

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL MEETING of the SWANSCOMBE & GREENHITHE TOWN COUNCIL held on THURSDAY 11 DECEMBER 2025 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Councillor Dawn Johnston – Town Mayor
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
Revd. Charlie Lloyd – Evans
Dartford Borough Councillor Carol Gale
x2 Members of the public

ABSENT: There were none

320/25-26. 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.

321/25-26. REV. 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.

322/25-26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

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 health reasons.

An apology for absence was received from Kent County Councillor Thomas Mallon due to other commitments.

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

RESOLVED:

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

323/25-26. 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.

324/25-26. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 OCTOBER 2025.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 October 2025 and be confirmed as a true record and be signed.

325/25-26. MINUTES OF THE PLANNING, MAJOR DEVELOPMENT, TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON THE 15 OCTOBER 2025 AND 19 NOVEMBER 2025.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Planning, Major Developments, Transportation and Environment Committee Meetings held on 15 October 2025, and 19 November 2025 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

326/25-26. MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 6 NOVEMBER 2025.

RESOLVED:

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

327/25-26. MINUTES OF THE RECREATION, LEISURE AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 13 NOVEMBER 2025

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Amenities Committee held on 13 November 2025 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

328/25-26. MINUTES OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12 NOVEMBER 2025.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Heritage Sub-Committee Meetings held on 12 November 2025 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

329/25-26. TOWN COUNCILLOR RESIGNATION.

Councillor Paul Parson submitted a written letter of resignation on 5 November 2025, which took immediate effect.

A Notice of Casual Vacancy for the Swanscombe Parish Ward was posted / displayed, with a deadline of 24 November 2025.

The Electoral Services Manager, Dartford Borough Council, confirmed that they had not received sufficient requests for the vacancy in the Swanscombe Parish Ward and that the Town Council were now able to fill the vacancy by co-option.

Vacancy posters were immediately displayed on the Town Councils website, social media and notice boards requesting Expressions of Interest (EOI)

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

330/25-26. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL), DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL (DBC)

Further to minutes 51/21-22 (*full Council 24 June 2021*), 36/23-24 (*AGM 17 May 2023*), 34/24-25 (*AGM 15 May 2024*) and 37/25-26 (*AGM 14 May 2025*) the Infrastructure Levy Monitoring and Management Officer (DBC) had written advising that a proportion of the CIL receipts received from development/s within the Town Council area, for period 1 April 2025 to 30 September 2025, had been received and apportioned accordingly.

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

331/25-26. **BUDGET REPORT - ESTIMATES 2026 – 2027 (p).**

The ATC/RFO went through the report in detail.

After lengthy discussion it was proposed, duly seconded and agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED:

1. That the current financial position of the Town Council in line with the draft Annual Estimates be noted.
2. That the proposed budget adjustments put forward for the Annual Estimates be taken forward as detailed:
 - a. Public Lighting – That no additional budget would be allocated for Christmas Lighting in 2026 and to continue using the solar lights for a second year.
 - b. Churchyard – That the agreed budget of £2,000 for additional works to the Churchyard Wall at St Peter & St Pauls Church be included for 2026 - 2027.
 - c. Civic Budget – That the Town Council stop budgeting for a Civic Reception in the 2026 - 2027 financial year, with the Civic Budget increased to £2,000 and more emphasis be placed on utilising the Annual Open Town meeting to thank local organisations.
 - d. Council Office Building Maintenance – That the budget allocation of £4,000 be included for the repairs to the Air Conditioning System in the Council Offices Community Hall in 2026 - 2027.
 - e. Wage Budget within the Old Fire Station Community Café – That the wage budget for an additional member of staff, at the cost of £5,000, be included for the 2026 - 2027 Financial Year, with finalised contract arrangements being put to the Personnel Committee.
 - f. Cost of Living Increases – That the level of budgetary increase of 5% to allow for the cost of living be agreed.
 - g. Staffing Budgets – That the increase to the staffing budgets of a minimum of 3%, agreed by the Personnel Committee (minute 284/25-26) be endorsed.

- h. Increases to Leases and Hire Charges – That the proposed increases to hire charges by 2.5% and Leases, as detailed within the individual Lease documents, be agreed.
3. That the current position in relation to the Council Tax Base be noted
4. That the revenue generated from the increase in properties form the Council Tax Base be evenly split between increasing reserves and reducing the tax burden on residents.
5. That the timeline and proposal for managing / increasing the Town Councils reserves, as detailed within the report, be taken forward.

Following the unanimous passing of all resolutions the Responsible Financial Officer confirmed that the resulting precept for 2026 – 2027 would be £504,732 (an increase of 5.5%), and that these figures would be put to the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting, followed by the Special Town Council meeting on the 8 January 2026 for endorsement.

