

MINUTES of the Meeting of EDENBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL, held in Rickards Hall on Monday 03 October 2022, at 7.30 pm.

Present: Cllrs J Aldridge, A Baker (Vice-Chair), S Compton, A Damodaran, M Gemmell Smith, V Jennings, A Layland, N Lloyd, S McGregor, S Sumner, and S Taylor

In attendance: Town Clerk; District Cllr Barnett; one member of the public and no members of the press.

Cllr Baker Chaired the meeting.

A minute's silence was held in memory of Her Late Majesty The Queen Elizabeth II.

1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received, noted and accepted from Cllrs McArthur, Read and Todd.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS OR PREDETERMINATION

None.

19:33 Meeting was adjourned for agenda item 3.

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

One resident wanted to share a recent experience of a friend who had recently visited the cemeteries, having not been for three-and-a-half years. Their first impression as they entered the cemetery was how wonderful and well kept, and despite the hot summer the flowers had flourished. However, it was not just the excellent work of the groundstaff keeping the cemeteries to high standards, there was something more meaningful and something quite profound. The friend also spoke to other visitors who agreed that the cemetery gardens were truly wonderful and did have a profound impact. The resident asked for thanks and appreciation for all they do be passed on the groundstaff.

19:38 Meeting was reconvened. One resident left the meeting.

4. TO RECEIVE, ADOPT AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON [04 July 2022](#) (9748-9754)

Resolved: that the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 04 July 2022 be duly signed by the Chair of the meeting as a true and accurate record of the meeting; pages 9748-9754.

5. TO RECEIVE COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

5.1. County Councillors

None.

5.2. District Councillors

Cllr McGregor mentioned Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) were beginning its budget preparations; and work on the draft Local Plan continued.

Cllr Barnett reported he had attended the SDC CIL Board meeting in September and was pleased additional funding for the Medical Centre had been confirmed.

6. TO ADOPT THE FOLLOWING REPORTS/MINUTES OF MEETINGS

6.1. Planning Committee – [18 July](#) (9755-9757); Planning Committee – [15 August](#) (9766-9769); Planning Committee - [5 September](#) (9772-9774; [26 September](#) (9780-9782)

Resolved: that the minutes of the meetings and numbered - Planning Committee – 18 July (9755-9757); Planning Committee –15 August (9766-9769); Planning Committee - 5 September (9772-9774; 26 September (9780-9782) to be adopted.

6.2. Finance Committee – 18 July (9758-9760)

Resolved: the minutes of the meeting and numbered – 18 July (9758-9760) to be adopted.

6.3. Open Spaces Committee –25 July (9761-9765); 5 September (9775-9779)

Resolved: the minutes of the meetings and numbered – 25 July (9767-9765); and 5 September (9775-9779) to be adopted.

6.4. Personnel Committee – 1 September (9770-9771)

Resolved: the minutes of the meeting and numbered – 1 September (97770-97771) to be adopted.

7. TO RECEIVE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING on 18 July:

7.1. To note: Committee approved the insurance provider and policy cover for the Council 2022-23, (Council resolution had approved expenditure up £17k), and made the following resolutions:

- to appoint Gallaghers as the broker with Hiscox as the insurance company providing the council insurance cover (6.1.1);
- a 3-year rate stability commitment with Gallaghers/Hiscox (6.1.2);
- insurance cover as quoted but asked the RFO to confirm the level of assets (contents and outdoor equipment), and to include the playground cover. It was noted there may be some slight adjustment to the policy quote (6.1.3). The policy cost quoted was £12,032.54 plus some adjustment to allow for increase with the assets

7.2. to refer the decision and confirmation of the expenditure for valuations for Church House and Rickards Hall, and Doggetts Barn back to full Council

Members noted the decisions as detailed in items 7.1 and 7.2, which had been referred to the Finance Committee under delegate authority. The amended valuations for three desktop valuations were noted and,

Ratified: the amended cover for the Depot, was £230,238 increased to £234,100 (1.67% increase); the Sports Pavilion, was £1,218,079 increased to £1,520,858 (24.85% increase); and the Public Toilets, was £155,924 increased to £192,454 (23.42% increase).

