

South Willesborough and Newtown Community Council
www.swancc.org.uk

**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on Monday 5th
July 2021**

The Chair welcomed members and public to the first face to face meeting of the Council since April 2020

80/21 Record attendance and list apologies for absence

Present Sue Mullan (SM) (Chair) David Mullan (DM) Paul Bohill (PB) Eric Parkinson (EP) Peter Porter (PP) Johnny Hunt (JH) Nick Cane (NC) Andy Rogers (AR) Steve Campkin (SC)

Apologies were received from Councillors, Nirosha Thilagarajan and Graham Galpin

Also in attendance: Rob Woods (RW) and Sarah Evans (SE) (clerks) Peter New (PN) - Kent Police Volunteer & Neighbourhood Watch Manager, Jacky Godden (JG), prospective candidate for co-option and 4 members of the public.

81/21 Declarations of pecuniary, other significant or voluntary interest

There were no declarations of interest made

82/21 Agree Minutes of the Annual Council meeting of 4th May 2021 and sign

The Minutes of the Annual meeting were agreed as a true record of proceedings and signed

Proposed AR - Seconded PP. Resolved: unanimous agreement

83/21 To receive a report on decisions taken under delegated powers and agree

Members received and considered a report of the Clerks on decisions taken by them under delegated authority.

PP raised issue of looming deadline on capital grant bidding process

- a) **Proposed EP - Seconded JH. Resolved: unanimous agreement to endorse the decisions taken**
- b) **Capital grant bid options to be presented to next Finance and General Purposes Committee (Action - Clerks) (See Appendix 1)**

84/21 Meeting adjourned for members of the public to raise questions on items on the agenda and to hear a presentation from a prospective candidate (JG) for the current Council vacancy

The meeting adjourned at 19.10pm

Malcolm Webb – raised issues on parking in Newtown- to be covered in Item 86/21

The Chair allowed David Gower and Mariko Hunt to express concerns respectively about unkempt verges, blocked drains and potential traffic disruption due to a new traffic light installation at the Waterbrook Park roundabout.

The Council committed to further examine these points and to take the issue of overgrowing vegetation at the Gas House Fields allotments to the next Allotments Committee (Action Clerks)

The Chair then invited JG to make a presentation on her reasons for wishing to fill the current casual vacancy. Councillors were invited to question her.

The meeting reconvened at 19:27pm

85/21 Resolution to appoint to Council vacancy

JG was asked to leave the room

Resolved: It was agreed unanimously to invite JG to fill the current vacancy.

JG returned to the room, accepted the position and joined the meeting as a member

Action – RW/SE/JG ensure completion of Acceptance and Declarations forms.

86/21 Matters arising from the last Ordinary and Annual Council meetings

- 1) Cllr Bohill – PB expressed concern about
 - a) ongoing parking issues in the Newtown area and projected future problems with a return to pre pandemic parking levels and with the additional complication of Newtown Railway Works redevelopment
 - b) the lack of a positive response from ABC on our suggestion to use Wainwright Place car park as a temporary park for contractors' vehicles
 - c) the complex interaction of ABC/KCC responsibilities and the difficulties of not being able to meet Council officers from both authorities in the current pandemic to explore options to alleviate these problems.

In addition, other attendees commented on the growth in contractors' vehicles parking in residential streets such as Cudworth Road and Canterbury Road and blockages experienced by large emergency vehicles and buses.

SC commented that he and the Head of Highways for Ashford are currently trying to organise meetings with the various teams to discuss problems and solutions around Ashford East regarding parking, speeding and getting HGVs out of Willesborough and South Willesborough.

