

South Willesborough and Newtown Community Council
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Ordinary Council Meeting - 5th December 2022

MINUTES

The meeting opened at 7pm

200/22 Record attendance and list apologies for absence

In attendance- Andy Rogers (AR) (Chair) David Mullan (DM)) Steve Campkin (SC) Peter Porter (PP) Andy Hodges (AH) Nirosha Thilagarajan (NT) Eric Parkinson (EP) Also, in attendance –Rob Woods (Assistant Community Council Manager, Peter New (PN) Neighbourhood Watch and 5 members of the public

Apologies Sue Mullan (SM) Paul Bohill (PB) Eric and Jacky Godden (JG) apologies received and approved

201/22 Declarations of pecuniary, other significant or voluntary interest

SC declared an OSI as a tenant allotmentee

202/22 Agree Minutes of the Council meeting of 7th November 2022 and sign

Following a discussion, it was noted that the Minutes of the November meeting were incomplete. **Resolved: Proposed DM Seconded NT and agreed unanimously that the Chair should not sign the Minutes until accuracy is established.**

203/22 Meeting adjourned for members of the public to raise questions on items on the agenda

The meeting was adjourned at 7.02pm One member of the public raised the issue of speeding vehicles on Earlswoth Road. AR explained that SWANCC was exploring traffic management initiatives, including measures to prevent speeding, with KCC and ABC One member of the public raised the issue of continual harassment by UKPCM for car parking fines which were understood to have been waived. SC offered to take this up with the relevant officer at ABC

One member queried the reason for not having “Any Other Business” on a Council agenda RW explained the reason. The member of the public then asked how to get items of concern on the agenda and was informed to contact an elected member in the first instance.

The meeting reconvened at 7.10pm

204/22 To receive a presentation from Peter Le Rossignol, Council Manager, Kingsnorth Parish Council on successes and challenges for the Council at Kingsnorth.

Mr Le Rossignol was unable to attend for this item.

205/22 To receive reports from

a. Ashford Borough Council Ward representative

AR reported on his first meeting as observer to the Board of the company set up to oversee the Newtown Railway Works development. Good to have a SWANCC member involved but little to report back in this phase of the project.

Joint Transportation Board meeting cancelled

In a link with d) below he reported on KALC's concern over the recent Police announcement on the loss of PCSO's in the County. He noted Kent Police had indicated that warranted officers would replace them but there is concern about visibility, loss of local knowledge and communications with local councils.

b. Kent County Council Ward representative

SC reported he had been mostly dealing with floods. He said "I now have a contact for southern water that I am now making sure knows exactly what's going on with regards to our insufficient waste water system.

He organised for Conway trucks to go to Bentley Road which was flooded to the point that people couldn't leave or return to their houses. The problem was KCC drains feeding into Southern Water assets which were on ABC land. So, as an ABC councillor he gave permission to both Southern Water and KCC to access that land' SC and AR now have keys for that gate, should they ever need them.

What was obvious was that the drainage team were massively understaffed and under resourced, with only four of them for the whole of Ashford and every Conway truck was out. SC also sat through the Maternity Report on the HOSC (health overview and scrutiny committee). The committee was assured that lessons had been learned and things were improving. He questioned the wisdom of removing lack of resources and staffing problems from the equation and the representatives from the Trust acknowledged that those were factors but not excuses for the behaviour

He will be contacting ABC's new parking officer in the New Year regarding yellow lines on Canterbury Road and investigating the parking at the call centre.

c. Police and Neighbourhood Watch representatives

A Police representative did not attend. PN echoed AR's concerns about the potential loss of 200 PCSO's countywide urging that the Council continues its good work of developing a community of interest against crime and anti-social behaviour and that the Council invites a senior Police officer to a future meeting to explain how the review will benefit SWAN. Picking up on a key point in his written report he advised residents about crime reduction during the Christmas period including, inter alia, prevention of theft of internet deliveries, stored Christmas gifts and theft from vehicles. He thanked SWAN members and residents for their continuing support in 2022

d. **KALC representatives** - See a) above

e. Swan Centre representative

PB apologised and was unable to attend for this item

206/22 To receive the minutes of the Extraordinary Finance and General Purposes Committee of 7th November 2022 and consider the following recommendation

