



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 9th July 2025 at 7.00pm

Present:

Cllr David Donaldson (Chair)
Cllr Clive Veck (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Tom King
Cllr Mike Livesey
Cllr Alice Mulinya
Cllr Charlotte Thomason
Cllr David Wallin
Ms Nabila Yakub (Town Clerk)

In attendance online: Mr Daniel Gooch, Thanet District Council Open Spaces Manager

6 Members of Public

FC/25/105 Welcome from the Chairperson

Cllr Donaldson opened the meeting

FC/25/106 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Fenning and from Jason Gordon, Community Warden. No apologies were received from Cllr Scott.

FC/25/107 Members' Interests

None

FC/25/108 Minutes

The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 11th June 2025 were received and approved as an accurate record. Cllr Livesey noted the importance of following up on discussions raised during meetings or the Public Right to Speak.

FC/25/109 Update on Play Areas

Cllr Donaldson reported working extensively with Thanet District Council to secure an additional £40,000 for the new play area project, bringing the total budget to £60,000. Dan Gooch from TDC joined via video link but experienced significant audio difficulties. Despite technical challenges, Gooch managed to communicate his recommendation for the Sea Road location over the other two sites (Ethelbert Square and Adrian Square), citing better access, proximity to amenities, and reduced potential for complaints. He outlined a timeline involving public consultation, design phases, planning processes and implementation. The Clerk thanked Mr Gooch for his recommendation to obtain a professional inspection of the Lymington Road play area, in order to inform quotations from play area repair providers.

Regarding the skate park, given its current condition Gooch strongly advised closing the facility immediately due to liability concerns, recommending proper signage and photographic evidence of closure attempts. The Clerk confirmed operatives could quickly close gates and install signage, despite previous signs being removed.

Cllr King expressed frustration about returning to "square one" after working on the project for a year, questioning the decision to involve TDC and complaining about lack of communication regarding the expanded scope from a simple under-sevens play area to a £60,000 project.

Cllr Donaldson responded that he had used his position as a TDC councillor to secure maximum funding, which was his job representing Westgate.

FC/25/110 Residents' Feedback from Annual Town Meeting

Cllr Donaldson presented feedback from residents' suggestions categorised into four groups: Completed Items, Work in Progress, Ideas for Consideration, and Non-Viable suggestions. The situation regarding dog mess around town was discussed and an awareness campaign was agreed. The website was discussed at length. The Clerk added details about website improvements being a work in progress and noted the auditor's positive assessment of the current site's legal compliance. Cllr Livesey however pointed out the lack of a search function, which makes the site hard to navigate.

FC/25/111 Volunteers for Picnic in the Park

Cllr Donaldson made a call for Councillors to volunteer. A number of Councillors confirmed their attendance.

FC/25/112 Confirm VJ-Day commemoration

Cllr Thomason, as Events Committee Chair, detailed VJ Day commemoration plans for 15th August, including a multi-faith service led by Reverend Susan Wing, flag displays, decorations and community tea afterward. Cllr Veck requested the term "commemorate" rather than "celebrate" given the atomic bomb context. Cllr Thomason agreed it would be both a commemoration and a celebration of community and sacrifice.

FC/25/113 Councillors' Reports

Cllr Donaldson reported attending the KALC Local Government Reorganization meeting in Ashford with the Clerk, noting the deadline of 28th November for proposals to the Secretary of State, though details remain unclear about the final structure.

Cllr Veck provided updates on the library acquisition, explaining KCC's delay due to their county-wide library review affecting 99 libraries. He reported meeting with Birchington Council and Westgate Sparks representatives about volunteer involvement, proposing co-option onto various committees including the skate park working group and Events Committee.

FC/25/1014 County and Thanet District Ward Councillors' Reports

Cllr Donaldson reported ongoing discussions with Thanet District Council on an Open Spaces Management Agreement to create a collaboration strategy between Council operatives and TDC staff for keeping Westgate clean and tidy. He also noted Thanet District Council's £400,000 recycling expansion project to provide access for residents currently unable to recycle due to limited access or multi-occupational accommodation, with approximately half the funding coming back from Kent County Council through recyclable waste revenue.

FC/25/115 Report(s) from Steven England, Beat Officer for Westgate and Birchington, and/or Jason Gordon, Community Warden

None.

FC/25/116 Public Right to Speak

A resident offered to repair the skate park immediately, requesting to see the health and safety report justifying closure. Cllr Thomason explained insurance liability concerns about unauthorised repairs, while the resident argued for immediate action rather than prolonged closure.

A resident questioned the lack of consultation with children and parents about play area preferences and asked whether TDC funding could support skate park repairs. The Clerk explained TDC's condition that their £40,000 be used specifically for the new play area project.

A resident criticised the absence of Kent County Council Councillors and raised concerns about book censorship in KCC libraries, particularly regarding trans-issue books. Cllr Donaldson agreed about the disappointing lack of KCC representation despite personal invitations.

A resident questioned TDC and KCC's views on town councils' future role post the 2028 reorganisation. Cllr Donaldson explained that while TDC supports town councils through their parish and town forum, parish and town councils have been largely excluded from reorganisation discussions. The focus is on restructuring district and county councils into three or four unitary authorities by 2028.

Cllr Veck noted that town councils will continue but may see increased workload and responsibilities. He emphasized they're in a "holding pattern" awaiting concrete information as authorities focus on upper tier restructuring.

Cllr Donaldson referenced the reorganisation meeting's promise of "a more prominent role for towns and parishes in the local area."

FC/25/117 Clerk's Correspondence

The Clerk reported submitting annual governance documentation to external auditors and congratulated staff on recent training completions. She proposed adjusting the meeting calendar to accommodate the new Local Transport Committee, suggesting 5:30pm meetings before Planning at 6:00pm and Full Council at 7:00pm. Cllr King however expressed concerns about meeting length and councillor fatigue from multiple consecutive meetings. Councillor King also proposed re-establishing a Community Safety Partnership Committee to engage residents. The meeting concluded with reminders about the summer magazine distribution, the 19th July Picnic in the Park event and the Westgate Tiles of Joy exhibition scheduled for late August.

FC/25/118 Date of Next Meeting:

Wednesday 10th September 2025 at 7pm.

Signed: _____

Date: _____