AGENDA ITEM 4
TC 05/11/2026

MINUTES of the TOWN COUNCIL MEETING of the SWANSCOMBE & GREENHITHE TOWN COUNCIL held on THURSDAY 22 OCTOBER 2026 at 6.30pm

PRESENT: Councillor Dawn Johnston – Town Mayor
Councillor Richard Lees
Councillor Denise Butler
Councillor Lesley Howes
Councillor Celedonia Krawczyk
Councillor Baptiste Reynaud
Councillor Hazel Stephens

ALSO PRESENT: Adil Iftakhar – Interim Town Clerk & RFO
Indigo Allred – Assistant Town Clerk
X3 Members of the public

ABSENT: Councillor Alan Reach

258/26-27. **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 Lorna Cross, due to other commitments.

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

RESOLVED:

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

259/26-27. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.**

Councillor Lesley Howes declared a pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 20 due to her role as the Local History Group secretary.

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.

260/26-27. **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 14 SEPTEMBER 2026.**

Councillor Baptiste Reynaud noted that there had been a misspelling of his surname on minute 253/26-27 and requested this to be corrected.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Special Town Council meeting held on 14 October 2026 be approved as a true and accurate record and be signed subject to the above-mentioned corrections.

261/26-27. **TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

The Town Mayor Councillor Dawn Johnston greeted all those in attendance and specially extended a warm welcome to a visitor from the United States; noting her interest in observing how local government operates in England. The Town Mayor then announced her upcoming events; those being: A Halloween Pumpkin Hunt on 30 October 2026 at Swanscombe Park, a Charity Quiz Night on 27 November 2026 at Church Road Community Hall, and a Wreath Making Lesson on 28 November 2026 at the Town Council Offices Community Hall.

262/26-27. **SENIOR GROUNDSMAN/GARDENER'S REPORT.**

Members considered the report presented by the Senior Groundsman, which updated members on the work undertaken and planned by the Parks Department in the following areas:

Broomfield: Review of seasonal turf management, routine pitch maintenance, and ongoing boundary upkeep.

Eagles Road: Update on perimeter fencing repairs, scheduled shrub pruning, and addressing maintenance issues arising from recent playground inspection reports.

Heritage Park: Summary of recent landscaping tasks, pathway clearance, pond area upkeep, and adherence to the ongoing Heritage Park Management Plan.

Knockhall: Review of end-of-season football pitch renovations, goal mouth repairs, and planned shrub cutting and leaf clearance.

Swanscombe Park: General updates on sports pitch configurations, open space maintenance, and fixing ad-hoc play area asset damage.

Valley View: Update on completed playground equipment inspections, wet pour safety surfacing repairs, and seasonal grounds upkeep.

Equipment / Staffing: Review of the department's operational fleet, updated chemical and asset registries, and an update on staff training and availability.

Miscellaneous: Summary of ad-hoc community feedback items, administrative park updates, and reactive maintenance projects across the town's open spaces.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

263/26-27. **ANNUAL SAFETY INSPECTION OF PLAYGROUND EQUIPTMENT.**

The Annual Playground Safety Inspection was undertaken in September 2026 by a RPII (Register of Playground Inspectors International) / ROSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) Certified Playground Specialist. Members were issued with the Inspection Finding Summary and the risk assessment matrix used by the Inspector.

When the report was received, a copy was passed to the Senior Groundsman/Gardener, which is under review to ensure any action required is being undertaken.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Playground Safety Inspection Report be noted.

264/26-27. **INGRESS PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE – VERBAL UPDATE.**

The Interim Town Clerk/RFO provided a verbal update on ongoing correspondence with Crest Nicholson regarding the completion and handover of the Ingress Park Community Centre. Members were advised that, although Crest Nicholson's Technical Director had indicated that a contractor's priced programme of works would be available by 16 October 2026, this had not been received. The Town Council has therefore formally requested the programme and confirmation of completion dates. Outstanding matters include structural designs for the bike and bin store foundations, utility connections, repairs to a roof-related leak affecting the men's toilets, and the completion of remaining snagging works, including electrical items and car park landscaping.

RESOLVED: That the verbal update be noted.

265/26-27. **SWANSCOMBE LEISURE CENTRE – VERBAL UPDATE.**

The Interim Town Clerk/RFO provided a verbal update on the future commissioning of Leisure Services at Swanscombe Leisure Centre. Members were advised that constructive meetings had been held with Gravesham Community Leisure Limited (GCLL) to discuss matters including business rates, insurance, rent, subsidy reduction, the Craylands Lane car parking proposal, and the potential extension of the current agreement. To ensure compliance with the Procurement Act 2023 and the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, a lifetime contract valuation will be undertaken to determine the appropriate procurement route. Members were further advised that a soft market testing exercise will be undertaken, with GCLL formally included in the process. Once the valuation and market testing are complete, all commissioning options will be assessed, and a detailed options report will be brought back to Council for consideration.

RESOLVED: That the verbal update be noted.

266/26-27. UPDATE ON ELECTIRC VEHICLE CHARGING POINT (EVCP) USAGE AT THE GROVE AND THE SWANSCOMBE LEISURE CENTRE (CRAYLANDS LANE) CAR PARKS.

Members were provided with details of the Flex-Budget Report balanced to 30 September 2026.

RESOLVED: That the summary of accounts to 30 September 2026, be noted.

267/26-27. 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 Dawn Johnston is the Town Councils representative on IPGM. IPGM have indicated that, although unable to supply any documentation, they would like a verbal update to be submitted to the Council.

Members received an update from Councillor Hazel Stephens regarding management and maintenance matters concerning the maintenance of the beachfront, and significant increase in associated costs. Members were advised that negotiations were ongoing regarding future management arrangements for public open spaces, with further information to be provided to residents once agreements had been finalised.

