

DISTRICT COUNCIL OF SEVENOAKS

Minutes of the Meeting of the Sevenoaks District Council held on 22 July 2014 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Mrs. Davison (Chairman)
McGarvey (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs. Abraham, Mrs. Ayres, Ayres, Mrs. Bayley, Ball, Bosley, Brookbank, Butler, Ms. Chetram, Mrs. Cook, Cooke, Davison, Dickins, Edwards-Winser, Eyre, Fittock, Fleming, Gaywood, Mrs. George, Grint, Hogarth, Horwood, Mrs. Hunter, Lindsay, Ms. Lowe, Maskell, Mrs. Morris, Neal, Orridge, Mrs. Parkin, Pett, Piper, Mrs. Purves, Ramsay, Mrs. Sargeant, Scholey, Miss. Stack, Miss. Thornton, Towell and Underwood

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Mrs. Bosley, Mrs. Bracken, Brown, Clark, Mrs. Clark, Mrs. Dawson, Firth, Raikes, Searles, Walshe and Williamson

12. To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 13 May 2014.

Some confusion was caused by the wording in the third paragraph of page 4 of the minutes and it was agreed that this needed to be made clearer.

It was noted that one too many members had been appointed to the Sevenoaks District Strategic Board, Councillor Abraham advised that he had agreed to be removed subject to Council's approval.

Resolved: That

- a) the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 22 July 2014 be approved and signed as a correct record, subject to the last sentence of the third paragraph on page 4 being amended to read 'He also stated that the 24 dual hatted members should not vote, but if they did and voted against passing on the money, they should resign';
- b) Councillor Abraham be removed from the membership of the Sevenoaks District Strategic Board.

13. 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.

In order to be as clear and transparent as possible, Cllr. McGarvey advised that in relation to Minute 18 (a) 'Community Governance Review – Badgers Mount Order' he had been a co-opted member of a committee of Shoreham Parish Council discussing this issue and had previously been a clerk to Shoreham Parish Council.

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14. Chairman's announcements

The Chairman announced that Ian Bigwood was retiring from Electoral Services on 15 August 2014 after 33 years service. He would be greatly missed and was very well thought of throughout his profession and by Members.

She reported that she had attended and represented the Council at 64 events in the last two months, which had included visiting 12 local schools. It was proving to be very enjoyable.

"The lamps are going out all over Europe, we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime."

The Chairman advised that Sir Edward Grey, Foreign Secretary, had said these words on the eve of Britain officially entered the First World War. 100 years on everyone was being invited along with millions of individuals, households and companies to join together in a national moment of reflection. Everyone in the UK was being asked to turn off or dim their lights between 10pm and 11pm on 4 August 2014 – leaving only a single light or candle for this symbolic act of reflection and hope.

15. To receive any questions from members of the public under paragraph 17 of part 2 (the council and district council members) of the constitution.

No questions had been received.

16. 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.

17. Matters considered by the Cabinet

a) Safeguarding Policy for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Ms. Lowe seconded the recommendations from Cabinet. The report sought approval for the adoption of the updated Safeguarding Policy to enable the Council to more effectively meet its statutory responsibilities under s. 11 of the Children's Act 2004 and follow guidance published by the Department of Health and Kent County Council in relation to vulnerable adults. The Policy was intended to apply to all staff, Members of the Council, contractors and volunteers, and also clarified the District Council's responsibility for ensuring that any organisation that received funding from the District Council had appropriate policies in place to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.

Resolved: That the updated Safeguarding Policy for the protection of children and vulnerable adults be adopted.

b) Sevenoaks District Community Safety Strategy & Action Plan 2014/15 Adults

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Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Ms. Lowe seconded the recommendations from Cabinet. The report which sought approval for the adoption of the Sevenoaks District Community Safety Strategy & Action Plan 2014/15.

A Member expressed support for the policy but requested that in line with the now adopted Safeguarding Policy, that vulnerable older people living at home be added to the list of priorities when it was next reviewed. It was noted that although not directly mentioned, the Community Safety Team took the issue seriously and particularly worked on issues such as cold calling.

Resolved: That the Sevenoaks District Community Safety Action Plan be adopted.

18. Matters considered by other Standing Committees

a) Community Governance Review – Badgers Mount Order

The Chairman advised that since the publication of the agenda Officers had been made aware of some typographical errors in the Establishment Order which had since been corrected. Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Pett seconded the recommendations from the Governance Committee.

Councillor Grint speaking as a resident and Ward Councillor and on behalf of his fellow ward councillor, was very pleased to be able to support the historic creation of an independent parish council and thanked Shoreham Parish Council for its care, cooperation and help with becoming independent.

Resolved: That subject to typographical amendments in the Establishment Order, a Parish Council for the parish of Badgers Mount be established on and from 1 April 2015 in the terms of the Establishment Order as appended to the report submitted.

b) Community Governance Review

Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Pett seconded the recommendations from the Governance Committee.

