

SWANLEY TOWN COUNCIL

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

Present

Cllr R Morris (Chairman)	Cllr T Searles
Cllr L Ball	Cllr V Southern
Cllr J Barnes	Cllr J Underwood
Cllr R Brookbank	Cllr A Venter
Cllr M Fittock	Cllr H Willingale
Cllr A George	
Cllr J Halford	
Cllr J Sargeant	

Also in attendance

Cllr R Gough, Kent County Councillor	Lisa Saunders (Operations Director)
Julie Pilbeam (Chief Executive)	Geoff Mills (Democratic Services Officer)
Sally Moor (Corporate Director/Responsible Finance Officer)	5 Members of the Public

The meeting opened at 7.30pm

Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and approved from Cllr C Lee and Cllr M Mahy.

Declarations of Pecuniary and non-Pecuniary Interests

None

Minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2015

9667 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 4 February 2015 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

Minutes from Committees held since the last Full Council meeting.

The Minutes of the following meetings were received and noted.

- (i) Finance and Audit Committee - 21 January 2015
- (ii) Estates and Facilities Committee - 21 January 2015
- (iii) Development Control Committee - 18 February 2015
- (iv) Finance and Audit Committee - 18 February 2015
- (v) Swanley Banqueting Board - 18 February 2015

Initials

Mayor's Communications

The Mayor gave the following report

A couple of the highlights of the past month for the Mayoress and I were a charity lunch at Cobham Hall which was delightful and the Mayor of Dartford's Ball at the Orchard which had an Asian theme for the evening and where I won 144 bottles of beer.

I have some formal events coming up this month including the Lord Lieutenant's Civic Service at Rochester Cathedral.

I would like to invite all councillors, officers and residents to Swanley's raising of the Flag for Commonwealth Day next Monday the 9 March at 9.30am for 10am. This should be a short but important event followed by coffee in the Clocktower Pavillion. All local authorities are flying the flag to raise awareness of the Commonwealth so I hope you can join me.

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 October 2014 Beer Festival, it was confirmed that the event had covered its own costs and it would be a matter for the new Council to be elected in May 2015 to decide if the event was to be run again.

The meeting was then reconvened

Report from County Councillors

Cllr Robert Brookbank spoke about the scheme to improve Birchwood Corner and prevent lorries mounting the pavement. He said the proposal by Kent County Council to place a 6' 6" width restriction on Birchwood Road Leydenhatch Lane and Russett Way would be reported to the Town Council's Development Control Committee at its meeting on 18 March 2015. The closing date for comments to be sent to KCC was 25 March. He understood the Police had already raised an objection to the proposal on the grounds that it would affect traffic in Bexley and Wilmington.

Cllr Brookbank said in relation to the traffic problems on Sycamore Drive, there had been a change of one parking space in Bartholomew Road. Work to resurface the road at the junction by ASDA was due to start on 16 March 2015.

Cllr Roger Gough said the bund on Pinks Hill had been completed but the expansion of the lagoon was something for completion in the longer term.

With regard to the proposed development of land at Beechenlea Lane, Cllr Gough said he had spoken to Kent Highways about the access conditions imposed by the Planning Inspector. Kent Highways had said it was unable to justify an objection to the development on highway grounds.

Initials

Cllr Gough said the new village signs were now in place and the high friction surfacing put down at the 'gateway' points. The village sign would be repainted.

Cllr Gough also spoke about the decision of the operators to close the Oasis Academy. Students currently attending Oasis would be found places at other schools and it would not close completely until 2016. Cllr Gough said the County Council believed there was an ongoing need for education provision in the area and therefore it was likely the site would remain in education use. With regard to the Furness school, Cllr Gough said as it had been unable to attract a sufficient number of pupils it was no longer financially viable.