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 informed the meeting that unfortunately she is unable to attend the new date of the meeting due to prior commitments.

Borough and Parish Forum (BPF)
Councillor Dawn Johnston and the Town Clerk are the Town Councils representatives on the BPF.

Members were also informed that no recent meetings of the Borough Parish Forum had taken place, as a planned event had been cancelled and was awaiting rescheduling.

268/26-27. REPORT FROM KENT COUNTY COUNCILLOR.

Unfortunately, Kent County Councillor for Swanscombe and Greenhithe, Mr Thomas Mallon, was not in attendance. No report was submitted.

269/26-27. REPORT FROM DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCILLORS.

Dartford Borough Councillor Carol Gale attended the meeting. She gave a brief report which detailed that:

She had attended a second workshop regarding the Swanscombe Peninsula, involving major landowners including Logica, and that concerns were raised that the exercise appeared largely academic, with limited feedback from landowners, and that references to the "Swanscombe Peninsula for Ebbsfleet Garden City" could impact the identity of Swanscombe and Greenhithe. Members also received an update on the proposed Greenhithe Medical Centre, with local GP representatives reporting significant service pressures and construction anticipated to commence in the New Year. The Community Grants Scheme was noted, including funding of up to £3,000 for environmental initiatives, with higher amounts potentially available for projects delivering wider community benefits. In relation to the Pit 11 development, concerns were expressed regarding Kent County Council's lack of objection to the application, inaccuracies within the supporting report, including references to Mounts Road as a two-way route, and potential environmental issues associated with the site's former use. Members were also advised that a request to purchase land from MCK had been declined due to foundation concerns, and that Dartford Borough Council would be asked to seek a further review of the Kent County Council report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

270/26-27. KENT POLICE REPORT.

Unfortunately, though an overview of the report to be given was provided to Council Officers, Kent Police Community Support Officers were unable to attend.

271/26-27. KENT COUNTY COUCIL (KCC) COMMUNITY WARDENS REPORT.

Unfortunately, Kent County Council Community Warden for Swanscombe and Greenhithe, Ms Angela Jarrett, was unable to attend the meeting.

No report was submitted.

272/26-27. COMMUNITY SAFETY LIASON.

Lorry Watch – Councillor Lesley Howes reported that the relocation of lorry parks had been discussed at a recent Stone Town Council meeting. It was noted that the previous working group no longer appeared to be active. Members were advised that the lorry parks within Manor Park had now been closed and discussions had taken place regarding the identification of a designated alternative location. Councillor Johnston agreed to liaise with Stone Town Council to obtain an update and explore opportunities for joint working on the matter.

RESOLVED: That the updates be noted.

273/26-27. **DETAILED ANALYSIS OF CRIME STATISTICES FOR SWANSCOMBE & GREENHITHE.**

Members were provided with, and discussed, the up-to-date detailed analysis of crime figures for Swanscombe and Greenhithe.

Councillor Celedonia Krawczyk queried whether Police have considered the early release of prisoners' impact on local crime. Councillor Richard Lees requested an update on actions being taken to address nuisance bikes within the area. Officers were asked to make enquiries with Kent Police and provide an update at a future meeting.

RESOLVED: That the statistics be noted and that Officers liaise with local police regarding the above-mentioned queries.

274/26-27. **CRAYLANDS LANE CAR PARK – ASSET REVIEW.**

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

RESOLVED: That officers liaise with Craylands Lane Primary School and that the proposed tariff structure be reviewed to align with other car parks in the area, before a final proposal is brought back to Council for consideration.

275/26-27. **THE HERITAGE HALL – 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 asset review update be noted.
2. That the recommendations as set out in the report be agreed.
3. That the Interim Town Clerk/RFO be authorised to progress the agreed recommendations and report back to the Council as required.

276/26-27. **TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBER STOREROOM INVENTORY.**

Members considered the inventory list produced and presented by the Assistant Town Clerk and after discussion it was unanimously agreed that:

RESOLVED:

1. That the Chamber Storeroom Inventory be noted.
2. That the Assistant Town Clerk, in conjunction with the Local History Group, be authorised to reorganise the Chamber Storeroom, and to repurpose, donate, sell or dispose of the items which are of no practical or historical value.

At this point in the meeting, Councillor Lesley Howes left the council chamber and took no part in the discussion, or decision of the following agenda item

277/26-27. THE LOCAL HISTORY GROUP USE OF TOWN COUNCIL FACILITIES.

Members considered the report regarding the Local History Group's use of Town Council facilities, which detailed use of storage space within the Chamber Storeroom, access to the Council Chamber for meetings, and heritage displays. Members recognised the valuable contribution made by the Group in preserving and promoting the Town's local history.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That use of the Chamber for meetings or events be a maximum of one booking per month.
3. That Town Clerk/RFO liaise with the Local History Group to finalise the proposed arrangements and any applicable charges for hire of the Chamber for meetings/storage. The Town Clerk/RFO to be given delegated authority to agree arrangements and charges for hire in consultation with the Town Mayor.

278/26-27. EBBSFLEET CRICKET CLUB REQUEST.

Members considered the request from Ebbsfleet Cricket Club for a discounted block booking of the hall over a nine-week period and the report which outlined the current hall hire charging structure, the existing concessions already provided to local cricket clubs, and the financial implications of the various charging options available to the Council.

RESOLVED: That the item be noted and that Ebbsfleet Cricket Club be offered the booking at the Regular Booking Rate of £24.60 per booking for the nine-week period.

279/26-27. LONE WORKING POLICY.

Members considered the proposed Lone Working Policy and discussed its intended application across Council operations and noted that the policy provided an appropriate framework for managing lone working risks, and that further consideration should be given to strengthening provisions covering out-of-hours lone working arrangements.

RESOLVED: That the Lone Working Policy be adopted; that the policy be reviewed annually; and that the policy be brought back to a subsequent meeting of the Town Council with proposed amendments relating to out-of-hours lone working.