- a) **That a separate notice board is kept permanently UpToDate in the Clerk office confirming all committee member holiday dates and this is recommended to Council for all committees.**

Members noted the minutes and agreed unanimously to inform the Community Council Manager in advance of holiday leave or other committed absence

207/22 To receive and note the draft minutes of the Ordinary Finance and General Purposes Committee of 21st November 2022 and consider the following recommendations

- A) **Item 90/22 - To review the following Council policies - Safeguarding Policy: Disciplinary Procedures: Training, Learning and Development Policy**
The Committee recommends to Council
- i. **that all 3 policies require further review and/or investigation**
 - ii. **that the target date for the revised Safeguarding Policy is February Council meeting**
 - iii. **that an up to date employment handbook should be produced to complement the revised Disciplinary Procedures**
 - iv. **that the Training Learning and Development policy should reflect the Council's aspiration for Quality Council status**
- B) **Item 91/22 To note the new pay scales for 2022-23**
The Committee recommends Council to accept the new nationally agreed pay award backdated to 1st April 2022 in recognition of the excellent service provided by the staff
- C) **Item 92/22 To consider the insurance renewal quote for the Gas House Fields allotments and agree**
- i. **To recommend to Council, the in principle purchase of specialised Allotmenteer Insurance from Chris Knott Insurance that will extend cover to the site representative, volunteers and the community plot as well as providing insurance cover for all tenants of the allotments**
 - ii. **To recommend to Council to minimise risk through a policy offering £5million cover at a cost of £370.85**
 - iii. **To recommend to Council and Allotments Committee that the unit cost to tenants, estimated at £4.04p per person pa, is not passed on this year**
 - iv. **To recommend to Council, to re-endorse the current policy of Council-led management on the Gas House Fields site**

Members noted the draft minutes.

Following a discussion on recommendations A-C above it was resolved:

A – Proposed SC Seconded EP to accept recommendations A i-A iv en bloc. Agreed unanimously

B - Proposed PP Seconded DM to accept the recommendation. Agreed unanimously

C - PP queried the reason for not recharging tenants. He was advised that the financial risk to the Council was low compared to the high risk of losing tenants in the current economic climate and given the Council's aspiration to support healthy activity and mental health initiatives. Proposed NT Seconded EP to accept recommendations C i -C iv en bloc. 6 members were in favour with one member (PP) abstaining. Recommendations agreed by majority vote.

208/22 To receive a report of the Responsible Financial Officer on the budget process and agree

Members considered 2 points of principle given a draft expenditure budget for 2023-24 calculated at 9% above that of 2022-23

RW reminded members of the budgeting/precepting processes, the financial impacts on the Council's reserves of money and the potential impact on residents emphasizing that

- a) accounting rules require the Council to form a budget prior to declaring a precept.
- b) the draft expenditure budget was formed in line with the accounting convention of prudence and presented members with the worst case scenario.

Members discussed the relative merits of maintaining expenditure levels in support of the Council's Community Plan commitments or reducing expenditure and prioritizing its commitments. Upon being put to the vote **members resolved**

- a) to maintain the Council's current Community Plan commitments
 - b) to maintain the current policy of not passing on the full cost of its plans to local taxpayers and
 - c) to agree with the Finance and General Purposes Committee's aspiration to maintain the cost of Council services to local taxpayers at or close to 2022-23 levels in the current financial crisis.
- 6 members in favour 1 abstention (PP)

209/22 To receive and note the draft minutes of the Staffing Committee of 30th November 2022 and consider its recommendations

- i) To recommend 40 hours per week for the Community Council Manager from 01/02/2022.
- ii) SM and AR to ensure any necessary upskilling of the CCM through the proposed internal audit in February 2022.
- iii) SM to request the RFO to adjust the Budget for Staffing for Council Monday 5th December at 7pm
- iv) To ensure the budget for 2023/2024 included 60 hours admin support for Summer 2023.
- v) To ensure the hand- over of RW's commitments to the Chair and Vice Chair.

Members noted the draft minutes without comment

Proposed SC Seconded AH to accept the recommendations en bloc. Agreed unanimously

210/22 To review Committee progress reports from the Community Council Manager and note any feedback

Members reviewed and noted the reports without comment

211/22 To receive a verbal update from Cllr Campkin on the Planting and Biodiversity Working Group and agree

SC reported that he joined the working group, Jacky Godden, Jacky Willis and Danbarsing Gurung, two weeks ago and planted daffodils, crocuses and bluebells in Albion Place, litter picked the area, and trimmed the hedges and mowed the grass. The two Jackies then planted some more daffodils around the trees by the Newtown bridge. The working group meets weekly.