7.2.1. To approve the expenditure for new valuation of Doggetts Barn (Grade 2 listed), 72A High Street, Edenbridge, TN8 5AR, fee £995 + VAT on-site visit

7.2.2. To approve the expenditure for new valuation of Church House and Rickards Hall (Grade 2 listed), 72 High Street, Edenbridge, TN8 5AR, fee £1,110 + VAT on-site visit

Members unanimously,

Resolved: the expenditure for two new valuations for:

7.2.1 Doggetts Barn (Grade 2 listed), 72A High Street, Edenbridge, TN8 5AR, fee £995 + VAT; and,

7.2.2 Church House and Rickards Hall (Grade 2 listed), 72 High Street, Edenbridge, TN8 5AR, fee £1,110 + VAT.

7.3. To ratify: Since the Finance Committee meeting, the revised total annual insurance premium £12,169.36 plus an additional buildings annual premium £696.66 following desk top valuations for the Depot, Pavilion, and public toilets

Members noted the insurance premiums and unanimously,

Ratified: the Council's insurance premium, currently £12,169.36 plus an additional buildings annual premium £696.66 following desk top valuations for the Depot, Pavilion, and Public Toilets. Adjustments from additional valuations were yet to be confirmed.

8. RECEIVE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING on 1 September:

8.1 To approve increasing the contract hours by one additional hour for one employee, thus increasing the budget and pay of up to £608 per year, based on current rates of pay to enable employee(s) to meet the National Insurance credit threshold

Members voted, 10:1 majority,

Resolved: To increase the contract hours by one additional hour for one employee, thus increasing the budget and pay of up to £608 per year, based on current rates of pay, to enable an employee to meet the National Insurance credit threshold.

8.2 To adopt the policy document for salaries and payroll procedures

Members unanimously,

Resolved: to adopt the Salaries and Payroll Procedures policy.

8.3 To receive an update following on from meeting, item 5.2 other staff matters: Communications Assistant – opportunity to work remotely

The Town Clerk said following the Personnel Committee, when it was reported that the Communications and Administration Officer was moving abroad, discussions had taken place about the viability of continuing with the Council but working remotely. Davina had made a significant positive impact for the Council in her few months. Her role would be to continue with social media and other Council written communications. The appropriate IT equipment provided enables remote working complying with cyber security and GDPR. The HR consultant (Worknest) had highlighted three areas for UK compliance with overseas workers: tax regulations, insurance, and visa/work permit. Members asked the Clerk if working arrangements would be kept under review? The Clerk replied yes, and with budget reviews. It was also suggested that outsourcing maybe a solution to consider. Members unanimously,

Resolved: subject to the Town Clerk clarifying and resolving employment compliance issues, to allow a trail of remote working for the Communications Officer, starting as soon as viable and to be kept under review.

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

9.1 Clerk's report

Received and noted. Cllr Lloyd noted the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) had been signed off by the External Auditor. He congratulated and thanked the Town Clerk and RFO for their work with the end-of-year accounts and AGAR.

Cllr Sumner noted the new playground at the Recreation Ground which was being well used. He asked if a second bin could be considered at the teenage end-of-playground; currently there is one double bin at the toddler end.

9.2 Communications Officer's report

Received.

9.3 Market Officer's report

Received.

9.3.1 To consider installing suitable safe electric supply with check meter from the Mess room (Public Toilet block) for the use of market traders, and the expenditure of between £335 to £485 plus VAT (*depending on preferred option*)

Members considered the benefit and the need for separate electricity supply for potential traders. Due to practicalities and that traders could provide their own electric batteries/generators Members concluded, not to install separate electricity supply for use at the Market but could be reviewed if there was a demand.

