

South Willesborough and Newtown Community Council
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Ordinary Council Meeting – 6th February 2023

MINUTES

The Chair opened the meeting at 7pm

23/23 Record attendance and list apologies for absence

In attendance, Sue Mullan (SM) (Chair) Andy Rogers (AR) (Vice Chair) David Mullan (DM)) Steve Campkin (SC) Peter Porter (PP) Andy Hodges (AH) Nirosha Thilagarajan (NT) Paul Bohill (PB) and Jacky Godden (JG)

Also, in attendance Rob Woods RW- Locum Clerk, Peter New (PN) Neighbourhood Watch, David Smith-(DS)- ABC and 3 members of the Public,

Apologies received from Eric Parkinson and approved

24/23 Declarations of pecuniary, other significant or voluntary interest

None

25/23 Agree Minutes of the Council meeting of 9th January 2023 and sign

The minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting.

Resolved:- Proposed AR Seconded DM and agreed unanimously

26/23 To receive reports from

a. Kent County Council Ward representative

SC's report focussed on KCC's proposed budget for decision on 9th February and a range of amendments proposed by opposition parties.

The government has allowed KCC to increase council tax by 2.99% without a referendum. It can also impose an additional tax to cover the cost of adult social care.

Whatever the final outcome there be increases in the KCC element of the Council Tax in addition to Ashford BC tax increase estimated at circa £5 pa and the Police at circa £15 per household (Band D).

b. Ashford Borough Council Ward representative,

AR explained that no ABC or KALC meetings had taken place since the last Community Council meeting and he had nothing significant to report from those organisations. A meeting of the Board of the Newtown Railway Works development will take place soon and he will report back on that at the next meeting

c. KALC representatives

See b) above

d. Neighbourhood Watch representative

PN reported that he will be meeting the new Chief Inspector soon. He also wants to seek guidance from SWAN on how he can contribute to the content of the SWAN website in future. **(Action PN/CCM)**

PN advised on key crime “growth areas” such as theft of catalytic converters, gardening equipment from sheds and car number plates. He reinforced the concept and value of crime prevention policies especially as austerity measures continue to challenge response policing. With reference to prevention PN sought the Council’s support for, and endorsement of, Operation Guardian Angel which aims to identify vulnerable residents and improve communications with them via the Neighbourhood Watch network.

PB added that, due to austerity, some vulnerable residents may also need protection from harassment by public authorities and utility companies and from scams involving bogus local authority employees.

e. Swan Centre representative.

Nothing to report

27/23 Meeting adjourned for members of the public to raise questions on items on the agenda

The meeting was adjourned at 7.22pm and reconvened at 7.23pm

28/23 Newtown Road Pedestrian Underpass - General litter and graffiti - What steps should SWANCC take to remedy?

PP reported on the graffiti and litter in the Newtown Road Underpass and the impact on perceptions of personal safety. Following a discussion, DS informed the Council that KCC is the body responsible for the underpass.

Resolved :-No firm decisions were taken

Action SC to contact officers at KCC to establish a) the reasons for graffiti being left on the walls of the subway approach and b) establish ownership of the adjacent grassy verges and authority for SWANCC staff to pick litter from them if required.

29/23 To consider the planting of a tree reserved from the SWAN Queens Green Canopy collection, in memory of George Koowaree.

SC proposed the Council should plant a surplus tree in former Cllr Koowaree’s memory and offered to organise the planting and a commemorative plaque.

Resolved – Proposed SC Seconded AR and by unanimous agreement to plant the tree on Newtown Green

30/23 To consider a report of the Community Council Manager on the achievement of the objectives for the SWAN Community Plan and to consider the value of the SWAN online business directory objective outstanding

The report was presented in the CCM’s absence and following a short discussion.

Resolved: Agreed unanimously

- a) **To remove the reference to the production of a business directory in the current year but retain it as an aspiration for completion by March 2024**
- b) **To note the achievements in the Community Plan**

31/23 To consider a report of the Community Council Manager on the progress of the application of the Area Enhancements budgets.