280/26-27. BANKING STRATAGY.

Members considered the Banking Strategy and the arrangements proposed for the management of Council funds. Members agreed that transparency and accountability in relation to funds should be maintained at all times and it was unanimously agreed that:

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the Banking Strategy be approved.

281/26-27. **MONTHLY BANK RECONCILIATION.**

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 September 2026 be noted.

282/26-27. **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING.**

RESOLVED: That the date of the next Full Council meeting, 5 November 2026, be noted.

283/26-27. **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC.**

MOVED BY Councillor Hazel Stephens and seconded by Councillor Richard Lees.

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.

284/26-27. **STAFFING UPDATE.**

Members considered the confidential staffing update report regarding the successful completion of a Level 2 Sports Turf Operative Apprenticeship by Employee 72 and the associated recommendation for salary progression. Members welcomed the achievement, recognised the additional skills and expertise gained within the Council, and unanimously agreed that:

RESOLVED: That the report be noted; that the successful completion of the apprenticeship by Employee 72 be recognised; and the salary increase be approved.

285/26-27. **VAT COMPLIANCE REVIEW AND EVELUATION OF PROPOSALS FOR SPECIALIST SUPPORT.**

Members considered the confidential report regarding a review of the Council's VAT arrangements following compliance concerns identified during the most recent Internal Audit. The report outlined the potential financial risks associated with the matter and presented options for obtaining specialist professional support to assist the Council.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and that option 2 (BCA Accountants) be appointed to provide specialist professional support in relation to VAT compliance.

286/26-27. **LANDSCAPE SERVICES CONTRACT REVIEW.**

Members considered the confidential report reviewing the Town Council's Landscape Services contract. During discussion, Members sought further information regarding the operational implications, resource requirements, staffing capacity, training needs, equipment provision, and the overall financial impact of the proposals.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and that the matter be deferred to the next Town Council meeting with further information on the cost implications, resource requirements, and operational considerations of the proposals.

287/26-27. **NIGHT & DAY SECURITY CONTRACT REVIEW.**

Members considered the confidential report regarding a review of the Council's contract with Night & Day Security Ltd. After much discussion it was agreed that:

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and that the recommendations contained within the report be approved, including the termination of the existing contract, the transfer of appropriate duties to the Council's in-house Parks Team, and the progression of proposals for a dedicated Park Warden role, subject to the return of a formal job description to a future meeting for approval.

288/26-27. **THE SWANSCOMBE CENTRE PREFORMANCE UPDATE.**

Further to minute 186/25-26 the Finance Director GCLL had provided the Performance of Services Report which includes details for Finance and Attendances for May, June, July and August 2026.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

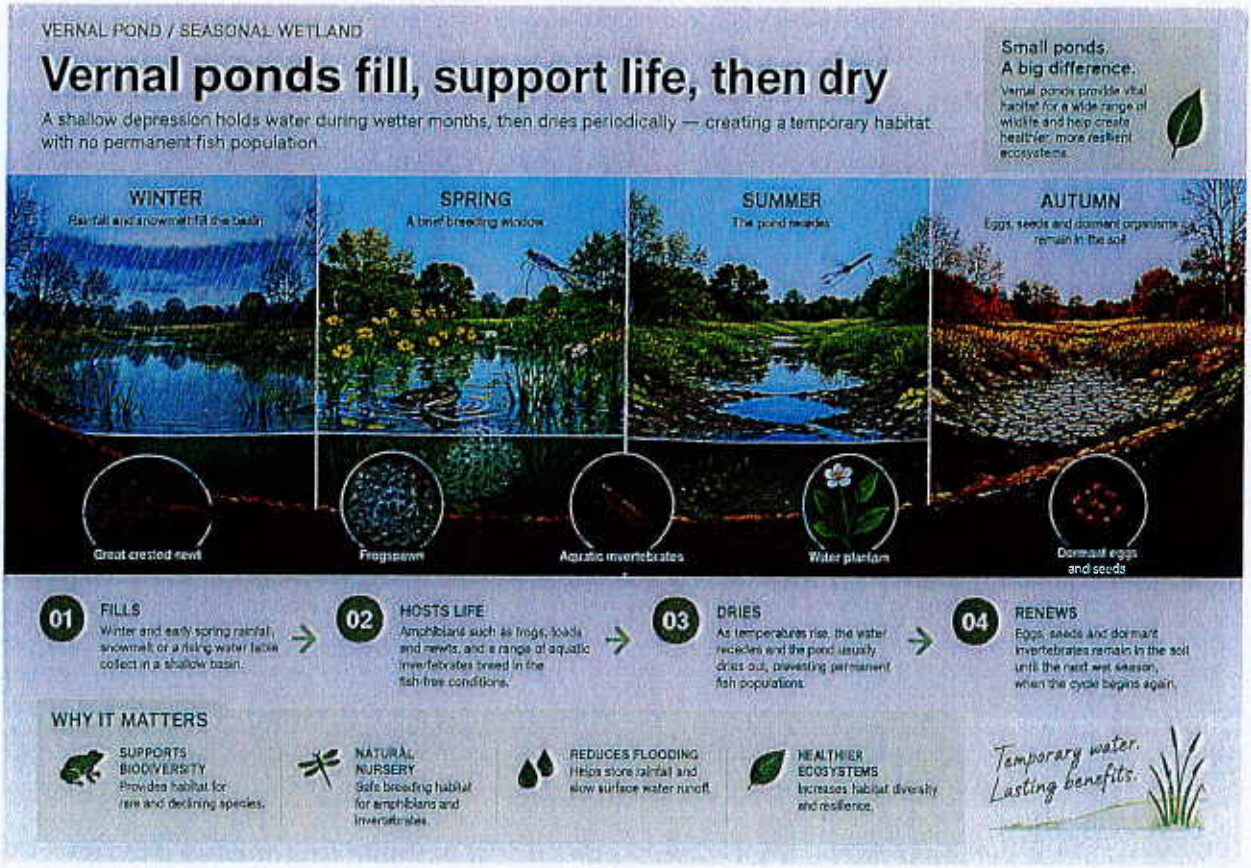
There being no further business to transact the Meeting closed at 9.30 pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chairman)

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What is a Vernal Pond?

