



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 13th November 2024 at 7.00pm

Present

Cllr Wallin (Chair)

Cllr Veck (Vice-Chair)

Cllr King

Cllr Donaldson

KCC Cllr Crow-Brown

Beat Officer for Westgate and Birchington PC Steven England

Ms. Nabila Yakub – Interim Town Clerk

4 x Members of the public

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

FC/24/56 Apologies for Absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Worrow, Cllr Scott, Cllr Mulinya, Cllr Thomason, Cllr Fenning and from Westgate and Birchington Community Warden – Jason Gordon.

FC/24/57 Declaration of Interests

None.

FC/24/58 Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 9th October 2024 were received and approved as an accurate record.

FC/24/59 Town Councillor Vacancy

The Chair outlined the vacancy process following insufficient election candidates. The Interim Town Clerk provided details of the co-option process, which will involve advertising the vacancy, receiving applications, and conducting interviews in early 2025.

FC/24/60 Skate Park Update

Cllr Veck, as the Chair of the Finance Committee, provided an update on the skate park redesign and rebuild project.

A budget range of approximately £18,000 to £28,000 has been estimated for the project. Some funding has already been secured, including a £5,000 pledge from a charitable trust. The council has agreed to match any funds raised up to £8,000. Cllr Veck is actively pursuing additional funding sources, such as applying to Sport England and seeking grants from Thanet District Council and Kent County Council. The project timeline targets completion between April and June 2025. Consideration is being given to adding additional features like lighting to extend the usage hours of the skate park, especially during the winter months.

FC/24/61 Website Launch

Interim Town Clerk Ms Yakub announced that the new council website is now live and operational. She thanked Ms Dublin for her significant input and support. The website has undergone a full refresh, with updated colours to match the council's institutional branding. The website is now fully accessible, with additional functionality to assist those with visual impairments.

Ms Yakub acknowledged that the website is still a work in progress, as a large amount of information needs to be updated and activated. However, the core foundation is now in place, and the team will continue working to bring more content and improvements to the website over time. The website address is westgateonseas.gov.uk, and Interim Town Clerk encouraged everyone to visit and provide feedback as the website continues to evolve.

FC/24/62 Events Committee

Interim Town Clerk, Ms Yakub reported that the council is now focused on preparations for the upcoming Christmas season. The lights will be lit tomorrow for the late-night shopping event in Westgate. The traditional Christmas tree supplier has been engaged, who will provide and erect the tree, as well as put up and take down the lights.

Ms Nabila Yakub noted that she was going to mention the Remembrance Day event in the clerk's correspondence, but she could provide the update now. She stated that Ms Jagelo from the council office did a great job organizing the event, as it was the office's first time doing so. The event went very smoothly. Reverend Wing held a beautiful service, both in the church and

at the outdoor ceremony. Ms Yakub expressed that there was a fantastic attendance, and it was wonderful to see the community come together for the event. Unfortunately, the PA system did not work properly and will need replacing to prevent similar issues in the future.

FC/24/63 Annual Town Meeting

Tentative dates for the annual town meeting and council meeting in May 2025 were proposed and agreed in principle: Wednesday 14th May 2025 for the Annual Council Meeting and Wednesday 27th May 2025 for the Annual Town Meeting.

Action: Interim Town Clerk Ms. Yakub to email Councillors to confirm their availability and liaise with the Community Centre to book the space.

FC/24/64 Finance Committee

The Finance and General Purposes Committee convened to review recent developments, with Cllr Veck newly confirmed as Chair. The Chair extended gratitude to Interim Town Clerk Ms. Yakub and to Finance Officer Mark Dango for implementing a new accounting system, Scribe, live since April 1, 2024, which produced bank reconciliations for the first six months of the financial year (April–September 2024). These reconciliations, presented and verified at the meeting, signalled significant progress in restoring financial stability. The Chair reviewed bank statements and payments, addressing queries on cash flow trends, and expressed satisfaction with the explanations provided. Monthly reconciliations and signoffs will resume, with a request for earlier preparation of reports to allow adequate review time. The committee also began preparations for the 2025/2026 budget, including considerations for precept requests to the District Council. Acknowledging the team's efforts, the Chair noted that the improved accounting procedures reassure the committee and position it well for upcoming fiscal planning.

FC/24/65 Housing Update

Cllr Veck stated that the council is arranging a team meeting with the property developer, their consultants, representatives of the Westgate and Garlinge Action Group, and council members.

Alison Eardley, the council's property development consultant, is coordinating the meeting, which has now been scheduled for early December. The council is waiting to hear the confirmed date from Alison Eardley.

FC/24/66 County and Thanet District Ward Councillors' Report

Cllr Crow-Brown provided updates on blue badge applications, ongoing road closures and diversions, and support for the Westgate Action Group.

Cllr Donaldson reported on the Chancellor's budget providing a guaranteed 3.2% real-terms resource increase for local authorities and reinstating deprivation as a factor for extra funding. Thanet District Council is on target to acquire 1,000 affordable homes by 2027 under Cabinet member Helen Whitehead.

Cllr Donaldson mentioned the council's partnership on community champions and expressed concerns about some items included in the local government devolution paper.

Cllr Donaldson also informed that he has been actively lobbying to cabinet members for direct funding for first-tier councils.

FC/24/67 Chairman and Councillors' Reports

The Chair briefly repeated that the website is up and running and mentioned magazine would hopefully be out in 2-3 weeks.

Cllr King provided an update on the play area. Together with the Interim Town Clerk he is in the process of engaging with the third expression of interest for the play area project. Once the three expressions of interest have been received, they will be presented to the Council.

FC/24/68 Report from PC Steven England, Beat Officer for Westgate and Birchington

PC England stated that he is working through the public emails and will be present at the late-night shopping event on the following day.

FC/24/69 Public Right to Speak

The member of the public expressed concern that at the last meeting, Anna Gillings had indicated they would press ahead with the application to get it through the planning commission, even though the major road network funding from the government is still unknown. The member of the public noted that without the major network funding from KCC, the developers will have to fund more of the costs, which could put the provision of affordable housing and Section 106 contributions in doubt. The member of the public felt this was a concerning situation that the council should be aware of.

FC/24/70 Town Clerk's Correspondence

Ms Yakub stated that she had already covered everything she needed to say earlier in the meeting.

FC/24/71 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday, 11th December 2024, at 7.00 pm.

The meeting closed at 7:34 pm.

Signed: R. J. Wall

Date: 11/12/24