

MINUTES of the Council Meeting of EDENBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL, held in Rickards Hall on Monday 18 October 2021, at 7.30 pm.

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

In attendance: Town Clerk; no members 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 Aldridge, Baker, Compton and Damodaran.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS OR PREDETERMINATION

Cllr Lloyd declared a personal (non-pecuniary or prejudicial) interest in agenda item 11.1.

19:32 Meeting was adjourned for agenda item 3.

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

None.

19:32 Meeting was reconvened.

4. TO RECEIVE, ADOPT AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON [13 September](#) (9586-9591)

Resolved: that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 13 September 2021 be duly signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record of the meeting; pages 9586-9591.

5. TO RECEIVE COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

5.1 County Councillors

Cllr McArthur reported that Kent County Council (KCC) had been working on its response to the Gatwick second runway public consultation. She noted the Gatwick consultation van had been out and about including in Edenbridge.

The Reconnect programme for Kent's children, helping young people to get back to enjoying activities and opportunities, would continue the free food voucher scheme for the half-term school holiday.

She also mentioned the asylum seekers accommodation issues, and that unaccompanied asylum children's numbers were down from 450 to 312. However sadly, every boat that arrived in Kent had children on.

5.2 District Councillors

Cllr Layland advised that the Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) Cabinet meeting on 14 October, had resolved support for the Farmstead Drive, Spitals Cross, Edenbridge, development proposal and recommended to Council the provision of £7.6m in the 2021/22 Capital Programme to deliver the scheme (item 35). It also supported the Stangrove Estate regeneration project and recommended the Capital funding of £4.3m; (item 36).

Cllr McGregor noted the Development Control Committee had approved the planning application (20/02988/OUT) for outline planning for 340 dwellings, including affordable housing, and land for a 4FE secondary school. He also mentioned that he continued to keep the Marlpit Hill safety improvements on the Joint Transport Board (JTB) agenda.

6. TO ADOPT THE FOLLOWING REPORTS/MINUTES OF MEETINGS

- 6.1** *Planning Committee – [20 September](#); [11 October](#) – minutes yet to be published*
Resolved: the minutes of the meeting and numbered – 20 September (9592-9593-9572) be adopted; the meeting 11 October was noted.
- 6.2** *Open Spaces Committee – [20 September](#)*
Resolved: the minutes of the meeting and numbered – 20 September (9594-9599) to be adopted.
- 6.3** *Finance and Governance Committee – [27 September](#)*
Resolved: the minutes of the meeting and numbered – 27 September (9900-9601) to be adopted.
- 6.4** *Forward Planning Steering Group – [4 October](#) – minutes yet to be published*
The meeting was noted, with minutes yet to be presented.
- 6.5** *CIL Board – [11 October](#) – minutes yet to be published*
The meeting was noted, with minutes yet to be presented.

7. COVID-19 (Coronavirus): update

The Town Clerk's report was noted: The office maintained Covid-19 safety measures and twice-weekly testing. All staff were now office based, with homeworking used on a flexible arrangement, although this was minimal.

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

8.1 Clerk's Report

Received.

8.1.1 To receive report from Ellis Whittam/Worknest Health and Safety/Risk Assessment annual review visit

Members noted the report following the annual visit.

8.1.2 Community Warden's report

Report noted.

9. TO RECEIVE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING (27 September):

9.1 Covid-19 2020/21 Accounts- to cancel the outstanding residents shopping invoices

Members unanimously,

Resolved: to cancel the outstanding residents Covid-19 shopping invoices, due to the unforeseeable change in personal circumstances.

