

**Swanley Town Council**  
Civic Centre, St Marys Road, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7BU  
Tel: 01322 611663  
[www.swanleytowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.swanleytowncouncil.gov.uk)

**SUMMONS**

**ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

Date 15<sup>th</sup> March 2018

Dear Member

You are hereby summoned to attend the Annual Meeting meeting of the **Town Council** at the Alexandra Suite, Civic Centre on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2018 at 7:30pm or at the conclusion of the public participation session.



Mr S Nash  
CEO / Town Clerk

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**RECORDING (AUDIO AND / OR VIDEO OF COUNCIL MEETINGS AND USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

During this meeting the public are allowed to record the Committee and Officers from the front of the public seating area only, providing it does not disrupt the meeting. Any items in the exempt Part of an agenda cannot be recorded and no recording device is to be left behind. If another member of the public objects to being recorded, the person(s) recording must stop doing so until that member of the public has finished speaking. The use of social media is permitted, but all members of the public are requested to switch their mobile phone devices to silent for the duration of the meeting.

**MOBILE PHONES**

Member of the public are reminded that the use of mobile phones (other than on silent) is prohibited at Town Council and Committee meetings.

**AGENDA**

- 1. WELCOME – Introduction and House Keeping**
- 2. ANNUAL REPORT – Council Leader – Cllr Ray Morris**
- 3. REPORTS - From Committee Chairmen**
  - (a) Policy & Finance – Cllr M Horwood
  - (b) Development Control – Cllr R Morris
  - (c) Personnel Committee – Cllr L Dyball
  - (d) Estates and Facilities Committee – Cllr N Scott

#### **4. Public Questions**

Formal questions may be put in writing to the Council prior to the meeting and should be addressed to the Town Clerk prior to noon on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2018. A verbal question may be raised by a member of the public although shall not necessarily require a response by the Council. Each member of the public will be entitled to speak for a maximum of two minutes.

#### **5. Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2019

If you would like further information on any of the agenda items, please contact Mr Steve Nash, on 01322 611663 or [snash@swanleytowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:snash@swanleytowncouncil.gov.uk)

#### **Council Members:**

Mayor Cllr L Ball

Leader Cllr R Morris

Deputy Leader Cllr Horwood

Cllr C Barnes

Cllr J Barnes

Cllr L Dyball (Leadership Group)

Cllr L Gaire

Cllr S Gaire

Cllr Halford

Cllr M Hogg

Cllr E Komolafe

Cllr T Searles

Cllr N Scott

Cllr V Southern

Cllr H Willingale

## **Report from Chief Inspector Walford – Kent Police Annual Town Meeting 28<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

### **Crime Issues**

Sevenoaks has the approx. population of 120,000 people, the crime rate is low, the average number of crimes reported in any 24 hours is 21, 45% to 50% are domestic violence which is a real problem but Kent police provide a good support service to help the victims.

In the Swanley area there has been a number of thefts, particularly of motorbikes, Kent police are working in partnership with Met police to apprehend those who are committing the crimes. He did warn the meeting that they should not tackle any burglars and ring 101 immediately if they are witnessing to a crime.

He also reported that Sevenoaks had the lowest figures for Anti-Social behaviour in the country.

Police priorities have changed dramatically over the years, PSO's are now seen as the local Community policing team. The police now focus on Domestic Violence, Sex Industry & Violence, Terrorism and Extremism. All school and colleges provide information to students/teachers on all these subjects and advise on the how they can be indoctrinated and how to detect if some is being radicalised.

Modern slavery and trafficking is also a problem for the police to tackle, the Chief Insp gave a brief on how these people were controlled and the likely places these people could be employed or used. He went on to say that has not been any Gangs, drugs or extortion identified in Sevenoaks district. The police were concentrating on supporting vulnerable young adults who have been subjected to child sexual exploitation. The Chief Insp took a question from the floor regarding cyber bullying, he responded that new processes were being put in place and increased monitoring would be in place later in the year.

The Mayor thanked the Chief Insp for his report

## **Report A. Report from Cllr V Southern – Leader of Swanley Town Council**

Thank you for attending this evening. This is my last appearance as Leader of the Council so I will set out to inform you of what your Council does, has done in the past year and plans for the new Council year about to start.

During the year the Council has had high spots and low spots. For example we did not cover ourselves with glory over Swanley in Bloom. A departed officer attempted to save money on the street planters and we ended up with much inferior plantings. The Council reviewed the issues and decided on a new approach and just last Saturday Coolings Nursery had a function in the Town Centre detailing how they will handle the competition on our behalf. A new supplier will provide and maintain the planter boxes. These changes will not increase the Council's expenditure.

Another low spot was when we handed back the unprofitable grass cutting contracts to the County and District Councils. We did not realise they had no maps of where they should cut. Our new policy is if we are in doubt we will cut it and we will shortly be buying new equipment for that purpose.

