

MINUTES of the SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING of the SWANSCOMBE & GREENHITHE TOWN COUNCIL held on THURSDAY 8 JANUARY 2026 at 7.15pm

PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Graham Blew – Town Clerk
Martin Harding – ATC/Responsible Financial Officer
Indigo Allred – Administration Officer
x2 Members of the public

ABSENT:

Councillor Alan Reach

371/24-25. 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.

372/24-25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

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

RESOLVED:

That the reason for absence, for the above Town Councillor, be formally accepted and approved.

373/24-25. 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.

374/24-25. ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE TOWN MAYOR / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND THEIR POSITION ON THE AGENDA.

There were none.

375/24-25. MINUTES OF THE PLANNING, MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS, TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON 17 DECEMBER 2025.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Planning, Major Developments, Transportation and Environment Committee Meeting held on 17 December 2025 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

376/24-25. MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 3 DECEMBER 2025.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Community Safety Committee Meeting held on 3 December 2025 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

377/24-25. MINUTES OF THE LEASES & LEGAL SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 DECEMBER 2025.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Leases & Legal Sub-Committee Meeting held on 17 December 2025 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

378/24-25. ANNUAL ESTIMATES 2026 – 2027

Further to minute 331/25-26 (*full Council 11 December 2025*) and minute 370/25-26 (*Finance & General Purposes 8 January 2026*) members were advised of the proposed Annual Estimates for the 2026 - 2027 financial year (*Annual Estimates provided with the preceding Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting paperwork*).

Members discussed the implications of the draft estimates and acknowledged that whilst the Town Council did not want to increase the Council Tax for residents, it understood that the financial pressures it was currently experiencing made this decision a necessity.

MOVED BY Councillor Richard Lees, seconded by Councillor Peter Harris, and put to a vote with nine in favour, and one abstention.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed Annual Estimates for 2026 – 2027 be approved.

379/24-25. COUNCIL TAX BASE & PRECEPT 2026 – 2027.

Further to the previous item Councillors discussed the level to set the Council Tax Base for Band D properties and the precept figure for 2026 – 2027.

In addition, members raised their dissatisfaction with the way in which the Council Tax Support Grant (CTSG) had been withdrawn by Dartford Borough Council (DBC) for the 2026 – 2027 financial year. Members agreed that a letter should be sent to the Head of Finance at DBC asking for consideration of whether a phased withdrawal could still be utilised and outlining the disproportionate impact this withdrawal would have on the Town Council and to express the dissatisfaction with the lack of prior consultation.

MOVED BY Councillor Richard Lees, seconded by Councillor Lesley Howes, and put to a vote with nine in favour, and one against.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Council Tax Base for Band D properties, as detailed in the Annual Estimates, and the precept figure be set at £504,732 for 2026 - 2027.
2. That a letter be sent to the Head of Finance at DBC, as detailed above, regarding the withdrawal of the Council Tax Support Grant.

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

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chairman)