

South Willesborough and Newtown Community Council

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Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on

Monday 7th November 2023

November 2023 Minutes

The Clerk opened the meeting at 7pm due to the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair.

In attendance Cllr Steve Campkin (SC) Cllr Eric Parkinson (EP) Cllr Paul Bohill (PB)

Also, in attendance Sarah Evans Community Council Manager (SE CCM), Peter New Neighbourhood Watch, PN, PC Adele Tyrer Ashford Borough Ward Cllr Sojan Joseph and 5 Members of the Public.

The Clerk requested members to agree a Chair for the meeting.

Agreed unanimously SC to Chair the meeting.

190/23 Record attendance and list apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Nirosha Thilagarajan, Cllr Andy Rogers, Cllr Andy Hodges, Cllr David Mullan and Cllr Sue Mullan. These were all approved.

191/23 Declarations of pecuniary, other significant or voluntary interest

SC is tenant at Gas House Fields Allotments

192/23 Agree Minutes of the Council meeting of 2nd October 2023 and sign (attached)

Deferred to the next meeting.

193/23 To receive reports from

- a. KCC Cllr
- b. KALC representatives
- c. **Observer to the Newtown Railway Works Development**
- d. **Police and Neighbourhood Watch representatives,**
- e. **Ward Cllrs**

A) SC advised that the most recent KCC meeting had been cancelled due to the significant storm that week. That budgets were being reviewed and he would update Council on its progress.

SE advised SC of a request from resident regarding the large puddle and pothole on Earlsworth Road. The resident believes that this is the cause of Water Damage to his retaining boundary wall and had been requesting a repair from KCC to an avail. SC asked to receive the report and would take this up directly with the resident and KCC

SE raised the bricks on the bridge of Mead Road had become dislodged that this had been reported to KCC who had visited the site but not actioned repairs SC would take this forward.

B) No update for this month.

C) No update for this month.

D) PN read a previously circulated report and introduced new Beat Officer PC Adele Tyrer to the Council. PC Tyrer advised Council she had specifically applied for this position was committed to community engagement and being a face in the community. She advised the large area she is covering and advised members to ensure they always report crime.

SE thanked PC Tyrer on behalf of the Council and thanked her for her commitment and time to come to the meeting. SE commended the Police on the arrest of nuisance motorcyclists on Belmont Place and raised the letter sent by Council last month to PC Wheatley to request the area is patrolled when possible to prevent recurrence. SE also advised of the crime in Wainwright Place and issues raised in the previous Planning and Highways Committee and correspondence send on this item. PC Tyrer agreed to investigate.

EP raised concerns on Christmas season and waste being targeted to see what new items had been purchased in a house and advised residents to be careful to dispose of all waste securely in the wheelie bin provided.

E) Ward Cllr Sojan Joseph advised ABC were working on budgets and savings were needed to be made. That some ABC Councillors had raised concerns on the possible move of the Civic Centre to International House and a meeting would be held to discuss this in further detail. That the new contract for bin collection was progressing well and Members advised they were aware of this.

SE raised correspondence received from a young resident highlighting bushes on Earlsworth Road outside the school preventing line of site and 2 near miss accidents as a consequence. Cllr Joseph requested photos of the site in question and would raise this with Aspire.

SE raised concerns on the overgrowth and brambles at the end of Mead Road which is again restricting visibility for drivers and was the scene of 2 significant accidents in the previous year. Cllr Joseph agreed to take this forward and request this is cut.

SC advised that Aspire were overstretched at present due to the extended mowing season caused by the extended season of grass growth this year and this was delaying the regular cutting and bramble management. That over the next 2 years ABC were planning to expand Aspire.

SE raised correspondence received from a resident regarding CCTV at the underpass and tidying and repairs needed at that site. Cllr Rogers had more history on this item and would be requested to discuss this with Cllr Joseph.

PN raised concerns with Budget Cuts being made at ABC that the CCTV in the town centre was of vital support to the Police and particularly if they are delayed responding or need a bird's eye view of the situation and urged Cllr Joseph to support an ongoing budget for CCTV in the Borough.

