

DISTRICT COUNCIL OF SEVENOAKS

Minutes of the Meeting of the Sevenoaks District Council held on 1 April 2014 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Pett (Chairman)

Mrs. Davison (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Abraham, Mrs. Ayres, Ayres, Mrs. Bayley, Ball, Bosley, Mrs. Bosley, Mrs. Bracken, Brookbank, Brown, Ms. Chetram, Clark, Mrs. Clark, Mrs. Cook, Cooke, Davison, Mrs. Dawson, Dickins, Eyre, Fittock, Fleming, Gaywood, Mrs. George, Grint, Horwood, Mrs. Hunter, London, Ms. Lowe, Maskell, McGarvey, Mrs. Morris, Neal, Orridge, Mrs. Parkin, Piper, Mrs. Purves, Ramsay, Mrs. Sargeant, Scholey, Searles, Miss. Stack, Miss. Thornton, Underwood and Williamson

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Edwards-Winsler, Firth, Hogarth, Raikes, Towell and Walshe

41. To Approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 18 February 2014

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 18 February 2014 be approved and signed as a correct record.

42. To receive any declarations of interest not included in the register of interest from Members in respect of items of business Included on the agenda for this Meeting

No further declarations of interest were received.

43. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman firstly welcomed Chief Inspector Tim Cook, District Commander, to the meeting.

The Chairman extended his gratitude and thanks to the local schools who took part and the residents who came out in their droves to congratulate Lizzy; and Go buses, Arriva and the Sevenoaks Chronicle. It was an excellent showcase for the Council. He could not believe the number of people who wanted to be photographed with him, as well as Lizzy. He advised that he had learned after the event that he had a closer connection than he realised in that he had worked with her Grandmother 25 years ago when he had been a lecturer and she had been a librarian at the same college.

He expressed his pride in the Council's officers who had organised a professional, first class event in a very short time, and understood that in the past couple of weeks he knew that many had worked exceptionally hard to make to make the parade a great success.

It was particularly noteworthy that this occurred at the same time as the Sports Relief Mile event on Sunday 23 March at Sevenoaks Preparatory School, which was coupled with the launch of the Air Alert scheme. The workload and pressures were illustrated by

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the fact that that he had received an important communication at 8.20pm on the Saturday evening from the officer concerned. Again he congratulated all involved.

The Chairman had been privileged to lead the Council team at Sunday's Sports Relief Mile, which had raised in excess of £120 so far. One team member did the mile; the remainder did three, including the Chairman. Anyone minded to contribute to this very worthy cause should please log onto: <https://my.sportrelief.com/sponsor/chairmans-sevenoaks-council-team>.

The Chairman advised that he had attended the memorial service for John Thompson Spare OBE, who had been a long serving former Councillor at Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and at one time its youngest Mayor. He had also been the founder/president of Voluntary Action Tunbridge Wells (VATW) which later became and is now known as Voluntary Action West Kent (VAWK).

The Chairman reported that he had also spent a day on what he called the 'dust carts', but the Chief Officer Environmental and Operational Services was at pains to tell him there were called 'waste collection freighters' these days. It was incredibly illuminating, and indicative of a huge need to educate the Council's waste generators (residents) as to what was and what was not recyclable, to help improve the Council's recycling rates. He expressed his thanks to the crew who took him out, and to all of the refuse collectors, who were clearly much more significant ambassadors of the Council than may be appreciated.

He took the opportunity to remind Members of the Sevenoaks 'In Bloom' competition.

The Chairman extended an invitation to all Members to attend his Civic Service at St Mary the Virgin Church, Woodlands, Knatts Valley at 3.00 p.m. on Sunday 13 April 2014. If interested, he requested that Members email him. It was a very small Church with limited space so it would be on a first come, first served basis.

CHANGE IN AGENDA ITEM ORDER

With the Council's agreement consideration of agenda item 10 (a) was moved forward to be taken after agenda item 6 (a).

44. To receive any Questions from Members of the Public under Paragraph 17 of Part 2 (The Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution.

Two questions had been received from members of the public in accordance with paragraph 17 of Part 2 (The Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution.