10. HEALTH AND SAFETY/RISK ASSESSMENT: To receive report from Worknest annual review visit

Members received the detailed report following a Worknest Health and Safety visit in September. Overall, standards were good with some procedural improvements recommended.

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

11.1 To note: Finance and Governance Risk Assessment has been reviewed and updated

Noted. The Town Clerk thanked Cllrs Lloyd and Sumner for their assistance with this review.

11.2 To receive an update on the Main Road Marlpit Hill (Hilders Lane/Hillcrest Road junction) 40-mph buffer zone scheme, following the public consultation (8 July until 1 August 2022)

Noted as reported in the Clerk's report: Following the public consultation, Kent Highways had confirmed under five objections were received, and therefore approval by the Head of Service to go ahead has been given. The scheme design was currently being finalised ready for construction on site. Once this process was complete, Highways would provide the quote for carrying out the works and upon receipt of payment (from the Council) an order with the contractor would be placed.

11.3 To receive an update on the Games Club and note confirmation of funding from Involve Kent

Involve Kent had agreed the value up to £5,000 for the Council to continue running this service. A proportion of this would cover the Rickards Hall hire. The contract was on an outcomes basis, reviewed at the annual renewal time. There was scope to expand the brief for the Games Club facility/service which the Community Warden and Clerk were currently considering.

11.4 Neighbourhood Planning

The Clerk's report provided some background, noting Sevenoaks Town had recently gone to a Reg 16 consultation with its Neighbourhood Plan. Members were asked if they wanted to consider looking at costs, funding available and potential policies for a Neighbourhood Plan. Members discussed; the previous draft Plan had been a lot of work, and costs, and was now dated. It was noted that previous advice in 2017 from SDC had been *for those preparing a Neighbourhood Plan, you must show that your policies are in accordance with the new emerging Local Plan's strategic policies*. In view that there was still no Local Plan, Members **agreed** to hold off for the time being and to allow the new elected council (May 2023) to consider what a Neighbourhood Plan could do for Edenbridge.

12. OTHER BUSINESS including items referred from Committees for decision

12.1 Christmas Extravaganza – Saturday 26 November 2022: to approve the free use of Rickards Hall for the Edenbridge Christmas Community Association (ECCA)

Members unanimously,

Resolved: Edenbridge Christmas Community Association (ECCA) free use of Rickards Hall for its Extravaganza on Saturday 26 November 2022.

12.2 Christmas Extravaganza – Saturday 26 November 2022: to approve the ECCA use of the Council's TN8 events licence

Members unanimously,

Resolved: ECCA use of its TN8 events licence for Extravaganza event on Saturday 26 November 2022.

12.3 To approve the annual expenditure of £1,684.20 for: 1 x 240 and 1 x 360 litre bins, £1,344.20 plus the annual admin fee of £152 per bin (total £302) for Doggetts

Barn/Rickards Hall; and Market Yard Public Toilets/and Market, and annual supply of paper recycling sacks (£38). *Sevenoaks District Council has reviewed its guidance for business on their waste duty of care. To comply with the commercial waste requirements the Town Council will require the appropriate bins for two sites*

Members unanimously,

Resolved: the annual expenditure of £1,684.20 for: 1 x 240 and 1 x 360 litre bins, £1,344.20 plus the annual admin fee of £152 per bin (total £302) for Doggetts Barn/Rickards Hall; and Market Yard Public Toilets/and Market, and annual supply of paper recycling sacks (£38).

12.4 To approve the expenditure of £600 plus VAT for a new full fire safety Risk Assessment

Members unanimously,

Resolved: the expenditure of up to £1,000 plus VAT for a new full fire safety Risk Assessment for its buildings.

12.5 To approve the expenditure of £685.92 plus VAT for 5-yearly inspection and service of the Council's solar panels sited at the Depot and the Pavilion

Members unanimously,

Resolved: the expenditure of £685.92 plus VAT for 5-yearly inspection and service of the Council's solar panels sited at the Depot and the Pavilion.

