

**MINUTES of the Council Meeting of EDENBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL, held in Rickards Hall at 7.30 pm on Monday 9 December 2019**

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Present: Cllrs J Aldridge, A Baker, A Damodaran, V Jennings, A Layland (Chairman), N Lloyd, M McArthur (Vice-Chairman), A Read, J Scholey, P Smith, S Sumner and B Todd

In attendance: Town Clerk; County Councillor Peter Lake; one member of the public and no members of the press.

**1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received, noted and accepted from Cllrs McGregor, Roberts-Smith, Smart, and District Councillor Barnett.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS OR PREDETERMINATION**

Cllr Lloyd declared a personal non-pecuniary interest in item 11.4 (member of the Bonfire Society); Cllr Layland advised he had received the resident's correspondence and had proposed the item (11.4) for the agenda.

*The District Council members stated that although they would be considering planning applications at this meeting they would be reconsidering them at the district level, taking into account all relevant evidence and representations there.*

*19:31 Meeting was adjourned for agenda item 3.*

**3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS**

Gill Humble of Business Innovation Zone (BIZ) spoke about the threat to the future of BIZ and the Community Car Wash due to having to find new premises by March 2020. BIZ started about 5-years ago without any funding to provide help and support to unemployed people and develop their skills to get them in to employment. The car wash scheme provides a service to the community and a facility for people to talk. She said it was not money she was asking for, but help to talk to local businesses to find a suitable new location where the car wash scheme could continue. Members discussed and asked questions.

*19:37 Meeting was reconvened.*

*19:37 Cllr Layland proposed to bring forward agenda item: 9.1 County Councillor's report, as Cllr Lake was in attendance; and to also bring forward item 11.5 for Gill Humble as she was in attendance.*

**Resolved:** Members supported the proposal to bring forward the agenda item 9.1 to receive the County Councillor's report; and 11.5 to receive a request from the Business Innovation Zone re the Community Car Wash

County Councillor Lake thanked the Council. He said that he had complained about the prolonged BT works on Four Elms Road and had taken this up with Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport (Michael Payne).

Cllr Lake mentioned he had just been notified that the 540 bus, operated by Hams Travel, which transported children to High Christie School, Tonbridge, had announced that after 31 December 2019 there would be no service; this would affect 60 Edenbridge pupils. He was due to meet with the Cabinet Chairman (Roger Gough) to discuss a way forward and the funding for school buses. (Since the Town Council meeting, Cllr Lake had secured funding to maintain the school bus.)

KCC had a management plan in place to manage the Ash fungus dieback which was expected to affect over 50% of the county's ash trees. KCC has initiated an Ash project.

Referring to Gatwick, air traffic over Hever and Edenbridge and the conversion of the emergency runway, he said that there was expected to be a hearing in the New Year and would encourage people to attend.

Finally, he praised the Christmas lights in Edenbridge which KCC had made a contribution towards. Members thanked Cllr Lake for the all his hard work and everything he does for the residents and school children of Edenbridge.

**To receive a request from the Business Innovation Zone re the Community Car Wash**

**Resolved:** to write a letter to the Chamber of Commerce to ask if they could offer help and/or advice with new suitable premises.

*19:50 Member of public left the meeting.*

**4. TO RECEIVE, ADOPT AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE EXTRA ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON [25 November 2019](#)**

**Resolved:** that the minutes of the extra ordinary Council meeting held on Monday 25 November 2019 be duly signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record of the meeting; pages 9286-9287.

**5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES FOR REPORT AND NOT ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA**

**5.1 [Draft Local Plan update](#) - To note: SDC has submitted a response (18 November) to the Inspector's letter (28 October). The matter is on hold until after the election period**  
Noted.

**5.2 To receive an amended list of Council and Committee meeting dates for 2020**  
Received and noted.

**5.3 Accessibility Regulations: To receive an update on the Council's website and also Council papers accessibility**  
The Town Clerk's report was received and noted: new software had been purchased to improve the presentation of PDF documents; and work was proceeding on the Council's website to upgrade it.

**5.4 To note: the CIL application to SDC for the Spitals Playground refurbishment was not successful**  
Members were disappointed that the Town Council's application had not been successful due to other schemes that had been deemed to have greater priority at this time.