Following a long discussion, it was agreed that any action resulting from the meetings with KCC and others should be complemented by our own scoping exercise to be presented for discussion initially by the Planning and Highways Committee by July 2022 (Action RW/SE) - including previously identified priority areas:

- a) a reduction in the number of vehicles on the road
- b) proposals to design out inconsiderate/illegal parking and speeding
- c) promoting healthy and environmentally friendly transport
- d) improved traffic flow
- e) the impact of electric vehicles on SWAN infrastructure

2) Cllr Rogers – Kent Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct was distributed to all members

AR emphasized the importance of reading and signing the Code of Conduct as evidence of a member's commitment to maintain a high standard of behaviour in public life in terms of how Councillors relate/respect each other, the public and the Council staff

Resolved: Agreed unanimously - All Members to return a signed copy of the Code to the Proper Officer (Action RW/SE – put copy of Code on website)

87/21 Planning Applications requiring urgent decision

- a) **21/810/AS 29 Richard Hilary Close Change of Use from residential to House of Multiple Occupation for assisted living**
Agreed to request an extension of time for comment (Action RW/SE)
- b) **21/987/AS 57 Alfred Road – Two Storey Extension**
Agreed – no objection

88/21 To receive reports from Borough and County Ward Councillors, Kent Police, Neighbourhood Watch (attached) and KALC representatives

Borough Council – AR

- 1) Congratulations to SC on election to KCC
- 2) Newtown Railway Works development delayed 12 months and on-site hotel expected to be deleted from the plans
- 3) Received complaints about nuisance bonfires – need to inform people about the rules and regulations
- 4) Pleased to attend official opening of Bromley Green FC new facilities which could a possible venue for Council meetings in future.
- 5) Ashford Mayor to introduce a scheme to recognize individuals' contributions to local life
- 6) Following discussions, a commitment by Network Rail to maintain the underpass near Samuel Peto Way in a tidy state
- 7) AR/Cllr Smith member grants – ideas/bids sought from local groups

County Council – SC

- 1) County Hall still not fully accessible to members and staff
- 2) A key KCC mental health facility is to be improved but concerns about centralization and access for relatives
- 3) Hoping for a seat on the JHOSC (Joint Hospital Overview and Scrutiny Cttee) to argue the case for keeping all three hospitals in Ashford, Canterbury and Thanet open.
- 4) More resources to be directed at reducing the backlog of Public Rights of Way (PROW) complaints – currently 7000
- 5) 75% of KCC income now comes from Council Tax precept.
- 6) Transport issues as reported under item 86/21
- 7) Supporting Cllr Cornish with her project to standardise speed limits on Bad Munstereifel Road and install speed cameras. Her complaint is mostly noise from bikes at the weekend, but also pollution, road safety and carbon emissions
- 8) Receiving equal support and opposition for not cutting grass verges in May - believes KCC owned land is being left as part of the Council's Plan Bee strategy.

20.00 – The Chair suspended this item temporarily to allow members and public to participate in the NHS Day, Clap for the NHS initiative

Neighbourhood Watch – PN (see report Appendix 2)

- 1) Good work between Council and Neighbourhood Watch has continued
- 2) Developing a strong partnership with PCSO Oliver Welch who despite changes in personnel at Kent Police will continue to be our PCSO
- 3) Little change in overall crime trends
- 4) Seeing an increase in crimes committed against soft targets such as allotments and sheds
- 5) A strong focus on drug related activity
- 6) Need to reinforce message to residents about reporting crime
- 7) Picking up on parking debate, PN confirmed that parking is an issue across Ashford and can be problematic for emergency vehicles. PN to supply typical widths of emergency vehicles
- 8) PP asked about the laws on e-scooters. PN to send official guidance

- 9) PN thanked SWAN for its contribution and in return PN was thanked for his exceptional service notably providing speedy reassurance to vulnerable residents in the Mead Road area

KALC – AR

- 1) AR appointed as Vice Chair of Ashford local committee and to a seat on the Ashford Joint Transportation Board
- 2) Strong objection at this level to closure of William Harvey Hospital A&E Department
- 3) KALC to express a view on Section 106 processes at request of ABC scrutiny committee

89/21 To receive a verbal report on the Council's Community Plan (Cllr Galpin)

Resolved: Hold over to next meeting in light of Cllr Galpin's apology for absence

90/21 To consider the 2020/21 Internal Audit Report and agree

RW presented a short report.

