

South Willesborough and Newtown Community Council
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Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the above Council held at the Stock Pot Meeting Room, Orbital Park on Monday 2nd September 2019 at 7pm

Present

Sue Mullan (SM) (Chair) Nirosha Thilaragajan (NT) Nick Cane (NC) Charli Wilson (CW)
Phill Thorne (PT) Peter Porter (PP) Eric Parkinson (EP) Matthew Harris (MH)

Also in attendance

Borough Councillors – David Smith (DS) and Andy Rogers (AR)

Three members of the public

Garry Harrison (GH) and John Hunt (JH) - candidates for appointment as co-opted member

Clerk/RFO Rob Woods (RW)

53/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The apologies of Cllr Liz Thorne (LT) and Cllr Bohill were **noted and approved**
For work related reasons NT advised the Clerk she would be late for the start of the meeting and this was accepted

54/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

PT, MH and NC declared an OSI in item 62/19c (!!)
ER declared an OSI in item 62/190a – Street Parking in the Alfred Road area

55/19 TO HEAR PRESENTATIONS FROM CANDIDATES FOR CO-OPTION TO SOUTH WILLESBOROUGH WARD AND VOTE

NT was absent for this item and did not vote

JH confirmed to the Clerk prior to the meeting in writing that he fulfilled the eligibility criteria for the position of Councillor. GH had only confirmed a residency qualification prior to the meeting such that the Chair asked for a verbal confirmation his eligibility qualification as a Councillor. Having satisfied the Chair that he fulfilled all criteria for a Councillor position, GH was then invited to make the first presentation. GH requested the Chair to allow the circulation of a hard copy of his presentation. The Chair agreed to the request.

JH was then invited to make his presentation following which both candidates were asked to leave the room whilst members considered the presentations and a voted for their preferred candidate.

With a **vote** in favour of 6 to 1, JH was duly coopted as a member for the South Willesborough Ward and was invited by the Chair to take his place as a Councillor. After offering congratulations to JH, GH left the meeting

56/19 AGREE MINUTES OF LAST COUNCIL MEETING AND SIGN

Having been circulated prior to the meeting, they were **agreed** and **signed** as a true record.

NT arrived at 7.20pm

57/19 MEETING ADJOURNED FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO RAISE QUESTIONS ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

The Chair explained that given the long agenda, this item was introduced early in the agenda to allow members of the public to leave early should they wish. No questions were raised and the meeting was **reconvened**.

58/19 TO RECEIVE VERBAL REPORTS FROM BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

AR reported

- a) With only two road traffic accidents recorded on the KCC “crash map”, concerns that the Highways authority do not have a full picture of traffic accidents in the area and is examining the use of apps to encourage more incidents to be reported easily. Will be seeking support from Kent County Councillor, Koowaree
- b) Following the walkabout on the previous Saturday that ABC has undertaken to reinstate fencing/barriers to protect Newtown Green from vehicle incursion.
- c) Play areas – the area behind Alfred Road has already been tidied by the Council’s landscaping contractor but there are no funds available for any play equipment upgrades at this time.
- d) He will update the Council at the next meeting on the issue of overflowing bins
- e) The confusing and poor quality of the signage in the underpass (Asda) has been noted

DS reported

- a) He had thanked Aspire Landscape Management for their work in tidying the approaches and improving visibility in the Newtown Road railway underpass
- b) That a new law will require Local Authorities to be responsible for the maintenance and safety of all new underpasses. He had not received any formal briefing from ABC but the item will be on the agenda for the next meeting of the Joint Transportation Board
- c) With up to six attempted muggings in the railway underpass it was considered that lighting should be a priority improvement
This led to comments about the poor quality of street/security lighting in other locations including the area around Amanda’s Bench (NC) and the route to/from the Albion pub – Spinney – Amanda’s Bench (PT)
- d) He had brought the Planning Committee’s attention to concerns about increased flood risks of the Aylesford Stream, given the impact of the construction of Junction 10a and developments in the Lorry Park
- e) Following his intervention, Quinn Developments had agreed to put on a second event at the Swan Centre at a more convenient time for commuters to showcase their plans for the Railway Works

The Chair thanked them for their reports

59/19 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE OF 19/8/19

The Draft Minutes were circulated in advance, received and **adopted**

60/19 FINANCE AND GENERAL PUROSES COMMITTEE ITEMS REFERRED TO COUNCIL FOR DECISION:

60/19a REVISED BUDGET FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION

Having been previously circulated the revised budget as presented was **considered and adopted but subject to further review at the 2020/21 precept setting stage**

60/19b TO MAKE COUINCILLORS AWARE OF THE UNDERSPEND ON COMMUNITY PROJECTS AND TO SEEK AGREEMENT ON THE WAY FORWARD

Having been previously circulated, Councillors considered a report of the Clerk. The decision of the Finance and General Purposes Committee to consult with the community via newsletter and flyer; requesting their priorities for action was **noted and ratified** (Action RW)

Councillors then discussed a recommendation to encourage ongoing communication with the Community, through a new Sub-Committee of the Finance and General Purposes Committee

After **considering** the options, the intended audience and the impact on current resources, it was **agreed**