10. TO RECEIVE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FORWARD PLANNING STEERING GROUP MEETING (04 October):

10.1 To support improvements to the IT file storage system and to move to cloud based storage solutions, and the potential expenditure of £7,000 for budget year 2022/23; and

10.2 To consider upgrading the broadband telecommunications and additional annual expenditure of expenditure of £3,000 per year

10.3 To support a review of the Council's Assets and investigate the costs for commissioning a review for inclusion in the new budget (2022/23)

10.4 Thursday Market:

10.4.1 To join NABMA (current membership offer is until 31 March 2023) and the expenditure of £500 plus VAT

10.4.2 To create a Markets Policy (to formalise Edenbridge as the Market Authority)

10.4.3 To recruit on a fixed term contract for 1 year (to be reviewed) a person to oversee the Market on Thursdays and to work to increase the number of

traders, the profile of the market and organise promotional activities. Est. 8-10 hours per week, £5,500 annual salary budget

Members unanimously,

Resolved: to support the recommendations from the Forward Planning Steering Group for items above - 10.1 through to 10.4.3.

10.5 To consider the recommendation for budget 2022/23 to increase the precept to fund new projects and help reduce the budget deficit gap

Members unanimously,

Resolved: additional funding for the above projects should be included in the 2022/23 budget and to increase the Precept to fund new projects, and help reduce the budget deficit gap.

The draft budget will be presented to the Finance Committee for consideration at its November meeting. A recommendation will be made to full Council to consider at its December meeting. The budget for 2022/23 will be formally approved at the January Council meeting.

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

11.1 Edenbridge Community Christmas Association (ECCA): To consider a grant of £1,500 for its main event – Christmas Extravaganza 2021

Members received a grant application to be considered under its annual grants programme. It was noted that it was not normal procedure to make an award outside of the Grants Meeting; and that the total grants budget for 2021/22 was £7,880. However, in view of the Christmas Extravaganza event taking place being before the meeting, and that the Edenbridge Community Christmas Association (ECCA) were keen to ensure the success of this year's event, following last year which had been affected by Covid-19 lockdowns, Members,

Resolved: to award the ECCA a grant of £1,500 from the grants budget.

11.2 To receive verbal report following Annual Town and District Council Liaison Meeting on 12 October

The meeting was an opportunity to discuss local matters, which included:

- update on Emergency Planning. It was noted that Edenbridge was the most proactive area in the district and that this had helped also with the Covid-19 support to the community. The Council's Emergency Planning Committee members had received flood warden training, and some had radio comms. licences.
- Main Road/Marlpit Hill: It was agreed this needed to remain on the JTB agenda and SDC said that they would write again to KCC Highways if needed.
- Public Toilets - Business Rates Relief: The Town Council expressed its disappointment that it was not eligible for the relief and refund on the public toilets tax. SDC explained that this was because the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) did not have the toilets separately assessed as they appeared under the Market yard car park rates. The Town Clerk advised this would be taken up with the VOA and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC)
- Parish Charter: SDC was looking in to this which would be helpful for the 31 town and parish councils to have clarity and commitment. Edenbridge was praised for already having partnership projects.
- PACT meetings: Rickards Hall was offered as a location to host these meetings with a view for them to resume. SDC would take this back to the Community Support team.
- Emerging Local Plan: The Plan had not been withdrawn. SDC were looking at updating some aspects including the High Streets element and were working with

an agency to look at this. A new Call for Sites was being done. It was aiming to be at the Regulation 19 stage by April 2023.

- SDC Capital Development Programme: Stangrove Estate planning application was currently being consulted on. Proposals for Spitals Cross were in the early stages.
- SDC budget: The impact of Covid-19 had caused a £100k gap. There were tax base issues affecting all three levels of councils.

11.3 To confirm continued Kent Association for Local Council (KALC) Membership for financial year 2022/23 and the estimated expenditure £1,700 plus vat

Members unanimously,

Resolved: to continue with Kent Association for Local Council (KALC) Membership for financial year 2022/23 and the estimated expenditure £1,700 plus vat.

