



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 10th December 2025 at 7.00pm

Present:

Cllr David Donaldson (Chair)
Cllr Clive Veck (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Stephen Fenning
Cllr Tom King
Cllr Mike Livesey
Cllr Alice Mulinya
Cllr Matthew Scott
Cllr David Wallin

Cllr Luke Evans (Kent County Council)

Ms Nabila Yakub (Town Clerk)
Ms Ana Jagelo (Administration Officer)

3 Members of Public

FC/25/185 Welcome from the Chairperson

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all present. Cllr Donaldson reported that Cllr Charlotte Thomason had resigned due to increased workload and said that the Council must now follow the formal vacancy process with TDC electoral services. Cllr Donaldson expressed his thanks to Cllr Thomason for all her work and commitment to the Council during her period in office.

FC/25/186 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Jason Gordon (Community Warden).

FC/25/187 Members' Interests

Cllr Donaldson declared that he lives in Ethelbert Square.

FC/25/188 Minutes

- The minutes of the Extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 31st October 2025 were received and approved as an accurate record.
- The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 12th November 2025 were received and approved as an accurate record.

FC/25/189 Public Right to Speak

A resident of Palm Court addressed the Council expressing strong opposition to the proposed play area on the green opposite.

A resident thanked the Council for the Community Centre Christmas tree and asked if the remaining nearby shops could also have lights, as only two of five currently do and the area feels dark.

FC/25/190 Meeting Calendar Dates

The Clerk presented the draft meeting calendar for December 2025–May 2026 which, in particular, included:

- an Extraordinary Full Council meeting on 4th February 2026 for co-option,
- the Annual Council Meeting for 6th May 2026, and
- the Annual Town Meeting for 13th May 2026.

FC/25/191 Proposed Amendment to Standing Orders

The Clerk proposed amending the Standing Orders to allow greater flexibility in varying meeting dates and times. Ordinary Council and committee meetings would still be set by resolution at the Annual Council Meeting (or by the relevant committee under delegation), but dates and times could later be changed either by Council/committee resolution or, where circumstances require, by the Proper Officer in consultation with the Chair, subject to statutory notice requirements. Annual Meetings must still comply with the Local Government Act 1972 and cannot be moved outside the statutory timeframe. The draft wording was presented for consideration now and will be formally voted on at the next Full Council meeting in January.

Cllr Donaldson noted that the current number of meetings causes repetition and places a heavy burden on staff time and requested that a review of meeting frequency and structure be brought to a future Full Council meeting.

FC/25/192 Christmas Closing Dates

Cllr Donaldson proposed closing the Town Council office from 24th December to 2nd January for Christmas, which Councillors agreed to, and clarified this applied only to the office, with operatives still working (e.g. bin emptying and street cleansing).

FC/25/193 Co-option Date

The Clerk reported that the date of 4th February 2026 had been set for the co-option, and informed Council that two candidates had put themselves forward for the position.

FC/25/194 New Play Area

The Council was asked to choose a preferred location in principle for a new children's play area so that work could move on to build materials and design. The Clerk reported that voluntary consultation (online, forms and emails) showed a strong majority for Sea Road over Adrian Square and Ethelbert Square.

A recorded vote was taken as follows:

In favour of Adrian Square: 0.

In favour of Ethelbert Square: Cllr King.

In favour of Sea Road: Cllr Donaldson, Cllr Veck, Cllr Fenning, Cllr Mulinya.

Objecting to all three locations: Cllr Scott, Cllr Wallin.

Abstentions: Cllr Livesey.

It was **RESOLVED** to proceed with Sea Road in principle.

FC/25/195 Councillors' Reports

Cllr Donaldson reported that he had attended the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) AGM, accompanied by Cllr Mulinya. Mr Vince Cable, Leader of Medway Council, gave the keynote address on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) which, while informative, did not provide any substantially new information.

Cllr Veck reported that construction of the new skatepark had begun, with demolition complete and Phase One under way. An additional £4,000 from TDC is expected (subject to approval), and the first concrete pour is hoped for before Christmas, weather permitting. He thanked local businesses and groups for their support, including Kelly's Café, and noted strong community interest in the project.

Cllr King reported that an allotment tenant was worried about not yet having paid her allotment fees; he had advised her the Admin Officer was off sick and fees would be collected in due course. Cllr King also asked that a future Agenda include canvassing Council staff on whether they wish to have union recognition.

FC/25/196 County and Thanet District Ward Councillors' Reports

Cllr Donaldson reported that there would be a Full Council meeting at Thanet District Council the following day.

Cllr Evans, the Kent County Councillor, reported ongoing problems with burst water pipes after the cold snap, particularly on Half Road/King George V Avenue. Cllr Evans confirmed the Manston

Hydrogen Project is still progressing despite rumours, and raised serious concerns about numerous dead swans, fish and now foxes along the River Stour, saying bird flu alone does not explain this and that he is pressing the Environment Agency for answers amid reports of sewer collapses and possible pollution. Cllr Evans remained sceptical about the North Thanet Link road scheme, though it may allow future improvements at the Westgate traffic lights and outlined KCC's plan for new Special Resource Provisions in schools (including several in Thanet) to increase local SEND places, cut expensive private placements and bring extra funding into host schools.

Cllr Donaldson reported that communication with Kent County Council in relation to acquisition of the Library was ongoing. Cllr Evans expressed his support for the project.

Speaking to Cllr Evans, Cllr King highlighted problems with the 35 bus service, which was reduced from an hourly to a two-hourly service when it was linked to the 37 route, leaving mainly elderly residents facing long waits and unable to walk back with shopping. He stressed the service is vital, noted new government funding to KCC for bus improvements, and asked that this be used to restore an hourly service. Cllr Evans agreed to make enquiries with KCC about the 35 service and explore whether the new bus funding could help improve it.

FC/25/197 Report(s) from Steven England, Beat Officer for Westgate and Birchington, and/or Jason Gordon, Community Warden

The Clerk read Jason Gordon's report as follows: the Westgate Christmas lights switch-on was very busy and successful, with Jason arranging removal of an obstructing vehicle for safety. He has stocked the Town Council office with emergency food supplies, supports weekly well-being coffee mornings and several local residents, has delivered talks to a Boys' Brigade on safety, alcohol and drugs using "beer goggles" activities, and helps a local church serve fortnightly roast dinners to around 60 residents.

FC/25/198 Clerk's Correspondence

The Clerk reported that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) will this year include a new Assertion 10, and that she has attended training and will bring guidance and supporting policies to a future meeting so the Council can sign it off correctly. She advised that the recently appointed Finance Officer chose not to confirm their post after nearly three weeks in role, so recruitment has been reopened for this position. She concluded by wishing Councillors and attendees a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

FC/25/199 Date of Next Meeting:

Wednesday 14th January 2026 at 7pm.

Signed: _____

Date: _____