- 1) RW would develop a terms of reference for a new Community Engagement Committee and bring it back to the next Council meeting for further consideration (**Action RW**)
- 2) As a short term measure, RW to circulate a list practical and convenient projects suggested by the former Community Group to the next Finance and General Purposes Committee for its consideration (**Action RW**)

60/19c TO NOTE THE CURRENT LEVEL OF RESERVES AND AGREE THAT THE COUNCIL SHOULD AIM FOR A GENERAL RESERVE OF £20-£24k BY THE END OF THE ELECTORAL TERM

Councillors **noted** the current general reserve of £8500 and earmarked reserves of £1650. It was **agreed** that the Council should aim to build a general reserve of £20000 - £24000 by March 2023

60/19d TO CONFIRM THE APPOINTMENT OF LIONEL ROBBINS AS INTERNAL AUDITOR

Following a verbal report of the Clerk, the Council **agreed** the appointment of Lionel Robbins as Internal Auditor

60/19e TO NOTE THE CONTENT OF THE DRAFT GRANTS POLICY AND ADOPT

Having been previously circulated the contents of the draft policy were **noted** and the policy **adopted**

61/19 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE OF 28/8/2019

The Draft Minutes were circulated in advance, received and **adopted**

62/19 PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE ITEMS REFERRED TO THE COUNCIL FOR DECISION:

62/19a RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION ON THE IMPACT OF PARKING ON ROADS IN THE PARISH

Having previously been circulated, Councillors considered a report of the Clerk and subject to adding The Fire and Rescue Service to the organisations contacted for feedback, **ratified** the recommendations of the Planning and Highways Committee which were:

1. **A substantial survey of residents in the Alfred Road area with the aim of securing a 50% feedback**

2. **Stagecoach and Ambulance service to be contacted for feedback**
3. **A general survey of SWAN residents and a Public consultation evening to be organised and advertised focussing on highways issues including parking, traffic flow and street lighting**
4. **A budget is made available to purchase items needed for the Consultation exercise**

62/19b RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION ON THE EXTENDED USE OF SPEEDWATCH

Having previously been circulated, Councillors considered a report of the Clerk. In general discussion PP questioned the value of Speedwatch and **proposed** that this should be a Police function. This was put to the **vote** and the proposal was defeated by 7 to 1. Continuing the general discussion, the Council **considered** and **ratified** the recommendations of the Planning and Highways Committee which were

1. **To continue the Speedwatch programme given its twin value as a speeding deterrent and community-led initiative**
2. **To concentrate on the longer, straighter stretches of Newtown Road, subject to engaging sufficient volunteers**
3. **Speedwatch equipment, bought by the former SWAN Community Group, should be retrieved and listed on the Council's asset register (Action RW)**
4. **Concurrently, RW to investigate the effectiveness and prices of fixed equipment that does not require significant volunteer input**
5. **Use Council website and social media to encourage people to report speeding or traffic nuisance via 101 or by expressing concerns to the Clerk by e-mail or phone**

62/19c ANY OTHER MATTERS ARISING OR REFERRED TO COUNCIL BY THE PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE

I. P&H COMMITTEE MINUTE REF 4/19a - PLANNING APPLICATION - ZONE A WATERBROOK PARK, SEVINGTON

Declarations of interest and low attendance prevented a Committee vote on this matter and the matter was referred to Council for decision

The Council **considered** and **agreed** with the recommendation of the Planning and Highways Committee which was

To request the Clerk to respond to ABC requesting that no development should take place until it can be established that

- a. **Appropriate infrastructure including GP facilities, pedestrian safety, play parks and educational facilities have been considered/agreed**
- b. **The impact of this development (and others in our Parish) on traffic generation and flow via Newtown Road has been properly assessed by a disinterested organisation.**

II. P&H COMMITTEE MINUTE REF 5/19 - TO CONSIDER THE IMPACT OF THE NEWTOWN RAILWAY WORKS PROPOSAL

Due to low attendance and declarations of interest the Planning and Highways Committee could not vote on this item and the matter was referred to Council for decision

The Council **considered** and **agreed** with the recommendations of the Planning and Highways Committee which were

1. **That the Council should write to the Joint Transportation Board requesting a cumulative assessment of the impact that this and other developments (inc Waterbrook Park mentioned above) will have on the Parish, notably the impact on our road network in terms of traffic generation and parking especially Newtown Road and the areas off it most affected by parking issues**
2. **That the Council should proactively encourage a high turnout to the public consultation on 4/9/19**
3. **That the Council should consider and agree a list of projects that could form the basis for negotiation on a potential Section 106 agreement between the Council and the developer**

The Chair referred to a previously circulated report of the Clerk on this item and read out a list of potential projects which Councillors **considered** and **agreed** without amendment

- a) Due to pressure on the Swan centre, the conversion and lease on a peppercorn rental of the former café and buildings under the Clock Tower to a new hub for SWANCC inc meeting rooms and office and possibly other facilities such as a Community Café.
- b) Buy in a PCSO or Street Ambassador
- c) A Caretaker Service
- d) Improvements to play areas and provision of play facilities for older children
- e) A replacement litter bin scheme to encourage more recycling
- f) Improve bus shelter on Alfred Road
- g) Enhanced lighting in various parts of the Parish
- h) Purchase land for allotments
- i) Crowbridge improvements

