

SWANLEY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Full Council of Swanley Town Council held at the Civic Centre, Swanley on Wednesday 4 February 2015

Present

Cllr R Morris (Chairman)	Cllr T Searles
Cllr L Ball	Cllr V Southern
Cllr R Brookbank	Cllr J Underwood
Cllr M Fittock	Cllr H Willingale
Cllr A George	
Cllr J Halford	
Cllr C Lee	
Cllr M Mahy	

Also in attendance

L Saunders (Operations Director)	Cllr R Gough, Kent County Councillor
S Moor (Responsible Financial Officer)	9 Members of the Public
G Mills (Democratic Services Officer)	

The meeting opened at 7.30pm

Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and approved from Cllr J Barnes, Cllr J Sargeant and Cllr A Venter. Apologies from the Chief Executive were also noted.

Declarations of Pecuniary and non-Pecuniary Interests

Cllr Halford declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 10 – paragraph 3.3 as his wife worked as a volunteer at the North West Kent Volunteer Centre.

Minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2014 and the Extra-ordinary meeting held on 21 January 2015

9629 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 10 December 2014 and the minutes of the extra-ordinary meeting of Full Council held on 21 January 2015 were approved and signed as a true record.

Initials

Cllr Underwood referred to paragraph 12 (i) of the minutes for the meeting of Full Council held on 10 December 2014 and said that he and Cllr Sargeant had formed an independent political group.

To receive the Minutes from Committees held since the last Full Council Meeting.

The minutes of the meeting of the Development Control Committee held on 21 January 2015 were received and noted.

Mayor's Communications

The Mayor gave the following report

Since our last Council meeting in early December 2014 the Mayoress and I have been very busy particularly over the Christmas period representing the Council at various functions and events.

The most enjoyable were the Town's own festivities including the lantern Parade and service and The Pantomime at the Woodlands which was great fun. As usual the Town Council provided a Christmas Day lunch for residents that would be on their own at Christmas. So we visited the Woodlands on Christmas Day to wish everyone a Happy Christmas and enjoyed having a chat to all the guests.

We expected January to be quiet but it has been just as busy with events including a Sunday Service at Rochester Cathedral and nearer to home the Army Cadets awards in the Swanley Army Hall, the ATC awards at Five Wents Hall and the Sea Cadets Christmas event.

We went to the National Under 25's Bowls Championships at Whiteoak Bowls Centre which we really enjoyed. I would like to take this opportunity to promote the Bowls Centre as it is an excellent modern Bowls venue. I was told that it is probably the best in the country so we are very fortunate to have such a good sports facility in the town and perhaps we should publicise it more.

I have attended a few social events with other local Mayors including The Magic of Christmas Concert at The Orchard in Dartford, ten pin bowling at Bexleyheath and even greyhound racing at Crayford – and yes I did win.

(Finally, I would like to congratulate Cllr Mark Fittock for being awarded Alderman of Kent County Council.

Initials

Public Question Time

In accordance with Standing Order 3 (e) the meeting was adjourned in order to allow members of the public to address the meeting.

In response to a question about the use of Bio fuel by the Town Council, Cllr Searles said the Council had not used the fuel for some years and the matter had been the subject of a report to Full Council at its meeting on 10 December 2014

In response to a question about prior notice of the extra-ordinary meeting of Full Council held on 21 January 2015, Cllr Searles said that the agenda had been posted on the Town notice boards and that the press did not always choose to attend council meetings.

The meeting was then reconvened

Report from County Councillors

Cllr Robert Brookbank said the 20 mph scheme for St Mary's Road was now going ahead. Also the scheme for Birchwood Corner would be going out for public consultation and that process would commence during the course of the next week.

Cllr Brookbank referred to the consultation which the County Council had commenced on the possible closure of Furness School, Hextable. The school provided for children with special needs but as the number of pupils had declined so had the level of funding which the school received. Also the school had in recent times received some poor OfSTED reports with the latest saying it was in need of improvement.

Cllr Brookbank said that KCC had been given government approval to spend some £40m which would be used to undertake a two year programme converting existing street lamps to LED lighting. As LED lights were more efficient then the savings made would be used to return to having more street lights turned on in residential areas.

Cllr Roger Gough also spoke about the closure of Furness School and said the consultation period would run to the end of March 2015. The matter would then be reported to the County Council's Education Scrutiny Committee following which as the responsible KCC Cabinet member he would take the final decision. Cllr Gough said that in the past the school had received government funding on the basis of 60 pupils but with changes in the funding structure it now only received funding based on its current roll which was 31 pupils. Should the school close then there was specialist provision available at main stream schools in the area.

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With regard to street lighting, Cllr Gough said that the government free loan of £40m provided scope for the County Council to revert back to whole street lighting. The procurement process to convert street lamps to LED lighting would now commence and he hoped the conversion process would commence later in the year.

Cllr Gough said that he had spoken with residents who lived on Beechenlea Lane and he understood officers from Kent Highways would be visiting the site during the course of the next week. As to the bund to be built on Pinks Hill, work had been delayed due to a lack of fill material but said Cllr Gough he expected things to be completed within the next week or so. Cllr Gough said the new village signs that had been put in place still needed some painting and some high friction surfacing put down at the 'gateway' points.