194/23 To note the end of the role of Observer to the SWAN Centre Board

Resolved:- It was noted the SWAN Centre Board is extremely efficient and the relationship with the SWAN Centre was positive and the year role of Observing the Board had been informative and helpful. That this would now end as the year had been completed. Going forward the SWAN Centre Board would need help with advertising their committee meetings and this would be continued.

195/23 Meeting adjourned for members of the public to raise questions on items on the agenda. (This item will last no more than 15 minutes in total)

The meeting was adjourned at 7:29pm and immediately reopened. PC Adele Tyler left the meeting.

196/23 To receive an update on the actions from Meeting with Ashford Borough Council and SWANCC representatives to discuss physical improvements in Newtown and South Willesborough on ABC Land.

Members discussed a previously circulated report.

Resolved:- Proposed EP and Seconded PB and Agreed unanimously 1) to note the successful progress on the actions raised with Ashford Borough Council and the positive working relationship being developed with the New Housing officer for Newtown. 2) Cllrs to convene a walkabout on Bullied Place to consider practical improvements such as planting to improve the look and feel of the area in line with the Community Plan and bring recommendations to Council.

197/23 To receive a report of the Community Council Manager regarding residents' concerns of overgrowth and litter over the footpath rear of primary school and railway tracks

Resolved:- Agreed unanimously to investigate if the non-cutting and weeding was linked to the SWANCC Planting and to advise that this is no longer required and to request this is tidied. To investigate if bins are available for litter on this path and if not to request it. To request the SWAN Litter picker to walk this route a further time during the month if possible within his rounds.

Action SE to request LP to walk this route a further time of the month.

198/23 To receive and note the Minutes of the Planning and Highways Committee October 2023 and consider recommendations to Council.

Resolved:- Proposed EP and Seconded PB and Agreed Unanimously 1) To receive and note the Minutes of the Planning and Highways Committee. 2) To accept the recommendation to write to all residents on Canterbury Road for evidence of accidents or damage to vehicles caused by congested or illegal parking.

Action SE To draft letter to review at the next Council Meeting.

199/23 To receive and note the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee October 2023

Resolved:- Proposed EP and Seconded PB to receive and note the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee. Proposed PB and Seconded EP and Agreed Unanimously 1) to

withdraw the Sponsorship Policy until the has Powers of General Competency. 2) To adopt the Procurement and Purchasing Policy for the year, this would be reviewed again in 2024. 3) To accept the recommendations for the mental health and wellbeing policy as follows to formally write into the policy to keep two 1 perch plots where possible for fast tracking the allotments waiting list if a prospective SWAN tenant is referred by GP or Mental Health Support Worker or a Mental Health Charity.

Also, 18th November 2023 is the KALC AGM at which there is to be a resource serviced for Parish Councils to gather resources of benefit to residents within Mental Health and Wellbeing therefore the sign posting function within this policy is updated on review of these resources.

200/23 To receive and note the Minutes of the Staffing Committee October 2023 and recommendations to Council

Resolved :- Proposed PB and Seconded EP and Agreed Unanimously 1) To update the agenda number on this item to 200/23 and going forward to update all Agenda items in numerical order for the Minutes. To receive and note the Minutes of the Staffing Committee. 2) To accept the recommendation to increase the wage of the Litter Picker to newly announced Living Wage of £12 and backdate to the date of the Announcement. 3) To delegate the Finance and General Purposes Committee to determine a Salary Increase for the year 2023 to 2024 on reflection of the excellent work and service provided. 4) To receive at Council Quarterly reports on the progress of the Litter Picker and rounds conducted. 5) To accept the recommendation that the Community Council Manager complete the qualification for CILCA.