Resolved: to note the Internal Auditor's recommendations and thank the staff for maintaining a high standard of financial management in 2020/21 (Appendix 3)

91/21 To consider a draft mental health policy and agree

JH presented the draft policy

Resolved: By unanimous agreement to adopt the policy without amendment (Appendix 4)

92/21 To receive a report of the Clerk on Post Covid19 Community Event and agree

Members discussed a report circulated in advance of the meeting

Resolved: By 8:1 majority vote (PP abstention) to agree

- a) In principle, to a Victoriana/Railway Heritage themed event to coincide with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations in 2022 subject to funding
- b) Consider options for a smaller, local event in 2021 at the next Council meeting (Action RW/SE)
- c) All members of the Council and staff to be involved in the planning and delivery of community events

93/21 To consider and agree the Plastic Free Ashford Pledge

Members discussed a letter circulated in advance of the meeting.

Resolved: Unanimous agreement to sign up to the pledge in principle and consider options at the next Council meeting

94/21 To receive correspondence/e-mails of an urgent nature

There were none

95/21 To confirm the date of the next meeting as 2nd August 2021 and items for the agenda

Agreed: Date confirmed 2nd August 2021

Items for inclusion

- 1) Draft Youth strategy (JH)
- 2) Community event options
- 3) Plastic Free Pledge – further discussions
- 4) Nominations for Queen's Honours list and Ashford Mayor's "local hero" award

96/21 Forum for debate

Members discussed the use of our Facebook platform for suggestions on removing single use plastic

There being no other business, the Chair closed the meeting at 21.03hrs

Signed **Dated**.....
Chair

Appendix 1 - Decisions taken by the Clerks in extreme circumstances under delegated authority of the Council

Bank Switch –Metrobank to Unity Trust Bank completed on 17th May 2021

Authorities agreed for online payments

View and Submit only– The Clerks

View and Approve – Cllrs Porter, Mullan S, Thilagarajan, Parkinson

Agreed - The use of the Salvation Army Hall, Cudworth Road from July 2021 for Council meetings for 12 months and Committee meetings for 3 months (to be reviewed) at a cost of £562.50

Section 106 Questionnaire completed on behalf of Council for ABC Scrutiny Committee (Council members sent copies previously)

Agree to pruning of unkempt bush and maintenance of surrounding areas in the Alfred Rd area under S137 Local Government Act

Agree to Cleaning of graffiti on road signs and underpass walls – under S17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998

AGAR - Agreed commencement date – public right of access to Council documents – 14th June for 30 days

For Finance and General Purposes Committee

Covid 19 Health and Safety risk assessment for Cudworth Road premises (attached)

Creditor Payments as below

PAYEE	NET	GROSS	VAT	CHEQUE	REASON	RECORDED IN
Clerk Salary May	£783.53	£783.53	£0.00	138	Clerk Salary	Clerk Salary
Clerk -Salary May	£908.04	£908.04	£0.00	140	Clerk Salary	Clerk Salary
NEST - May	£78.35	£78.35	£0.00	DD	Pension payments	Clerk Salary
Agilico	£39.95	£47.94	£7.99	DD	Phone/Broadband	Phone/Broadband
Deposit Unity Trust Account	£500.00	£500.00	£0.00	139	Deposit - Unity Trust Account	
Siemens	£93.07	£111.68	£18.61	DD	Printer Lease costs	Stationery/Equpt
Siemens	£26.31	£31.57	£5.26	DD	Printer Lease costs	Stationery/Equpt

Unity Trust Bank transfers

HMRC	£216.92	£216.92	£0.00		Employment taxes	Clerk Salary
Expenses - Clerk	£49.25	£55.24	£5.99		Stamps/Locks	Clerk expenses
Castle Water	£53.21	£63.86	£10.65		Water bill	Allotments
Community Action Suffolk	£240.75	£240.75	£0.00		Insurance Premium	Insurance
InteractiveM	£470.00	£489.20	£19.20		Newsletter Print/Dist	Printing
Envisage Groundcare	£855.00	£1,026.00	£171.00		Ground clearance	Allotments
KALC	£1,040.48	£1,248.58	£208.10		Membership	Subscriptions
ASL	£41.94	£50.33	£8.39		Photocopy costs	Stationery
SLCC	£120.00	£144.00	£24.00		Clerk training	Clerk training
Agilico	£39.95	£47.94	£7.99	DD	Phone/Broadband	Phone/Broadband

