 14 December 2024, in the Town Council Offices Community Hall. In addition, Santa would be visiting and carols in the High Street would begin from 12 noon.

A Christmas Open Mic Night with the Town Mayor would be held on Friday 20 December 2024 at the Heritage Community Hall.

305/24-25. CHANGE IN AGENDA ORDER.

The Town Mayor advised the meeting that, due to the public present the order of the agenda would be changed so as not to take up their time/delay them unduly.

306/24-25. CO-OPTION OF TOWN COUNCILLOR FOR THE SWANSCOMBE WARD.

The Chairman thanked the candidates for expressing their interest in serving the community and invited them to address the meeting.

In accordance with Standing Order 6 b) Members voted and it was duly carried;

RESOLVED:

That Mr Paul Parsons be co-opted on to the Town Council for the Swanscombe Ward.

307/24-25. CO-OPTION OF TOWN COUNCILLOR FOR THE GREENHITHE WARD.

The Chairman thanked the candidate for expressing their interest in serving the community and invited them to address the meeting.

In accordance with Standing Order 6 b) Members voted and it was duly carried;

RESOLVED:

That Mr Graham Taylor be co-opted on to the Town Council for the Greenhithe Ward.

308/24-25. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC.

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

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.

Having already declared a personal interest Councillor Dawn Johnston took no part in the decision of the following item.

309/24-25. COMPLAINT

A formal complaint had been received and processed under the Town Councils Complaint Handling Procedure.

Members allowed responses from the x2 Town Councillors the complaint referred to.

At this point the x2 Town Councillors left the chamber and took no part in the discussion or decision of this item.

Members debated the contents of the complaint, and the responses of the individuals concerned.

After lengthy discussion it was proposed, duly seconded and agreed:

RESOLVED:

That the complaint is dismissed/not upheld and that the Town Council consider the matter closed.

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

Signed: _____

(Chairman)

Date: _____