

South Willesborough and Newtown Community Council www.swancc.org.uk

Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 4th July 2022

The Chair opened the meeting at 7pm

132/22 Record attendance and list apologies for absence

In Attendance: Sue Mullan (SM) David Mullan (DM) Andy Hodges (AH), Andy Rogers (AR), Steve Campkin (SC), Eric Parkinson. (EP), Nirosha Thilagarajan (NT from 7.42pm) , Peter Porter (PP) Paul Bohill (PB)

Also, in attendance - Rob Woods (RW) Proper Officer, Peter New (PN) Neighbourhood Watch and 5 members of the public

Apologies from were received from Jacky Godden (JG) – holiday and Sarah Evans, Community Council Manager – family engagement. JG Absence approved

133/22 Declarations of pecuniary, other significant or voluntary interest

None

134/22 Agree Minutes of the Council meeting of 13th June 2022 and sign

The Minutes of the meeting were agreed as a true record of proceedings and signed.

Proposed DM Seconded PB and agreed unanimously

135/22 Meeting adjourned at 7.03pm for members of the public to raise questions on items on the agenda

Issues were raised about unkempt verges at the junction of Albion Place and Newtown Road which were also considered to be a danger to motorists. AR offered to raise the issue with Aspire

Meeting reconvened at 7.05pm

136/22 To receive reports from

a. Ashford Borough Council Ward representative

AR reported on Joint Transportation Board issues including new parking arrangements in Tannery Lane, the low expectations for the resumption of Eurostar services from Ashford, the increased use of the Sevington Inland Border Facility, traffic management including ticketing illegally parked lorries on Orbital Park and attempts to educate nuisance motorcyclists affecting the A2070

He also reported that

- a) work had started on the Newtown Railway Works development with ABC now having a majority interest in the site.
- b) He had visited the Boys Hall venue redevelopment and that a conditional premises licence was pending
- c) In the light that funding had been agreed for security initiatives in the Outlet-Railway Station underpass, he would press for similar funding for vulnerable public areas in the SWAN area

Agreed – AR/PB/DM to attend a site visit at former Newtown Railway Works site

b. Kent County Council Ward representative

SC reported that

- a) He had attended the Local Government Association Annual Conference (LGA), which included a speech from Michael Gove MP. He congratulated all councillors at all levels for their exemplary hard work under such difficult circumstances and proceeded to lay out his plans for the future, devolving responsibilities downwards but without the funding.

- b) He would be strongly advising the complete removal of the pedestrian barriers recently installed by KCC
- c) Kennington Community Council are currently working on a 20MPH zone, which was approved by JTB. The documents for the 20 mph zone have been sent to the clerks for investigation by the Planning and Highways Committee.
- d) He would be chasing up Cllr Paul Bartlett regarding the cycle lanes and footbridge to link up Finberry, SWAN, Designer Outlet and Brompton.
- e) That he is considering a survey of residents regarding parking on Mead Rd/Canterbury Rd junction and speeding in the area.
- f) That bus use in Kent, stands at around 80% of pre-pandemic levels. Bus operators operate in a de-regulated commercialised environment and LTAs are not therefore able to insist that any operator provides any service or service level.
- g) KCC's budget for the support of public bus services is being reduced by £2.2m demanding that consideration is given to the withdrawal of 39 service contracts from October. KCC has been given an indicative allocation of £35m of DfT funding to support the National Bus Strategy agenda. Whilst this funding is not yet certain, we are confident that from October we can use this to start to build back from this more negative re-basing exercise. However, it should be noted that the majority of funding is in the form of Capital for things like highway measures and other restrictions also mean that we are unlikely to be able to use this fund to reinstate services directly. Public Transport officers will continue to work with all operators to explore the potential for some to take on routes being cancelled by other providers but this is unlikely to provide cover for the many of cancellations given the prevailing commercial conditions.
- h) KCC will also work with communities, parents and schools to support them if there is an appetite to fund and coordinate local solutions and the department is making available Community Transport funding for things like vehicles for this purpose.
Finally " I really wanted to say well done to everyone with the Jubilee event. We made the local news and are one of 5 case studies by the Eden Project. I would like to encourage the events committee to do a debriefing on what went well and what could have gone better, but I tried this myself and couldn't come up with any improvements. Looking forward to the next one!"