Question 1: Mr. John Morrison

'Can the Leader of the Council explain the lack of any provision in the proposal for recurring management costs and staffing for the new car parks, including CCTV monitoring?

Given the lack of such provision and the lack of any perimeter at ground level to limit pedestrian access, how will the new car parks be able to meet the minimum security and safety standards to obtain the British Parking Association/ACPO 'PARK MARK' certificate?

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What consultation has the council had with police on the safety and security aspects of the proposal?’

Response: Leader of the Council

‘In calculating a rate of return on the investment the Council has taken into account all ongoing revenue costs, including maintenance, management, enforcement, business rates and CCTV. The project provides a satisfactory return on investment including the economic benefits for the Town. The Council has engaged a leading specialist parking consultant who have extensive expertise in the conceptual design of parking structures, to assist the Council in design, specification and preparing the planning application. The design will cover all safety and security aspects including emergency lighting, CCTV provision, fire safety, entry/exit control and pedestrian safety. Once a planning application has been submitted a full planning consultation exercise will be undertaken. The planning application will be determined by the Council’s Development Control Committee.’

Question 2: Mr. Roger FitzGerald

‘Why is the Council not thinking strategically and why is it not integrating the proposed new car parks into a wider masterplan for the town centre?’

Response: Leader of the Council

‘I don’t believe that the proposals for a decked car park to provide increased long stay parking provision for the town precludes the possibility of a wider master plan, and in fact I believe it could form a corner stone to the further development of such a plan, the fact remains that this proposal could be delivered in a timely and cost effective manner to the benefit of residents and businesses in the town.’

There was no further discussion.

45. To receive any Petitions submitted by Members of the Public under Paragraph 18 of Part 2 (The Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution.

No petitions were received.

46. Matters Considered by the Cabinet

(a) Sevenoaks Town Centre Parking Review

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Ms. Lowe seconded the recommendations from Cabinet. The report detailed a proposal to provide additional parking capacity in Sevenoaks Town by ‘decking’ the existing Council owned Buckhurst 2 and/or the Suffolk Way car parks; a review of current parking provision and the results and conclusions from a parking survey undertaken by an independent company in November 2013; details of estimated construction costs for various options for these two car parks and the existing planning policies and scope for both sites; and provided a breakdown of estimated costs per option and the likely estimate of additional income generated whilst providing options for funding the project. The report also identified opportunities for increasing parking in the areas near the railway station by ‘decking’ the existing Council owned Bradbourne car park. Members noted the decision already taken by Cabinet to submit a planning

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application to provide an additional 300 car park spaces on the existing Buckhurst 2 car park by providing a two storey elevated car deck; and requested the Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee to set up a Working Group to look at car parking technology such as smart ticketing.

A Member expressed concern that the proposals would have a detrimental impact on the town through overbuilding and increased traffic and that further consultation should have taken with interested parties such as Sevenoaks Town Council, the Chamber of Commerce and other interested parties.

Another Member commented that proposals for the Buckhurst car park had been proposed over twenty years ago but shelved on a change of administration. She asked for assurance that the works would be completed in a timely manner and asked whether there would be any environmental enhancements.

The Leader stated that there was unmet demand for long stay parking for businesses and residents already in the town. There were over 100 applications on the waiting list for business permits, and there was an increasing number of residential units and more over shop accommodation being returned to residential accommodation causing further pressure on spaces. The difference between now and twenty years ago was that construction methods had moved on and it was possible to build these structures, on site, quicker and in a more environmentally friendly manner within 6-8 weeks rather than months. With regards to environmental enhancements these new structures would be cladding with appropriate finishes. He advised that he had been approached about existing unsightly plans but pointed out that there were no plans as yet that anyone could look at. Agreeing the recommendation would allow proper plans and a consultation process where people could look at the proposals. The Town Council were contacted in February and would be part of the consultation process.

A Member asked whether there would be a comprehensive risk assessment carried out. Other Members commented on the need for more parking to benefit the residents of the District. Another Member stated that it was a question of stewardship as to whether to have a sleepy historic town or a thriving vibrant one.

