




Minutes of the Full Council of Westgate-on-Sea Town Council
held in Town Council Office, 78 St Mildreds Road,
Westgate-on-Sea CT8 8RF on Tuesday 16th April 2024 at 7.00pm

Present	Cllrs Donaldson (Chair), Veck (Vice Chair), Fenning, King, Thomason and Wallin.	
Also, in attendance	Trish Hamilton (Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer), Emma Dublin (Social Media Contractor) and 1 resident.	
2024//FC/46	<p>EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE</p> <p>RESOLVED with the Chair advising the meeting of the evacuation procedures to follow in the event of an emergency.</p>	
2024/FC/47	<p>Election</p> <p>(i) To confirm the results of the Contested Election of Councillor for Westgate -on-Sea Town Council's Ward</p> <p>Resolved where it was noted that following the recent Bye Election, John Worrow won the majority vote. As such, he was declared elected to Westgate-on-Sea Town Council.</p> <p>(ii) To welcome new Councillor John Worrow and to receive his Declaration of Acceptance of Office</p> <p>Resolved with the item deferred noting Cllr Worrow has signed and submitted his Acceptance of Office meeting the legal requirements.</p>	
2024/FC/48	<p>TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE.</p> <p>RESOLVED with apologies and reasons accepted from Cllrs D'Abbro (family commitment), Mulinya (unwell), Scott (training commitment and Worrow (prior commitment attending Thanet District Council Scrutiny Committee Meeting). Apologies were also noted from Thanet District Cllr Braidwood (training).</p>	
2024/FC/49	<p>MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>RESOLVED with Cllr. King declaring a non-pecuniary interest in the matter of public transport (No. 35 Bus - Agenda Item 2024//FC/54). He is a Member of United Union. Cllr. King availed of his right to stay, speak, and vote on the matter. No other interests were declared.</p>	
2024/FC/50	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>(i) It was moved by Cllr Fenning, seconded by Cllr Wallin , carried, and RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 5th</p>	

	<p>March 2024 be signed and approved as a correct record of the meeting.</p> <p>(ii) It was moved by Cllr Wallin, seconded by Cllr Veck, carried, and RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Planning, Highways and Environment Committee Meeting dated 12th March 2024 be signed and approved as a correct record of the meeting.</p>	
2024/FC/51	<p>TO CONSIDER UPDATES FROM PARTNERS SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY</p> <p>(i) COMMUNITY WARDEN JASON GORDON AND POLICE CONSTABLE STEVE ENGLAND to report on issues affecting Westgate-on-Sea.</p> <p>Resolved with no reports available due to both parties being absent dealing with community issues.</p> <p>(ii) COUNTY AND THANET DISTRICT WARD COUNCILLORS' REPORTS: Kent County Council (KCC) and / or Thanet District Councillors (TDC) to report on issues affecting Westgate-on-Sea.</p> <p>Cllr Donaldson updated all present on Thanet District Council's consultation on how to better support town and parish councils which is being led by Christian Bright. The Local Government Boundary Commission is also consulting on the number of councillors per ward. While it was envisaged that Westgate-on-Sea would not see a reduction due to being one ward, other councils might be affected if the plan to reduce the number of councillors from 56 to 42 transpires. Cllr Donaldson also shared some good news that Thanet District Council has exceeded its target to secure 200 houses and is now looking at achieving 1000 thanks to Helen Whitehead and her team. A discussion followed on how local councils could become housing providers the principle of which was supported.</p> <p>Cllr Wallin continues to lead on the Council's flag flying events where the is looking at obtaining a Kent Invicta flag, Commonwealth Flag and Kent Day flags.</p> <p>Cllr King expressed concern about the removal and / or cutting back of two trees within the parameters of the Recreation Ground and two or more on TDC's side. There are also concerns about the removal of trees in 3 – 5 Chilham Avenue which were alleged to be dead although residents argue this. Cllr King's request for an Independent Tree Expert opinion to be obtained was supported. He also said that the TDC consultation process surrounding this appeared to be inadequate.</p> <p>Cllr King questioned the use and ownership of the Community Centre which he asked for priority attention to be given to.</p> <p>RESOLVED with both updates noted.</p>	
2024/FC//52	<p>COUNCILLORS' REPORTS: Westgate-on-Sea Town Councillors to report on any matters dealt with since last meeting, if appropriate. Also discussed :-</p> <p>i. Update on plan for the B24 Bomber Remembrance Event on Saturday 27th April 2024.</p>	

