

WESTERHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held at Russell House on
Monday 10th October 2022 at 7 pm

Present: Councillors: Mrs H Ogden (HO) – Chairman
Mrs L Bird (LB), Mr E Boyle (EB),
Mrs D Coen (DC), Mrs J Davies (JD),
Mr B Holt (BH), Dr J Lord (JL),
Mr C Pither (CP), Mr N Robson (NR),
Mrs S Sheen (SS) and Mr K Thompson (KT)

In attendance: Town Clerk: Mrs A Howells (AH)

Item		Action
	A minute's silence was held to mark the passing of Queen Elizabeth II	
1.	<u>Apologies for Absence</u> Apologies were received and accepted from Mr C Elsdon-Wortley – business commitment and Cllr Kay – holiday.	
2.	<u>Declarations of Interest not previously declared</u> None.	
3.	<u>Minutes of the Council Meeting on 11th and 25th July 2022</u> It was resolved to approve and sign the minutes of the Council meeting held on 11 th and 25 th July.	
4.	<u>Information items arising from the minutes of the previous meeting not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda</u> 5.6 Fountain repair - The work commenced on 13 th September. The crane had repositioned all the pieces. Stone work to repair the broken lower stone was still awaited. 8.1 Refund from Darent Valley Landscape Partnership - An email had been received from Darent Valley Landscape Partnership requesting payment details in order to repay the grant. 9.4 Incident on The Green - The claim was ongoing. The Clerk had answered further questions from WTC Insurance Company in conjunction with Cllr Lord.	
5.	<u>To receive and consider the following Minutes of Committee:</u> Cllr Robson presented the Minutes: 5.1 <u>Planning and Development – 21.07.22</u> Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) continued to work on their Local Plan.	

<p>In November they will consult on non-Green Belt sites as part of their Regulation 18 consultation.</p> <p>Tandridge District Council was continuing to send monthly updates to the Inspector regarding their Local Plan.</p> <p>Covers Farm – WTC had responded to the latest consultation. The application would not be heard before December 2022.</p> <p>Resolved: that the Minutes be adopted.</p> <p>5.2 <u>Planning and Development – 04.08.22</u></p> <p>Resolved: that the Minutes be adopted.</p> <p>5.3 <u>Planning and Development – 18.08.22</u></p> <p>Resolved: that the minutes be adopted.</p> <p>5.4 <u>Planning and Development – 01.09.22</u></p> <p>Resolved: that the minutes be adopted.</p> <p>5.5 <u>Planning and Development – 29.09.22</u></p> <p>Members of the Planning Committee approved the minutes.</p> <p>Resolved: that the minutes be adopted.</p> <p>5.6 <u>Highways and Lighting – 05.09.22</u></p> <p>Cllr Bird presented the Minutes.</p> <p>The Speed Indicator Device (SID) was now working after a fuse issue.</p> <p>Hosey Hill residents would be conducting a speed watch tomorrow.</p> <p>SDC would be installing six EV charging points in the Westerham car parks using BP Pulse in the Autumn.</p> <p><i>Post meeting information from SDC Parking Officer indicates that only one of the proposed charging points was currently assessed as feasible due to electricity supply and telemetry issues. Further investigation is being carried out.</i></p> <p>Cllr Robson asked about the removal of the bollard at Hosey Common. He felt this would leave the Common access vulnerable. Cllr Bird responded that WTC had been assured this would not happen but she would investigate.</p> <p>Cllr Coen asked when the double yellow lines around The Green would be assessed. Cllr Bird responded that it should be by the end of the year.</p> <p>Cllr Boyle asked why WTC had not received the additional signage for 20's Plenty? Cllr Bird responded that she would continue to chase KCC.</p> <p>Members of the Highways and Lighting Committee approved the minutes.</p> <p>Resolved: that the Minutes be adopted.</p> <p>5.7 <u>Finance and General Purposes – 26.09.22</u></p> <p>Cllr Sheen presented the minutes.</p> <p>The majority of the items in the minutes would be covered in the Council Agenda.</p> <p>Cllr Pither asked about the Long Pond Funds. Cllr Sheen responded that as the Friends of the Long Pond had provided details of their Constitution and bank account, F&GP had transferred the balance held in Reserves representing the remainder of monies raised by the public.</p> <p>Cllr Coen queried the cost of the hanging baskets.</p> <p>Members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee approved the minutes.</p> <p>Resolved: that the Minutes be adopted.</p> <p>5.8 <u>Allotments, Playing Fields and Open Spaces – 05.10.22</u></p> <p>Cllr Lord presented the minutes.</p>	<p>LB</p>
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	<p>The majority of the minutes was routine work. Members of APFOS approved the minutes. A briefing paper had been circulated regarding The Green; this was to be read in conjunction with the minutes item 9.2. Following lengthy discussion it was unanimously agreed to support Proposal 3 – We consider that Covid has changed the way that people socialise and there had been a sustained move towards a 'café culture' with increased use of outdoor spaces. Based on this, and the positive comments received, we look to place 1 or 2 appropriate fixed benches/seating units in the paved area. APFOS would formulate a detailed plan, including a communication plan and would circulate it to all Councillors when completed</p> <p>Resolved: that the minutes and Proposal 3 of the briefing paper be adopted.</p> <p>5.9 Youth and Community – 07.10.22</p> <p>Cllr Coen presented the minutes.</p> <p>6.1 Y&C had a number of plans for the future. The Crockham Hill, coffee, cake and chat sessions were going well so an additional date had been added for a lunch at the Royal Oak with transport provided. The community boxes would be sent out again this year but the focus would be on food hampers and Y&C would be liaising with the Foodbank and the Almshouses to prevent duplication of supplies.</p> <p>7.11 Warm Spaces – following discussion it was agreed that Cllr Coen would lead on this issue while the Clerk was away. Members of the Youth and Community Committee approved the minutes.</p> <p>Resolved: that the Minutes be adopted.</p>	<p>APFOS</p> <p>DC</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Finance</p> <p>6.1 Payment List to 31st August 2022</p> <p>Cllr Sheen reported that she had nothing to bring to Council's attention. There were no other queries and the lists were approved.</p> <p>6.2 Committee Accounts to 31st August 2022</p> <p>Cllr Sheen reported that the accounts were in line with what was expected and she had nothing to bring to Council's attention. There were no queries and the accounts were approved.</p> <p>Cllr Robson expressed his dissatisfaction at the way the accounts package did not show a forecast for the end of the year. Cllr Sheen confirmed that F&GP and Committee Chairmen constantly reviewed budgets but understood his frustration. It was not possible to fulfil his request using the current financial package.</p> <p>6.3 External Audit Report</p> <p>The report from the External Auditor had been circulated and there were no issues to bring to the Council's attention. Thanks were given to the Finance Officer for all her hard work.</p> <p>6.4 External Auditor appointment</p> <p>The SAAA (Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments) was responsible for appointing external auditors for smaller authorities. Procurement was underway for the next five year period (2022/3 - 2026/7). WTC would be automatically opted-in unless a decision was taken to opt-out. There were a number of conditions that MUST be met by an authority which were</p>	

	<p>currently undertaken on our behalf. Opting-out would certainly generate additional RFO workload, with no identifiable benefits, therefore the Finance Officer would not recommend opting-out. F&GP at their meeting on 26th September had made a recommendation to opt-in. Following discussion it was agreed to opt-in to the External Auditor SAAA appointment.</p> <p>6.5 Budget process and timeline A paper had been circulated, there were no queries. Meetings would be set up over the next few weeks with Committee Chairmen.</p> <p>6.6 To consider Grant Application for Citizens Advice (CA) The grant application and had been circulated. Following discussion it was agreed to award a grant of £1,000.</p> <p>6.7 To consider Grant Application for Tots Teachers The grant application had been circulated. Following discussion it was agreed to request further information about the proposal and for a breakdown of the costings. The grant application would then be considered at the next meeting. The Clerk to explain the WTC grant process to the applicant.</p>	<p>DM</p> <p>DM/AH</p> <p>AH</p>
7.	<p><u>Strategic Business Plan</u> The draft Strategic Business Plan had been circulated but not all Cllrs had received the draft. It was suggested that an executive summary at the beginning would be helpful. It was agreed that the Clerk would re-send the draft Plan and this would be discussed at the next Council meeting. Comments to be sent to Cllr Sheen and the Finance Officer.</p>	AH
8.	<p><u>King George's Field Re-development Project</u> 8.1 KGF Project Report – The report was received and noted. Thanks were given to the Project Officer on the progress made so far. 8.2 KGF Funds Report – The report was received and noted. Following discussion it was agreed that additional information was required regarding the monies that had been committed. Cllrs offered their help with the Project if needed. 8.3 Date for additional Council meeting to approve skatepark tender – Following discussion it was agreed that Cllrs would indicate their preference of either 9th or 16th November for the additional Council meeting to the Clerk.</p>	<p>DM Cllrs</p> <p>AH</p>
9.	<p><u>ECO Policy</u> 9.1 Committees ECO Action Plans had been circulated. Cllr Ogden congratulated the Committees on all the amazing work that had taken place and the amount of progress that had been made. Following discussion it was agreed that the Action Plans would be reviewed annually by Council. Committees were reminded that Kent Wilder Awards had indicated that monitoring of schemes was integral to the Action Plans and even if an item was marked as completed monitoring was still expected. 9.2 'Green' postcard consultation responses - Cllr Lord volunteered to put together a summary of the responses that had been received on the 'Green' postcard. Following discussion it was agreed that the summary</p>	

	would be placed in TN16 and on the WTC website and used as a report to the ATM in April 2023. Committees would decide on how to take the relevant points raised in the consultation forward at their meetings over the next year.	
10.	<u>Annual Liaison meeting with Sevenoaks District Council</u> Cllr Ogden reported that she, Cllrs Coen and Robson and the Clerk had met with the Leader, CEO and Deputy CEO and Chief Planning Officer of SDC for the Annual Liaison meeting on 4 th October. The overall message received was that there was much uncertainty following a change in government. The main issues discussed were regarding finance, cost of living increases, income and the precept. SDC recommended operating a ten year budget. Planning issues were discussed, including the Local Plan, Investment zones and the liberalisation of planning laws. A request was made to SDC for WTC to view the car parking data for usage following the increased charges after six months, in January 2023.	
11.	<u>Civility and Respect Pledge</u> The Clerk had circulated a paper regarding the Civility and Respect Pledge as through the Sector there were growing concerns about the impact bullying, harassment and intimidation was having on councils, councillors and staff. In response the Civility and Respect Project had been founded by the Civility and Respect Working Group and was supported by representatives across the sector including National Association of Local Councils (NALC), Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), County Association and councils. A Bullying and Harassment Statement had also been circulated and it was agreed that the Health & Safety Committee would review a WTC statement. Following discussion and after reviewing the documents it was unanimously agreed to sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge. Resolved: To sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge.	AH AH
12.	<u>Meeting Schedules 2023</u> The meeting Schedules for 2023 had been circulated and were approved.	
13.	<u>Correspondence</u> 13.1 The KALC Annual General meeting was being held on Saturday 19 th November at Ditton Community Centre commencing at 10 am. 13.2 Cllr Ogden detailed the email from KCC regarding Covers Farm planning application.	
14.	<u>Reports from Councillors</u> Cllr Ogden had read out the Proclamation for the new King and led the minute silence for the late Queen. Cllrs Coen, Sheen, Thompson, Lord and Robson had attended the minutes silence for the late Queen and the Proclamation for the King. Cllr Davies reported she, Cllrs Coen and Sheen had been volunteering at the Crockham Hill coffee, cake and chat sessions.	

	<p>Cllr Davies had discussed warm spaces with local businesses. Cllr Davies was discussing with Crockham Hill school a craft/ECO project. Cllr Boyle would be choosing the Christmas trees this week. Cllrs Sheen and Lord had attended a meeting regarding KGF playground tenders. Cllrs Ogden, Coen and Robson had attended the SDC Liaison meeting on 4th October. Cllr Holt would be attending the IPAG this week. Cllr Pither reported he was investigating major burning of bonfires in Westerham. Cllr Lord had attended the allotment judging. Cllr Ogden had attended the Citizens Advice meeting on 19th July. Cllr Ogden and the Clerk had attended the soft opening of the George and Dragon on 21st July. Cllr Ogden had been dealing with issues regarding school buses throughout the summer culminating in a photoshoot at 7am at the beginning of September. Cllrs Ogden and Holt had attended the Sea Cadets prizegiving. Cllr Ogden had attended and spoke to the SDC CIL Board.</p>	
15.	<p><u>TN16, Crockham Hill Village Newsletter & website</u> Community Voice</p>	
16.	<p><u>Matters for District and County Councillors</u> School buses Covers Farm</p>	
17.	<p><u>Further matters for consideration at the next meeting</u> May 2023 Elections Strategic Business Plan Gold Award Pre budget</p>	
18.	<p><u>Date of next meeting</u> Monday 5th December 2022</p>	

The meeting was concluded at 10.05 pm

Minutes confirmed as a correct record:

Chairman