**Resolved – agreed unanimously that in the light of the success of the 20's Plenty scheme in Kennington the Council should give high priority to its highways, parking and transportation aspirations for the SWAN area and in the light of the bus usage figures to further examine the options for providing alternative bus services.
(Action Clerks/ P&H Cttee)**

c. Police and Neighbourhood Watch representatives

Police representative did not attend

PN reported that

- a) South Willesborough now has a Neighbourhood Watch for every street.
- b) Crime trends centre on theft from vans, and other key risk areas such as garages, sheds and other external storage facilities
- c) Residents need to be alert to scammers
- d) Sudden spikes in crime rates include dog theft, theft of internet delivery parcels, and more recently, theft of fuel and number plates
- e) Thanks to funding from AR and others, he has been able to saturate South Willesborough with NW branded road signs

d. KALC representatives – nothing to report

- e. **Swan Centre member representative** - PB reported that 2/3 new volunteers had come forward to assist in the practical running of the Centre and to ensure its security

137/22 To receive and note the draft minutes of the Planning and Highways Committee of 15th June 2022 and consider the following recommendations

- 1) To gather more evidence of the issues caused by the design and installation of the Nuisance barriers by KCC over 4 weeks**
- 2) To write as a whole Council to address the correspondence received to date.**

The minutes were noted without comment

Resolved – Proposed AR Seconded DM and agreed unanimously to support the Committee’s recommendations (Action Clerks/P&H Committee)

138/22 To receive and note the draft minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee of 15th June 2022 and consider the following recommendations on the Area Enhancement Budget.

- 1) To agree to split the budget over 3 main headline points Litter £7,000, Environment and Planting, £7,000 Public realm improvements £6,000**
- 2) An hourly living wage litter picker is hired for 30 hours a month on a 6-month trial basis with collection from Ashford Borough Council**
- 3) To note the breakdown of commitments and opportunities within the 3 main headlines for the budget to date and pending**
- 4) To agree the creation of a preferred suppliers list to assist in the efficacy and application of these aims**

Members considered a report of the Community Council Manager distributed in advance of the meeting. Following an explanation by PP and a short discussion it was resolved that:

- a) The minutes were noted without comment**
- b) There was unanimous support for the Committee’s recommendations (Action Clerks)**
- c) The creation of a preferred supplier list would not usurp the Council’s Procurement Policy**

Statutory Powers – Local Government Act 1972 S 101, 111 and 112, Highways Act 1980, Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, Countryside Act 1968

NT joined the meeting at 7.42pm

139/22 To receive and note the draft minutes of the Communications Working Committee and consider a range of linked recommendations

Members noted the Committee minutes without comment and considered a report of the Community Council Manager on the printing and distribution of images of the Jubilee event

Following an explanation by PP and a short discussion **it was resolved that:**

- a) The Summer newsletter content as distributed was noted and agreed without comment**
- b) The cost of the Summer newsletter, including increased costs of design and production, are found from the current print and distribution budget devolved to the Committee**
- c) The following recommendations are supported**
 - i. To protect the drone image of the human SWAN taken at the Jubilee event with copyright**
 - ii. To offset the cost of printing images of the human SWAN by charging a reasonable £10 per image which would include a small contingency for increased interim costs**
 - iii. In connection with ii) above, to delegate an assessment of best value to the Community Council Manager and RFO**
 - iv. To provide A2 canvasses for up to two local public venues if budgets permit**

(Action Clerks/RFO - items ci-civ and to revisit the Terms of Reference of the Communications Working Committee)

Statutory Powers –Local Government Act 1972 - S111 and S139

140/22 To consider possible interventions for residents struggling with rising costs

Members considered a report of the Community Council Manager distributed in advance of the meeting. Members felt that inflation and increase in living costs could create severe financial problems for some families in the SWAN area. Additionally, that a re-set of the Council's budget with a view to increasing well-being and crime prevention services should be undertaken

Following a discussion, it was resolved by unanimous agreement;-

- a) to support the recommendations to
 - I. To increase signposting to available services
 - II. To signpost opportunities to support existing charitable relief in SWAN area
 - III. To ensure residents know where they can get a meal on a regular basis if in need
 - IV. To ensure charities within the SWAN area supporting residents within these situations know how to access the SWANCC grants and donations schemes
- b) To include key information in the next Council newsletter
- c) To request the Finance and General Purposes Committee to undertake a review of the current budget and to report back to Council

Statutory Powers - Local Government Act 1982 s142, Local Govt and Rating Act 1997

141/22 To consider the creation of a Working Group with the Environment Champion encompassing the planting elements of the Area Enhancements Budget.

