

**MINUTES of the Council Meeting of EDENBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL, held in Rickards Hall at 7.45 pm on Monday 27 January 2020**

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

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

*Prior to the meeting, Members met with Sergeant Nathan Cox Sevenoaks Community Safety Unit and discussed policing and community safety, and also in relation to Edenbridge. Sgt Cox was hoping to attend the Annual Town Meeting.*

**1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received, noted and accepted from Cllrs, Z Roberts-Smith, A Smart, J Scholey, P Smith

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS OR PREDETERMINATION - none**

*19:47 Meeting was adjourned for agenda item 3.*

**3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS**

Cllr McGregor asked if the Council could put an item on a future agenda to review the lighting on Westways. Members **agreed**.

*19:49 Meeting was reconvened.*

**4. TO RECEIVE, ADOPT AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON [09 December 2019](#)**

**Resolved:** that the minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday 9 December 2019 be duly signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record of the meeting; pages 2299-9303

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

**5.1 County Councillor**

County Councillor Lake reported he was delighted that the Head of Property at Kent County Council (KCC) had confirmed the land transfers between KCC and Kent Community Heath NHS Foundation Trust (KCHFT) were expected to be completed within the next seven days. KCC Highways had reported to Cabinet that it was struggling to cope with the high number of reports being received - the past month had seen over 6,000 online reports for potholes and other problems. They were prioritising and working through these. Reports should continue to be made via the website. Finally, he mentioned drains; some had been difficult to clean due to rusting covers which required a different team to attend. He encouraged reporting of blocked drains, which would also help alleviate flooding issues, be done also via the website.

**5.2 District Councillors**

Cllr McGregor mentioned Sevenoaks District Council's (SDC) main issue continued to be the draft Local Plan and they were awaiting the Inspector's detailed full report.

Cllr McArthur provided an update as the Cabinet Member, Cleaner and Greener Portfolio Holder. A major project was the restoration and improvement of Bradborne Lakes; Lottery

Heritage Fund was also supporting the project. Reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality was another project, including around schools with the aim to stop car engines running when stationary. The Government would like to standardise waste management, for example glass collections from home; this was not something SDC currently offered and so would need to be considered for including in its waste management services. The SDC Dunbrik Depot was now open to the public for MOTs.

**6. TO ADOPT THE FOLLOWING REPORTS/MINUTES OF MEETINGS**

**6.1 Finance Committee - [16 December](#) (9306-9310)**

**Resolved:** the minutes numbered 9360-9310 be adopted.

**6.2 Planning and Transportation Committee – [16 December](#); and [13 January](#)**

**Resolved:** the minutes numbered 9304-9305; and 9311-9313 be adopted.

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

**7.1 Clerk's Report**

Received.

**8. TO APPROVE THE DRAFT BUDGET AND PRECEPT FOR 2020/21, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE (DECEMBER 2019)**

The draft budget and proposed Precept had been published on the Council's website. Cllr McGregor requested a recorded vote.

**Resolved:** Members unanimously supported the Precept increase of 4% to £554,973 for 2020/21. For a Band D property, this represents an increase of £5.77 or 48p per calendar month. Cllr McGregor abstained from the vote.

*20:02 Cllr Lake left the meeting.*

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

**9.1 [Draft Local Plan update](#):** The Inspector has advised SDC to withdraw its Plan; she says that SDC has not adequately undertaken constructive engagement with neighbouring authorities to resolve the issue of unmet housing need in the District and has failed to plan strategically by not sufficiently examining how these needs could be accommodated. SDC has responded that SDC is not proposing to voluntarily withdraw the plan from examination and has requested the Inspector's report as soon as possible, so that we can move forward. **Does Edenbridge Town Council want to consider a response to SDC or wait for the Inspector's detailed report? Does the Town Council want to consider reconvening the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group?**

Members discussed SDC's response to the Inspector's initial report and its letter dated 21 January 2020 to the Secretary of State (The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP) expressing SDC's concerns to the Inspectors conclusions of its draft Plan; and requested a chance to meet and discuss the Plan.

Members noted that a lot of work had already gone in to preparing a Neighbourhood Plan, but without a current Local Plan it would be premature to progress further and without knowing the direction of the SDC draft Local Plan.