Resolved: That

- a) Romney Street Ward be created in the Parish of Shoreham;
- b) the number of parish councillors for the Romney Street Ward, the Shoreham Ward and The Well Hill Hundreds Ward of the Parish of Shoreham be 1, 6 and 1 respectively; and
- c) the boundary between the parishes of Chevening and Sevenoaks Weald be amended in the vicinity of Bowzell Green.

c) Changes to the Council's Constitution

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Councillor Fleming proposed and Councillor Pett seconded the recommendations from the Governance Committee.

Resolved: That the following amended wording replace Part 13 paragraph 15 (2) of the Constitution 'Officer Responsibilities and Delegations – Delegation to Chief Planning Officer'

- (i) 'Where the Council is a consultee (e.g. when the planning application has been submitted to Kent County Council as the Mineral Planning or Education Authority, or to an adjoining planning authority) and the application is considered to be significant, controversial, or sensitive in nature then the Chief Planning Officer shall if requested by a Member or Members report the matter to the next Development Control Committee.
- (ii) Where the Council is a consultee (e.g. when the planning application submitted by Kent County Council as the Mineral Planning or Education Authority, or to an adjoining planning authority) and when timeframes do not allow and the application is considered to be significant, controversial, or sensitive in nature then the Chief Planning Officer shall if requested by a Member or Members seek the views of the Local Ward Member, the Leader and other relevant Portfolio holders and Deputies.'

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

- a) Appointments to Outside Organisations – The Local Democracy and Accountability Network for Councillors

The report sought to retrospectively approve the appointment of Cllr. Raikes with Cllr. Miss Stack as official substitute, to South East Employers (SEE) The Local Democracy and Accountability Network for Councillors.

Resolved: That

- a) Councillors Raikes be appointed to serve on the Local Democracy and Accountability Network for Councillors, with Cllr. Miss. Stack as the official substitute retrospectively from 4 July 2014; and
- b) the Chief Officer Corporate Support be appointed as the Officer representative with delegated authority given to the Chief Executive to change as necessary.

20. 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.

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21. 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.

22. 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 2 April to 9 July 2014.

He further advised in relation to the South East England Local Enterprise Partnership, that despite being the largest area and it being indicated that funding would be treated more favourably to reflect this. This had not happened. Due to a number of changes made there was also a reduced pot which was aimed more at shorter projects with a 12-18 month window. A proposed project in Swanley had not been successful. However a small pot for West Kent of £4.2m had been identified which he hoped could be passed to the West Kent partnership and he would update Council in due course.

In response to a question he reported that at the recent meeting he and the Chief Executive had attended a meeting with the principle of the Hadlow Group had been buoyant about the prospects of K College coming under their control subject to government confirming that any debts would be written off before they took full control. A further meeting was to take place later that week.

23. Matters considered by the Cabinet

- a) Investment Strategy

Members noted that parts of the report had now been reclassified as open to the public, and were careful during the debate not to mention information contained within the exempted papers (by virtue of section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from this meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that likely disclosure of exempt information is involved as defined by paragraph 3 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) as identified in Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972). The debate was therefore held in public and there was no need to pass a resolution to exclude the press and public.

Cllr. Fleming moved and Cllr. Ramsay seconded that money be set aside for the purposes of the proposals set outlined for the Investment Strategy. In moving the recommendations Cllr. Fleming advised that this was one of the steps being taken in the overall strategy and goal of self sufficiency. He advised that a trading company was still being investigated but further legal advice was being sought. He understood that both the Scrutiny Committee and the Audit Committee were interested in setting up working groups to examine the strategy but that he had been reassured that there would not be a duplication of work.

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The Chairman of the Audit Committee advised that it would be looking into the risk management, not the merits, as this was a new area of exposure and as such would abstain from voting as the Chairman of that Committee.

A Member had concerns including whether there was enough in house expertise; that it may be too restrictive to limit investment just to the district; the cost of consultants; Officer's time and resources; and whether the Council could be flexible and quick enough to respond when delays could be costly. In response to those and other questions Cllr. Fleming advised that though the report mentioned it Council was not yet being asked to set up a trading company; whilst it was not the best time for interest rates or investing in the property market, the return would still be more favourable than what the Council was in receipt of at the moment. Self sufficiency was crucial in order to be able to support the community and provide what was needed locally and talks were already underway as to what exactly self sufficiency would be as arguably if government was sufficiency local authorities should have free rein to spend their own money.

Resolved: That up to £5m be set aside from a review of reserves for the purposes of the proposals outlined in the Investment Strategy (as outlined within the exempted parts of the report).

(Cllr. Grint abstained from voting as Chairman of the Audit Committee)

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.49 pm

Chairman