A vernal pond is a temporary wetland that fills during autumn, winter and spring before drying out in summer. Unlike permanent ponds, periodic drying prevents fish populations from becoming established, creating ideal conditions for amphibians and specialised invertebrates.



The Vernal Pond Cycle

Winter rainfall fills depressions, creating seasonal water bodies. During spring, species such as newts, frogs and aquatic insects breed in the fish-free habitat. As temperatures rise, water levels recede and the pond dries. Eggs, seeds and dormant invertebrates remain in the soil until the next wet season, when the cycle begins again.

- Supports biodiversity by providing habitat for rare and declining species.
- Acts as a natural nursery for amphibians and freshwater invertebrates.
- Stores stormwater and slows surface-water runoff.
- Increases ecological resilience and habitat diversity across the landscape.

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Info

From: Lucy.Sawyer-Boyd@kent.gov.uk
Sent: 26 October 2026 13:44
To: Info
Cc: Graham Blew
Subject: Draft NLHF Project Enquiry Submitted for Swanscombe Heritage Park
Attachments: HLF project enquiry SHP Oct 26.pdf; HLF Draft Application Content for SHP.docx

[WARNING] This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Indigo,
As discussed, I've developed the original audio trail concept into a broader heritage project and have now submitted a revised National Lottery Heritage Fund Project Enquiry.
I've attached a copy of the enquiry for your records and review.
The proposal brings together several strands into a single project focused on improving access to and understanding of Swanscombe Heritage Park's heritage:

- Restoration of the existing etched steel and boulder interpretation features.
- Replacement of the worn plastic matting route linking the Skull Site to the wider heritage trail network with a path that matches the existing park design.
- Creation of an "Ancient Waters" seasonal wetland feature inspired by the prehistoric Thames landscape, including habitat improvements and a heritage-inspired artwork.
- Community heritage research and engagement activities.
- Development of the audio trail as a key interpretation output.

The project has been framed to respond directly to the feedback received on the previous audio trail enquiry, particularly around increasing community participation, broadening heritage outcomes, improving access and incorporating natural heritage elements.
Please note that the budget included in the enquiry is indicative only. Before progressing to a full application, SGTC may wish to obtain more accurate quotations for key elements such as the path works, interpretation restoration and artwork. The figures included are intended to demonstrate the anticipated scale of the project rather than provide final costs.
One area that will need further investigation is the proposed path improvements, as we will need to establish whether there are any archaeological or SSSI constraints that may affect the scope of works. I've therefore included provision for discussions with Natural England during project development.
Hopefully the Heritage Fund's response will give us a clearer indication of whether this broader approach is more likely to be supported before any significant time or money is invested in developing a full application.
Please let me know if you'd like to discuss any of the proposals in more detail.
Kind regards,

Lucy Sawyer-Boyd
Partnership Officer| North West Kent Countryside Partnership
Trosley Country Park, Waterlow Rd, Vigo, Gravesend, DA13 0SG
Tel: 0300 0410589/ Mobile:07809334071| www.nwkcp.org / www.kentcountryside.org.uk

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National Lottery Heritage Fund Draft Application Content

Project Title

Reconnecting Swanscombe: Restoring Access, Interpretation and Heritage Landscapes at Swanscombe Heritage Park

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Tell us about your project

Swanscombe Heritage Park is an internationally significant heritage landscape, best known as the location where the Swanscombe skull fragments were discovered, providing some of the earliest evidence of human occupation in Britain.

The park also contains important geological, industrial and natural heritage. Despite this significance, many visitors struggle to fully engage with the site's stories. Existing interpretation features have deteriorated through weathering, vandalism and theft, reducing their effectiveness. The route connecting the Skull Site to the wider heritage park relies on ageing plastic cellular matting that is reaching the end of its useful life and detracts from the visitor experience. A former pond feature has also become increasingly difficult to sustain and no longer delivers its intended environmental, educational or landscape benefits.

This project will improve access to heritage, restore interpretation features, create a climate-resilient seasonal wetland inspired by the ancient Thames landscape, commission a heritage-inspired artwork, and develop a community-created audio trail exploring the archaeological, geological, industrial and natural heritage of Swanscombe.

The project will actively involve local people through heritage research, volunteer activities, habitat creation events, interpretation development and community engagement activities.

Together, these improvements will ensure that the internationally important heritage of Swanscombe is more accessible, better understood and better connected for current and future generations.

What is the heritage focus of your project?

The project focuses on the internationally significant archaeological heritage of Swanscombe Heritage Park and its relationship with the wider Thames landscape.

The project will help people understand:

- The discovery and significance of the Swanscombe skull.
- Early human occupation of Britain around 400,000 years ago.
- The prehistoric Thames landscape and its importance to human settlement.
- The geological heritage of the Lower Thames Valley.
- The industrial heritage associated with chalk quarrying and cement production.
- The evolution of the site from industrial landscape to heritage park and nature conservation area.

The project will also conserve and restore existing interpretation features that form part of the original heritage park design and visitor experience.

Why is your project needed?

While Swanscombe Heritage Park contains heritage assets of international significance, several issues currently limit visitor engagement and understanding.

Many of the existing etched steel interpretation features have become weathered and difficult to read, while some interpretation elements have been vandalised or stolen and require replacement. Existing interpretation no longer communicates the site's stories as effectively as originally intended.