332/25-26. PAVILION PROJECT – UPDATE

Members considered the report updating on the current situation / position regarding the Pavilion Project.

RESOLVED:

1. That the latest designs, as agreed in consultation with the Borough Architect, be noted.
2. That the progress made with various funding providers to secure the moneys needed to construct the Phase One of the project be noted.

333/25-26. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION – UPDATE

Members considered the report on the current position and timeline for Local Government Reorganization.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

334/25-26. LORRY PARK WORKING GROUP – UPDATE.

Members considered the notes from the Working Group meeting held on 21 October 2025.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

335/25-26. INGRESS PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE – UPDATE

Members considered the information / update that had been provided by the Technical Director & Deputy Managing Director - Eastern, Crest Nicholson.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

336/25-26. STAFF / MEMBER TRAINING – UPDATE.

The following training had been scheduled / undertaken: -

Cllr Dawn Johnston	Future Leaders: Attracting young talent to parish and town councils – 25 February 2026	NALC – Online
Cllr Ann Duke Cllr Lesley Howes	KALC AGM – 22 November 2025	The Rochester corn exchange
Town Clerk ATC/RFO	Martyn’s Law and Event Management – 20 November 2025	The Project Alliance – Online.
Town Clerk ATC/RFO	Youth Funding All – 21 November 2025	Funding For All – Acacia Hall Dartford

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

337/25-26. 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 Peter Harris advised that the accounts for 2024 – 2025 had just been received and would now take time to review.

Whitecliffe Community Liaison Group (WCLG)

Councillor Dawn Johnston is the Town Councils representatives on the WCLG. As previously agreed, the agenda and Minutes from the meeting on 23 September 2025 were available for inspection.

Councillor Dawn Johnston update that the last meeting had focused on snagging across the development.

Bluewater Forum (BF)

Councillor Dawn Johnston is the Town Councils representatives on the BF and gave a report on the last meeting held on 27 November 2025.

Presentations had been given from Homeinstead Care, CPR Skills and from Bluewater on the charity initiatives they were operating over the festive period

338/25-26. REPORT FROM KENT COUNTY COUNCILLOR.

Unfortunately, Kent County Councillor for Swanscombe and Greenhithe, Mr Thomas Mallon, was unable to attend the meeting.

A report for members to consider had been submitted in advance updating on the progress being made with investigating options for traffic flow improvements along Stanhope Road.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

339/25-26. REPORT FROM DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCILLORS.

Unfortunately, Dartford Borough Councillor Emma Ben-Moussa was unable to attend, but had submitted a report which included tackling neighbour disputes, high levels of fly tipping, investigations into a use for the land to the rear of Brenda Terrace and lighting in Leonard Avenue.

An update was provided on the health of the Road Sweeper for the area and how his work was being covered.

A site meeting would be scheduled with the Cabinet member responsible for parking to look at Swanscombe High Street and Stanhope Road, and bollards had been installed outside Manor Community Primary School, along with a proposal for planters maintained by the school, to alleviate nuisance parking.

An opening event was being planned for the Secret Garden in Gunn Road, and an objection had been raised to the proposed development in Milton Road.

Dartford Borough Councillor Carol Gale was in attendance and gave a verbal report to members on the current status of environmental investigations around water pipes in Swanscombe Marshes, in addition a retrospective planning application was awaited for an unauthorised road that had been installed in that area also.

Liaison was ongoing to try and improve bus services from Bluewater that served local hospitals and schools.

Confirmation was provided that Dartford Borough Council were taking over the purchase and construction of the new Medical Centre in Steele Avenue, which would then be Leased to the Integrated Care Board.

An updated was provided that policy was being set to change the permitted development rights that the creation of Houses of Multiple Occupancy, in dwellings for 3 to 6 residents, would have to submit a full planning application.

Councillor Gale finished by outlining the investment being made within the Borough to increase housing stock and improve the number of properties available for Temporary Accommodation.

RESOLVED:

That the reports be noted.

340/25-26. SEALING OF DOCUMENTS.

There were none

341/25-26. TOWN MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Town Mayor, Councillor Dawn Johnston, updated the meeting on her upcoming Mayoral events including:

- Burns Night Quiz and Poetry Night on the 25 January 2026
- Charity Fashion Show in partnership with Eleanor on 28 February 2026

The Town Mayor thanked the Administration Team for the preparation of the meeting to ensure information was clear and enabled members to consider and make decisions.

The Town Mayor wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New year.

There being no further business to transact the Meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chairman)