Lionel Robbins	£120.00	£120.00	£0.00		Audit fees	Internal Audit
Clerk - Salary June	£783.53	£783.53	£0.00		Clerk Salary	Clerk Salary
Clerk - Salary June	£908.64	£908.64	£0.00		Clerk Salary	Clerk Salary
HMRC	£217.52	£217.52	£0.00		Employment taxes	Clerk Salary
Nest	£78.35	£78.35	£0.00	DD	Pension payments	Clerk Salary
Carol Ellis (Cherry Tree Nursery)	£100.00	£100.00	£0.00		Donation	Grants

Income Received:

VAT recovery (2019-20) £1539.55: Bid Award – Return to Pre Covid Activities £514.00: Interest Received £6.10

For members' information - Budget Summary to date

BUDGET SUMMARY		BUDGET	ACTUAL	-	GENERAL	GHF	-	DIFFERENCE	%
	Reserve Support	15000	15000		13650	1350		0	100%
	Credit - KALC	288	288		288			0	100%
RECEIPTS	Precept	42945	21473		19540	1933		-21473	50%
	VAT Recovered	750	1540		1401	139		790	205%
	Rents	2000	0			0		-2000	0%
	Other	0	514					514	
	Interest	30	10		9	1		-20	34%
	TOTAL RECEIPTS	61013	38824		34888	3422		-22189	64%
PAYMENTS		BUDGET	ACTUAL	-	GENERAL	GHF	-	DIFFERENCE	%
	Employee Costs	25070	6460		5168	1292		-18610	26%
	Councillors Costs	£1788	124		124			-1664	7%
	Legal Costs	£825	120		96	24		-705	15%
	Running Costs	£14830	4505		3041	1416		-10325	30%
	Projects	£18500	2100		2100			-16400	11%
	TOTAL inc VAT	61013	13309		10529	2732		-47704	22%
	VAT to RECOVER	690.55							
RESERVES		BUDGET	ACTUAL	-	GENERAL	GHF	-	DIFFERENCE	%
	E-Mail Migration	-£106	0		0	0		106	0%
	Broadband	£74	48		48			-26	65%
	Noticeboard repairs	£1,050	0		0			-1050	0%
	Spring Clean costs	£150	0		0			-150	0%
	Election Costs	£3,500	0		0			-3500	0%
	Legal Fees	£4,000	0		0			-4000	0%
	Speed Indicator Device	£6,000	0		0			-6000	0%

	Key deposits	£650	0		0		-650	0%
	Allotments- repair	£3,000	0		0		-3000	0%
		£18,318	£48		£48	£0	-18270	0%

For Planning and Highways Committee

21/913/AS	33 Cudworth Road	Law Dev Cert	No comment	Now Permitted
21/1441/AS	Orbital Park CON A, CON B COND	Discharge of conditions	No comment	Now Permitted
21/809/AS	19 Gladstone Road	Front & Rear Dormer to facilitate loft conversion	No objections	Now Permitted
21/752/AS	21 Mead Road	Rear infill extension	No objection	Now permitted
21/717/AS 21/721/AS	Caffyns Orbital Park	Illuminated Fascias	No objection	Now permitted
21/16 GPDE/ AS	80 Gladstone Road	Larger Homes extension	No comment	Now permitted
21/460/AS	Orbital Park	Openreach Digital Depot	No comment	Now permitted

For Allotments Committee

On emergency grounds, the removal of a dangerous telegraph pole and disconnection of redundant wires attached to a home in Hamilton Rd. Employed local operator registered for this purpose. £50 plus VAT
Allocation of plots: Agreed to split plot 49b to create a more manageable plot size for current tenant and allow a further plot for a new tenant.
Within our routine powers we have completed 2 rounds of inspections and agreed sheds, greenhouses or fruit cages in line with the Terms and Conditions.

Rob Woods
Sarah Evans
June 2021

Appendix 2 Neighbourhood Watch report

Since we last met, good and steady progress continues, and I have added another Operational Scheme into the SWAN C.C. Area. There is constant liaison and communications between myself and PCSO WELCH about the SWAN C.C. area crime trends and crime prevention.

The New scheme is

- **SURTEES CLOSE**

The residents have a mixture of vulnerabilities and disabilities which makes the work of Neighbourhood Watch essential.

