

Council – 14 September 2010

DISTRICT COUNCIL OF SEVENOAKS

Minutes of the Meeting of the Sevenoaks District Council
held on 14 September 2010 commencing at 7 p.m.

Present: Cllr. Loney (Chairman)

Cllr. Orridge (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs. Abraham, Arnold, Bosley, Mrs. Bosley, Brookbank, Mrs. Broomby, Chard, Mrs. Clark, Coates, Mrs. Cook, Darrington, Davison, Mrs. Davison, Dean, Fleming, Gaywood, Gilbert, Grint, Harrod, Lankester, London, Mrs. Lowe, Maskell, McGarvey, McInnes, Ms. Moore, Mrs. Morris, Orridge, Mrs. Parkin, Pett, Piper, Ramsay, Ryan, Mrs. Sargeant, Scholey, Underwood, Waller, Walshe and Williamson.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Mrs. Bracken, Brigden, Brown, Bruce, Cole, Cooke, Mrs Dawson, Golding, Mrs. Hunter, Mrs. Purves, Miss Stack and Wigg.

26. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Chairman proposed that the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 20th July 2010 be approved and signed as a correct record.

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 20th July 2010 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs. Mrs. Broomby and Mrs. Cook informed the Council of inaccuracies with their reported declarations, as they were trustees of West Kent Mediation in their own right and were not appointed by the Council.

There were no further declarations of interest.

28. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman's first announcement was that he had represented the Council and residents of the District at the military funeral for Sapper Mark Smith, which was held at St Martin's Church in Eynsford on 19th August. Sapper Smith had served with the Royal Engineers for nine years and was on his second tour of duty in Afghanistan. Because of the need for Royal Engineers to detect roadside bombs he had volunteered to retrain to carry out this work. Sadly, he was killed by friendly fire when a shell providing a smoke screen for his work fell short and he was killed by the explosion.

The Chairman informed Members that Sapper Smith had family connections with Eynsford and had expressed a wish to be buried there, if he were to die on military service. He was unmarried and left behind a mother who lived in Swanley. The Town Mayor of Swanley, Cllr. Mrs. Sargeant, attended the

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funeral representing Swanley Town Council and the residents of Swanley.

The Chairman stated that it was a military funeral with a Deputy Lieutenant from the London Lieutenancy attending with senior officers from the Royal Engineers and service men and women from Sapper Smith's regiment. The Church was full and CCTV screens were set up outside for those unable to be in the church to see and hear the service. The service was concluded with the burial party firing a volley of shots over the grave.

The Chairman informed Members that Sapper Smith's family and friends spoke admiringly of the solemn and dignified way the Royal Engineers and the Army chaplain had conducted the service and the comfort that this had given them. It was a sad occasion and a reminder of the sacrifices servicemen and women make on behalf of this country.

The Chairman also announced that he and the Vice-Chairman had attended sixteen of the family fun days organised by the Council throughout the District during August. He stated that the Youth Development Officer, Sophie Paige, and her team had worked hard to put on these enjoyable and exciting activities and that for some parents unable to afford a holiday, daily attendance at these events was their holiday for the children.

29. TO RECEIVE ANY PETITIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

None were received.

30. MATTERS CONSIDERED BY THE CABINET AND/OR OTHER COMMITTEES

None.

31. REPORTS FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OR OTHER DIRECTORS ON MATTERS REQUIRING THE ATTENTION OF COUNCIL

A. EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING – BUDGET COUNCIL

With the permission of Council, Cllr. Fleming made an alteration to the recommendation from the Cabinet. To avoid Members having to meet in the week of Christmas, the Cabinet meeting would be moved from Thursday 16 December 2010 to Monday 13 December 2010 and the additional Council meeting would be held on Thursday 16 December 2010, rather than Tuesday 21 December 2010.

Cllr. Fleming moved, and Cllr. Ramsay seconded, the recommendation of the Cabinet as altered above.

Resolved: That the Council:

- (a) Agrees that the meeting of the Cabinet due to be held on 16th December 2010 now be held on 13th December 2010; and

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- (b) Approves the budget timetable set out in the Appendix to the report, including the setting of an additional Council meeting on 16th December 2010 to approve the budget for 2011/12.

32. TO CONSIDER ANY QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER PARAGRAPH 19.3 OF PART 2 OF THE CONSTITUTION

(a) Cllr. Mrs. Sargeant asked the following question:

“Could the Leader of the Council please tell me if the Chairman of this Council is the official representative at events within the District?”

The Leader of the Council replied as follows:

“Yes, the Chairman is the Council’s official representative when invited to attend events within the Sevenoaks District.”

Cllr. Mrs. Sargeant asked a supplementary question as follows:

“Could the Leader please tell me why the Chairman and Vice-Chairman receive an enhanced allowance when Portfolio Holders represent the Council at events within the District?”

The Leader of the Council replied as follows:

“On the occasions, and they are rare, that the Chairman is not able to accept an invitation, the Vice-Chairman stands in for him on the same basis. There may be occasions when neither Chairman or Vice-Chairman are available and the Leader or a relevant Cabinet Member may be invited as the Council’s representative. As Chairman of the Council he/she takes precedence within the District unless the Lord Lieutenant is in attendance representing the Queen”.

33. TO RECEIVE ANY QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC UNDER PARAGRAPH 17 OF PART 2 OF THE CONSTITUTION

None were received.

34. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL ON THE WORK OF THE CABINET SINCE THE LAST MEETING

The Leader thanked staff who had been involved in organising the family fun days. He also thanked those town and parish councils which had provided funding for the events, as well as Kent County Council which had also provided funding.

The Leader informed Members that he had visited Family Action in Edenbridge, which was one of many small, hard working voluntary organisations in the District which provided invaluable services. He asked Members to thank similar organisations which they were involved in on his

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behalf.

The Leader told Members that there had been a recent meeting of the Kent Leaders at the end of August, where a proposal had been considered to create a Kent and Medway Local Economic Partnership (LEP). West Kent supported this proposal and it felt this delivered a good deal for the area. However, late on in the process a rival proposal for a Kent and Essex partnership was put on the table, which West Kent did not support as it felt it would be marginalised in that arrangement. As a result, the Sevenoaks put forward a bid as part of the Kent and Medway LEP, which would be led by Medway Council, whereas Kent County Council and some other Kent Districts included themselves in the Kent and Essex LEP. The two bids were currently before the Secretary of State.

The Leader informed Members that he had been invited to join the Local Government Association Executive Committee, which he said was a reflection of how Sevenoaks District Council was now viewed. He also informed Members that the Department for Communities and Local Government had invited him to join their Deregulation Task Group.

A Member asked why the Cabinet had been considering moving to one of two new executive leadership models, when the current government was committed to allowing Councils to return to the Committee system. The Leader replied that the letter from Grant Shapps MP, at the end of the Cabinet report, explained the situation.

A Member asked the Leader why the Council was establishing older people's forums, which he felt would be talking shops, when older people wanted to have somewhere to have benches to sit down in the town and the Council had done nothing about this. The Leader replied that older people's forums would not be talking shops. He also stated that the removal of the benches in Blighs had not been the responsibility of the Council but the previous operator, who was concerned about anti-social behaviour. He stated that he would write to the new operator of Blighs to request that they reinstated the benches.

35. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMEN OF THE SELECT COMMITTEES ON THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEES SINCE THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING

There were no questions on the report.

36. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PERFORMANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ON THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE SINCE THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING

There was no report.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.33 P.M.