12.6 To approve closing the Council office for three full working days (one day per week) to enable the staff time to work through the all the office online and paper files to enable the new IT File Storage System moving to a Cloud Based Storage Solution (approved Council January 2022)

Members unanimously,

Resolved: closing the Council office for three full working days (one day per week) to allow staff time to work through the all the office online and paper files to enable transfer to the new IT File Storage System moving to a Cloud Based Storage Solution.

12.7 Energy prices: The Council's energy contract for its buildings is secured by a 5-year contract expires 30 June 2025. The Streetlighting electricity supply 3-year contract expires 01 April 2023

Noted.

12.8 Warm Places: with the current Cost of Living crisis, parish and town councils are being asked to consider how it can help and if there is potential to extend its facilities

12.8.1 Games Club

Member unanimously,

Resolved: to extend the Games Club times and to provide a bowl of soup. It was noted that the Involve Kent funding could extend to this.

12.8.2 Sevenoaks District Warm Spaces initiative

Members received information on an initiative for 'Warm Spaces' which the Clerks from the four towns in Sevenoaks district (Sevenoaks, Swanley, Edenbridge and Westerham) had been discussing with SDC's Health and Communities Manager. The idea was to provide an online database (and local leaflets) of places where residents could go and get a cuppa, meet other people and be warm. Towns/parishes already had a range of facilities and places that residents could use, and these places already had safeguarding procedures and access to appropriate support advice. For example, community cafes, leisure centres, libraries, play groups, met and chat groups, church groups etc, and the idea of the initiative was to encourage places to extend their invitation to people in the community who may just need a warmer space and to meet new people. The Charter, online questionnaire and database would be set-up SDC on its website.

Members were supportive for the Games Club to be included in the Warm Spaces initiative.

12.9 To approve the annual expenditure of £2,400 plus VAT for the pitch decompaction at the Recreation Ground and Nomads/Mowshurst

Member unanimously,

Resolved: the annual expenditure of £2,400 plus VAT for the pitch decompaction at the Recreation Ground and Nomads/Mowshurst.

12.10 Edenbridge Dementia Friendly: To consider a new initiative in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce and the Manor Care Home

The Town Clerk reported, at a recent meeting with the Chamber of Commerce one of the initiatives raised was to try for Edenbridge to be a Dementia Friendly town. The Chamber proposed engaging with the new Manor Care Home who were already looking at providing support services/facilities within the town. Following a meeting with all three organisations, it was thought a collaborative initiative to engage with retail businesses and consider a suitable way forward to help make Edenbridge dementia friendly. An initial Reception (19 October) was proposed hosted by the Manor Care for local retailers to see if there was an appetite for business to be involved. The idea was to facilitate bringing resources together including advice from other professionals in the Dementia field. Members unanimously,

Resolved: to support a collaborative initiative to help Edenbridge in becoming a dementia friendly town.

12.11 SDC annual Liaison Meeting – Thursday 27 October (10.30 am) – to put forward any agenda items

Members noted this meeting for councillors was an opportunity for them to raise matters directly with the SDC leader and officers. The proposed agenda items on Clerk's report were noted.

12.12 Edenbridge Remembrance Sunday 13th November 2022

Members noted this year's Wreath laying ceremony would take place at 11.00 am at the War Memorial (Edenbridge Memorial Hospital), with a Church Service in the afternoon at 2.30 pm. Members of the Council were encouraged to attend.

Cllr Baker was organising the crafted poppies display for the Stangrove railings again.

12.13 Thursday Market: To consider allocating a budget of £300 for activities for December

Members unanimously,

Resolved: to support pitch fee offer for December and a budget of £300 for activities to help encourage activity during the Christmas period.