Members recognized the urgency and were unanimously in favour, subject to the Terms of Reference being agreed by the Council at the earliest opportunity (Action Clerks/ SC/JG)

142/22 To consider a report from Event organiser Roger Crouch and a further report from the Community Council Manager and agree a date, theme and world record attempt for a Community Event on Newtown Green 2023 to celebrate 180 years of the Railway.

Members discussed the reports submitted and following a discussion and unanimous agreement it was resolved:

- a) To hold an event, if possible, on Newtown Green in 2023
- b) The provisional date 2nd July 2023 (Sunday)
- c) To agree the world record attempt (subject to costs)
- d) To invite Roger Crouch to Council to discuss his proposal in September (Action Clerks)
- e) To prepare a cost and contingency budget for inclusion in the 2023/4 precept setting exercise (Action RFO/FGP Committee)
- f) Due to changes within the Councils insurance to note specific event Insurance would need to be completed
- g) To note that the management plan and Ashford Safety Group compliance work would need to be undertaken
- h) To note the impact on staff time of this scale of event

Statutory Powers – Local Government Act 1972 S145 S111

143/ 22 To note the response from Mandy Cracknell at Ashford Borough Council on the Wainwright and Alfred Road car parks on Newtown

Noted but that the Council still needs clarification on the ownership of car parks in the Newtown Green area (Clerks to pursue)

144/22 To note the response from Mandy Cracknell at Ashford Borough Council regarding the Controlled Parking Zone project and agree actions.

Noted

Following a brief discussion, it was agreed unanimously to take up Ms Cracknell's offer of a meeting with a SWAN delegation in Rye (Action Clerks)

145/22 To note the receipt of the paper transfer for the Allotments from Ashford Borough Council and agree to review and consider seeking legal advice before the acceptance of them.

Following a lengthy discussion, it was resolved

- a) To request the Allotments Committee to consider the documents received prior to seeking independent legal advice on the transfer (Action Clerks/ Allotments Cttee)
- b) Legal advice costs to be paid from the reserve earmarked for that purpose.
(Action Clerks)

(Action Clerks to procure legal services in accordance with the Council's Procurement Policy)

146/23 To note the update on the fines issued to Volunteers at the Jubilee event

Members considered that, to the best of their knowledge, this matter had already been resolved with assistance from Housing staff at Ashford Borough Council

147/22 To consider an update on the use of SWANCC provided defibrillators. To agree a mechanism for the reporting of the need for a replacement loan device and or consumables after use and budget required.

Members discussed a report of the Community Council Manager, circulated prior to the meeting. It highlighted that defibrillators may not always be replaced quickly following a deployment such that an enhanced communications mechanism is required to reduce the risk that the device and its consumables may not be immediately available/useable. This may also result in the need for an enhanced budget, depending on the number of deployments

Following a discussion, it was agreed unanimously that

- a) An agreed protocol is put in place to minimise the risk to individuals and the Council
- b) If additional costs are incurred, over and above budget provision, money could be vired from the Public Realm element of the Area Enhancement budget (See Minute 138/22 (1) above) in the current year
(Action Clerk/RFO)

Statutory power - Public Health Act 1936, s234

148/22 To note concerns of residents that Japanese knot weed is growing vigorously on the alley to the rear of Gladstone and Curtis Road.

Members expressed concern and the need to intervene to establish a) if the plant is actually knotweed b) land ownership

It was agreed unanimously that independent verification is needed and that attempts are made to establish land ownership. (Action Clerks to contact Aspire in the first instance)

149/22 To agree possible dates of either 8th, 9th, 10th August 2022 and Members to meet Chief Executive of Ashford Borough Council.

Agreed 10th August 2022 9-12am

150/22 To delegate the Event Working Group to consider requirements for the possibility of Christmas Trees in the SWAN area and the Christmas Community Carol Service.

Agreed unanimously

151/22 To receive urgent correspondence/e-mails

None

152/22 To agree date of next meeting as 5th September 2022 and any agenda items

Date agreed

Items to include Use of Clock Tower building, State of alleyways in Newtown, Newtown Green Village green status, Feedback from Orbital Park and S Willesborough Walkabouts

153 /22 Forum for exchange of information between Council members

No comments

There being no further items to be discussed the Chair closed the meeting at 9.05pm

Signed Chair _____

Date _____