



Minutes of the Full Council Meeting
Held at the Westgate-on-Sea Town Council Office
78 St Mildreds Road, Westgate-on-Sea CT8 8RF
on Wednesday 15th January 2025 at 7.00pm

Present:

Cllr David Wallin (Chairman)
Cllr Clive Veck (Vice Chair)
Cllr David Donaldson
Cllr Tom King
Cllr Alice Mulinya
Cllr John Worrow
Cllr Charlotte Thomason

Cllr Derek Crow-Brown
Nabila Yakub (Interim Town Clerk)

7 Members of Public

FC/25/01 Welcome from the Chairman

The Chair welcomed everyone and requested introductions from the Councillors present.

FC/25/02 Apologies for Absence:

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Fenning, Cllr Scott, PC England and Community Warden Jason Gordon.

FC/25/03 Members' Interests

None.

FC/25/04 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th December 2024 were received and approved as an accurate record.

FC/25/05 Co-option Process

The Chairman outlined the application process, interview structure, and voting procedures for co-opting a new Councillor to fill the current vacancy. The Council agreed to advertise the co-option widely using a variety of communication channels. Cllr Worrow requested a hustings in order to have a degree of democracy, however Councillors chose not to pass the proposal to go to vote.

Handwritten initials 'DW' in black ink, positioned above a horizontal line.

FC/25/06 Budget

The Council needs to finalize and submit its budget for next year to TDC, ideally by 24th January, with a final deadline of 7th February. Workshops have already been held, involving committees as well as the Full Council, to prepare the budget. It is on today's Agenda as a confidential item due to discussions on salaries. The Council is on track to meet the deadline and comply with TDC guidelines.

FC/25/07 Cleansing Operatives

The Council welcomed the new Cleansing Operative, Travis, and discussed the positive feedback from residents on the increased engagement and responsiveness of the cleansing team. The council commended the improved communication and coordination with residents.

FC/25/08 Pancake Races

The Town Clerk confirmed the Pancake Races 2025 will be held on Shrove Tuesday, 4th March, on Station Road. Invitations will be sent to schools and businesses, and the Council is considering a historical twist to the event.

FC/25/09 Promenade Bins

The Council discussed the need for better coordination with TDC regarding bin emptying on the promenade, especially during peak times. Cllr Donaldson recommended reporting incidents of overflowing bins to TDC on the day through proper procedure. The Chairman agreed to consider inviting the relevant TDC cabinet member, Steve Albon, to a future meeting to address these concerns.

FC/25/10 County and Thanet District Ward Councillors' Reports

Cllr Derek Crow-Brown provided an overview of the potential devolution of Local Government in Kent and Medway, including the creation of new unitary authorities. Both Kent and Medway Councils have expressed interest in joining the government's devolution priority program, which would replace borough, district, and county councils with three new unitary authorities led by an elected Mayor. The proposal aims to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance infrastructure funding, but concerns have been raised about job losses, reduced local representation, and inequalities in service distribution. The Council discussed possible implications, with some Councillors expressing concerns that the process is being rushed and emphasizing the need for greater public consultation, particularly regarding the impact on education, planning, and social care.



FC/25/11 Chairman and Councillors' Reports

The Chairman mentioned recent vehicle thefts in the area and alleged difficulties in relation to reporting them to Kent Police.

Cllr Donaldson attended the TDC budget briefing and acknowledged the effort put into managing it effectively within the statutory 3% reduction limit.

Cllr Worrow commended the Council's performance, highlighting the Clerk's effectiveness and anticipating their official appointment. He noted the success of a recent Council gathering at Walmer Castle, emphasizing the importance of team cohesion. The Council currently has seven staff members, including two office staff and four operatives, who play a vital role in maintaining local services.

Cllr Worrow requested an update from the Clerk regarding the new vehicle. The Clerk updates as follows: the Council is acquiring a Maxis tipper with a tool pod and a cage for securing rubbish, expected to be delivered by mid-February, with efforts to speed up delivery. This will support the four operatives. Additionally, the second vehicle passed its MOT and service at a reduced cost, and both vehicles are now operational.

FC/25/12 Report(s) from Steven England, Beat Officer for Westgate and Birchington, and/or Jason Gordon, Community Warden

The Clerk reported that the first surgery with PC England and Community Warden Jason Gordon was held in the Council offices on Monday, 13th January, offering residents advice and free materials on scams. The session was promoted on social media, and future events will be advertised as well.

FC/25/13 Public Right to Speak

A resident requested an update regarding the housing situation and was informed that at present there were no new developments to report.

A resident suggested that candidates for the Town Council receive clear information about the induction and training they will receive once elected. It was also proposed that candidates publicly clarify their platforms and areas of interest. This suggestion was made for future consideration.

Cllr Thomason suggested to hold an informal Saturday surgery for residents to meet councillors, ask questions, and learn about the application process. Cllr Thomason volunteered for the purpose.

A resident raised concerns about the lack of transparency in the Co-option process, suggesting clearer communication with the public. It was also emphasized that Councillors' roles and support should be clearly defined. Additionally, a call was made for greater public



involvement in budget decisions at the end of the financial year, with a suggestion to consult the community on how leftover funds are spent.

Cllr Veck clarified that some funds, like those set aside for a playground, have not been spent yet as the project hasn't been started. Councillors are already discussing potential initiatives for the future, and once the full budget is approved, updates will be shared. The public will have the opportunity to provide input on these proposals during meetings with a right to speak. Cllr King reminded residents that the Annual Town Meeting is a key opportunity for residents to provide input on what they would like for Westgate. In the past, residents have suggested projects like additional cleaning and funding for youth initiatives, which were then implemented by the Council. The Annual Town Meeting, typically held between March and May, allows people to voice their ideas, which are then considered in the Council's budgeting process. While not all suggestions can be funded, the Council values public input. Clear communication and early announcements of the meeting date are important for encouraging participation.

FC/25/14 Town Clerk's Correspondence

The Clerk reported that the Town Magazine has experienced a delay due to challenges securing publication slots. No other updates were provided, and the Clerk concluded by wishing everyone a Happy New Year.

FC/25/15 Date of Next Meeting:

Wednesday, 12th February 2025 at 7pm.

FC/25/16 Exclusion of the Public and Press

The Council passed a resolution to exclude Press and Public from the remainder of the meeting pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meeting Act) 1960. Because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and the press were asked to leave the meeting during consideration of the following items:

- i. Budgetary and staffing matters;
- ii. Clerk's correspondence.

Signed: 

Date: 12/2/25