12.14 To confirm the Office Christmas arrangements

Members unanimously,

Resolved: to close the office for the Christmas week; Monday 26, Tuesday 27 bank holidays; Wednesday 28 and Thursday 29 statutory leave days; Friday 30 December staff have option to use an annual leave day or to work. Friday 23 December, the office would close early.

It was also noted the staff annual Christmas lunch would be a Friday in December.

12.15 King Charles III Coronation 2023: to consider instructing the Finance Committee to allow for a budget for the town's celebrations

The date of the Coronation was yet to be confirmed but was expected to be Spring/early summer 2023. Members were asked to consider if it wanted to establish a Working Group and consider allocating an initial budget. There was much discussion. With the success of the Queen's Jubilee celebrations and Beacon, Members were keen to provide a celebratory event for residents. Members **agreed** to establish a working group to report back to Council. Nominated members: Cllrs Baker, Compton, Damodaran, Gemmell Smith, Layland, Lloyd, Todd.

Members considered an indicative budget for instructing the Finance Committee to consider in its draft budget 2023/24. Following considerable debate, Members voted 5:4 with one abstention, and

Resolved: a £5,000 Coronation event budget.

12.16 To approve the proposed Council and Committees Meeting schedule for 2023/24

Members received the proposed calendar of meeting dates for 2023 and unanimously,

Resolved: the meeting dates for Council and Committee meetings 2023.

13. CONSULTATIONS

13.1 [Kent Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2023-2028](#) – closing date 31 October

13.2 [National Highways and Transport Survey 2022/23](#) – closing date 23 February 2023

13.3 [Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan - Regulation 16](#) Consultation - closing date 22 September

13.4 [Better Together community survey](#)

Consultations 13.1-13.4 were noted.

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

None.

15. TO CONSIDER ANY PRESS RELEASES

15.1 With the Council's current set-up with its social media and website platforms is this item necessary as an agenda item

Members agreed to keep the regular agenda item 'to consider press releases'.

16. MATTERS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

To consider shutting the Council office one day a week – item for future Personnel Committee meeting.

17. FORWARD PLANNING STEERING GROUP (FPSG) – the next meeting is 31 October – are there any specific future projects Members would like to be considered by the FPSG

Band Stand; Skate Park.

In view of the confidential nature of agenda item 18 and 19 to be discussed, the Chair 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.

Members unanimously,

Resolved: to excluded Members of the public for agenda items 18 and 19.

20:50 District Cllr Barnett left the meeting.

18. COUNCIL ASSETS REVIEW

18.1 Forge Green

Members noted that Forge Croft was about a story and half higher than its neighbouring site (currently Jewsons); any access would be difficult to create at its boundary.

18.2 Mowshurst

Two developers had approached the Council to consider potential sale of the car parking area and Moswhurst barn. Members noted the area was well used by walkers and Nomads Football Club and alternative parking would be required. Members unanimously,

Resolved: it was not pursuing any changes for this area and to currently do nothing.

19. LAND OUTSIDE THE POLICE STATION WHERE THE COUNCIL'S FLAGPOLE SITS

The developer of the Old Police Station had approached the Council with a proposal to take on the responsibility of a small area which fronts the High Street (18mx10m approximately and encompasses the two trees, the two benches, the sign for the school and the town's flagpole) for the cost of the land transfer legal fees (costs unknown). Members considered this offer with interest and unanimously,

Resolved: it could take on the area at the Old Police Station fronting the High Street creating a suitable small garden/seating/amenity fitting for the flagpole and the community. However, with budget constraints and not knowing the costs of the legal fees to enable the land transfer there was some hesitation as to whether they could commit without knowing the costs. It was suggested if the landowner would gift the land and cover the legal fees, the Council would welcome the opportunity to turn this area in an appropriate garden area.

In view of the time span between Council meetings and the developer's time frame of the offer, Members unanimously,

Resolved: delegated authority to the Finance Committee to receive any updates and consider if any budget could be allocated to help with this/potential legal fees.

20. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 05 December

Meeting closed at 21:10