

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL MEETING of the SWANSCOMBE & GREENHITHE TOWN COUNCIL held on THURSDAY 27 MARCH 2025 at 7.00pm

PRESENT:

Councillor Ann Duke – Town Mayor
Councillor Dawn Johnston – Deputy Town Mayor
Councillor Emma Ben-Moussa
Councillor Peter Harris
Councillor Lesley Howes
Councillor Paul Parsons
Councillor Hazel Stephens
Councillor Graham Taylor

ALSO PRESENT:

Graham Blew – Town Clerk
Martin Harding – ATC/Responsible Financial Officer
Councillor Thomas Mallon – KCC Councillor for
Swanscombe and Greenhithe
x1 Members of the public

ABSENT:

Councillor Alan Reach

453/24-25. 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.

454/24-25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Lorna Cross, due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Richard Lees, due to health reasons.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Claire Pearce 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 Dartford Borough Councillor Michael Brown due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was received from Dartford Borough Councillor Cally Gale due to other commitments.

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

An apology for absence was received from Reverend 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.

455/24-25. 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.

A resident addressed the meeting with some information in relation to planning considerations for agenda item 10 – Relocation of Manor Park HGV Transport Hub.

456/24-25. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 30 JANUARY 2025

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 30 January 2025 be confirmed as a true record and be signed.

457/24-25. ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE TOWN MAYOR / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND THEIR POSITION ON THE AGENDA.

There were none.

458/24-25. MINUTES OF THE PLANNING, MAJOR DEVELOPMENT, TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THE 5 FEBRUARY 2025 AND 19 MARCH 2025.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Planning, Major Developments, Transportation and Environment Committee Meeting held on 5 February 2025 and 19 March 2025 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

459/24-25. MINUTES OF THE RECREATION, LEISURE AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2025 AND 13 MARCH 2025.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Amenities Committee – 23 January 2025 and 13 March 2025 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

460/24-25. MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 6 MARCH 2025.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Meeting held on 6 March 2025 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

461/24-25. MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12 FEBRUARY 2025.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Community Safety Committee Meeting held on 12 February 2025 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

462/24-25. REVIEW OF STANDING ORDER AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS.

As per Standing Order 41 b) an amendment was proposed for Standing Order 38(b) and Financial Regulation 11(c).

The proposal was to ensure that the sections on procurement and contracts are adjusted to refer to the updated Procurement Act 2023 and Procurement Regulations 2024.

The amendment was proposed and seconded and will stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

RESOLVED:

That, in accordance with Standing Order 41 b), the proposed amendment, as detailed above, stand adjourned, without discussion, to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

463/24-25. **SECTION 137 EXPENDITURE: LIMIT FOR 2025 - 2026.**

Members were informed that the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) had confirmed that the appropriate sum for the purposes of Section 137 (4) (a) of the Local Government Act 1972 for local (parish and town) councils in England for 2025 – 2026 was £11.10.

This is the amount as a result of increasing the amount of £10.81 for 2024 – 2025 by the percentage increase in the retail index between September 2023 and September 2024, in accordance with Schedule 12B to the 1972 Act.

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

464/24-25. **80th ANNIVERSARY VICTORY IN EUROPE (VE) DAY 2025 – 8 MAY 2025 (p).**

Both Councillors Lesley Howes and Clare Pearce had submitted requests that the Town Council consider in what way it intended to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day on the 8 May 2025.

It was agreed that the second recommendation on the agenda in relation to the purchase of a Kentish Flag be deferred for discussion as part of the proceeding agenda item.

Members discussed previous celebrations and potential access to funding for resident led events.

RESOLVED:

1. That Councillor Dawn Johnston co-ordinate a resident led celebration for the Greenhithe area with access to the Town Councils open spaces if required.
2. That Councillors Emma Ben Moussa, Ann Duke and Paul Parsons co-ordinate a resident led celebration for the Swanscombe area with access to the Town Councils open spaces if required.
3. That a commemorative video be recorded with the Town Mayor, lighting the 'Lamp Light of Peace' in line with the national order of celebrations, to be released via the Town Councils social media feeds.

465/24-25. COMMUNITY EVENT WORKING GROUP

Members discussed the notes from the last Community Event Working Group meeting which included the details to commemorate St Augustine's Day on 26 May 2025

RESOLVED:

1. That the update be noted.
2. That the proposed event to mark St Augustine's Day on the 26 May 2025 be endorsed.
3. That the Town Council purchase a flag of Kent, in line with the quote and design provided to members, to be flown over the weekend of the St Augustine's Day celebration.

466/24-25. RELOCATION OF MANOR PARK HGV TRANSPORT HUB.

Further to minute 399/24-25 (PTE Meeting 5 February 2025) members considered the proposal that the Town Council take a strategic lead and begin engagement with relevant stakeholders in relation to the relocation of the HGV Transport Hub.