Councillors then put a number of questions to Cllr Brookbank and Cllr Gough to which they responded accordingly. In particular Cllr Gough said in response to a question about the need for the County Council to undertake a full traffic survey, he had spoken to officers in the Highways Department and had requested them to look at the traffic situation in the Swanley area.

The Chief Executives Report (including Progress and Information)

The Chief Executive submitted a report on the following matters:

Gateway

There had been no further updates on the completion date other than the expected completion time of summer 2015.

The Oaks Clinic

The Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive had met with both the upstairs and downstairs tenants to discuss the lease options. The existing tenant that occupied the downstairs area had agreed to take on the upstairs area in a variation of their existing lease. The lease would include the ability to sub lease part of the upstairs area back to the existing tenant. The upstairs tenant had also agreed to pay the Council £40,000 in back rent. The District Valuer was conducting a full valuation of the property so as to agree the future rental figure and the extent of the demise.

Station Road Property

Officers had now made an application to Sevenoaks District Council for a change of use to B1 (offices). Once the change of use had been approved remedial works would be carried out to the value of £5000 to improve the rental value of the property. Upon completion of the works the property would be marketed for lease.

Website

The Town Council website had been updated to a more user friendly platform and a system was now in place which enabled daily news bulletins linked to social media and content to be kept up to date and fresh. During the course of discussion it was agreed that points raised by Cllr Venter together with an update on the ongoing work to upgrade the website would be the subject of a report to a future meeting of Full Council.

Initials

Local Police Community Support Officer changes

Sevenoaks District Commander Tim Cook has announced that several PCSOs would be moving into constable roles and therefore the team would be changing. At the time of the meeting it was not known which officers would be working the Swanley wards. Cllr Halford said the police should be asked about the possibility of special constables being used to support the full time officers who patrol in and around Swanley.

9668 It was **RESOLVED**: that

- (a) the report of the Chief Executive be noted,
- (b) approval be given to the variation of the lease on the Oaks surgery to include the entire property with the ability to sub –lease, as detailed in paragraph (b) of the report; and,
- (c) With regard to the Website, the points raised by Cllr Venter together with an update on the ongoing work to upgrade the website would be the subject of a report to a future meeting of Full Council.

Delivery of Funding for Swanley Park Community Building

9669 It was **RESOLVED**: that the position on grant applications as detailed in the report be noted.

Formalisation of the Swanley Recreation Ground Charity and Trustees

During the course of discussion on this item Cllr Southern and the Chief Executive gave a briefing on the background to this mater and the actions now being proposed to put Swanley Recreation Ground on a proper footing.

9670 It was **RESOLVED** that all members of Swanley Town Council be appointed as Trustees of the Swanley Recreation Ground and for Council Members to a meet as the Trustees on Wednesday 15 April 2015 to begin the process of applying for a new scheme.

Consultation on the Future of Furness School

9671 It was **RESOLVED**: that the consultation report be noted.

Formation of a new Political Group

Cllr Sargeant proposed and Cllr Underwood seconded that the recommendations contained in this report be approved.

This report advised the Council that Cllr Underwood and Cllr Sargeant had formed their own political group. In speaking to this matter Cllr Underwood said he felt that he and Cllr Sargeant should have been allocated two existing committee seats and that in any event the matter was something which should have possibly been reported to the meeting of Full Council following the elections. However he was grateful to accept the seats which had now been allocated.

Initials

It was then confirmed that Cllr Sargeant would serve on the Personnel Committee and Cllr Underwood on the Swanley Banqueting Board.

9672 It was RESOLVED

- (a) That the formation of a new political group be noted; and,
- (b) and it be noted that Cllr Sargeant would serve on the Personnel Committee and Cllr Underwood on the Swanley Banqueting Board.

The meeting closed at 9.30 PM

The next meeting of the full Council is on Wednesday 1 April 2015 in the Council Chamber, the Civic Centre, St Mary's Road, Swanley commencing at 7:30pm

Signed..... Chairman

Date: 1 April 2015