I also noted a property that provided “Assisted/supported living” in the community, housing some very, very vulnerable people in Surtees Close.

I will hope to set up a new scheme in the “New Builds” properties adjacent to the Outlets in Newtown Road as occupation commences.

This brings the schemes of NHW I manage for the SWAN C.C. area to 19.

SWAN C.C. Neighbourhood Watch (19 Operational Schemes in total)

- Samuel Peto Way

- Kirtley Way
- Harold Way
- Ellson Close
- Newtown Road
- Gresley House
- Turner Close
- Fairview Drive
- White Willow Close
- Jacobs Oak
- Clover Court
- Kings Prospect
- East Stour Way
- Riverbank Way
- Richard Hillary Close
- River Close
- Surtees Close
- Wainwright Place
- And Willesborough General

CRIME TRENDS

Crime trends do not vary too much, however with the warmer weather there is a need to keep communities alert and vigilant for

1. Security of properties especially with windows doors and patio doors wide open. It is essential security last thing at night includes doors and windows locked at ground floor level
2. Sheds, garages and external storage is required to be as secure as possible. Risk-assess what is left in sheds with no more than flimsy locks for expensive fishing tackle/golf equipment and very expensive tools and equipment.
3. As always, the need to be vigilant with parked vehicles. Leave nothing on show when parking especially last park up for the night.

General guidance remains the same and below are headings under constant monitoring.

- 1. MAIN PREMISES SECURE AT ALL TIMES,**
- 2. THEFTS FROM VEHICLES**
- 3. THEFTS FROM COMMERCIAL VEHICLES & VANS**
- 4. SHEDS, ALLOTMENT SHEDS, GARAGES, BARNs, STABLES, OUTBUILDINGS and ANY EXTERNAL STORAGE.**
- 5. WARNINGS OF SCAMS**
- 6. THEFT OF DELIVERIES FROM DOORSTEPS**
- 7. DRUGS**
- 8. ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**
- 9. DOG THEFTS**
- 10. BOGUS CALLERS**
- 11. CATALYTIC CONVERTER THEFTS**
- 12. ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, CATAPULTS**

DRUGS

There is drug use and activity in the Swan C.C. area.

Fairview Drive, White Willow Close are being monitored

Turner Close also closely monitored

Reports of drug activity in Mead Road/Gladstone Road area ,plus other roads of off Newtown Road.

The reason drug activity is of concern is that this is the matter that drives so much of the petty crime in areas. Thefts of Tools from Vans, thefts from garages and sheds. The work of chancers and opportunists is often to fund the next drug fix.

Also, drug crime develops, more dangerous drugs, more dangerous criminals which then feeds County Line Drug Activity, often nearby to vulnerable persons homes.

It is vital that we collect as much intelligence and information on these activities and feed that in to the police who can target resources into that work and areas of concern.

REPORTING

The need to report all crimes and Anti-Social behaviour is essential, and our message on this must be constant and consistent.

This work is ongoing and essential to drive home the message of the need to **REPORT ALL CRIME** no matter how small. It is also important to report attempted crimes.

Please remember these calls will shape the action of our PCSOs and Police Officers in responses, and importantly preventative patrols. It will also shape our crime prevention work and target campaigns. This work will also be reflected in articles in your newsletters throughout the year.

The police are not clairvoyant..... they must be called and informed !
Writing on Facebook is not reporting a crime!

Thank you for your support councillors as always.

Peter New (Kent Police Volunteer & Neighbourhood Watch Team)

Appendix 3 – Internal Audit Report

I am pleased to report to Members of the Community Council that I have completed my internal audit of the Council's records for 2020-21 and have been able to complete the Annual Internal Audit Report for the 2020-21 Annual Governance & Accountability Return.

Members should be aware that the audit tests that I undertook during the audit cannot be relied on to identify the occasional omission or insignificant error, nor to disclose breaches of trust or statute, neglect or fraud which may have taken place and which it is the responsibility of the Members of the Council to guard against through the Community Council's internal control procedures.

Members will be pleased to know that I did not find anything major in my financial audit to report and that I found the record keeping to be of a good standard and the Council's approach to the management of risks to be sound. As a result I was able to answer 'YES' to all the relevant questions contained in the Annual Internal Audit Report.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank your Clerks for the assistance given to me in the conduct of the audit that took place on 10 June 2021.