The report was presented in the CCM’s absence and following a discussion, which included clarification of the Council’s responsibility for litter management in the Boys Hall area,

Resolved:- Members agreed unanimously

- a) To note the update report
- b) To continue skip days in the current financial year subject to locations and dates being agreed with the CCM and Uprising (Action CCM) and budget (Action SC to bring up at next Finance and General Purposes Committee)
- c) Following safety issues raised by JG, to request KCC or ABC to repair a path near Albion Terrace currently unusable by mobility scooter riders and examine the Council's powers and budget to undertake the repairs in default (Action CCM/SC)
- d) Following comments by PB to put ownership/ improvement of the Alfred Road bus stop on the agenda for the next meeting (Cross ref Item 40/23)

32/23 To receive and note the draft minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee of 23rd January 2023 and consider any recommendations.

SC retrospectively apologised for his absence at the meeting which was due to illness

Resolved: Proposed DM Seconded PB and agreed unanimously that the minutes are noted without comment

33/23 To receive and note the draft minutes of the Planning and Highways and General Purposes Committee of 18th January 2023 and consider any recommendations.

Following a discussion, members endorsed the Committee's recommendation to reverse an earlier decision and to examine with KCC, the cost and feasibility of a portable speed indicator device (Action – CCM/AR)

Resolved: Proposed PB Seconded SC and agreed unanimously that the minutes are noted and the recommendation is accepted.

34/23 To update the Council on the correspondence regarding the 5g mast planning application

AR reported that the mast had received planning approval and that the Planning and Highways Committee were satisfied it would not obstruct any views for drivers at the junction of Newtown Road and Mead Road.

Resolved: By unanimous agreement, no further action is required

35/23 To receive and note the draft minutes of the Staffing Committee of 16th January 2023

Resolved: agreed unanimously that the minutes as presented are incomplete (Action CCM to amend the minutes prior to the next Staffing Committee meeting)

36/23 To receive an update from the Planting and Biodiversity Working Group.

JG reported that 11500 bulbs had now been planted in all the designated areas. The Council expressed its thanks to JG, SC and the other members of the working group

Resolved No decisions required

(Action CCM requested to arrange rotavating for the next stage of the planting programme)

37/23 To receive an update on the Eat Well Spend Less Roadshow

SM reported that the event was a major success with higher than expected footfall due in part to the marketing and organisation of the event and to the number of partners involved. Members received feedback that the timing of the event may have impacted negatively on footfall and that it might like to consider an earlier start time for any similar future events.

Resolved:

- a) **By unanimous agreement that by virtue of expenditure under S 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, the event represented excellent value for money and benefit for the Council and the residents of the SWAN area in the current economic climate.**
- b) **By unanimous agreement to congratulate the CCM, Emma Everett (ABC) the Events Working Group and Council members on their organisation and marketing of the event and involvement on the day.**

38/23 To consider any correspondence received on the future of the G -line

No correspondence received. AR reported verbally that the passenger figures were low despite attempts to make residents aware that the service could be lost if the bus operator considers it to be unviable.

Resolved: Unanimous agreement to promote greater use of the G Line service in the Council's social media and other communications platforms.

Action Communications Working Committee

39/23 To receive urgent correspondence.

- 1) SM reminded members of the content of RW's e-mail of 30th January 2023 relating to a request for members to consider and advise the CCM on locations for the planting of 3 trees to commemorate the late Queen Elizabeth and the correspondence between the CCM and the daughter of former Councillor George Koowaree.
- 2) SM signposted members to a series of training sessions on the May election process

40/23 To agree date of next meeting as 6th March 2023 and any agenda items.

Date agreed

Items to include 1) Eliciting public feedback on parking, traffic and speeding issues 2) Litter following Bromley Green football matches and 3) Legal ownership of the Alfred Road bus stop

41/23 Forum for exchange of information between Council Members.

JG –Updating members on Mallards following the fire

PB –Approaching ABC to justify the empty homes in Newtown

There being no further items to discuss the Chair closed the meeting at 8.44pm

Signed _____ Date _____

Chair