**6. TO CONSIDER THE CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS – none**

**7. For Information**

**7.1 AMENDED PARISH CONSULTATION – Information Only. Single-Storey extension to rear elevation with roof replacement and single storey front extension infill. Erection of a front dormer. Landscaping works to facilitate decking. A summary of the main changes: Further information – design and access statement. Ref No: Ref No: [19/02937/HOUSE](#)**

**7.2 Details pursuant to condition 3 (hard and soft landscaping) of planning permission [19/00379/FUL](#) Millions Mill Hill Edenbridge KENT TN8 5BU. Ref. No: [19/03274/DETAIL](#)**

**7.3 Details pursuant to condition 4 (vehicle charging) of planning permission [19/00379/FUL](#) Millions Mill Hill Edenbridge KENT TN8 5BU. Ref. No: [19/03333/DETAIL](#)**

- 7.4 Details pursuant to condition 5 (means of enclosure) of planning permission 19/01129/LBCALT Millions Mill Hill Edenbridge KENT TN8 5BU Ref. No: [19/03310/DETAIL](#)

Items 7.1-7.4 were noted.

**8. TO ADOPT THE FOLLOWING REPORTS/MINUTES OF MEETING**

- 8.1 **Emergency Planning Committee – [4 November](#)**  
**Resolved:** the minutes numbered 9268a-9268b be adopted.
- 8.2 **Open Spaces Committee – [18 November](#)**  
**Resolved:** the minutes numbered 9276-9280 be adopted.
- 8.3 **Personnel Committee – 21 November**  
**Resolved:** the minutes numbered 9281-9282 be adopted.
- 8.4 **Planning and Transportation Committee – [25 November](#)**  
**Resolved:** the minutes numbered 9283-9285 be adopted.

**9. TO RECEIVE COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

- 9.1 **County Councillor**  
Received and minuted before agenda item 4.
- 9.2 **District Councillors**  
Nothing new to report.

**10. TO RECEIVE REPORTS AND ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM WORKING GROUPS; DELEGATED REPORTS; CLERK'S AND OFFICERS' REPORTS**

- 10.1 **Clerk's report**  
Received.
- 10.2 **To receive the Community Warden's report**  
Members noted that the Community Warden's work was broad and not everything could be reported due to the confidentiality of some of the areas covered.

**10.2.1 Community Speedwatch update**

Members were pleased to see that Community Speed Watch Scheme (CSW) had achieved 31 speeding letters sent out as a direct response, and drivers would have been registered as speeding twice to have warranted those letters. Members expressed their thanks to the Community Warden for all her work and also with the CSW scheme.

**Statement:** **The Town Council is satisfied with its approach to the Community Speed Watch scheme and the results achieved. It is understood that Kent Police is reviewing its CSW policies and once these have been issued, the Town Council will then review its own procedures.**

**11. OTHER BUSINESS including items referred from Committees for decision**

- 11.1 **Open Spaces Committee: To ratify the following resolution and recommendations:**
- 11.1.1 **To ratify the decision to extend the skilled groundsman to 5 days a week until 31 March 2020 (he then reverts back on to the summer contract 5-days per week)**  
**Ratified:** to extend the skilled groundsman to 5 days a week until 31 March 2020. It was noted that he then reverts back on to the summer contract 5-days per week
- 11.2 **Personnel Committee: To receive the following recommendations:**
- 11.2.1 **To introduce an annual pay increment system using the NJC recommended pay scales which is to be linked to the staff appraisal procedures, and 'satisfactory performance' to include continuous development by means of gaining additional/improved abilities and skills through training, experience, achieving target or other means.**

**Resolved:** to approved an annual pay increment system (effective from 1 April) using the NJC recommended pay scales which is to be linked to the staff appraisal procedures, and 'satisfactory performance' to include continuous development by means of gaining additional/improved abilities and skills through training, experience, achieving target or other means.

**11.2.2 To consider if the Council would like to review the pension scheme and if research into private schemes could be considered for new employees**

Cllr Scholey said that he had carried out some research into possible alternative schemes.