	<p><u>Summary</u> : There will be a short memorial service at the B24 Liberator Memorial on Saturday 27th April 2024. The service will be led by Reverend Susan Wing and will take place at 11 am. We invite residents to attend to commemorate the bravery of the pilots and crew who lost their lives during World War II.</p> <p>ii. Update on Proposed Play Area and consultation process involving three potential sites.</p> <p><u>Summary</u>: The Council has met with Thanet District Council and complete don the pre application stage for three proposed areas to be considered namely Adrian Square, Ethelbert Square and Sea Road. The next step is to meet with Kevin Hollow (TDC’s Officer who will advise on design , health and safety etc. Cllr Thomason said that while she supports the proposal, she had concerns that the existing play area needed investment.</p> <p>iii. Update on the Council’s appointment of Alison Eardley, Planning Consultant, and subsequent work.</p> <p><u>Summary</u>: The preliminary meeting went well with residents, WOSCCAAA and CPRE Attending a questions an information gathering event organised by Westgate-on-Sea Town Council. The application is not yet in. When it is, Alison will compete her consultancy work and report back to WoS TC on her findings.</p> <p>RESOLVED with the updates (i) to (iii) noted.</p>	
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2024/FC/53	<p>FINANCE AND EXPENDITURE</p> <p>Under Finance and Governance: -</p> <p>i. To appoint an Internal Auditor</p> <p>It was moved by Cllr Donaldson, seconded by Cllr Wallin carried, and RESOLVED that Mr Roger Taylor CGMA ACMA of Popplett Taylor Consulting Ltd. be appointed at a cost of £540 to cover preparation work, visit and final report. The Audit will take place on the 2nd May 2024</p> <p>ii. To note progress on the End of Year Returns</p> <p><u>Summary</u> : The Town Clerk and RFO read out the following statement:-</p> <p>“The Council’s computer was stolen recently. This has resulted in a data breach which the Council is addressing. Consequently, it meant that the Council had to review its accounting system and replace it with a new model where the accounts for the previous year has to be recreated in full. While progress has been made in this area, there is still work to be done due to the extenuating circumstances caused by the theft and consequences of the interruption to the Council’s workflow caused by having no staff for a period. The Clerk said she was working in extenuating circumstances which continues to impact on what she can realistically deliver asking for both the organisation’s and the public’s support during the challenging time.”</p>	
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	<p>The Council thanked the Clerk for her work to date and said the new system which she had to design from scratch was an improvement in that it was more transparent and easier to understand.</p> <p>III. To consider the approval of expenditure of £7,935 to resolve the untenable position of the Council having no reliable I.T. infrastructure in place and the associated risks this situation presents .</p> <p>It was moved by Cllr Donaldson, seconded by Cllr. Wallin carried and RESOLVED that the expenditure be approved as part of the Council's ongoing commitment to continuous improvement. This complies with the General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011 Sec 1 (1) and Local Government Act (LGA) 1972, s.111 which gives the Council the power to do anything (whether or not involving the expenditure, borrowing or lending of money or the acquisition or disposal of any property or rights) which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of its functions.</p>	
2024/FC/54	<p>To consider Kent County Council Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation Cllr Neil Baker's response on the matter of the No. 35 Bus Service serving Westgate-on-Sea. Also to agree any associated actions.</p> <p>Background: The response reads :- ... Thank you for your email dated 12 March 2024 regarding the No. 35 bus service serving Westgate-on-Sea.</p> <p>Unfortunately, I cannot add a great deal to the response that I previously provided to Councillor King, which sets out that KCC were trying to respond to a decision made by the commercial bus operator amid difficult circumstances which would have left parts of the community in Broadstairs with no bus service whatsoever.</p> <p>In the context of an operational decision that left no area without a service and actually sought to protect other residents of Thanet from this very outcome, we would not have been required to conduct full consultation or an Equality Impact Assessment.</p> <p>I maintain that this seems like entirely the right and fair course of action and without additional funding that would support extra resource required to maintain service for all areas or enhanced frequencies,</p> <p>I regret that I cannot currently commit to reviewing or overturning this decision.</p> <p>Yours sincerely, Neil Baker Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport Kent County Council</p> <p>It was moved by Cllr King, seconded by Cllr Donaldson carried, and RESOLVED that the Council was dissatisfied with the response. Questions were asked to ascertain whether KCC breached legalisation and discriminated against the aged and disabled . The matter was delegated to the Clerk's to produce a draft response based on the comments made for the Council to consider.</p>	

2024/FC/55	<p>PUBLIC RIGHT TO SPEAK included:-</p> <p>A local trader and resident supported the Council's stance on the No. 35 Bus saying that the reduced service was impacting on local business with less people coming into the town. She also drew attention to the Christmas and New Year period asking the Council to begin its searches for affordable trees ahead of the shopping season as local businesses need the town's displays to be at their best to promote the local economy which trade was very much reliant on.</p> <p>A written representation raising concerns about the condition of the play equipment in the Recreation Ground (Lymington Road) resulted in agreement for a site inspection to be carried out on 18th April 2024 with a view to accessing the situation and making any necessary improvements.</p> <p>RESOLVED with the representations and any associated actions noted for processing.</p>	
2024/FC/56	<p>NEXT MEETING : The next meeting is 7th May 2024. ((This will be the Annual Town Council Meeting)</p>	
	<p>Meeting closed at 8 pm.</p>	

Signed.....

Dated.....

Chair of the Council