In reply and response, the Leader advised that the old concrete multi storey car parks were the least environmentally friendly options and it was cost prohibitive to cut into the ground, even the cost of providing surface car parking had increased. With regards to the vibrancy of the town, many of the residents commuted to London, other than shoppers parking was needed for workers within the town. The Town had ridden the recession better than most but could not stand still.

The motion was put to the vote and it was

Resolved: That

- a) subject to planning consent, to undertake a Procurement exercise for the project and subject to the successful tender being within the estimated costs as outlined in this report, to award a contract to design and build the elevated car park decks on the existing Buckhurst 2 car park;

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- b) a budget of £3.5-£4.0 million be approved to be financed by borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board;
- c) that delegated authority be granted to the Portfolio Holders for Finance and Resources and Economic and Community Development to, after consideration of the tender evaluation, accept the most economically advantageous tender, to award the contract and authorise expenditure and approvals within the estimated costs outlined in this report and the borrowing approval;
- d) that a planning application be submitted for the decking of the existing Bradbourne car park to increase parking capacity in the area adjacent to the railway station; and
- e) a planning application be submitted to provide additional parking spaces in the existing Suffolk Way car park by providing either a one or two storey elevated car deck, to allow for longer term provision of additional short stay parking capacity.

47. To receive a presentation from Chief Inspector Tim Cook, the District Commander on the Policing arrangements for the District following the recent reorganisation

Chief Inspector Tim Cook, District Commander Kent Police reported that Kent Police had seen a series of financial reductions already losing £53 million and about to lose another £20 million. This had led to a reduction in staffing and a necessary remodelling of the workforce. Both the Commissioner and Chief Constable shared a joint vision placing victims first, focusing on reducing crime and protecting the public from harm. Strategic priorities within the plan included: cutting crime and catching criminals; ensuring visible, community policing was at the heart of Kent's Policing Model; putting victims and witnesses first; protecting the public from serious harm; meeting national commitments for policing; and delivering value for money. The Police and Crime Plan reflected the Commissioner's commitment to retain visible, community policing as the bedrock of policing in the county.

The Chief Inspector would have 65 Constables and there would be 24/7 policing. He would be accountable for the policing seen. Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) were magnificent ambassadors for Kent Police and would be the staff delivering day to day local and on-going community engagement at a ward level. There would be a Community Policing team, which would have a Sergeant and a team of four who would deal with more strategic longer term delivery on more problematic issues. This would start on 24 June 2014.

Chief Inspector Cook was happy to answer questions relating to the reorganisation. He advised that he would also be attending the Council's Scrutiny Committee the next day and welcomed further questions from Members there.

A Member requested that PCSOs make themselves known to their ward councillors. Other Members praised their local PCSOs and made pleas that they not be removed because of invaluable local knowledge they had built up. Members also requested that PCSOs attend local Town or Parish Council meetings. A Member requested that that differentiation between different parts of wards needed to be acknowledged. The Chief

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Inspector thanked Members on behalf of the PCSOs, he added that they were the bedrock of delivering local policy. Some PCSOs had to be moved for career progression or other reasons but he gave assurance that he would retain PCSOs in the areas about which they had built up local knowledge wherever possible, would keep Members informed about any changes and would make appropriate cover arrangements for any PCSOs who had to be moved. There was no reason why PCSOs would not be able to attend meetings and he would expect that of the officers. In response to a question he advised that there was a clear policy with regards to supporting events such as Remembrance Sunday parades which was taken by the Chief Constable.

48. Matters Considered by Governance and Licensing Committees

(b) Community Governance Review

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Mrs. Davison seconded the recommendations from the Governance Committee and it was

Resolved: That

- a) a community governance review be undertaken in the Parish of Shoreham to investigate the creation of a new parish ward;
- b) a community governance review be undertaken to investigate the boundary between the parishes of Chevening and Sevenoaks Weald in the vicinity of Bowzell Green; and
- c) the terms of reference for the review set out in Appendix C to the report be adopted.

(c) Polling Districts and Polling Places Review

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Mrs. Davison seconded the recommendations from the Governance Committee and it was

Resolved: That the polling scheme shown as Appendix A to the report, be approved.

