

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL MEETING of the SWANSCOMBE & GREENHITHE TOWN COUNCIL held on THURSDAY 26 MARCH 2026 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Councillor Dawn Johnston – Town Mayor
Councillor Emma Ben – Moussa
Councillor Denise Butler
Councillor Lorna Cross
Councillor Ann Duke
Councillor Peter Harris
Councillor Lesley Howes
Councillor Claire Pearce
Councillor Hazel Stephens
Councillor Graham Taylor

ALSO PRESENT: Graham Blew – Town Clerk
Indigo Allred – Administration Officer
Revd. Charlie Lloyd – Evans
x10 Members of the public

ABSENT: There were none

521/25-26. 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.

522/25-26. 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.

523/25-26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Richard Lees, due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Alan Reach, due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Elizabeth Wickham, due to illness.

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 Carol Gale 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.

524/25-26. 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.

525/25-26. ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE TOWN MAYOR / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND THEIR POSITION ON THE AGENDA.

There were none.

526/25-26. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 9 FEBRUARY 2026.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Special Town Council Meeting held on 9 February 2026 and be confirmed as a true record and be signed.

527/25-26. MINUTES OF THE PLANNING, MAJOR DEVELOPMENT, TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON 4 FEBRUARY AND 25 FEBRUARY 2026.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Planning, Major Developments, Transportation and Environment Committee Meetings held on 4 February, and 25 February 2026 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

528/25-26. MINUTES OF THE RECREATION LEISURE & AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON 22 JANUARY AND 12 MARCH 2026.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Recreation Leisure & Amenities Committee Meeting held on 22 January and 5 March 2026 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

529/25-26. MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5 MARCH 2026.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Meeting held on 5 March 2026 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

530/25-26. MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11 FEBRUARY 2026.

RESOLVED:

That the Community Safety Committee Meeting held on 11 February 2026 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

531/25-26. MINUTES OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 25 FEBRUARY 2026.

RESOLVED:

That the Personnel Committee Meeting held on 25 February 2026 be confirmed and the recommendations made therein be adopted.

532/25-26. INDEPENDENT FORENSIC FINANCIAL INVESTIGATION REPORT (UPDATED DATA REVIEW) – ACTION PLAN.

The Locum Responsible Financial Officer had been instructed to carry out a forensic financial investigation, and members discussed the report that had been provided. The Locum Responsible Financial Officer detailed the executive summary of the report to the meeting.

A draft Action Plan addressing the issues highlighted in the report had also been submitted by Councillor Graham Taylor and the Locum Responsible Financial Officer.

There followed a lengthy discussion on the draft Action Plan, and the financial position of the Town Council with members agreeing that a separate meeting should be held to further discuss and finalise the Action Plan.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Independent Financial Investigation Report be received and noted.
2. That members be given more time to consider the draft Action Plan and that it be considered again at a Special Town Council meeting.

533/25-26. ADMINISTRATION STAFFING STRUCTURE AND JOB DESCRIPTION.

Members of the Personnel Committee had proposed a new administration staffing structure for members to approve and also two job descriptions for the Town Clerk/RFO role for members to select from for the new Town Clerk/RFO role.

RESOLVED:

That the Administration staffing structure be agreed, and that job description 4a be selected for the Town Clerk /RFO role.

534/25-26. x2 NEW STANDARD LAWN MOWERS.

In his report to the Recreation Leisure & Amenities Committee Meeting on 12 March 2026, the Senior Groundsman /Gardener had informed members that x2 new standard lawn mowers would be required for the Parks Department. Members considered the inclusion of £983.34 in the 2026-2027 budget to purchase the required lawn mowers as soon as possible after 1 April 2026.

RESOLVED:

That £983.34 required to purchase the x2 new standard lawn mowers be included in the 2026 – 2027 budget, and that they be purchased as soon as possible after 1 April 2026.

535/25-26. REVIEW OF POLICIES.

Members of the Recreation Leisure & Amenities Committee had requested that a Working Group be formed to review the Town Council's policies. Members also asked that Standing Orders to be reviewed by the Working Group as well.

RESOLVED:

That a Working Group be formed to review the Town Council's policies and Standing Orders, and that nominees be brought forward to the next meeting.

536/25-26. LORRY PARK WORKING GROUP – VACANCY.

Councillor Elizabeth Wickham had requested to come off the membership of the Working Group, members considered how to fill the vacancy, and it was agreed to ask Scott James Dunn PhD who had recently taken part in a co-option.

RESOLVED:

That Scott James Dunn PhD be invited to fill the vacancy.

537/25-26. **ANNUAL OPEN TOWN MEETING**

Members considered the scheduled date of 29 April 2026 for the Annual Open Town Meeting and, due to the pre-booked annual leave of a member of the Admin Team, members felt that it would need to be re-scheduled.