III. P&H COMMITTEE MINUTE REF 6/19 - TO CONSIDER THE IMPLICATIONS OF SIGNALISING THE CROWBRIDGE

The Council considered a previously circulated report and following a general discussion **ratified** the recommendations of the Planning and Highways Committee which were

- a) **The Council's policy should be to influence a re-design of the bridge; using £62000 already earmarked in previous Section 106 agreements as a contribution.**
- b) **That any gap in funding could form part of a negotiated Section 106 agreement between the Council and the developer (if the Highways Authority has not already intervened)**
- c) **Borough Ward members and the Joint Transportation Board are made aware of these recommendations (Action RW)**
- d) **To express this preference to representatives of Quinn Developments at the public consultation on 4/9/19**

IV. P&H COMMITTEE MINUTE REF 8/19 - TO AGREE THE COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS PROGRAMME FOR THE NEXT TWELVE MONTHS

The Council considered a previously circulated timetable of meetings. The proposed dates for Council and Planning and Highways Committee were **agreed** but the Clerk was requested to review the dates of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and to bring them forward, if possible, to give more time between the end of the monthly Committee programme and the next full Council meeting

Action - RW to review dates and circulate revised programme to Council members

63/19 TO AGREE THE PROGRAMME AND DEADLINES FOR ADOPTION AND PUBLICATION OF KEY POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

Having been previously circulated, the Council **considered** a report of the Clerk and **agreed**

- a) That the policies and guidelines already recorded in Council Minutes as adopted should be published on the Council's website by September 16th 2019
- b) To retrospectively agree to record the adoption of the Social Media policy presented to Council in May 2019 and publish it on the Council's website by 16th September 2019
- c) To instruct the Clerk to investigate the status of the Disciplinary Policy and Procedures (Action RW)
- d) The prioritisation and proposed adoption and publication deadlines of the following policies

High Priority

Business Plan Policy
Safeguarding Policy
Equality Policy
Health and Safety Policy/Statement
Transparency Policy

Adoption by December 2019 : Publication by 17th January 2020

Medium Priority

Subject Access Request Policy/Form
Website Policy
Disciplinary Policy and Procedures (depending on current status)

Adoption by February 2020 : Publication by 17th February 2020

Low Priority

Asset Register
Retention of Records Policy
Website Advertising Policy

**Adoption by March 2020 : Publication by 17th March 2020
(Action RW)**

64/19 TO RECEIVE RECOMMENDATIONS ON PROPOSALS FOR A PROGRAMME OF COMMUNITY WALKABOUTS

Councillors **considered** a previously circulated report and **agreed** that

- a) **Walkabouts should be quarterly where possible**

- b) Four focus areas will be Newtown, South Willesborough, Fairview and Orbital Park taken in rotation
 - c) Businesses on Orbital Park should be informed in advance where possible
 - d) East Stour School is invited to take part in the school's area of interest
 - e) Council members should encourage residents to take part in the walks in their own areas
 - f) The walks should be advertised initially on Notice Boards, Council website, Social media and the local Press
- (Action RW)

65/19 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL REPORT FROM CLLR CANE ON A PROPOSED LITTER PICKING EVENT

NC proposed that this item be held over to the next meeting and his proposal was **agreed**

66/19 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL REPORT FROM CLLR L THORNE ON ESTABLISHING A VE DAY CELEBRATION WORKING GROUP WITH ASSOCIATED BUDGET

In Cllr L Thorne's absence, PT presented the report on her behalf

Some work has already been undertaken via an informal group who have considered, inter alia, three different sites for a street celebration, the form of the celebration and a timetable that would allow sufficient time for all insurances/licenses/road closure orders to be sought and Health and Safety assessments carried out.

The Chair thanked PT for presenting the report at short notice

Following a discussion, it was **agreed** that a task and finish Working Group should be established with Cllr L Thorne as Chair and NC and CW representing the Council

(Action Cllr L Thorne)

67/19 CORRESPONDENCE/E-MAIL CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk reported that he received a varied range of correspondence which may or may not be of interest to individual Councillors but could not take on the role of arbiter. The Clerk proposed that he would forward every item of Council-related, e-mail correspondence to all Councillors and review the value in March 2020

The proposal was **agreed subject to forwarded e-mails being marked "correspondence"** (Action RW)

68/19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED ON THE AGENDA

The date of the next Council meeting was **agreed** as 7th October 2019 with venue to be confirmed and items to include

The findings of a Councillors' survey on the use of tablet devices

Cllr Cane's report on Litter picking

Newtown Works proposal (subject to Planning and Highways Committee referral)

69/19 FORUM FOR EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION BETWEEN MEMBERS

The Clerk was requested to ensure Cllr George Koowaree is invited to future Council meetings (Action RW)

There being no other business, the Chair closed the meeting at 8.52 pm

Signed _____
(Chairman)

Dated ____/____/____