

MINUTES of the MEETING of the RECREATION, LEISURE & AMENITIES COMMITTEE
held at THE COUNCIL OFFICES, THE GROVE, SWANSCOMBE on THURSDAY 26
JUNE 2025 at 7.00PM

PRESENT:

Councillor Emma Ben Moussa - Chairman
Councillor Peter Harris – Vice-Chairman
Councillor Lorna Cross
Councillor Ann Duke
Councillor Lesley Howes
Councillor Dawn Johnston
Councillor Hazel Stephens
Councillor Elizabeth Wickham

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillor Paul Parsons
Councillor Graham Taylor
Graham Blew – Town Clerk
Martin Harding – Assistant Town Clerk/RFO
Dan Usher – Senior Groundsman / Gardener

ABSENT:

There were none

71/25-26. ARRANGEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS REGARDING FILMING OR RECORDING THE MEETING.

The arrangements and constraints relating to the filming or recording of the meeting were explained.

72/25-26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

There were none

73/25-26. SUBSTITUTES.

There were none.

74/25-26. 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.

75/25-26. ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE CHAIRMAN / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND THEIR POSITION ON THE AGENDA.

There were none.

76/25-26. TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 MARCH 2025

Recommended:

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 March 2025 were approved and signed as a true record.

77/25-26. SENIOR GROUNDSMAN / GARDENER'S REPORT.

Members were provided with a copy of the report which updated members on the work undertaken, by the Parks Department and the work planned which included:

Broomfield, Eagles Road, Heritage Park, Knockhall, Manor Park, Swanscombe Park, Saxon Court, Equipment / Staffing and Miscellaneous.

Recommended: That the report be noted.

TOWN CLERK AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT.

78/25-26. LARGE CONIFER HEDGE – SWANSCOMBE PARK.

The Senior Groundsman/Gardener had reported that the large conifer hedge alongside the bowls green had become the victim of disease and would eventually die off. The Senior Groundsman/Gardener did indicate that the hedge was showing signs of green and small shoots but the previous professional advice was that the hedge would not survive

Members were asked to consider what course of action, if any, should be taken.

Recommended: That the hedge be monitored for a period to check whether it could recover, and a quote for removal, if needed, be sought.

79/25-26. THE OLD FIRE STATION BUILDING CHURCH ROAD, SWANSCOMBE, DA10 0HF - ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE

Dartford Borough Council's Solicitor had written to notify that The Old Fire Station Building had been accepted and added to the List of Assets of Community Value.

The Town Council submitted its re-application in January 2025 and the reasons for accepting the Town Council's re-application were outlined in the letter dated 12 May 2025.

Recommended: That the item be noted.

80/25-26. INGRESS PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE – UPDATE.

Further to the previous update, minute 439/24-25, the Technical Director & Deputy Managing Director – Eastern, Crest Nicholson had advised that he believed they would be trying to handover the area in Autumn/Winter 2025.

The Town Mayor indicated that she would be chasing Crest directly on potential timelines as she intended to hold future events at the venue.

Recommended: That the update, and current position, be noted.

81/25-26. APPLICATION FOR A MEMORIAL.

Members considered an application for a memorial bench with plaque that had been received.

After discussion it was agreed that a memorial bench / plaque could be placed in line with the policy and contact should be made with the family to make the arrangements.

Recommended: That the family be contacted to make the necessary arrangements for a memorial bench and / or plaque to be placed in an agreed location.

82/25-26. WOODLAND TRUST – COMMUNITY TREE PROJECT.

As per previous years, the Town Council had successfully applied to the Woodland Trust for tree whips to further the planting of wildlife hedging within our open spaces.

Woodland Trust agreed to provide the Town Council with 426 free whips, arriving in November 2025. These would be used, in consultation with the Senior Groundsman Gardener and North West Kent Countryside Partnership, as needed between projects in Broomfield Park, Heritage Park or Swanscombe Park.

Recommended: That the item be noted.

84/25-26. 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.

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

85/25-26. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC.

MOVED BY Councillor Lorna Cross and seconded by Councillor Lesley Howes;

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 item of business.

86/25-26. THE SWANSCOMBE CENTRE – PERFORMANCE OF SERVICES UPDATE.

The Finance Director GCLL had provided the latest Performance of Services Report which includes details for Health & Safety, Finance and Attendances.

Recommended: That the item be noted.

There being no further business to transact the Meeting closed at 7.25pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chairman)