**9.2 To adopt the updated Terms of Reference (reflecting the revised meeting and committee structure)**

**Resolved:** the Terms of Reference Policies be adopted.

**9.3 New Committees structure: To appoint Members to Committees where there are vacancies**

**Resolved:** Cllr Read was appointed to the Open Spaces Committee; Cllr Sumner was appointed to the Finance and Governance Committee. It was noted all Members were now on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Board, and the Charities and Grants Committee.

**9.4 Remembrance Sunday Service: To discuss the role of the Town Council with the future organisation, responsibility and to nominate representation for a meeting to be organised with the main organising parties**

The Clerk was asked to organise and facilitate a meeting with the Royal British Legion (RBL), and the Parish Church. Cllrs Layland, McArthur and Todd were nominated to represent the Town Council.

**10. HEALTH AND SAFETY – to receive the annual inspection report**

Received; there were no comments.

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

**11.1 To receive a verbal report from the Chairman of the Emergency Planning Committee including an update following the floods on 20 December**

Cllr McArthur, Chairman of the Emergency Planning Committee (EPC), provided details from the flooding incident on 20 December 2019. Flood alerts had been issued during that week, but the advice on the Wednesday had been to standby from Friday forwards. Radio tests had been carried out the week before and the night before. The Flood Alert followed by a Flood Warning was received on the Friday morning, and before first light on 20 December radio comms had been set up. Cllr McArthur, as Community Emergency co-ordinator (CEC) had made contact with KCC, SDC and the Environment Agency (EA), plus volunteers and Town Council's grounds staff. The grounds staff were out before 8.00 am directing traffic. CEC travelled round to view the event, deciding to close roads as necessary, and walked the High Street to reassure residents and business owners. Doggetts Barn was fully operational with communications and logging section and volunteers were assessing and reporting.

Heavy field run-off and blocked gullies resulted in severe standing water on Crouch House Road, Lingfield Road – at Edenbridge and Haxted - Hever Road at Delaware and High Street. In addition, the closure of the M23 diverted a lot of traffic through Edenbridge and once Lingfield Road was closed at Haxted the problems intensified. The grounds and office staff fielded many requests for help with directions. Volunteers went out to check and recheck all previous hotspots and reports – Church Street, Honeypot Lane, Cobbetts Way, the Mill Pond, Victoria Road, Lingfield Road, St Brelade's stream, Spitals Cross and the pumping station at Waitrose. On foot the behaviour of standing water by Old Eden, behind Quality Tandoori, and the bund was reviewed. Grounds staff willingly delivered sandbags providing reassurance to High Street, Lingfield Road (Paradise Row), Lydens Lane, Victoria Road and Katharine Road, and stacked extra sandbags in Doggetts courtyard. Known vulnerable people were contacted by phone or on foot as far as possible to provide reassurance.

Cllr McArthur praised the comms and volunteer activity which was excellent, and the office staff and presence of the grounds staff with radio contact was an amazing help, as indeed the involvement of the EA, SDC and KCC.

She said that the EEPC would be requesting a multi-agency meeting.

The Chairman thanked Cllr McArthur, the grounds staff and the office staff for everything they had done on 20 December to help the residents of Edenbridge.

**11.2 To receive a verbal update on the land transfers at Stangrove Park from SDC to ETC**

The Town Clerk said that a copy of the land transfers had been sent to SDC requesting for them to be completed as soon as possible. SDC had instructed its grounds team to clear the vegetation on one section. It was hoped that the transfers would be finalised soon.

- 11.3 Storm Brendan: To ratify the expenditure for fencing repairs as a result of two fallen trees of up to £650. The clearance of two fallen trees at Stangrove Park have been completed by the groundstaff, and RWE who carried out work under budgeted works approved from the periodic tree survey report (Open Spaces Committee September 2019)**

**Ratified:** Members agreed the expenditure of up to £800 for fencing repairs as a result of two fallen trees at Stangrove Park.

- 11.4 Market Yard car park/Churchyard boundary wall: To approve the expenditure of up to £1,550 plus disbursements and VAT to prepare and serve a Party Wall Notice and draw-up a schedule of conditions as necessary**

**Resolved:** Members supported that expenditure of up to £2,000 for the necessary Party Wall Notice and Schedule of Conditions to enable the works to go-ahead for the renovations to the Market Yard Car Park/Churchyard boundary wall.

The Town Clerk was asked to report back to the Council with an update at its March meeting.