The route linking the Skull Site to the wider heritage trail network currently relies on deteriorating plastic cellular matting. This limits the quality of the visitor experience and creates a disconnect between one of the site's most important heritage assets and the wider park.

A former pond feature has repeatedly failed due to changing site conditions and unreliable water retention. It no longer provides meaningful ecological, educational or visual value.

There is also an opportunity to engage local communities in exploring, researching and sharing the stories of Swanscombe through new interpretation and digital resources.

Without intervention, visitors will continue to face barriers to understanding and enjoying the heritage significance of this nationally and internationally important site.

What are the aims of your project?

The project aims to:

- Improve public access to internationally important heritage.
- Conserve and restore existing heritage interpretation assets.
- Improve understanding of the Swanscombe skull and prehistoric Thames landscape.
- Enhance biodiversity and climate resilience.
- Create opportunities for volunteering and community participation.
- Improve interpretation through digital and creative media.
- Strengthen community pride and stewardship of the site.
- Create a more coherent and accessible visitor experience.

What will your project do?

Work Package 1: Restoration of Existing Heritage Interpretation

The project will restore and conserve interpretation features throughout the park, including etched steel installations and interpretation boulders.

Works will include:

- Condition survey of existing interpretation.
- Cleaning and conservation of etched steel elements.
- Restoration of faded or illegible interpretation.
- Replacement of missing or stolen interpretation components.
- Repairs to interpretation boulders and associated features.
- Integration with digital interpretation and audio trail content.

Outcomes

- Existing heritage interpretation will be conserved.
- Heritage will be in better condition.
- Visitors will have improved access to information about the site's significance.

Work Package 2: Heritage Access Improvements

The project will improve access between the Skull Site and the wider heritage park by replacing approximately 150 metres of deteriorating plastic cellular matting with a surfaced path matching the appearance and character of the existing path network.

Works will:

- Improve connectivity between key heritage assets.
- Improve visitor experience.
- Create a more coherent heritage trail.
- Enhance accessibility and wayfinding.
- Respect ecological and archaeological sensitivities.

Outcomes

- More people will be able to access and enjoy heritage.
- Visitors will experience the park as a connected heritage landscape.
- Access to the Skull Site will be improved.

Work Package 3: Ancient Waters - Seasonal Wetland Restoration

The project will transform a failed pond feature into a climate-resilient seasonal wetland inspired by the water-rich environments that characterised the ancient Thames landscape when early humans occupied the Swanscombe area.

Works will include:

- Reprofiling the existing basin to create a seasonal wetland.
- Creating shallow channels to intercept and direct surface water runoff.
- Reducing seasonal pooling on adjacent paths.
- Planting native wetland and marginal species.
- Creating new wildlife habitat.
- Installing interpretation explaining the prehistoric Thames landscape.

Heritage Artwork

A heritage-inspired artwork will be commissioned as a focal point within the wetland area. Developed with community input, the artwork will celebrate the prehistoric and natural heritage of Swanscombe and create a distinctive landmark for visitors.

Outcomes

- Natural heritage will be in better condition.
- Visitors will understand the relationship between water, landscape and human history.
- Biodiversity and climate resilience will be enhanced.
- The site will gain an attractive and sustainable educational feature.

Work Package 4: Community Heritage Research and Participation

The project will involve volunteers, schools, community groups and local heritage organisations in researching and sharing the stories of Swanscombe Heritage Park.

Activities may include:

- Archive and heritage research.
- Collection of historic photographs and materials.
- Interpretation workshops.
- Community events.
- Volunteer habitat creation activities.
- Artwork consultation and design engagement.
- Contributions to audio trail content.

Outcomes

- People will develop new skills and knowledge.
- Local communities will become more connected with heritage.
- Community knowledge will contribute to interpretation and storytelling.

Work Package 5: Community Audio Trail

The project will develop a digital audio trail bringing together the stories of Swanscombe Heritage Park.

Content will explore:

- The Swanscombe skull.
- Early human occupation.
- The ancient Thames landscape.
- Local geology.
- Industrial heritage.
- Wildlife and habitat restoration.
- Community stories and perspectives.

Outcomes

- More people will learn about heritage.
- Interpretation will be more accessible and engaging.
- Visitors will be able to explore the site in greater depth.

Who will benefit from your project?

The project will engage:

- Local residents.
- Schools and young people.
- Families.
- Existing and new volunteers.
- Local heritage organisations.
- Archaeology and history enthusiasts.
- Visitors interested in nature and wildlife.
- New communities associated with the Ebbsfleet Garden City development.
- Visitors who benefit from improved access and digital interpretation.

How will people be involved?

People will be involved through:

- Community heritage research.

- Interpretation workshops.
- Volunteer habitat creation and planting events.
- Artwork consultation activities.
- Audio trail development.
- School engagement sessions.
- Community events and guided walks.

The project will place local people at the centre of researching, shaping and sharing the heritage stories of Swanscombe.

What difference will your project make?

By the end of the project:

- Existing interpretation features will be restored.
- Missing interpretation elements will be replaced.
- Access to the Skull Site will be improved.
- A new seasonal wetland feature will enhance biodiversity and climate resilience.
- Visitors will have a better understanding of the prehistoric Thames landscape.
- Volunteers and community groups will have participated in heritage and conservation activities.
- A new audio trail will provide accessible interpretation.
- The heritage of Swanscombe will be better connected, better understood and better valued.

Legacy

The project will leave a lasting legacy through:

- Conserved interpretation infrastructure.
- Improved access to key heritage assets.
- A sustainable seasonal wetland feature.
- A permanent heritage-inspired artwork.
- A digital audio trail that can be updated and expanded.
- Stronger community involvement in heritage.
- Increased capacity for future heritage engagement and stewardship.

By bringing together archaeology, landscape, wildlife and community participation, the project will ensure that the heritage of Swanscombe Heritage Park remains accessible, relevant and valued for future generations.

