
SITTINGBOURNE AREA COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Virtual Meeting via Skype held on Tuesday, 8 September 2020 from 7.00pm - 7.42pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Derek Carnell, Simon Clark, Steve Davey (Chairman), Mike Dendor, Tim Gibson, James Hall, Ann Hampshire, Ken Rowles, Roger Truelove, Ghlin Whelan and Tony Winckless.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Philippa Davies and Bob Pullen.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Mike Baldock, Cameron Beart, Monique Bonney, Roger Clark, Alan Horton, James Hunt, Ken Ingleton, Carole Jackson, Elliott Jayes, Denise Knights, Benjamin Martin, Ben J Martin, Richard Palmer, Hannah Perkin, David Simmons and Eddie Thomas.

96 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Resolved: That Councillor Steve Davey be elected Chairman for the Municipal Year 2020/21.

97 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Resolved: That Councillor Derek Carnell be elected Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year 2020/21.

98 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

99 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

100 PUBLIC FORUM

The Chairman explained the purpose of the agenda item and invited members of the public present to ask a question or suggest an agenda item for a future meeting. No one present wished to speak.

101 PURPOSE AND ROLE OF AREA COMMITTEES IN SWALE

A Member suggested that the Committee might wish to consider discussing primary, secondary and further education provision in Sittingbourne at the next meeting.

The Chairman said that he was aiming to spend time with Members in other wards within the Sittingbourne area to explore what issues they faced and would be contacting them prior to the next scheduled meeting.

102 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 and cheap to get these signs put up. Cabinet would like to see area committees provide a prioritised list of sites they would be interested in funding signage for, and an indication where they would like those signs to go.

Heritage issues

The tabled paper explained that Swale had around 50 Conservation Areas (CA) many of which have 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. While it was recognized that CAs were less of an issue for Sittingbourne than other areas of Swale, the Committee could consider whether they would like to promote the placing of blue plaques to recognise notable men and women who have lived or worked in the area.

Conservation issues – including ponds

The paper explained that it was important that the Council has an up-to-date and accurate picture of the ponds in our Swale, their current condition, and 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 we need to be aware of, and were also strong promoters of biodiversity. They could also be used in promotional material encouraging visitors to our rural areas.

Discussion ensued on:

- Number of underground streams and rivers in Sittingbourne flowing out into Milton Creek;
- the Fire Service had comprehensive knowledge of ponds and other amenities as part of their water planning.

Other local issues

A member of the public suggested that the regeneration of Sittingbourne Town Centre be considered as a future agenda item.

The poor state of the entrance to the Sittingbourne skate park was mentioned which had an impact on access to the Dolphin Barge Museum. The Cabinet Member for Economy and Property said that the skate park was in the process of being transferred to a trust which would be a prelude to work to clear the site commencing.

A Member suggested that the underground bomb shelter at Trotts Hall Gardens, Sittingbourne could possibly be opened as a tourist attraction.

Chairman

Copies of this document are available on the Council website <http://www.swale.gov.uk/dso/>. If you would like hard copies or alternative versions (i.e. large print, audio, different language) we will do our best to accommodate your request please contact Swale Borough Council at Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT or telephone the Customer Service Centre 01795 417850.

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