212/22 To receive a report of the Community Council Manager on the community event in July 2023 and agree to book main acts and requirements, review the initial income opportunities and agree

This was discussed in the absence of the Community Council Manager.

Following a discussion, members resolved

- a) to endorse the Community Council Manager's proposals to book the following acts and other services in this financial year
- b) Brighton Charleston Girls £600
- c) Silhouettes £650
- d) Meyer Dancers £700
- e) Stage recommended at FGP by Roger Crouch £850 +VAT (to be reclaimed)
- f) Punch and Judy £400
- g) Circus Workshop £350
- h) Facepainter £300

b) Despite an error in the income calculation for wristband sales, to express confidence in the Community Council's Manager's advice that a minimum of £5500 will be achievable from sponsorship and commercial income and that the budget for 2023-24 should reflect that.

Proposed SC Seconded AH and agreed unanimously
LGA 1972 S145

214/22 To consider options for a Coronation event and delegate to the Events Working Group

Following a discussion members resolved by unanimous agreement not to proceed with a Coronation Event

Action RW to adjust draft budget to reflect that decision

215/22 To receive an update regarding UKCPM Car Parking and agree actions

DM reported that despite an appeal to the Chief Executive several months ago ABC had not responded to the Council's concerns about parking and parking fines in the Newtown area.

Members agreed to refer this to the Planning and Highways Committee for further detailed discussion.

215/22 To receive an update report of the Community Council Manager on the Eat Well Spend Less Roadshow

The Community Council Manager was unable to attend and present the report. Timings of the meeting were discussed.

Action CCM to request ABC to consider extending the hours

216/22 To receive the proposed meetings programme for 2023 and agree and to agree a closure period over Christmas 2022 and New Year 2023

Following a discussion it was resolved

- a) to accept the proposed meetings programme (Appendix A) subject to agreement on the Council's Annual meeting date, the date of the Annual meeting of Electors and clarification on the July Council meeting date
- b) to close the SWAN office from 25th December 2022 until 3rd January 2023

Proposed EP Seconded AH and agreed unanimously

218/22 To agree an internal audit including the Delegation Scheme by Chair and Vice Chair to assist the Community Council Manager in February 2022

Proposed AH Seconded NT Agreed unanimously

219/22 To receive urgent correspondence

None received

220/22 To agree date of next meeting as 10th January 2023 and any agenda items

Agreed 9th January 2023

Items to include Asda Bridge flooding update (AR) Children in Need (EP) Youth Strategy renewed invitation to Gareth Davies to present

Members noted that ABC Cllr Clarkson was invited to attend the January meeting to present his ideas for a memorial in the Newtown railway works development.

221 /22 Forum for exchange of information between Council Members

PP urged members to start thinking about their ongoing involvement in advance of the Election in May 2023

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 8.27pm

Signed: Date:.....
Chair

APPENDIX A

Meetings Programme 2023

Council - 1st Monday in the month except bank holidays and ordinary election

- January 9th
- February 6th
- March 6th
- April 3rd
- May Annual Council - To be agreed – must be within 14 days of councillors taking their positions.
- May Annual meeting of electors – TBD
- June 5th
- July 3rd to be moved to July 11th (To be clarified)
- August – Recess - NO meeting
- September 4th
- October 2nd
- November 6th
- December 4th

FGP – 4th Monday in the month except bank holidays

- January 23rd
- February 27th
- March 27th
- April 24th
- May 22nd
- June 26th
- July 24th
- August – Recess - NO meeting
- September 25th
- October 23rd
- November 27th
- December 18th

Planning and Highways – 3rd Wednesday of the month

- January 18th
- February 15th
- March 15th
- April 19th
- May – Either 17th or 24th - Depends on Annual meeting date decision

June 21st

July 19th

August 16th (Only for planning applications)

September 20th

October 18th

November 15th

December 20th

Staffing Committee – Quarterly – Dates to be confirmed

Allotments Committee - Quarterly – Dates to be confirmed

Communications Committee – Frequency and dates to be confirmed