- 11.5 Public Toilets: To receive a verbal update and to consider the appropriate action to resolve the outstanding issues**

The Town Clerk explained to Members why two of the Public Toilets had been closed in December: one had a leaking toilet as a result of faults to the pipe work; one had a door that did not close. Several communications had been sent to the contractor listing numerous issues with the toilets and requesting the work to be rectified. The Town Council was holding the outstanding £10,140, which would be payable once the work was completed. In a letter to the contractor, dated 6 January 2020, the Town Clerk had advised that if the work was not completed, another contractor would be asked to complete the work and these costs would be deducted from money being held back. She had not had a reply from the contractor. However, she said that contract law was complicated and asked Members if they would support getting legal advice.

Members discussed; they acknowledged the Town Council had been extremely patient with the contractor and understanding of their reasons why completion of the project had been delayed; and expressed their disappointment that the contractor was not forthcoming in rectifying the faults. It was noted the snagging list from September had included issues with the locking system and this also remained unaddressed. Members **agreed** the toilets needed to have the issues rectified as soon as possible and instructed the Town Clerk to obtain quotes for the outstanding work. The costs to reinstate the toilets should be deducted from the £10,140 retention.

- 11.6 Outstanding insurance claim: to receive an update on the claim (January 2019) for repair to the damaged streetlight, Swan Lane and to consider further action**

The Town Clerk reported that an email dated 22 January 2020 from the insurance company who had been disputing the Town Council's claim, confirmed that it agreed to settle the claim in full, £2,677.

- 11.7 To consider whether the Town Council should [commemorate VE day Friday 8 May 2020](#) and if so how**

Members noted that there was a three-day international celebration, 8 to 10 May 2020, to commemorate the VE Day 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The Parish Church was organising an activity on the Saturday and a service. Members discussed what it could do, but also noted the limited time and available resources. Members **agreed** that the town's flagpole should fly the Union Jack. Cllrs Baker and Sumner were nominated to consider a suitable community activity or event and to present a proposal to Members at the Council's next meeting in March.

- 11.8 To consider training for staff and councillors on Social Media Awareness and Conduct, and approve the expenditure of up to £950**

**Resolved:** the expenditure of up to £950 for training on Social Media Awareness and Conduct for staff and Councillors.

**11.9 To approve the expenditure of £75 for the Town Clerk to attend the SLCC Regional Conference (24 June); Councillors may also book places (expenditure to be approved)**  
**Resolved:** The Town Clerk, Cllr Layland, the RFO to attend the SLCC Regional Conference; and the expenditure up to £450 (6 places).

**11.10 Electronic Visual Display facilities at meetings: to consider if the Council would benefit from such a facility and consider a suitable expenditure budget**

Members supported the need for electronic visual display equipment however, it was agreed that further investigation was needed before confirming a budget. Cllr Aldridge was asked to consider the options and report back to the Council.

**12. ANNUAL TOWN MEETING – Monday 2 March: to agree the agenda and set a date to review the content**

Cllrs Layland, McGregor and Read were nominated to prepare the agenda which would include inviting SDC, the Police, the local Fire Brigade and other local organisations.

**13. CONSULTATIONS**

**13.1 [KCC 5-year Plan](#) – have your say – 6 January to 17 February 2020**

Noted.

**13.2 SDC – [Abandoned shopping trolley consultation](#) – deadline 6 March**

Noted.

**14. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS WHO HAVE ATTENDED MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES**

Reports were received from:

Cllr McGregor had attended a recent Town Twinning meeting. Of note, the French were hosting a group from Edenbridge in May as part of its VE Day 75<sup>th</sup> commemorations; and a group from Mont-Saint-Aignan would be visiting Edenbridge in September.

Cllr Layland had been to a Chamber of Commerce meeting.

Cllr Lloyd had attended a Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) Kent meeting.

**15. TO CONSIDER ANY PRESS RELEASES**

To advertise the Annual Town Meeting.

**16. MATTERS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

To consider additional lighting on Westways.

*In view of the confidential nature of the following items to be discussed the Chairman moved that the press and public be excluded from the Chamber. Public Bodies (admission to meetings) Act 1960*

There were no members of the public in attendance,

**17. LEGAL MATTERS: Update**

The Town Clerk said that the Solicitors fees had been reasonable and remained within budget.

**18. To receive the results nominations for Civic Medallion (nominations will be voted on at another meeting as they need to be supported unanimously by all councillors)**

Cllr Layland said that he was very disappointed that not all Members had voted for the Civic Medallions which meant the vote was null and void. He proposed that the procedures for selecting nominees and the voting should be reviewed. Members **agreed**.

**19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday 9 March**

Meeting closed at 21:31