Councillors then put a number of questions to Cllr Brookbank and Cllr Gough to which they responded accordingly. Cllr Searles said that with the amount of development proposed for in and around Swanley there was a need for a full traffic survey to be undertaken which Cllr Gough said he had noted.

The Chief Executives Report (including Progress and Information)

The Chief Executive submitted a report on the following matters:

Gateway

The naming of the Gateway competition had been extended to the end of February to encourage more resident participation and there would be a press release issued shortly confirming when the new Gateway was likely to open. A mobile Gateway would be set up in the town centre to show residents what they could expect from the new and improved services that were coming to Swanley. In response to questions Cllr Searles said the best estimate for the opening of the Gateway was July 2015. Also The Gateway would be run by the Town Council which would also be looking to run future library services with the possibility of library staff being employed directly by the Town Council at some date in the future date.

The Oaks Clinic

It was confirmed that discussions had been delayed due to the upstairs tenant not attending a meeting which had been arranged to discuss lease options. The Chief Executive was therefore continuing to press for action from the tenant.

Station Road Property

It was confirmed that the proposed expenditure of £5,000 was to undertake some refurbishment work to the existing building.

Audio Recording in the Chamber

Full Council agreed the £3,214.00 costs of this project

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

Full Council noted that The CAB had submitted the requirements for their occupation of the Civic Centre and had confirmed that they would be able to fund the improvements required from their own budgets

Initials

Community Building

The building regulations were at the approval stage with Sevenoaks District Council and officers were awaiting confirmation of funding from various sources.

St Mary's Recreation Ground

The CCTV system was now in place and so far there had been no incidents of anti-social behaviour or criminal damage. Officers had met with the head teacher of St Mary's School to discuss the issues caused by the broken fence and the intimidation of pupils by users of the play area. A cost for repair of the fence was being sought and ownership being confirmed.

Annual Town Meeting

Councillors were reminded that the annual town meeting would take place on Wednesday 25 March 2015 in the Alexandra Suite commencing at 7.30 PM.

Sevenoaks District Council Fun Days

The Council agreed to support these events by offering Swanley Park as a Fun Day venue.

9630 It was RESOLVED

- (a) That the report of the Chief Executive be noted.
- (b) That with regard to the Station Road property, approval be given to the submission of a planning application seeking a change of use with a view to marketing the property for office use under the terms of a lease and approval be given to the refurbishments at an estimated cost of £5,000
- (c) Approval be given to the installation of recording equipment in the Council Chamber at a cost of £3214, this to be taken from reserves.
- (d) Sevenoaks District Council be advised of the Town Council's offer for it to use Swanley Park as a Fun Day venue.

Smoking Policy

9631 It was **RESOLVED** that the Smoking Policy set out in the report be approved and adopted by the Town Council.

Freedom of Information Act Policy

9632 It was **RESOLVED** that the Freedom of Information Act Policy set out in the report be approved and adopted by the Town Council

Applications for Grant Aid

During the course of discussion on this item it was agreed that the Council should not make a grant to the Kent Exiles Youth American Football Team as it was not based in the Swanley area. With regard to the grant application by the 6th Swanley Scout Group, it was agreed that as the Group received funding from other sources the Council would limit its grant to £100.

9633 It was **RESOLVED** that subject to paragraph 14(i) above the grant applications set out in the report be approved.

Correspondence from the Local Government Commission

9634 It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Searles and the Chief Executive be authorised to send a response to the letter from the Local Government Commission saying that as far as Swanley Town Council was concerned its preference would be for one County Councillor to represent all 4 Swanley wards and Hextable.

Events Programme Review 2014

9635 It was **RESOLVED** that the report be received and that thanks be passed to Toni Roast for her hard work in organising the Christmas Day lunch.

Local Government Support Grant – Letter from Kris Hopkins MP

9636 It was **RESOLVED** that in light of the letter from Kris Hopkins MP, Cllr Southern and the Chief Executive be granted authority to write to Sevenoaks DC on behalf of the Town Council regarding an appropriate level of Local Council Tax Support for Swanley based on its local circumstances..

Consultation on future delivery of Library, Registration and Archive services in Kent.

9637 It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Searles and the Chief Executive be granted authority to respond to the consultation, particularly confirming the benefits and advantages of the proposed delivery and funding model for the Swanley Gateway.

Kent County Council – Highways and Transportation Winter Services

9638 It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

Swanley and District Twinning Association

9639 It was **RESOLVED** that agreement be given to assist the Twinning Association with the cost of a visit by some French visitors by covering the catering costs, up to a limit of £250.00, and also covering the venue costs.

Initials

Nomination of Annual Town Freeman Award

(Item 17- this is an unrestricted minute of a matter which was dealt with as confidential under the provisions of Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960)

9640 It was **RESOLVED** that approval be given to the nomination of Town Freeman for 2015/16 to Mrs Ruth Glenn.

The meeting closed at 9.50 PM

The next meeting of the full Council is on Wednesday 4 March 2015 in the Council Chamber, the Civic Centre, St Mary's Road, Swanley commencing at 7:30pm

Signed CHAIRMAN