11.4 To receive an update on options for the Queens Platinum Jubilee (2 -5 June 2022) to acknowledge this event and celebrations

Cllr Layland said that he and the other members of the small group of councillors (Cllrs Baker, Read, Todd), nominated to look at the Queens Platinum Jubilee celebrations, had agreed the Town should be part of the lighting of Beacons across the country. It would also be nice to be able to dress the High Street with suitable bunting. The proposal was to ask the Council to support this, and allocate a £5k budget. There was some discussion, including the possibility of applying for grants. Members unanimously,

Resolved: to allocate £5k in the 2022/23 budget to fund a Beacon for Edenbridge; and suitable jubilee festive decoration.

12. VACANCY FOR CO-OPTION

Members noted that the Notice for Casual Vacancy was advertised on 14 September closing on 4 October. SDC had received no request to fill the casual vacancy by election. The vacancy could now be filled by co-option. There was no legal requirement to advertise for expressions of interest. Members **agreed** that they would like to fill the vacancy as soon as possible and would canvass for potential candidates, whom would be received at an extraordinary meeting of the full Council.

13. OTHER BUSINESS including items referred from Committees for decision

13.1 To consider the following training Groundstaff and expenditure:

13.2.1 Pesticide Application (Pa1) Refresher Training for three groundstaff - £370.00 (for up to 8 people)

Members unanimously,

Resolved: the expenditure of £370 for Pesticide Application (Pa1) Refresher Training for three groundstaff.

13.2.2 Pesticide Application Training and Qualification (Pa1 and 6a) for one groundstaff – £270 per person for training and £275.00 registration and assessment

Members unanimously,

Resolved: the expenditure of £545 for one member of the groundstaff team for Pesticide Application Training and Qualification (Pa1 and 6a)

13.2.3 One Day Lantra Hedge cutter Training for 4 people - £425.00 per day for the Training plus up to £220 (£55.00 per person) for Lantra Registration.

Members unanimously,

Resolved: the expenditure of £645 for four groundstaff to attend hedge cutter refresher training and obtain Lantra registration.

13.2.4 One Day Lantra Chainsaw Cross-Cut and Maintenance Refresher for 2 people - £425.00 per day for the Training plus £110 (£55.00 per person) for Lantra Registration

Members unanimously,

Resolved: the expenditure of £535 for two groundstaff to receive Chainsaw Cross-Cut and Maintenance Refresher and obtain Lantra Registration.

13.2 Emergency Planning Training: Flooding, Resilience, Management and Response Conference and the expenditure of up to £289 (training cost public sector £389, discount voucher £100) for one person

Members asked for the Emergency Planning Committee (EPC) to consider the value of the Conference and to make nomination of who should attend. It was unanimously, the expenditure (at £289 per person with discount) for at least one person to attend The Flooding Resilience, Management and Response Conference 2022, assuming the EPC considered there was value in attending.

Resolved: the expenditure (at £289 per person with discount) for at least one person to attend The Flooding Resilience, Management and Response Conference 2022, assuming the EPC considered there was value in attending.

13.3 To approve the proposed Council and Committees Meeting schedule for 2022/23

Members unanimously,

Resolved: the new schedule for Council and Committee meetings 2022.

13.4 To appoint a new Member on to the Finance and Governance Committee; and Personnel Committee

Members agreed to wait until the councillor vacancy had been filled.

14. CONSULTATIONS – none

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

Cllr Lloyd said that he attends CPRE meetings and forwards minutes from its meetings as received.

16. TO CONSIDER ANY PRESS RELEASES

Remembrance Service arrangements.

17. MATTERS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

None.

In view of the confidential nature of agenda item 18 to be discussed, the Chairman proposed that the press and public be excluded from the Chamber. Public Bodies (admission to meetings) Act 1960 and the Local Government Act 1972 s100 and 102.

There were no members of the public in attendance.

18. CHURCH COTTAGE – to receive an update

The Town Clerk reported that following contact with the estate agent for Church Cottage, reasonable discussions had taken place and the understanding was that the fence would be reinstated removing the temporary gate. The new owner may at some point make a request to the Council regarding access for oil deliveries.

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 6 December 2021

Meeting closed: 20:30