201/23 To consider a report of the Community Council Manager on CILCA and agree

Resolved:- Agreed unanimously to the payment and purchase of SLCC Membership for the Community Council Manager. To the purchase of the prequalification course at £50 + VAT SLCC Member rate. To the purchase of the CILCA Qualification of £450 +VAT to the Purchase of the Building the Portfolio Course at £250 +VAT. To the purchase of Local Council Administration edition 12 onwards at a cost of £137 plus vat plus postage and clerk's manual at £47.50 + vat. That these costs be put into the budget for 2024 2025. That the CCM would pay for referrals and 2 mentoring sessions at £25.00 to give commitment to the Course along with personal time of 60 hours. That the CCM would work from home 1 day of the week, most likely Friday to carry out the training. That this would slow down the work in the SWAN Office but the Qualification was worthwhile. That the Summer recess would provide staff time to work on the Qualification. To delegate the Finance and General Purposes Committee to consider Admin support for the SWAN Office either an internship or admin support to assist with the workload for 2024 as currently it is at maximum capacity.

202/23 To review the insurance for Gas House Fields Allotments and agree

Resolved Agreed Unanimously to accept the quote from JMG Insurance for Public Liability insurance for Gas House Fields Allotments and the payment for this insurance.

203/23 To review the updated design terms for Communications from InteractiveM and agree

Members discussed the previously circulated report and the current newsletter and its excellent standard.

The Chair invited comment from PN who advised that as a number of residents only have a landline phone the value of a paper newsletter keeping residents up to date and including Neighbourhood Watch advice was essential for the protection and consistent communication with all residents. He commended the Council to continue with a paper newsletter and flyers to keep residents fully informed and all information at hand.

Resolved:- Agreed Unanimously to accept the ongoing provision of InteractiveM for Newsletters and Communications for the next year. To accept the new in-house designer service at the same rates as were used when outsourced to Zone Marketing for better service and increased contact ability.

204/23 To review the safety of the SWAN Office and agree actions Cllr Bohill

PB advised that on making visits to the SWAN Office he had noted the significantly increased footfall to the site and the comparative isolation of the SWAN Office with a lone female worker without facility to call for help or support. He highlighted the possible safety risks and advised the Council to have a suitable camera device to see who is coming to the office and an electronic control lock if possible to allow entry to the office.

PN gave the CCM a personal alarm until this was in place.

Resolved:- Agreed unanimously to investigate ring doorbell or similar devices and possible lock options as soon as possible.

Action PB to advise on camera options

Action SE to investigate costs

205/23 To review a report on the impact of the rising costs support provided by SWANCC and agree actions

Resolved:-Agreed Unanimously to send the report to KALC and Ashford Borough Council for their review. To note the immense effective ness of the rising costs, support in the SWAN area. That facility should be included in the budget for 2024 2025 for rising costs support.

206/23 To review the request from KALC for content for the Chair Clerks conference and agree ideas

Resolved:- Agreed Unanimously to submit the following ideas to KALC for the Chair and Clerks Conference.

How to work effectively and confidently as Chair and Clerk

How to have big vision as a Parish Council

How to empower leadership of Councillors within the framework of the Council

How to ensure all Cllrs ideas and aspirations for the Community are reflected within the Agenda for the Council

How to work effectively and positively with 21st Century modelling for the Parish Council life

How to be aware of unconscious bias and ensure balanced debates

207/24 To agree the Community Council Manager's attendance to the KALC AGM and the KALC Communications training for resilience planning

Resolved:- Agreed Unanimously to the attendance of SE CCM to both events.

208/23 Urgent Correspondence

No items were brought.

209/23 Forum for Exchange

PB advised on his recent visits to Hull and reflected on the differences and benefits of a Community Council with a professionally run service and committees.

PB advised that his recommendations to the Select Committee for Energy Companies on the management of Customers unable to pay their bills had been accepted and residents should find a more continuous service of gas electricity in unable to pay circumstances.

210/23 To agree the date of the next meeting Monday 4th December 2023 and items for the Agenda

The date of the next meeting was agreed as 4th December 2023.

There being no further business to discuss the Chair closed the meeting at 8:29pm

Signed Chair _____

Date _____