



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 July 2024 at 7.00pm

Present

Cllr Wallin (Chair)
Cllr Worrow (Vice Chair) (Left at 7.40pm)
Cllr Donaldson
Cllr King
Cllr Mulinya

Ms Nabila Yakub – Interim Town Clerk
Jason Gordon – Westgate Community Warden
7 Members of the Public

FC/24/14 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Thomason, Cllr Veck, Cllr Scott and Cllr Crow-Brown.

FC/24/15 Declaration of Interests

Cllr King declared a non-pecuniary interest in bus service nr. 35.

FC/24/16 Minutes of the Extraordinary Full Council Meeting held on 26th June 2024

The Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 26th June 2024 were presented for approval and **Agreed** as a true record. (Cllr King abstained from voting and said the reason was that he objected to the comments made by Cllr Donaldson which he felt was unsubstantiated (minute reference number FC/24/11).

FC/24/17 Office Lease

The Chairman said it had to be agreed at this meeting as to what the Council wanted to do regarding the lease. He said there were four options which had been circulated. Cllr Worrow asked him what his preferred option was. The Chairman said it would be to renew the current lease which would keep the Council at the current premises for a further 5 years. Following discussion the Chairman proposed the option to renew the lease. Cllr Worrow seconded. **The motion was voted upon and unanimously agreed.**

FC/24/18 Meeting Dates and Committees

The Chairman said he and the Clerk had been reviewing meeting dates. Cllr Worrow had also submitted some suggestions. It was important that there was a full attendance. The meeting day had been changed to Wednesdays and yet only 5 were in attendance. The Clerk circulated a document with proposals for the Full Council meeting to be held every second Wednesday of the month with the Planning Committee meeting held beforehand. Other Committee meetings would also be combined and held on a Wednesday evening towards the end of the month including those meetings that were held quarterly. Cllr Donaldson said it would prove more efficient by

combining committee meetings on the same evening. Cllr Thomason agreed with the proposal. Cllr King said it was an improvement on the current arrangements. **The motion was voted upon and carried unanimously.**

FC/24/19 Revised KALC Code of Conduct for Parish Councils

The Clerk referred to a revised document sent to Town and Parish Councils which she had already circulated to members. The Chairman said this was a standard document and asked for member's agreement for the document. **Unanimously agreed.**

FC/24/20 Play Area Update

Cllr King thanked for the assistance of the Clerk for information from a company called Sovereign who could provide equipment for the Play Area. A meeting was arranged to meet them on 1 August 2024. Another company called Playdell had submitted brochures, and a meeting would hopefully be arranged with them. Cllr Worrow asked what his preferred location was. Cllr King said it was not down to him to decide. There were 3 options, Adrian Square, Ethelbert Square and a portion of land above the West Bay Café. He said it depended on suitability, accessibility, safety, enclosure of the area. He was hoping to visit them with TDC officers but had not heard back. Cllr Worrow said his concern was that there must be public consultation to hear their views. Cllr King agreed but said in the first instance there had to be agreement on the suitability of the options. Cllr Donaldson said there was a process to follow including pre-application, full application and implementation of the plan. He also emphasized that there was reserve of £20,000 for the project less what has already been spent, which was approximately £560. If the process goes into the new financial year there was a possibility additional funds could be added. He thanked Cllr King for the work he had so far done.

FC/24/21 Poverty Alleviation Project Update

Cllr Donaldson said although he had initially suggested the project, it was Cllr Thomason who should take credit for progress so far and was leading it with support from Cllr Mulinya. He said it was a combination of seeking support from KCC's Winter Support Scheme and TDC's Warm Homes Scheme. A grant of £2000 was received from KCC through Helping Hands and a further £1600 through grants provided by Cllrs Derek Crow-Brown and Linda Wright of KCC. He said Charlotte had written a superb paper and suggested the Council adopts it. The Chairman and the Clerk both thanked Cllrs Donaldson and Thomason for their work and commended all who were involved. **The proposal was unanimously agreed.**

FC/24/22 Chairman's Report and Public Participation

(i) Councillor Surgeries

The Chairman said that surgeries had not been held for some time now. They were regularly held every second Saturday in the Town Council offices. Cllr Thomason had said she could commit to 12 Saturdays per year, Cllr Veck has indicated he could come in on some Saturdays. Cllr Wallin said ideally he would like to see 3 councillors volunteer so that cover of two Councillors each session could adequately be provided, even if there was an absence. Cllr Mulinya said she may be able to cover some Saturdays. Cllr Worrow said he would be a locum to provide cover. Cllr King agreed in principle to the surgeries but questioned the remit councillors would have as it was likely most residents' problems would be outside of the Councillors' remit e.g. planning issues. The Chairman said there were two district councillors that members of the public could be directed to. Cllr Mulinya requested a schedule so that the dates and Councillors attending could be seen.



The Chairman proposed the surgeries would be held on the second Saturday of each month from 10.30am to 11.45am commencing in September. **Unanimously agreed.**

(ii) Town Council Magazine

Emma said up to a year ago the Town Council had a regular magazine produced by an external company. She had spoken to the company and the service agreement was from April to April, however two issues were not published during that period. They were now willing to publish those two issues in October and December with a view to renewing the service agreement from January. Cllr Worrow said he was concerned over who had control of editorial content. He said this should rest with the Chairman. He said there should also be a page dedicated to the local MP and also for Westbrook and Garlinge Councillors. Emma said that the purpose of the magazine should be community outreach rather than a political tool. Cllr Worrow agreed but said it did not need to be political, the MP and Councillors could write about what they were doing for the district. Cllr Donaldson said the magazine was by Westgate for the people of Westgate but should also welcome contributions from neighbouring districts. The Chairman said there was an agreement to produce a town magazine. The next stage would be to fine tune it to sort out the exact terms as to who else contributed. Emma suggested the local MP should talk about talked-about major issues affecting the town without any reference to politics. **It was agreed** to discuss the renewal of the service agreement with the publishers.

