

MINUTES of the SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING of the SWANSCOMBE & GREENHITHE TOWN COUNCIL held on THURSDAY 20 AUGUST 2026 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Councillor Dawn Johnston – Town Mayor
Councillor Denise Butler
Councillor Lorna Cross
Councillor Ann Duke
Councillor Lesley Howes
Councillor Celedonia Krawczyk
Councillor Claire Pearce
Councillor Elizabeth Wickham

ALSO PRESENT: Adil Iftakhar – Interim Town Clerk / RFO
Indigo Allred – Assistant Town Clerk
Bart Woodhouse – Reverend
X14 Members of the public

ABSENT: Councillor Alan Reach

161/26-27. 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.

162/26-27. 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 Richard Lees, due to other commitments.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Hazel Stephens, due to other commitments.

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

163/26-27. 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.

164/26-27. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 16 JULY 2026.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 16 July 2026 be confirmed as a true record and be signed.

165/26-27. ITEMS DEEMED URGENT BY THE TOWN MAYOR / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES AND THEIR POSITION ON THE AGENDA.

The Town Mayor Councillor Dawn Johnston greeted members and members of the public who were in attendance and announced that:

Firstly, due to our extraordinary circumstances, the proposed Executive and Emergency Meeting to review the Council's finances over the recess, as agreed in Minute 74, 75 and 76/26-27, has been delegated to a Special Town Council Meeting and all finance items have been put on this agenda. Town Council meetings supersede all other committees, subcommittees and working groups. This ensures that the Council can do the previously agreed financial reporting while also allowing other priority matters to be brought forward for discussion. Importantly, this approach allows all Members to participate in the debate and decision-making process.

Secondly, Swanscombe and Greenhithe Town Council welcomes Dartford Borough Council's involvement on the Swanscombe Pavilion and looks forward to working alongside them, providing support wherever necessary. The Sports Pavilion at Broomfield Park is a valuable community asset, and it remains the Town Council's priority to see a new pavilion delivered as soon as possible for the benefit of residents, sports clubs, and community groups.

Thirdly, I would like to thank the Parks team for their excellent work in transforming the telephone kiosk on Pier Road into a community book exchange. The results speak for themselves. As agreed in Minute 20/25-26, a former Councillor would lead the creation and management of a volunteer group responsible for opening and closing the book exchange each day, as well as undertaking and funding any necessary maintenance. Unfortunately, as this individual is no longer a member of the Council, I would like to invite any Members who may be interested in leading this project to contact the Council Office. Once a lead Member has been identified, a public call for volunteers will be issued and an official opening date will be announced.

Finally, I would like to remind all Members and members of the public that the reports included within Council agendas are officer reports. They are not political documents. Council officers are employed by Swanscombe and Greenhithe Town Council and serve all Members equally, regardless of political affiliation. Officers have a duty to act in the best interests of the Council and the wider community, and all reports are prepared with that responsibility in mind. These reports are then brought before the full Council, where all Members can scrutinise, debate, amend, and make decisions upon the recommendations presented.

Should any Member or member of the public have questions, comments, or concerns regarding any report produced by officers, I encourage them to engage directly with

the Council's officers so that constructive and productive conversations can take place. I would also encourage members of the public to attend Council meetings whenever possible. Your views, experiences, and perspectives are important. I would like to thank everyone for attending this evening. As the Town Council continues to implement important changes, ongoing engagement with our community remains essential.

RESOLVED: That the items deemed urgent by the Town Mayor, as detailed above, be noted.

166/26-27. DESIGNATION OF PROPER OFFICER AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER.

Members considered the recommendation that Adil Iftakhar be designated as the Council's proper officer and Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) and undertake the duties of Locum Clerk with immediate effect.

RESOLVED: That Mr Adil Iftakhar, currently engaged by the Council under a contractor arrangement, be appointed as Interim Town Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer until further notice.

167/26-27. REVIEW AND AMEND THE COUNCIL'S MEETINGS CALENDAR 2026 / 2027.

