



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 8th October 2025 at 7.00pm

Present:

Cllr David Donaldson (Chair)
Cllr Clive Veck (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Stephen Fenning
Cllr Tom King
Cllr Alice Mulinya
Cllr Charlotte Thomason
Cllr David Wallin

Cllr Luke Evans (KCC)
Jason Gordon (Community Warden)

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

8 Members of Public

FC/25/142 Welcome from the Chairperson

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Cllr Evans as the new Kent County Councillor. An amendment to the Agenda was proposed and agreed upon, moving the discussion on the flag flying policy to a later item in order to accommodate public input.

FC/25/143 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Livesey and Cllr Scott.

FC/25/144 Members' Interests

Cllr King declared an interest as an allotment holder.

FC/25/145 Minutes

The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 10th September 2025 were received and approved as an accurate record.

FC/25/146 Play Area updates

A comprehensive update was provided on the new play area project, including plans for public consultation on three potential locations: Adrian Square, Ethelbert Square and Sea Road. Cllr King stated that in its current form, the play area had not been formally presented to Council for vote. It was also reported that the existing Lymington Road play area had undergone a formal inspection, which was being used to request and guide repair quotations.

FC/25/147 Increase in the number of Council members

The Council discussed expanding its membership, with Cllr King advocating for more representatives due to consistently low Council attendance and anticipated town growth. The Clerk provided a report from Thanet District Council, which indicated that regulations require a 565-signature petition (10% of the electorate) for a Community Governance Review. After examining representation ratios and considering upcoming local government changes, Councillors recommended deferring the expansion decision for 1-2 years.

FC/25/148 Future possible income streams, post-Barclays

The Council explored potential new income streams following the forthcoming cessation of rental income resulting from the departure of Barclays Bank. Discussions included summer concessions, catering opportunities and community space utilization. Cllr King suggested investigating seasonal licenses similar to Thanet District Council's model, potentially generating £5,000-£7,000. The Council agreed to remain open to continuing to explore additional funding possibilities.

FC/25/149 Co-option Policy

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Co-option Policy.

FC/25/150 Councillors' Reports

Cllr Donaldson referenced the upcoming Councillor Surgery, to be held on Saturday 11th October. Cllr Donaldson reported on the Christmas Tree for the Community Centre, saying that he would speak to Peter Hasted with the aim of providing a living Christmas Tree, which would grow over time. Cllr King requested that once or twice a year the Council assisted with removing waste and scrap materials from the allotments to prevent it from accumulating. The Admin Officer replied that the Allotment Rules stated that plot holders are responsible for their own waste, but should it become excessive a conversation could be had.

Cllr King gave an update on a resident he had been assisting who had been waiting for suitable accommodation. Cllr King reported that the matter was ongoing and had not yet been resolved with the Housing Department at Thanet District Council.

Cllr Veck reported that no news had been received from Kent County Council in relation to the Library, but that he would chase the matter up.

Cllr Veck reported, in relation to the skatepark, that a meeting was scheduled shortly with Nic Powley of Margate Skateboard Club CIC, together with both Council and community representatives, to discuss next steps, which would then be reported to Full Council.

FC/25/151 County and Thanet District Ward Councillors' Reports

Cllr Donaldson reported on two briefing sessions he attended at Thanet District Council, one on the "Awaab Ishak Law", arising from a child who died of breathing mould in his home, and the second on "No Excuse for Abuse".

Cllr Luke Evans, the new Kent County Councillor, delivered a comprehensive report covering multiple areas of Kent County Council's current initiatives. In highways, he outlined a proactive maintenance strategy focusing on complete road resurfacing rather than patchwork repairs, with guaranteed work and contracts that hold contractors accountable. He discussed the potential introduction of a £10 daily tax for foreign lorry drivers, which could generate £1-2 million annually for road maintenance.

Regarding local government reorganization, Cllr Evans explained KCC's preferred option: one overarching authority based in Maidstone with three regional assemblies, despite KCC not being favourable to LGR from the onset. Cllr Evans also highlighted economic challenges, noting the bankruptcy of several developers and potential implications for housing development.

Cllr Evans shared positive developments, including reducing KCC debt from £730 million to £650 million in five months and focusing on education, particularly special educational needs. He discussed the academization of local schools and the hydrogen transition energy project at Manston, which he views as an environmentally progressive initiative for waste management.

In his discussion on flags, Cllr Evans expressed pride in national symbols and noted the recent installation of flags on Canterbury Road. From a Kent County Council perspective, he stated that KCC will not remove flags placed on their lamp posts, emphasizing that if someone is injured while putting up or removing a flag, it would not be KCC's responsibility.

Cllr King enquired whether Cllr Evans would be supporting a beneficial outcome for the people of Westgate in relation to the Library, to which Cllr Evans gave a positive response.