Members agreed to form a Working Group to formalise the list of stakeholders to approach. It was agreed that the following members would form the Working Group and that an invitation be extended to Stone Parish Council for x 2 Members to attend the Working Group meetings:

1. Councillor Peter Harris
2. Councillor Dawn Johnston
3. Councillor Clare Pearce
4. Councillor Graham Taylor
5. Councillor Elizabeth Wickham

RESOLVED:

1. That the Town Council form a Working Group as detailed to begin engagement with relevant stakeholders.
2. That the Town Council extend an invitation to Stone Parish Council for x 2 members to attend the Working Group meetings.

467/24-25. FORMER COUNCILLOR PETER HARMAN – MEMORIAL / TRIBUTE.

Further to minutes 164/24-25 (Special Town Council 12 September 2024) and 227/24-25 (Town Council 24 October 2024), following consent from the family, an application had been made to Dartford Borough Council (DBC) regarding the proposed change of name for the new community centre in Ingress Park to 'The Peter Harman Centre'.

Members considered the correspondence subsequently received from the Address Management Officer (DBC).

RESOLVED:

That the Town Council contact the Address Management Officer (DBC) to enquire whether the building being named 'The Harman Centre' would preclude its use as a polling station.

468/24-25. STREAMING OF TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS.

A request had been made by Councillor Emma Ben-Moussa for the Town Council to investigate and consider streaming meetings to the public.

Members considered the information and report exploring this request and which detailed its possible implications.

RESOLVED:

That the consideration on whether to stream council meetings be deferred until such time as the full impact of devolution on Parish and Town Councils is determined.

469/24-25. COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PLANNING.

The Town Mayor, and the Town Clerk, had attended a Teams meeting, on 19 March 2025, with the Senior Community Resilience Officer to investigate the opportunity to begin a project to produce a Community Resilience Plan.

It was proposed to schedule a meeting of the Executive & Emergency Committee, as the process fell in line with its Terms of Reference, so that they can begin the process of compiling a Community Resilience Plan.

RESOLVED:

That a meeting of the Executive & Emergency Committee be scheduled for 10 April 2025, starting at 11.00am, so that they can begin the process of compiling a Community Resilience Plan.

470/24-25. STAFF / MEMBER TRAINING – UPDATE.

The following training had been scheduled / undertaken: -

x2 Groundsman / Gardeners	LANTRA – Basic Tree Survey & Inspection	Kingswood Training - Sevenoaks
Town Clerk	KENT SLCC Mini Conference and AGM	SLCC - Lenham

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

471/24-25. 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.

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 Johnston confirmed that the budget process for 2025 – 2026 was underway. A planning application had been submitted for the flood bank and that both new trees and spring bulbs had been planted. The MP for Dartford was due to tour the development in the coming month.

Kent Association of Local Councils Dartford Area Committee (KALCDAC).

The Town Mayor and Town Clerk are the Town Councils representatives on the KALCDAC. The last meeting was held on 17 February 2025.

Dartford Elders Forum (DEF).

Councillor Lesley Howes is the Town Council representative on the DEF. The last meeting was held on 24 March 2025.

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 12 March 2025.

Bluewater Forum (BF)

Councillor Ann Duke is the Town Councils representatives on the BF. The last meeting was scheduled to take place on 27 March 2025 and the notes from the 30 January 2025 meeting were available for inspection.

Whitecliffe Community Liaison Group (WCLG)

Councillor Dawn Johnston is the Town Councils representatives on the WCLG. As previously agreed, the Agenda for the 18 March 2025 meeting was 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 4 March 2025.

472/24-25. REPORT FROM KENT COUNTY COUNCILLOR.

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

Councillor Thomas Mallon advised that the main topics were fly tipping, cutting back of shrubbery and an access issue to a local allotment site.

Councillor Mallon confirmed that with the pending election, no meetings were being held and that any relevant correspondence for the area he received would be forwarded onto the Town Council for information.

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

473/24-25. 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).

Borough Councillor Emma Ben Moussa updated members on various issues/topics which included that a response had been submitted to central government regarding devolution.

The replacement of the empty properties on Leonard Avenue was undergoing the tender process. Whilst the new buildings at Gilbert Close were hoped to be ready for mid-April.

£9.8m had been allocated for further works to the Orchard Theatre development. DBC had received a grant to purchase temporary accommodation and had given a grant to Swanscombe Almshouses for energy efficiency.

Various ward walks, coffee mornings, and engagement events had taken place.

A handyman service for Council Tenants over 60 had been launched.

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

474/24-25. SEALING OF DOCUMENTS.

There were none

47524-25. TOWN MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Town Mayor would be hosting story time with Magical Maisy on the 15 April 2025 at the Heritage Community Hall. All proceeds from book sales on the day would go to the Town Mayor Charity Fund.

Chair Yoga with the Town Mayor was being finalised with dates to be confirmed.

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

Signed: _____

(Chairman)

Date: _____