Members considered the amended meeting dates for the remainder of the municipal year 2026 – 2027.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Community Safety Committee and Recreation, Leisure & Amenities Committee meetings be suspended and all scheduled meetings be cancelled until further notice.
2. That any business, reports, recommendations or decisions ordinarily falling within the remit of those committees be referred to, and considered by, Full Council at its scheduled meetings until such time as the committees are re-instated by resolution of the Council.
3. That the revised meetings calendar for 2026 – 2027 be noted.

168/26-27. MONTHLY BANK RECONCILIATIONS.

In accordance with Financial Regulation 2.2 a member of the council other than the Town Mayor or a cheque signatory is required to be appointed to verify the bank reconciliations produced by the RFO for all the council's accounts on a regular basis, Councillor Richard Lees was appointed (minute 30/25-26).

RESOLVED: That the bank reconciliations for June and July 2026 be noted.

169/26-27. BANK TRANSFERS.

In accordance with Financial Regulation 5.5 (c) Members considered the list of bank transfers undertaken for July 2026 for approval.

RESOLVED: That the bank transfers undertaken for July 2026 as per the annexed list, be approved.

170/26-27. TO RECEIVE FINANCE STATEMENTS AND PASS ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT.

In accordance with Financial Regulation 5.5 (a) Members considered the details of all receipts and payments for authorisation July 2026.

RESOLVED: That the receipts and payments for July 2026 as per the annexed list, be approved.

171/26-27. UPDATED WORKING BUDGET.

Further to minutes 566/25-26 and 77/26-27 Members reviewed the working budget.

RESOLVED: That the live position be noted and continue to be monitored.

172/26-27. SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS.

Further to minute 70/26-27 Members were provided with details of the Flex-Budget Report balanced to 31 July 2026.

RESOLVED: That the summary of accounts to 31 July 2026, be noted and continue to be monitored.

173/26-27. FINANCIAL REPORTING.

Further to minute 82/26-27 Members discussed the Budget Overview Report, produced and presented to Members by the Interim Town Clerk / RFO; which included the Town Council's reserves statement and commentary on significant financial pressures.

RESOLVED: That the financial reporting as detailed by the Interim Town Clerk / RFO be noted.

174/26-27. ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2026 - 2031.

Members considered the Asset Management Plan produced and presented by the Interim Town Clerk / RFO which would form the Councils framework for the management, maintenance, renewal and disposal of Council assets.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Asset Management Plan, as detailed/amended, be adopted.
2. That immediate implementation of the Asset Management Plan be approved.
3. That the Interim Town Clerk / RFO be authorised to undertake the actions identified in the Asset Management plan, subject to approved budgets and Full Councils resolutions where required.

175/26-27. THE GROVE CAR PARK – ASSET REVIEW.

Members considered the asset review report produced and presented by the Interim Town Clerk / RFO and after much discussion it was majority agreed that:

RESOLVED:

1. That the Town Council Officers do further research on potential management agreements for the Grove Car Park.
2. That the Town Council Officers bring forward a selection of potential management agreements at the following Town Council Meeting 10 September 2026 for further discussion.

176/26-27. THE GROVE HALL – ASSET REVIEW.

Members considered the asset review report produced and presented by the Interim Town Clerk / RFO and after discussion it was unanimously agreed that:

1. That the Town Council select Option 1 – To place the Grove Hall to let with a local commercial estate agency.
2. That the Town Council Officers report any proposals on the property to full council for further discussion and approval.

177/26-27. SCHEME OF DELEGATION.

Members considered the Town Council's Scheme of delegation provided and presented by the Interim Town Clerk/RFO at the recommendation of the Internal Auditor. It was unanimously agreed that:

RESOLVED: That the Scheme of Delegation be approved and adopted with immediate effect.

178/26-27. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING.**

RESOLVED: That the date of the next Full Council meeting, 10 September 2026, be noted.

There being no further business to transact the Meeting closed at 9.30 pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chairman)

