
SHEPPEY AREA COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Virtual Meeting held via Skype on Tuesday, 22 September 2020 from 7.00pm - 7.53pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Cameron Beart, Richard Darby, Simon Fowle, Ken Ingleton, Elliott Jayes, Peter Macdonald, Peter Marchington, Lee McCall and Pete Neal

OFFICERS PRESENT: David Clifford, Janet Dart and Bob Pullen.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Mike Baldock, Monique Bonney, Roger Clark, Steve Davey, Mike Dendor, Tim Gibson, Alan Horton, James Hunt, Carole Jackson, Denise Knights, Richard Palmer, Ken Rowles, Julian Saunders, David Simmons, Eddie Thomas, Tony Winckless and Corrie Woodford

APOLOGIES: Councillor Angela Harrison and Kent County Councillor Andy Booth.

114 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Resolved:

(1) That Councillor Ken Ingleton be elected Chairman for the Municipal Year 2020/21.

115 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Resolved:

(1) That Councillor Cameron Beart be elected Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year 2020/21.

116 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

117 PUBLIC FORUM

The Chairman explained that the purpose of this agenda item was to enable members of the public to direct questions or suggest agenda items for future meetings.

Local resident Linda Brinklow spoke about the need for great connectivity on the Isle of Sheppey for people who were unable to rely on car use and asked that the Committee considered looking at this in detail as part of their work programme.

Local resident Paul Brockwell suggested the Committee might focus their consideration on a range of items including levels of new housing development, the Queenborough and Rushenden regeneration scheme, regeneration of Sheerness town centre, neighbourhood policing, tree planting in urban areas, and the safety and upkeep of playgrounds.

Local resident, and Sheerness Town Councillor, Chris Reed asked the Committee to consider access to the promenade at Marine Terrace, Sheerness. Current arrangements meant that the promenade was difficult to access for people on bikes, mobility scooters and wheelchairs.

Resident Dolly White spoke about the process for publicising the existence of the Committee and the work it would be doing.

The Policy and Performance Officer noted the large number of residents who had dialled into the meeting in contrast to Area Committees elsewhere in Swale.

118 PURPOSE AND ROLE OF AREA COMMITTEES IN SWALE

The Chairman introduced the report which set out the purpose of Area Committees and the Committee's Terms of Reference.

It was noted that each member had an allocation of £4k, £56k in total as there were 14 Members representing the five wards covered by this Area Committee. The funds could be allocated to projects in consultation and agreement with the Area Committee at large.

The Chairman drew attention to the fact that agenda, reports and minutes of meetings would all be published on Swale Borough Council's (SBC) website.

119 SHEERNESS WAR MEMORIAL - VERBAL UPDATE

Councillor Elliott Jayes spoke about the war memorial located in Sheerness. A bid had been made for funding to SBC's Special Projects Fund to match that which had already been raised in the community to restore the memorial. Unfortunately the bid had not been successful.

Several Members registered their support for the restoration project and recommended that the Committee urged Cabinet to reconsider providing the funds needed to match the resources already raised in the local community from the Special Projects Fund.

Resolved:

(1) That Cabinet be asked to reconsider providing match funding for restoration of the war memorial in Sheerness from the Special Projects Fund.

120 LOCAL ISSUES

Brown tourism signs

The short paper for this item described the process for obtaining and siting of brown tourism signs. It was noted that there were many demands for more brown signs to support the leisure and tourism offer across Swale. However, it was not straightforward or cheap to get these signs put up. Cabinet wanted Area Committees to provide a prioritised list of sites which they would be interested in funding signage for, and an indication where they would like those signs to go.

A Member considered that there were higher priorities for the Committee to focus on. Another Member noted that brown signs were sometimes removed to enable works to take place, but were seldom restored following completion of the works. It was noted that parish and town councils might be a good source of knowledge on which local signs existed, which were obsolete and where signs were missing.

Heritage issues

The paper explained that Swale had around 50 Conservation Areas, many of which had not been reviewed for several decades. Earlier this year the Council launched a new Heritage Strategy, part of which included reviewing these Conservation Areas over the period of the Strategy. The Committee were invited to consider bringing areas forward for review which were not part of the Heritage Strategy Action Plan by allocating part of the grant funding available to them.

Conservation issues – including ponds

The paper explained that it was important that the Council had an up-to-date and accurate picture of the ponds in Swale, their current condition, and their ownership details. This did not include private ponds in peoples' gardens. There was both a strategic need for this information and also a heritage, conservation and tourism aspect. Ponds were often signifiers of underground waterways which SBC needed to be aware of, and were also strong promoters of biodiversity. They could also be used in promotional material encouraging visitors to Swale's rural areas.

Chairman

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All Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel