

WESTERHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting held at Russell House on
Monday 18th March 2024 at 7 pm

Present: Councillors: Dr S Kay (SK) – Chairman
Mrs L Bird (LB), Mr M Bortolozzo (MB),
Mr E Boyle (EB), Mrs D Coen (DC),
Dr J Lord (JL), Mr N Proudfoot (NP),
Mr N Robson (NR), Mrs S Sheen (SS)
and Mr K Thompson (KT)

In attendance: Town Clerk: Mrs A Howells (AH)
Finance/Project Officer: Mrs D Marshall (DM)
Mrs C De Bono – Deputy Clerk
Mrs J O'Sullivan – Assistant Clerk
SDC Cllr Diana Esler
SDC Cllr Richard Streatfield

Item		Action
1.	<u>Cllr Co-option/Declaration of Acceptance of Office</u> Following a selection meeting prior to the Council meeting it was agreed to co-opt Mr Mario Bortolozzo to the Council for the Westerham Ward. Mr Bortolozzo duly signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the presence of the Proper Officer and joined the Council.	
2.	<u>Apologies for Absence</u> Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Hussain – personal commitment and Cllr Rodgers – accident.	
3.	<u>Declarations of Interest not previously declared</u> None.	
4.	<u>Minutes of the Council Meeting on 22nd January 2024</u> It was resolved to approve and sign the minutes of the Council meeting held on 22 nd January 2024.	
5.	<u>Information items arising from the minutes of the previous meeting not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda</u> 8 ATM – The Clerk had not been able to find anyone to take video of the skatepark using a drone with camera yet.	
6.	<u>To receive and consider the following Minutes of Committee:</u> 6.1 <u>Planning and Development – 01.02.24</u> Cllr Robson presented the Minutes: SDC Local Plan - There was no further update. TDC Local Plan – The Inspector had rejected the TDC Local Plan as being	

unsound, a response was awaited from TDC.

Covers Farm – The KCC Planning meeting would not take place on 20th March but it might be heard on 17th April.

Moorcroft Place Planning Appeal – The appeal took place in public on 3rd February and the Inspector’s decision was pending. Cllr Robson attended and spoke at the appeal.

1 Westways – the owner had appealed against SDC’s decision and the appeal was pending.

Resolved: that the Minutes be adopted.

6.2 Planning and Development – 15.02.24

Resolved: that the Minutes be adopted.

6.3 Planning and Development – 29.02.24

Resolved: that the minutes be adopted.

6.4 Planning and Development – 14.03.24

Members of the Committee approved the Minutes.

Resolved: that the minutes be adopted.

6.5 Highways and Lighting – 05.02.24

Cllr Bird presented the Minutes.

Pilgrims Way – Additional signage had been added to both sides of the road, they were highly visible. Accidents would be monitored to see if the signs made any difference.

Granville Road – following discussion on the amount of damage to the grass it was agreed that H&L would include this on their HIP subject to them not having to pay for the work to be carried out. APFOS required a quote from KCC so they could consider whether to carry out the work.

Cllr Coen requested a speed watch session in Crockham Hill as there had been two incidents recently regarding speeding cars.

Members of the Committee approved the Minutes.

Resolved: that the minutes be adopted.

6.6 Youth and Community– 19.02.24

Cllr Coen presented the Minutes.

The CH Coffee morning was becoming a forum for community issues.

The Youth Club attendance was a slow burn but had the potential to be very good. Food and food preparation was now being offered, with the young people involved in planning the menus. The John Frith room was a good venue.

The first IAG meeting was held in January and was very useful, the Chief Inspector attended. The IAG would like more residents rather than cllrs!

Reporting any incidents was highlighted as a priority to enable the Police to respond/deal with incidents.

A successful application had been made through the KALC Winter Support Scheme and £1500 had been awarded to Westerham Foodbank. Thanks were given to Cllr Coen for completing the application.

Cllr Sheen asked why ASB was in the Youth section? Following discussion it was agreed to move this to Community Issues in the future.

Members of the Committee approved the Minutes.

Resolved: that the minutes be adopted.

6.7 Allotments, Playing Fields and Open Spaces – 04.03.24

Cllr Lord presented the minutes:

The Green – the York stone paving and octagonal bench had been fitted

	<p>and positive comments had been received from residents and businesses around The Green.</p> <p>KGF Redevelopment Project – Thanks to the Finance Officer as four stages had now been completed. The skatepark was a huge hit with young people. A joint project with Y&C would provide free instruction in the Easter and summer holidays, within 2 days 29 people had signed up. The girls only session was very popular. The path had been completed including all additional spurs on budget and had been very well received. The KGF project was now on hold until the latter part of the year as preparatory work was needed for the final two stages – an electrical survey and external VAT advice.</p> <p>The Clerk confirmed that the documents from the Land Registry had been received confirming that WTC was the owner of all of KGF as the northern section had been gifted by the Squerryes Estate.</p> <p>Cllr Coen asked about allotment vacancies. The allotments were self-funding and Westerham had more allotments than needed for the population size. Work was commencing on improving the sites.</p> <p>Members of the Committee approved the Minutes.</p> <p>Resolved: that the minutes be adopted.</p> <p>6.8 Finance and General Purposes – 11.03.24</p> <p>Cllr Sheen presented the minutes:</p> <p>Members of the Committee approved the Minutes.</p> <p>Resolved: that the Minutes be adopted.</p>	
7.	<p>Finance</p> <p>7.1 Payment List to 29th February 2024</p> <p>Cllr Sheen reported that F&GP had reviewed the January payment list and had nothing to bring to Council's attention. There were no queries on the February list and all the lists were approved.</p> <p>7.2 Committee Accounts to 29th February 2024</p> <p>Cllr Sheen reported that the accounts were in line with expected expenditure. There were no queries and the accounts were approved.</p> <p>7.3 Internal Auditor and Plan 2024/25</p> <p>The Audit Plan for 2024/25 had been circulated, there were no queries and this was approved, with KCC as the Internal Auditor.</p> <p>7.4 Effectiveness of Internal Audit</p> <p>Cllr Sheen reported that F&GP had reviewed the Effectiveness of Internal Audit and recommended approval. There were no queries and this was approved.</p> <p>Resolved: To approve the Effectiveness of Internal Audit</p> <p>7.5 Financial Risk Assessment</p> <p>Cllr Sheen reported that F&GP had reviewed the Financial Risk Assessment and recommended approval. There were no further queries and this was approved.</p> <p>Resolved: To approve the Financial Risk Assessment.</p> <p>7.6 Grant to St Mary's Church</p> <p>Cllr Sheen presented a paper regarding the Grant Applications and reported that Town and Parish Councils were now able to give grants to open churchyards due to an amendment of the Leveling Up and Regeneration Bill 2023.</p>	

	<p>Following discussion, it was agreed to award a grant of £675 to St Mary's Church.</p> <p>Resolved: To award a grant of £675 to St Mary's Church.</p> <p>7.7 <u>Grant to Crockham Hill Church</u></p> <p>Following discussion, it was agreed to award a grant of £400 to Holy Trinity Church, Crockham Hill.</p> <p>Resolved: To award a grant of £400 to Crockham Hill Church.</p> <p>7.8 <u>Grant to Sevenoaks Volunteer Transport Group</u></p> <p>Following discussion, it was agreed to award a grant of £125.</p> <p>Resolved: To award a grant of £125 to Sevenoaks Volunteer Group.</p> <p>7.9 <u>Grant to Westerham Town Partnership</u></p> <p>Following discussion, it was agreed to award a grant of £500 to WTP.</p> <p>Resolved: To award a grant of £500 to Westerham Town Partnership for a marquee for Beating of the Bounds event out of the 2024/2025 budget.</p>	
8.	<p><u>Housing Needs Survey (HNS)</u></p> <p>The HNS report had been circulated and Cllr Kay reported that this was a national format and not one that could be changed or adapted by WTC. However, WTC had advertised the survey widely.</p> <p>Cllr Proudfoot thought that the return was poor and this was unfortunate, as sending a postcard to the occupier had not been successful.</p> <p>The Clerk reported that the Westerham return had been particularly low compared with other areas despite the work carried out to advertise it, the reason for this was not clear.</p> <p>Cllr Proudfoot requested actual housing figures rather than percentages, the Clerk to forward this information to all Cllrs.</p>	AH
9.	<p><u>Results of WTC Survey</u></p> <p>The Clerk had collated the result of the survey and circulated the information. All the comments from the online survey had also been circulated. 59 people had completed the online survey and 92 the postcards. Following discussion, it was agreed that each Committee would discuss the items relevant to their Committee work and report back to the July Council meeting.</p> <p>An Action Plan to be set up for each Committee.</p>	Committees DM
10.	<p><u>Currant Hill Allotment Working Group</u></p> <p>The notes from the meeting of the Working Group had been circulated. Cllr Boyle reported the Working Group recommended that a meeting be set up with Mr H Warde to discuss the lease of Bloomfield allotments. F&GP had recommended Cllr Kay and Lord represent WTC at this meeting. Following discussion this was agreed; the Clerk to arrange the meeting.</p>	AH
11.	<p><u>Crockham Hill War Memorial Trust Minutes – 20th February 2024</u></p> <p>The minutes of the Trust from 20th February 2024 were noted.</p>	
12.	<p><u>Policies and Procedures</u></p> <p>The following Polices had been circulated and following discussion, with no legal changes or changes to WTC procedures were approved: -</p> <p>12.1 Asset Register- the Clerk to check the Land Registry details for land at</p>	

	<p>Madan and Hartley Road.</p> <p>12.2 Strategic Business Plan – This would be updated following the Committee discussion regarding the outcome of the survey at the October Council meeting.</p> <p>12.3 Standing Orders – Cllr Robson had minor queries but as WTC Standing Orders were based on the NALC template they were approved.</p> <p>Cllr Sheen reminded Cllrs that WTC had been awarded a Gold Award, which included its Governance procedures.</p> <p>12.4 Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Policy</p> <p>12.5 CCTV Policy</p> <p>Resolved: To approve the Asset Register, Standing Orders, Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Policy and CCTV Policy.</p>	AH
13.	<p><u>Correspondence</u></p> <p>13.1 A thank you note had been received from a former employee thanking Cllrs for her leaving gifts.</p>	AH
14.	<p><u>Reports from Councillors</u></p> <p>Cllr Sheen had attended the NALC webinar – Winning at the Strategic Funding Game on 1st December 2023.</p> <p>Cllr Sheen reported that she had attended the CH Coffee morning and discussed reporting incidents to the Police.</p> <p>Cllr Bird had attended two online meetings, one regarding Speedwatch with Kent Police and one with Thames Water.</p> <p>Cllr Robson had attended the Speedwatch meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Boyle had met with two businesses regarding donations for the electricity for the Christmas Lights.</p> <p>Cllr Robson had attended a Planning Appeal in Sevenoaks.</p> <p>Cllrs Coen, Lord and Proudfoot had attended the Foodbank AGM.</p> <p>Cllr Lord had visited APFOS sites with the new Deputy Clerk.</p> <p>Cllr Coen had attended the Edenbridge ATM on 11th March.</p> <p>Cllr Coen had visited the Youth Club.</p>	
15.	<p><u>TN16, Crockham Hill Village Newsletter & website</u></p> <p>None.</p>	
16.	<p><u>Matters for District and County Councillors</u></p> <p>None.</p>	
17.	<p><u>Further matters for consideration at the next meeting</u></p> <p>None.</p>	
18.	<p><u>Date of next meeting</u></p> <p>Monday 20th May 2024</p>	

The meeting was concluded at 9.15 pm

Minutes confirmed as a correct record:

Chairman