Indicative Project Budget

Capital Works

Item	Cost
Audio trail production	£10,000
Etched steel conservation and restoration	£5,000
Replacement of missing/stolen interpretation elements	£5,000
Interpretation boulder restoration	£1,000
Seasonal wetland earthworks	£1,000
Wetland planting and habitat creation	£2,000
Heritage artwork commission	£5,000
Heritage access path (150m)	£20,000

Capital Subtotal: £49,000

Activity Costs

Item	Cost
Community heritage research activities	£1,000
Community workshops and interpretation activities	£1,000
School engagement activities	£1,000
Volunteer habitat creation events	£1,000

Activity Subtotal: £4,000

NWKCP Staff Costs

Activity	Days	Cost

Project development & management	20	£6,400
Community engagement & partnerships	15	£4,800
Audio trail coordination	10	£3,200
Volunteer coordination	15	£4,800
Wetland & artwork delivery	10	£3,200
Reporting & evaluation	10	£3,200
Natural England / SSSI consultation and approvals	5	£1,600

85 days @ £320/day = £27,200

Staff Cost Subtotal: £27,200

Contingency

Item	Cost
Project contingency (approx. 10%)	£8,000

Contingency Subtotal: £8,000

Total Project Cost

Category	Cost
Capital Works	£49,000
Activity Costs	£4,000
NWKCP Staff Costs	£27,200
Contingency	£8,000

Total Project Cost: £88,200

Please note that all costs included within this document are indicative estimates only and have been developed to help define the overall scope and scale of the proposed project. They are intended to support initial discussions and project planning rather than provide final cost certainty.

Prior to submission, Swanscombe and Greenhithe Town Council may wish to obtain quotations for key elements of the project, particularly:

- Path construction and access improvements.
- Restoration of interpretation features.
- Artwork design and installation.

It should also be noted that some project elements, particularly the proposed path improvements, may require further discussion with Natural England and other stakeholders to determine any ecological, archaeological or SSSI-related constraints and to identify the most appropriate delivery approach.

Despite the indicative nature of the costings, this document provides a comprehensive outline of the proposed project, its intended outcomes and the activities required to deliver them. The project has been structured to align with the priorities of the National Lottery Heritage Fund by:

- Conserving and restoring existing heritage assets.
- Improving access to nationally and internationally significant heritage.
- Enhancing natural heritage and climate resilience.
- Increasing opportunities for community participation and volunteering.
- Improving interpretation and learning opportunities.
- Connecting archaeological, geological, industrial and natural heritage through a coherent visitor experience.
- Creating a lasting legacy through restored infrastructure, enhanced habitats and new digital interpretation.

The proposals and budgets within this document should therefore be viewed as a strategic framework for a future National Lottery Heritage Fund application, with further refinement and cost verification undertaken as the project develops.

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Check your answers

Have you spoken to anyone at the Heritage Fund about your idea?	Yes. We previously discussed an audio trail proposal with Rebecca Hussein following submission of Project Enquiry PE-00024759. Following feedback, the project has been expanded to incorporate improved access, restoration of heritage interpretation, environmental enhancement and increased community participation.	*Change*
What is the need for this project?	Swanscombe Heritage Park contains internationally significant archaeological heritage, including the site where the famous Swanscombe skull fragments were discovered. Despite its importance, several features that help visitors understand and access this heritage are deteriorating. Existing etched steel interpretation features have become weathered and difficult to read, while some interpretation elements have been vandalised or stolen. The route connecting the Skull Site to the wider heritage trail network currently relies on ageing plastic cellular matting, limiting the quality of the visitor experience and detracting from the landscape setting. A former pond feature has also become increasingly difficult to sustain and no longer provides the environmental or educational value originally intended. The project will address these issues through conservation of existing interpretation, improved access to key heritage assets, creation of a climate-resilient seasonal wetland inspired by the ancient Thames landscape and development of a community-created audio trail. Previous feedback from the Heritage Fund encouraged us to develop a broader project with stronger community and natural heritage elements. We have therefore expanded the proposal to include community heritage research, volunteer-led habitat creation and opportunities for local people to contribute to interpretation and storytelling.	*Change*
Describe what you will do during the project	The project will deliver five connected work packages. Existing etched steel interpretation features and interpretation boulders will be restored, conserved and repaired, including replacement of missing or stolen elements. Approximately 150 metres of deteriorating plastic cellular matting linking the Skull Site to the wider heritage trail network will be replaced with a surfaced route designed to match the character of existing park paths, subject to ecological and statutory approvals. A failed pond feature will be transformed into a climate-resilient seasonal wetland inspired by the water-rich environments that characterised the ancient Thames landscape when early humans occupied the area. This will include reprofiling, creation of shallow channels to intercept surface water and planting with native wetland species. A heritage-inspired artwork will be installed as a focal point. Volunteers, local heritage organisations, schools and community groups will participate in heritage research, interpretation workshops, habitat creation events and activities to support interpretation development. Research and community contributions will inform a new digital audio trail exploring the archaeological, geological, industrial and natural heritage of Swanscombe Heritage Park.	*Change*