Cllr Thomason raised several questions to Cllr Evans. She questioned why council tax might increase by 5% if KCC debt has been reduced, expressed concern about celebrating business bankruptcies and their impact on families, sought clarification on traffic light, asked how the proposed lorry driver tax might affect small businesses and requested confirmation about KCC's flag removal policy, specifically asking whether this applied to all flags or just certain types.

FC/25/152 Report(s) from Steven England, Beat Officer for Westgate and Birchington, and/or Jason Gordon, Community Warden

Jason Gordon, highlighted organising food parcel deliveries, attending Tuesday coffee morning well-being sessions, running ward surgeries with the police beat officer, and conducting scam awareness presentations. Jason also worked with Thanet District Council on a free bike fix and security marking event, supported local church dinners, and is planning to replicate a successful multi-agency Community Information Day event in Westgate next summer.

Jason Gordon also raised concerns about the tactile paving near the fish and chip shop on Station Road, which is broken and cracking, and highlighted ongoing issues with dropped curbs and inconsiderate parking that obstruct mobility scooter users.

FC/25/153 Clerk's Correspondence

The Clerk reported on the coat swap and donation initiative, which is proceeding successfully with many coats donated and the Salvation Army involved in collection. The Clerk also reported on the completion of the annual audit by Mazars. The audit review for the Annual Governance Statement was finalised with no significant matters arising, with the notice posted on the notice board and website.

FC/25/154 Public Right to Speak

A resident discussed the flag policy, arguing that flags should unite communities during meaningful events. The resident expressed concern about unauthorised flag displays, suggesting they symbolize division rather than patriotism.

A resident raised legal and ethical concerns about flags on lamp posts, questioning whether attaching items to public property is lawful. The resident provided detailed information about its connections to far-right groups like Britain First and highlighted problematic statements from campaign organizers. The resident's primary concern was the potential for these flags to represent racism and exclusion rather than genuine patriotism.

A resident criticised the unauthorised flag installation on Canterbury Road, arguing it was not a genuine patriotic display but a political statement. The resident's key question to the Council was how they would ensure Westgate remains a safe, welcoming and inclusive town for all residents.

FC/25/155 Flag Flying Policy

Cllr Wallin proposed using the town's flagpole more actively, suggesting flying relevant flags such as the Westgate flag, Invicta flag, St George's Cross and Union flag. He argued that the flagpole currently sits empty for 350 days a year and could be used to celebrate local identity and pride. Cllr Wallin emphasised that many residents had requested more flag usage and put forth his recommendation of flying the Westgate flag in particular.

Cllr Donaldson highlighted the extensive flag flying days established by Cllr Wallin, covering numerous national and commemorative occasions. Cllr Donaldson argued the current schedule is comprehensive and adequate for Westgate, questioning why Cllr Wallin felt additional flags were now needed. Cllr Donaldson expressed concerns that further flag flying might be interpreted as supporting controversial political movements, subjecting the Council to criticism.

Cllr Fenning, with dual heritage, challenged the flag proposal by emphasising community inclusivity and the importance of context. He argued that flags carry complex historical meanings. Cllr Fenning's core message was the need to ensure no community members felt excluded or marginalized by such symbolic actions. Cllr Fenning challenged the flag proposal's timing, questioning why this moment was chosen and what specific circumstances warranted such action, and why actions seemingly targeting a group with limited power to defend itself would be considered acceptable.

Cllr Thomason argued that while flags can represent pride, they are increasingly used to divide communities. She emphasised that national pride should not mean excluding people and highlighted the importance of diversity. She proposed that if a flag must be flown, it should send a message of "all welcome", symbolising community strength and inclusivity rather than creating boundaries.

Cllr King acknowledged the flag issue's complexity and how symbols can be used for divisive agendas. He argued that flags are a distraction from the real societal problem: wealth inequality. He suggested that true equality would render such symbolic gestures unnecessary. Cllr King's core message was that perception determines whether a flag represents hate or freedom.

Cllr Mulinya, shared a personal perspective on the flag discussion, expressing gratitude for Britain's opportunities. Cllr Mulinya initially saw the flags as a positive symbol of national pride and believed that most people understood the importance of diversity.

Cllr Veck expressed concerns about the flag proposal's timing and potential political implications. He was critical of permanently flying the St George's Cross, viewing it as a potentially divisive act. While ambivalent about the Union flag, he suggested a Westgate or "Welcome to Westgate" flag as a neutral alternative that could avoid political controversy.

As the item was not subject to a vote, consensus was to leave the flag-flying days as is, or to propose adding flying the Westgate flag onto the next meeting's Agenda.

FC/25/156 Date of Next Meeting:

Wednesday 12th November 2025 at 7pm.

Signed: _____

Date: _____