It was proposed, duly seconded and agreed:

RESOLVED:

That the Annual Open Town Meeting be re-scheduled for 20 May 2026.

538/25-26. **MARTYN'S LAW**

Members considered the impact of Martyn's law on events held in the Parks and Open Spaces.

RESOLVED:

That the item be considered again in the next financial year, as it was currently felt that none of the events hosted by the Town Council in 2026 -2027 would be in scope.

539/25-26. **STAFF / MEMBER TRAINING - UPDATE**

The following training had been scheduled / undertaken: -

Administration Officer	VAT Basics – 24 February 2026	HMRC – Online
Finance Training. <i>As per the attached.</i>	Income & Expenditure – 19 March 2026 Year End & Audit – 26 March 2026 Finance for Councillors – 28 April and 21 May 2026 Internal Controls – 6 May 2026	The Parkinson Partnership LLP – Zoom
Cllr Dawn Johnston	The Road Safety & Audit Travel Group (RSATG) – 21 April 2026	KCC – Maidstone

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

540/25-26. **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 AGM had been held, and that the 2024/2026 accounts were expected to be returned, following review from auditors, by the end of the following week.

Whitecliffe Community Liaison Group (WCLG)

Councillor Dawn Johnston is the Town Councils representatives on the WCLG. As previously agreed, the agenda from the meeting on 21 January 2026 was available for inspection.

Councillor Dawn Johnston advised that the group's purpose was looking at issues that arise as the development grows.

541/25-26. REPORT FROM KENT COUNTY COUNCILLOR.

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

No report was submitted.

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

542/25-26. REPORT FROM DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCILLORS.

Dartford Borough Councillor Claire Pearce provided an update that included: the Joint Transport Board who had considered the reduction of the 480-bus service running through Stanhope Road, that Fastrack B may be re-instated to run through Stanhope Road, but this would not increase the total volume of busses on the road. Dartford Borough Councillor Emma Ben-Moussa reported that work had been carried out by Dartford Borough Council regarding anti-social parking on Keary Road, and that this included bollards being installed and flower beds planted by school children.

RESOLVED:

That the reports be noted.

543/25-26. SEALING OF DOCUMENTS.

There were none

544/25-26. TOWN MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Town Mayor, Councillor Dawn Johnston, announced that Reverend Charlie Llyod-Evans would be moving to the Diocese of Oxford in July 2026. On behalf of the Town Council the Town Mayor thanked Reverend Charlie Lloyd-Evans for her great service to the community and wished her well in the move.

545/25-26. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC.

MOVED BY Councillor Graham Taylor and seconded by Councillor Peter Harris.

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.

546/25-26. OLD FIRE STATION COMMUNITY CAFÉ – COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS APPRAISAL.

Members were provided with a confidential report from the Locum Responsible Financial Officer, regarding the cost benefit analysis and possible structure options for the Old Fire Station Community Café.

After a lengthy debate on the report, it was agreed:

RESOLVED:

1. That the various utilities rates be queried and, where possible, all utility companies be supplied with up-to-date meter readings.
2. That further research on customer base, peak opening hours, product cost analysis and other business operational considerations undertaken before further consideration and that Councillor Denise Butler would assist Officers with the work.

547/25-26. SALARY GRADES AND FRINGE PAYMENT ISSUE.

Further to the Independent Forensic Financial Review provided by the Locum Responsible Financial Officer, members considered the salary grades in regard to aligning with the National Joint Council's grades, and the fringe payments staff had received.

After a considerable discussion it was agreed:

RESOLVED:

That further work would be undertaken to align with the NJC's salary grading so that staff who had received incorrect payments, through no fault of their own, were not

penalized and that the affected staff would be given individual letters of explanation from the Locum Responsible Financial Officer.

At this point in the meeting, Councillor Peter Harris left the council chamber and took no part in the discussion, or decision or the following item.

548/25-26. COMPLAINT.

Members were considered the Complaint and the advice from the Monitoring Officer at Dartford Borough Council.

RESOLVED:

That the item be noted.

549/25-26. RECOMMENDATION FROM FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE.

Members considered the recommendation from the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 5 March 2026.

RESOLVED:

That the recommendation be endorsed.

550/25-26. INTERNAL AUDIT.

Members discussed the report and information provided and the actions required to be undertaken in relation to the internal audit.

RESOLVED:

1. That the process for amending Standing Orders so that they include the change of internal auditor every 5 years, in accordance with The Practitioner's Guide, be started.
2. That the Town Council make enquires with the internal auditor used in previous years.
3. That a new Internal Auditor be used for the 2025/2026 accounting period with the Locum Responsible Financial Officer providing quotes from Independent Internal Auditors.

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

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chairman)