Project title	Reconnecting Swanscombe: Restoring Access, Interpretation and Heritage Landscapes at Swanscombe Heritage Park	*Change*
Tell us about the heritage of the project	Swanscombe Heritage Park is internationally important as the location where the Swanscombe skull fragments were discovered, providing evidence of human occupation in Britain around 400,000 years ago. The site also contains significant geological heritage linked to the Lower Thames Valley and industrial heritage associated with chalk quarrying and cement production. Over time, former industrial landscapes have developed into valuable wildlife habitats. The project will help visitors understand the relationship between archaeology, landscape, nature and people by conserving interpretation features, improving access and providing new opportunities to engage with the stories of this nationally and internationally important site.	*Change*
Please outline how your project will respond to our four investment principles.	Saving Heritage The project will conserve and restore existing interpretation features which help visitors understand the internationally significant archaeology of Swanscombe Heritage Park. Damaged, weathered and missing interpretation elements will be repaired or replaced, ensuring important stories remain accessible to future generations. Protecting the Environment The project will transform a failed pond into a climate-resilient seasonal wetland inspired by the prehistoric Thames landscape. Native wetland planting and improved management of surface water will increase biodiversity, enhance habitat quality and create opportunities for environmental learning. Community habitat creation events will encourage stewardship of the natural environment. Inclusion, Access and Participation The project will improve access to heritage by replacing deteriorating plastic matting with a path that better connects the Skull Site with the wider heritage park. Community groups, schools, volunteers and local heritage organisations will be involved through heritage research, interpretation activities, wetland creation, workshops and audio trail development. New digital interpretation will make heritage stories more accessible to visitors. Organisational Sustainability The project will strengthen partnership working between Swanscombe and Greenhithe Town Council, North West Kent Countryside Partnership, volunteers and local heritage organisations. The restored infrastructure, improved interpretation and digital audio trail will provide lasting resources that can continue to be used, updated and promoted beyond the life of the project. The project will also support long-term community engagement and stewardship of the site.	*Change*

Who will be involved in the project?	The project will be led by Swanscombe and Greenhithe Town Council with delivery support from the North West Kent Countryside Partnership. Volunteers will contribute to habitat creation, community engagement and heritage activities. Local schools, community groups and heritage organisations will be invited to participate in research, interpretation development and project events. Specialist contractors will deliver path improvements, interpretation restoration, artwork installation and audio trail production where required. The project will seek to build partnerships with local history and heritage groups to strengthen interpretation content and encourage long-term community involvement in the site.	*Change*
How long do you think the project will take?	Approximately 18 months. Estimated start date: Spring 2027. Estimated completion date: Autumn 2028. The programme will allow time for project planning, Natural England consultation, interpretation design, community engagement, capital works, habitat creation, audio trail production and project evaluation.	*Change*
How much is your project likely to cost?	The total project cost is currently estimated at approximately £88,000, although costs remain indicative and will be refined through further project development and quotations. Key budget headings include: Audio trail production: £10,000 Interpretation restoration and replacement of missing elements: £11,000 Heritage access improvements (150m path): £20,000 Seasonal wetland creation and planting: £3,000 Heritage-inspired artwork: £5,000 Community engagement, workshops and volunteer activities: £4,000 Project management, partnership development, community engagement and delivery by North West Kent Countryside Partnership: £27,200 Contingency: £8,000 Further work is required to confirm costs for path improvements and interpretation restoration and to assess any constraints associated with the site's ecological and archaeological designations. The budget will therefore be refined before submission of a full application.	*Change*
How much funding are you planning to apply for from us?	£88000	*Change*

Submit Project Enquiry Form

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Asset Review – Land at Lewis Road

The Land at Lewis Road, Swanscombe was registered under a possessory title number K805195 on the 3rd December 1999. The area has been managed since 1987 by the Town council as an allotment. The land is described as a backland allotment plot which is some 0.114 acres which is used by a single allotment holder. It is to the rear of residential property and adjacent to a rear vehicular access. The site is managed by the Swanscombe and Greenhithe Allotment and Gardens Association as the land was appropriated and used as an allotment, so it affords protection under Section 8 of the Allotments Act (1925).

Since possessory tittle registration the council has had the title for 12 years or more without anyone challenging it, therefore it would be advisable to apply to HM Land Registry to upgrade it to an Absolute Title. We have consulted both the Allotment holder and the Association in relation to this asset review. The land has been valued by an auctioneer using comparable evidence to be worth somewhere between £30,000 - £40,000.

Options Considered

- Option 1 – Actively upgrade the to Absolute Title
  Instruct officers to submit a formal application to HM Land Registry using Form UT1 to upgrade Title K805195 to an Absolute Title

- Option 2 - Maintain Status Quo
  Take no legal action currently and retain the existing Possessory Title.

- Option 3 - Pursue Statutory Disposal and Asset Sale
  Instruct officers to prepare a formal application to the Secretary of State under Section 8 of the Allotments Act 1925 to request consent to sell the land

Asset Review – Land at Lewis Road



Recommendation:

(a) That the Town Council approves a phased legal and operational strategy for the Land at Lewis Road, Swanscombe (Title K805195), by executing Option 1 (Immediate Title Upgrade) to secure the asset, and subsequently executing Option 3 (Statutory Disposal Application) to seek ministerial consent for sale, with the matter to be brought back to Full Council for a final determination once a decision from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has been received.

Asset Review – Town Council Offices

The Town Council Offices & Community Hall is a multi-purpose civic asset situated at The Grove in Swanscombe, Kent, DA10 0GA. Positioned within a prominent, central plot adjacent to Broomfield Recreation Ground and local transport links, the site comprises the main administrative council building, an integrated public community hall (boasting a capacity of 60 seated or 80 standing). The entirety of the premises is held under a long leasehold interest and operational management of Swanscombe & Greenhithe Town Council.

The integrated ground floor community hall is currently let out to Cygnets Pre-School Nursery, a registered, voluntary/not-for-profit childcare provider. The nursery operates on a term-time schedule (Monday to Friday, 08:45 to 15:30), transforming the hall into a sessional day-care facility with a capacity for up to 30 local children aged 2 to 5 years. Consequently, the council retains full internal liability for building insurance, utilities, structural repairs, and facility maintenance, while offsetting overheads through the nursery's rental arrangement and supplementing it with casual public hiring outside of preschool hours.