On the other hand the Council carried out a large and varied series of events for the residents, all very well received – the 1812 Night and the Guy Fawkes display attracted many compliments – including several “best ever” remarks. We have an even larger set of events this year which include the successful Italian market at the end of February and the Continental Market of just a few days ago.

Those markets were initiatives of our new Town Clerk, Steve Nash who has other fine ideas to enhance our town. Another Italian market is already arranged and we also hope to hold another Jobs Fair this year as we did so successfully in 2013 and 2014 but we do not yet have a date for that.

A large part of the Council's time this year has been taken up by just a few matters such as Swanley Banqueting, staff reorganisation and fighting off inappropriate development. Some of those put a heavy and unexpected strain on our finances and our reserves need some rebuilding. I might take some comfort from the very recent statement by a member of the Bank of England's monetary policy committee, a Mr. Vlieghe who said that unrealistic expectations were being placed on economics and forecasting models. “I'm never confident of any forecast,” he told the Treasury select committee and “It is always going to be the case... that there are going to be large forecast errors; that we are not going to forecast the next financial crisis”. If such a large organisation can't do it then one should not expect perfection from a town or parish council.

On a positive note we have, we hope, stemmed the losses made by Swanley Banqueting and the Town Clerk reviews its performance daily in real time whereas the Banqueting Board met perhaps 3 or 4 times a year. The Board is now abolished and its functions taken into the new Policy & Finance Committee which will meet almost monthly.

Undoubtedly the most difficult tasks which faced Swanley was to fight off the Vision Plan for Swanley which involved a massive “Garden Village” development in the Green Belt east of the town. This was considered to be a done deal by the cabinet members at the District Council but we fought a massive and successful battle aided by many residents who put heart and soul into the fight. We passed 3 resolutions in Council, regarding the Recreation Ground, the Green Belt and excessive development and our District Councillors won over enough allies to defeat the proposals at the District Council and so the Cabinet had to reverse its stand. Councillor Michael Horwood was particularly prominent as were residents such as Chris Prestedge, Michael Jenkins, Ruth Glenn and Paul Darrington who has now joined the Council as a Councillor for White Oak. I apologise for missing out any of the other valuable contributors by name. I should say before leaving that matter that this was a cross-party fight with all Councillors supporting our stand.

I would also like to commend Chris Hunt who has kept a watchful eye on the activities of Persimmon on the old United House site. Direct resident involvement is valuable to the community.

We have also expressed very severe opposition to aspects of the U&I plan to redevelop the town centre and their original plan was withdrawn. Your Council is in favour of progress and would welcome a regeneration of the main shopping area but we felt that several aspects of the scheme were unacceptable. This is an ongoing concern which will be in front of us for some time to come.

The arrangement which the Council made with Can You Experience to manage the Swanley Park was financially unsuccessful although the Council did not suffer financially compared to recent years. Steve Nash advises us to manage the entire future operation ourselves – something the Council has never done before. The Council is assured that adequate planning is going into this and it offers us a potential to receive a positive inflow of money whilst training several young people right through the apprentice system. The system whereby residents can obtain free parking permits for the Park are in place again and a visit to The Link with your V5, proof of identity and a utility bill proving residence will swiftly reward you with such a disc.

While I am mentioning The Link I am happy to report that this facility is getting rave feedback from many users. In July we had the official opening by HRH The Duke of Gloucester and the activities continue to expand. For example, tomorrow evening they have a book signing and talk by two leading published authors of crime novels, Lisa Cutts and Simon Booker. Lisa is actually a serving police detective in Kent and Simon is author of many TV scripts and lives in Deal.

Councillors, council officers and residents recently spent two days on a litter sweep of the town. The quantity and type of material which is thrown or dumped is distressing to many residents and makes our town look bad. I have asked Councillors Dyball and Darrington to work with the schools in the hope that the children will set an example and shame their parents or neighbours when they see such antisocial behaviour. Also, of course, they will get to understand how the problem impacts on their own environment. The Head of the Orchards Academy, Natalie Wilmans, has agreed to help us with this really important initiative.

The Council is processing the sale of the Woodlands which will produce a gross sales figure of about £2.5-million. The KCC has a charge over this, equivalent to a mortgage, which is £350,000 plus interest accumulated since 1995 but the nett proceeds will allow us to handle some much overdue infrastructure projects as well recover some costs and still have money in hand to bring the parks equipment up-to-date. Your Council will give very close attention to what priorities we should have for this. Apart from our expenditure of £172,000 in 2012/3 on new playground equipment the Council has not made any significant investment in infrastructure from its own funds since about 1997 but has spent hugely on maintenance. One certain project will be to provide specialised play equipment for disabled children, a project dear to the heart of Councillors Nina Scott and Shanker Gaire. We have already made a start on that with a special swing and we have £2000 in the kitty already but quite a lot more is needed.

Thank you for your patience. The Mayor will open the meeting to questions shortly.

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