(d) Review of New Governance Arrangements

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Mrs. Davison seconded the recommendations from the Governance Committee along with an additional recommendation that no Member could Chair more than one Advisory Committee.

Resolved: That the implementation of the following recommendations take effect from the date of Annual Council on 13 May 2014:

- a) the Scrutiny Committee changes to a fixed membership of 9 members plus a Chairman and Vice Chairman with all members of the committee being independent of the Cabinet Advisory Committees;

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- b) the membership of the Cabinet Advisory Committees increase from 10 members to 12 members including the relevant Cabinet and Deputy Cabinet Members on each of the Cabinet Advisory Committees;
- c) Members be able to sit on more than one Cabinet Advisory Committee;
- d) with the number of Cabinet Advisory Committees remaining at 5 the Committees should normally meet 4 times a year;
- e) the Advisory Committees be able to choose their own Chairman;
- f) the Governance Committee continue to investigate future Governance arrangements in general to allow the newly elected administration in 2015 to consider future governance;
- g) Portfolio Holders to individually present a report to each ordinary Full Council meeting in the same way the Chairmen of the Select Committees did previously;
- h) a comprehensive training plan for Members be developed for implementation in May 2015; and
- i) no Member to be Chairman of more than one Advisory Committee.

(e) Recorded Votes at Budget Meetings

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Mrs. Davison seconded the recommendations from the Governance Committee and it was

Resolved: That the requirement to hold a recorded vote at future budget setting meetings of Full Council be noted.

(f) Recording of Meetings

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Mrs. Davison seconded the recommendations from the Governance Committee along with an additional recommendation to publish the recordings on the Council's website.

A Member of the Governance Committee explained that the issue of publishing the recordings on the website had been discussed by the Committee at length and it had been decided that this should not be done until after the trial period. Councillor Fleming, with the agreement of the seconder, withdrew the additional recommendation.

The recommendations from the Governance Committee were therefore put to the vote and it was

Resolved: That Full Council meetings be recorded on a trial basis for the month of May and July 2014 and if successful Full Council ratify the roll out of the recording all meetings of Full Council, Development Control Committee and Licensing Hearings.

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- (g) Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing: Licence Fees 2014/2015

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Mrs. Morris seconded the recommendations from the Licensing Committee and it was

Resolved: That from 1 April 2014 the list of fees and associated costs for licences in respect of hackney carriage drivers and vehicles and private hire drivers, vehicles and operators be varied as set out in paragraph 7 of the report.

(Councillor Mrs. Dawson abstained from voting as taxis were her main mode of transport)

- (h) Adoption of Kent Licensing Compliance and Enforcement Protocol

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Mrs. Morris seconded the recommendations from the Licensing Committee and it was

Resolved: That the revised Kent and Medway Compliance and Enforcement Protocol be adopted

49. To consider the following reports from the Chief Executive or other Chief Officers on matters requiring the attention of Council:

- (a) Draft Calendar of Meetings for the Municipal Year 2014/15

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Ms. Lowe seconded approval of the draft meetings calendar. A Member requested that should additional meetings of the Development Control Committee be scheduled, that they avoid the first Wednesday of a month.

Resolved: That the calendar of meetings for 2014/15 be approved subject to formal adoption at the Annual meeting of Council on 13 May 2014.

50. To consider any questions by Members under paragraph 19.3 of Part 2 (the Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution, notice of which have been duly given.

No questions had been received.

51. To consider any motions by Members under paragraph 20 of Part 2 (the Council and District Council Members) of the Constitution, notice of which have been duly given.

No motions had been received.

52. To receive the report of the Leader of the Council on the work of the Cabinet since the last Council meeting.

The Leader of the Council reported on the work that he and the Cabinet had undertaken in the period 1 February to 14 March 2014. The Leader added his thanks to Officers for all the work undertaken for the Lizzy Yarnold tour of the District which was exceptional and brilliantly organised with hundreds of school children.

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53. Annual Report from Audit Committee

The Chairman of Audit Committee commended his report to the Council, there were no questions.

54. Annual Report from Scrutiny Committee

The Chairman of Scrutiny Committee commended his report to the Council, there were no questions.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.05 pm

Chairman