Following minute 277/26-27, half of the chamber storeroom as been designated for archival use by the Local History Group and discussions for the provision to hire the Chamber for viewing events are underway; cementing the building's role as a cultural repository. In principle, Dartford Borough Council has agreed to the decommissioning and removal of the former Cashier's Office furniture. This will enable the office to be repurposed, with potential rental income estimated at £300-£500 per month (£3,600-£6,000 per annum).



Asset Review – Town Council Offices

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Town Council:

(a) The Town Council notes the contents of this Asset Review Report and approves the retention of the Town Council Offices within the council's active property portfolio
(b) Note the asset review report regarding the optimisation of the Council Offices building following the internal relocation of the local history group to the Council Chamber.
(c) Authorise the letting of the former Cashier's Office space under a flexible Licence Agreement, targeting a monthly revenue of between £300 and £500.
(d) Authorise the Town Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) to market this asset opportunity across the Council's social media channels and local networks, to commence immediately once the space has been fully cleared and emptied of contents.

AGENDA ITEM 11

Town Council 05/11/2026

Council Office Christmas Opening Arrangements 2026/2027

December 2026

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 HOME WORKING	22 HOME WORKING	23 HOME WORKING	24 HOME WORKING	25 CLOSED	26 CLOSED	27 CLOSED
28 CLOSED	29 CLOSED	30 CLOSED	31 CLOSED			

January 2027

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
				1 CLOSED	2 CLOSED	3 CLOSED
4 RETURN TO NORMAL OFFICE HOURS	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

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AGENDA ITEM 12

TC 05/Nov/2026

30 October 2026 (2026-2027)

Swanscombe and Greenhithe Town Council

Prepared by: Indigo Allred Date: 30/10/26

Name and Role (Clerk/RFO etc)

Approved by: _____ Date: _____

Name and Role (RFO/Chair of Finance etc)

	Bank Reconciliation at 30/10/2026			
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2026			99,965.49
	ADD			
	Receipts 01/04/2026 - 30/10/2026			700,718.94
				800,684.43
	SUBTRACT			
	Payments 01/04/2026 - 30/10/2026			480,339.27
A	**Cash in Hand 30/10/2026** (per Cash Book)			**320,345.16**
	Cash in hand per Bank Statements			
	Petty Cash	30/10/2025	0.00	
	Current Account (General Funds)	30/10/2026	314,630.90	
	Active Saver 1 (General Reserves)	29/10/2026	387.35	
	Active Saver 2 (Earmark Reserves	29/10/2026	0.00	
	Mayoral Charity	29/10/2026	1,926.08	
	Active Saver 3 (Deposits)	29/10/2026	3,400.83	
				320,345.16
	Less unpresented payments			
				320,345.16
	Plus unpresented receipts			
B	**Adjusted Bank Balance**			**320,345.16**
	A = B Checks out OK			

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AGENDA ITEM 13
TC 05/11/26

JOB DESCRIPTION

Title: **PARK WARDEN (PART-TIME)**

Hours of Work: 16? hours (one week on, one week off)

Salary: £12.71 Per Hour

Reports to: Town Clerk/RFO and Assistant Town Clerk.

JOB OUTLINE: To provide a visible, reassuring presence on-site; ensuring park security through punctual gate management, thorough safety inspections, and robust out-of-hours reporting.

Key tasks
The job will involve the following:

1. Open all park gates, barriers, and facilities punctually in the morning, and securely lock them at dusk or designated closing times.
2. Clear the park of all vehicles, equipment, and members of the public prior to locking the gates to prevent anyone from being trapped on-site overnight.
3. Log and escalate urgent security breaches, vandalism, or immediate health and safety hazards to emergency services and council management during out-of-hours periods.
4. Act as a face of the park, answering public inquiries politely while calmly and firmly enforcing park bylaws and rules.
5. Complete shift logs, incident reports, and inspection checklists accurately to ensure all out-of-hours activity is recorded for management.

Sports Facilities and Weekend Operations

6. Support the Parks Establishment in the management and operation of the Council's sports facilities located within the Council's parks and recreation grounds.
7. Open, close and secure sports facilities, changing rooms, storage containers, garages, toilets and associated amenities in accordance with bookings, fixtures and training schedules.
8. Undertake pre-use and post-use inspections of football pitches, cricket facilities, bowls greens and ancillary buildings to ensure they are safe, clean and fit for use.

9. Liaise with sports clubs, facility users, hirers, volunteers and visitors during out of hours to facilitate the effective use of Council facilities.

10. Undertake weekend, evening and bank holiday duties in accordance with seasonal operational requirements and sports fixture schedules.

Key Tasks - Grounds Monitoring and Public Safety

11. Undertake visually identified litter picking and cleansing duties around Council sports facilities, open spaces and recreational facilities.

12. Remove dog fouling as identified and report persistent problem areas.

13. Remove broken glass and other hazardous materials from public areas.

14. During out of hours secure unsafe areas and equipment using appropriate signage, barriers or tape pending repair and report any issues to the Council.

15. Report maintenance issues, vandalism, anti-social behaviour and health and safety concerns promptly and accurately.

Community Safety and Out-of-Hours Presence

16. Provide a visible presence within parks and recreation grounds during evenings, weekends and public holidays to deter anti-social behaviour and promote community safety.

17. Attend community events and activities as directed to provide operational support and ensure facilities remain secure and well managed.

18. Maintain effective communication with Council officers regarding incidents, security concerns and operational matters arising during out-of-hours periods.

19. Assist with emergency responses relating to Council-owned parks and facilities when requested by senior officers.

20. Any other activities that may reasonably be required by the Town Clerk/Senior Groundman.

Person specification

Essential Skills & Experience

- Communication Skills
- Practical Skills
- Problem-Solving
- Reliability & Flexibility
- Driving Licence

Desirable Skills & Qualifications

- Basic first aid qualification.
- Experience working with volunteers or community groups.
- Knowledge of local horticulture, basic plant care, or countryside conservation

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