There is the Workplace Auto-enrolment Pension Scheme (WAEPS) which currently requires employees to contribute 5% of salary and employers 3%. This is a defined contribution scheme which applies to all employees where there is not a better scheme in place. On top of their 3% the employer is responsible for managing the costs of operating the scheme. However the projected pensions are very small compared to traditional occupational pensions. The first thing to remember is that, except for WAEPS, the pension schemes for government and local government employees are controlled by different primary legislation to pension schemes operated for employees of commercial organisations. This means that the regulations covering the governance of schemes are substantially different. Having spoken to senior officers in the Pensions' Regulator's office and the Pensions' Ombudsman's office at meetings of the Occupational Pensioners' Alliance, they have said that their remits do not cover schemes for the benefit of employees of government/local government.

Councils are not obliged to be part of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), but they have to provide opportunities for staff to join a pension scheme which meets certain legal minimum standards. There is nothing to stop the Town Council setting up its own scheme, except for the costs associated with managing it and lack of competent management skills.

Having carried out some research where there may be an alternative scheme where other councils may have gone down this route and thus might have provided an opportunity for Edenbridge Town Council to join, one could not be found. In the absence of to find evidence of the operation of such cheaper schemes in local government, it was suspected that no such scheme currently exists other than the national auto-enrolment basic pension scheme.

If a Council should resolve to no longer offer the LGPS to its employees, it will probably find itself responsible for a 'cessation deficit' because contributions previously paid were insufficient to cover the liabilities. A 'cessation valuation' is carried out by the Fund actuary and is a regulatory requirement. Any deficit identified must be paid by the Parish or Town Council. The costs of the 'cessation valuation' must be paid by the Parish or Town Council; currently costs are in the region of £2,500 + VAT.

Members discussed; it was commented that there was no opportunity for the Town Council to ask to join a scheme designed for employees of commercial organisations.

However, it was **agreed** that as pension legislation changes it would be worth reviewing on a triennial basis.

**11.2.3 To agree the recruitment process for a replacement Planning and Office Administration Assistant should progress as soon as possible**

**Resolved:** to recruit for a Planning and Office Administration Assistant, 4 days per week plus Planning Committee meetings.

**11.3 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): adopt the draft amended –**

- **Guidelines**
- **Meeting procedures and speaking protocol**
- **Terms of reference**
- **Application form**

**Resolved:** to adopt the following policies and guidelines for the Community Infrastructure Leve (CIL): Guidelines; Meeting procedures and speaking protocol; Terms of reference; Application form.

**11.4 To receive a resident's email to take action to reduce the impact of fireworks**

**Resolved:** to support the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) proposed motion to:

- to require all public firework displays within the local authority boundaries to be advertised in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people
- to actively promote a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks
- to encourage local suppliers of fireworks to stock 'quieter' fireworks for public display

**11.5 To receive a request from the Business Innovation Zone re the Community Car Wash**  
Received and minuted before agenda item 4.

**11.6 To consider writing a letter of complaint to BT Openreach following the drawn out disruption on Four Elms Road**

The Town Clerk was asked to write a letter of complaint to BT for the disruption caused on Four Elms Road and suggest they make a charitable donation to local cause.

**12. CONSULTATIONS**

**12.1 Kent County Council – on behalf of Transport for the South East – [draft transport strategy for the South East](#) – closing date 10 January**

Noted.

**13. TO CONSIDER ANY PRESS RELEASES**

None.

*In view of the confidential nature of the following items to be discussed the Chairman will move that the press and public be excluded from the Chamber. Public Bodies (admission to meetings) Act 1960*  
Although there were no members of the public in attendance, Members,

**Resolved:** to exclude members of the public and press due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted pursuant to s.1(2) of the Public Bodies (admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

**14. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON LEGAL MATTERS**

Following on from the November council meeting the Town Clerk updated Members and asked if the budget could be approved for specific legal advice with cases which required specific expertise.

**Resolved:** the expenditure for legal and professional fees as budgeted, up to £3,605.

**15. TO RECEIVE NOMINATIONS FOR CIVIC MEDALLION**

Nominations for Civic Medallions were received. Members were advised the Town Clerk would request Members votes which she would keep confidential. Feedback would be given at the next Council meeting.

**16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday 27 January 2020**

Meeting closed at 21:13