PREVIOUS AUDITS:

External Audit 2019-20:

The audit certificate was considered by the Council on 2 November 2020 noting the auditor's advice.

Internal Audit 2019-20:

No specific issues to follow up from last audit, items raised were advisory not needing action.

FINDINGS THIS VISIT:

During the audit I carried out sufficient work to enable me to complete the Annual Internal Audit Report. I concentrated on the trail from the annual Accounting statement back to the receipts & payments A/c and bank statements while testing a number of transactions to invoices or other

supporting documentation. I have also reviewed the Council's minutes for compliance with legal obligations, its general functioning and for mutual consistency with the accounts.

I found the financial records to be accurate and up to date.

I discussed with the Clerks that minutes should stand alone. Good practice is that reports should be attached to (or included in) the minutes in cases where reference to the report is necessary to understand the decision made. Similarly if the Council adopts recommendations from a committee without the minutes recording what the accepted recommendations are.

I noted that the transfer of allotments to the Council had not been completed as at October 2020. Allotments within the Council's area should have been transferred when the Council was created. Since allotments normally involve a net spend the Council has in one sense benefitted from the delay.

I have nothing further to report.

Lionel Robbins

Independent Internal Auditor

20 June 2021

Appendix 4 - Draft Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Introduction

As a Council

- a) We aim to support our residents affected by mental health and wellbeing issues and the NHS by **signposting** access to support, emergency crisis intervention, share advice on wellbeing and methods to protect mental and physical health.

Signposting

We will regularly update our key communications mechanisms - social media, website, noticeboards, and newsletter to ensure that all members and residents are signposted to free, mental health support and wellbeing advice

Sources

1. #Kent together Mental Health and Wellbeing "We can this together." Supporting and Sharing the Social Media Campaign
2. Every Mind Matters Campaign Useful Tips and Guides to help us look after ourselves and families
3. Live Well Kent free confidential support for mental health when impacted in life, work, money relationship housing and physical health.
4. A Text service from the NHS has been extended **text KENT to 85258**, you will start a conversation with one of the many trained and experienced volunteers who can give support at any time, wherever you are. It's a place to go if you're struggling to cope and you need immediate help.
5. Resources from Kent and Medway Clinical Commission Group KCC have produced Crisis Support Cards. They feature information for a range of easy to access mental health and wellbeing support services for children, young people and adults in KENT.
6. Infographics for Helplines and Crisis Support.
7. Multi agency wellbeing hub being developed in response to COVID19 at kent.gov.uk/wellbeing

Within Wellbeing Domestic Abuse and Protection for Vulnerable People

The Council continues to work with **Neighbourhood Watch**, and the **PCSO** who have a watchful eye for vulnerable residents.

To signpost the National Government led and County led Campaigns against Domestic abuse.

Within Ashford

Within Ashford we will signpost

- **Rising Son** an Ashford based charity working to improve the lives and wellbeing of victims in domestic abuse situations.
- Renew Wellbeing Based at Willesborough Baptist Church working with the NHS to offer a dedicated space for Mental Health Support and understanding.
- To signpost any other groups offering such practical and professional support.

Using Council Assets to Support Mental Health and Wellbeing

Happy to Chat Benches

- 1) CAMWG to locate suitable areas to locate benches with waste bins and to promote them as Happy to Chat sites. Or neglected benches which could be adopted for the purpose.
- 2) FGP Committee to consider whether this is affordable and feasible.
- 3) If feasible Clerks and Councillors to work with local groups to attract start up volunteers to promote this and interest.
- 4) The CWG to consider how to promote this within newsletter and Social Media communications.

Gas House Fields Allotments

Community Plot

GP referral or a genuine MH Charity referral for an allotment, will enable a fast track on the waiting list and applicants will be prioritised for this. Should an allotment plot not be available for a prioritised applicant an offer will be made to join the Community Plot project.

Community Plot.

The Allotment Committee will continue to develop this project and to progress this with the Clerks to draw in support from local groups and volunteers.

Created July 2021

Author Sarah Evans Joint Clerk

Review Date TBA