(iii) Traffic Issues

The Chairman referred to traffic issues in the area and referred to Westgate Avenue and other roads which needed looking at. He also said that members of the public also needed to inform the Council of dangerous roads. He suggested that Councillors inform the Clerk so that a list could be collated. Cllr Donaldson said there was a document called the Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) which as far as he was aware had not been updated since 2019. He said it was now time to review traffic issues and update the HIP. **Agreed**

(iv) Flagpole

The Chairman said he had circulated some photographs of the flagpole which looked as if it had been vandalised. He said it was originally a secondhand one and had not had any maintenance. He proposed it was replaced with a new one. A member of the public interjected and said it had been maintained in the past 12 months and that there should be an invoice for it. The Chairman said the Clerk would look into it. **Action: Clerk**

(v) Noticeboards

The Chairman said the two notice boards were in a state of disrepair and required replacing. It had also been brought to his attention that there was another noticeboard in another part of Westgate. Cllr Donaldson agreed they needed replacing. Three quotes should be obtained, and for the flagpole too, to be considered by the Council. **Action: Clerk**

(vi) Office Equipment

The Chairman said there are some items required for the office. Most notably were fans as the office and meeting room did get very hot. He proposed the Council purchased two air conditioning/ cooler units. One wall mounted for the office and one on wheels for the meeting room. Whilst he and the Chair had delegated authority to spend £500 he wanted to seek members views. Following discussion **it was agreed** that the Chairman and Clerk investigate further, including costs.

(vii) Website

Emma provided an update on the website. The original one was deemed not fit for purpose . A new one was commissioned but there had been some accessibility issues identified. She suggested that that the Council went back to the developers of the original website, Hugo Fox, and for them to liaise with Councillors as to what their original issues were and to see if they could be resolved and the website improved. Following a discussion, **it was agreed** that the Council would speak to Hugo Fox with a view to finding out how it could be improved, brought up to date and the costs involved. **Action: Clerk/Emma**

(viii) Email Discussion prior to Council Meetings.

The Chairman said that Councillors should discuss issues via emails prior to meetings so that councillors were aware in advance of the issues to be discussed. A member of the public said that was pre-determination. The Chairman disagreed and said data/information needed to be collated prior to the meeting and then discussed at the meeting. Cllr King said he totally disagreed and said that issues must be discussed in front of members of the public. Cllr Donaldson said there was a distinction between sharing information and making decisions.

(ix) Commemorative Bench

The Chairman said that allotment holder Denise Packer had passed away and there had been mention by the allotment holders to have a commemorative bench placed for her. Cllr Donaldson said that it should not come out of public funds. The Chairman **noted**.

FC/24/23 Reports

(i) Councillors

Cllr Donaldson said that there was a second Sea Link consultation. There had been a response to the first one. He said he had asked the Chairman of TAC, Marcel Pooke, to send him through information about the second consultation.

(ii) Community Warden

Jason Gordon said he was continuing to provide support for Birchington until confirmation of the areas to be covered by community wardens. He said he supported the 80th anniversary of D-Day in Westgate. He thanked the Chairman for organizing it. He had spoken to a resident who was putting out rubbish bags for collection far too early and they had subsequently been ripped open by seagulls causing a mess. She assured him she would not be doing this again. He said he continued to support the local church and also liaised with the police on some incidents in Westgate. There are also some rough sleepers that he has reported to TDC. He had also given presentations on drug and alcohol abuse, scams and also supported attended a multi-agency event in Birchington and requested a similar event for Westgate. He was also continuing to report potholes.

FC/23/24 Public Participation

A member of the public raised concerns over the Council's response to the development application for Westgate. Cllr Donaldson said the new Government had just taken office. He said that planning was still top of the agenda and acknowledged that there were serious problems with the planning process. The member of public said that the signals being sent out by the government was to build homes on a large scale irrespective of the damage to farmland and

communities. They asked if the Town Council would be lobbying the new Government. Cllr Donaldson said the Town Council would discuss that and put it on the agenda for the next Council meeting in September. The member of the public said that would mean nearly 3 months lost in writing to the Government who are proposing to push through new legislation. Following discussion, it was agreed to suggest a motion that 'Members of the Westgate Town Council to lobby the Government to protect farmland in Thanet from any further development'. **Agreed**

A member of the public asked why the meeting was not recorded from the beginning.

A member of the public asked when the memorial plaque would be reinstated on the recreation ground. Cllr Donaldson said there was a plaque that became dangerous and was taken down. Quotes were sought for its reinstatement.

A member of the public asked if the Council could improve the sound at meetings as it was difficult to hear voices for those with impaired hearing.

A member of the public referred to residents reporting traffic issues for the Highways Improvement Plan but asked how they would be resolved, bearing in mind the cost of repairs etc.

A member of the public asked why the NDP was on the agenda.

A member of the public asked when improvements would be made to the skate park. It was said that the Council was looking into this.

A member of the public asked how much it cost for the new website.

A member of the public reported that a tree branch was hanging over a telephone line opposite the library.

A member of the public said they would be submitting 3 Freedom of Information requests.

FC/24/25 Clerks Correspondence

The Clerk thanked the members of the public for their attendance and said their comments had been noted.

FC/24/26 Date of next Meeting

To be confirmed for either 11 September or 18 September 2024.

