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## SITTINGBOURNE AREA COMMITTEE

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**MINUTES** of the Virtual Meeting held via Skype on Tuesday, 8 June 2021 from 7.00 pm - 8.58 pm.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Derek Carnell (Vice-Chairman), Steve Davey (Chairman), Mike Dendor, Tim Gibson, James Hall, Ann Hampshire, Ken Rowles, Roger Truelove and Ghlin Whelan.

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Simon Algar, Martyn Cassell, Janet Dart and Jo Millard.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillors Cameron Beart, Roger Clark, Ken Ingleton, Peter Marchington and Pete Neal.

Kent County Councillor John Wright.

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Simon Clark and Tony Winckless.

### 46 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Members nominated Councillor Steve Davey to be elected as Chairman for the Municipal Year 2021/22, to be confirmed at the next Sittingbourne Area Committee in September 2021.

### 47 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Members nominated Councillor Derek Carnell to be elected as Vice-Chairman for the Municipal year 2021/22, to be confirmed at the next Sittingbourne Area Committee in September 2021.

### 48 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ken Rowles declared a non-pecuniary interest in the Swale Media Arts Centre.

Councillor Mike Dendor declared a non-pecuniary interest in the Kemsley Community Centre of which he was a Trustee.

Councillors Derek Carnell, Steve Davey and Mike Dendor declared a non-pecuniary interest in the Milton Creek Country Park of which they were Trustees.

### 49 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2021 (Minute no. 514-522) were taken as read, signed and approved as a correct record.

### 50 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Members noted the progress on actions.

The Chairman referred to the wayfinding audit of signage and advised the signage was up in Sittingbourne.

In the absence of the Cabinet Member for Economy and Property, the Chairman noted that she had undertaken to give an update at the September 2021 meeting. A Member expressed disappointment that there was no update for this round of meetings, however another Member commented that education was a Kent County Council (KCC) matter.

The Chairman referred to the Sittingbourne Town Centre Scheme and confirmed the matter raised at the last meeting about Virgin Fibre Optic was resolved. Another Member noted that the Light Cinema and Bowling Alley were open and had proved to be extremely popular.

The Chairman advised that he met with officers regarding the entrance to the Skate Park and the Dolphin Barge Museum and an investigation would be carried out to establish ownership with a view to clearing rubble. The Chairman requested that the greenery should remain in place.

With reference to the bomb shelter at Trotts Hall Gardens, Sittingbourne, the Chairman advised that it had been filled in and concreted over. The matter had been referred to the Estates Officer at KCC. A Member asked if there was an alternative site in Sittingbourne which could be preserved for education purposes. The Chairman responded that the Principal Archaeologist at KCC had been consulted.

## **51 PERIWINKLE WATER MILL SITE**

The Conservation & Design Manager gave an update on the current situation at the Periwinkle Water Mill Site and ran briefly through the project proposals. He advised that a structural survey revealed a number of problems which had delayed the project. The concrete structure was not deemed safe by the consultant engineer for the proposed use of the site. A site meeting is planned to establish the most appropriate interventions to address the concerns, and once agreed, the additional works would need to be included in tender documents. The officer hoped to be in a position to provide a further update at the end of June 2021. Subject to agreement with the Cabinet Member for Planning, it is anticipated that the extra costs for the structural interventions will be covered from the Heritage Strategy Budget, together with the design cost for the scheme, and the site interpretation. The set aside monies from the Sittingbourne Society for this project are anticipated to cover the bulk of the physical works set out in the tender documents.

A discussion took place and a summary of points discussed is listed below:

- A Member requested that the greenery be cleared so it looked like work was commencing;
- concerns were expressed about the barriers protecting the voids, the officer would check to ensure the site was safe;

- the vertical drop around the wheel would be covered by a grill and vertical metal rails would be put in place to prevent accidental falls;
- Members commented that the pavement in Church Street was unstable, the Drainage Officer would inspect and advise;
- The source of the water lying at the bottom of the void was currently unclear (rainwater or seepage into the space from piped or diverted water course) and liaison with KCC and/or a drainage engineer would be necessary to determine whether the proposed works to the concrete structure in light of determining the water source, were appropriate.

## **52 OPTIONS FOR ROMAN SQUARE & SQUARE OPPOSITE SWALE HOUSE**

Members noted the update report and commented as follows:

Square opposite Swale House:

- Members felt the designs did not address anti-social behaviour as the seating areas would encourage groups to congregate. The Chairman would bring revised plans back to the September 2021 meeting for consideration; and
- a KCC Member suggested that schools and colleges could be involved in some of the work.

Roman Square:

- Enforcement was required where drinkers congregated;
- the archway needed to be brightened;
- hanging baskets would improve the appearance of the area; and
- fly-tipping outside the charity shops needed to be addressed.

## **53 SITTINGBOURNE TENNIS CLUB**

David Croft, Club Secretary, gave an update about the Sittingbourne Tennis Club in Milton Recreation Ground. The Club would be meeting with Swale Borough Council officers to find a way forward regarding tenure. Future proposed projects included the provision of a club house and the resurfacing of courts. A Member commented that it was a community site so it should be for multi-use.

It was agreed that the Area Committee wait to hear the outcome of the meeting with officers and would then discuss how they would like to take the matter forward.

## **54 SPORTS FACILITIES**

The Chairman suggested reviewing sports facilities in the Sittingbourne area to see if any required work. The Head of Commissioning, Environment and Leisure said that officers would gratefully receive this feedback and added that a detailed Council review of sports facilities was due to commence but would take up to 18 months to complete.

It was agreed to bring this back to a future meeting once Members had been able to look at facilities in the area.

**55 PUBLIC FORUM**

Jackie Davidson raised some issues regarding traffic flow outside the bus station in Sittingbourne and suggested some changes which could improve the flow. Members suggested these ideas should be taken to Swale Joint Transportation Board. Jackie Davidson agreed to bring his proposals to the next Area Committee Meeting.

Jackie Davidson also raised concerns about the toilets near the cinema which closed early. He mentioned the need for better public transport. He also commented that the bus park was too small and there was a lack of recycling bins. The Head of Commissioning, Environment and Leisure agreed to look at the lack of bins.

**56 LOCAL ISSUES TO BE RAISED**

The KCC Councillor for Sittingbourne South raised the issue of Phoenix House. The Council Leader agreed to meet with both KCC Councillors to discuss Swale Borough Council's ambitions for the site.

**57 UPDATE ON AREA COMMITTEE REVIEW**

A Member who sat on the Area Committee Review Working Group gave an update on the progress of the Review. The Working Group were finalising their report which would be presented to the Committee Chairs. The Working Group recommended that Area Committees considered what their funding ambitions and priorities were for the year ahead.

A discussion ensued and the following points were made:

- There should be better public engagement;
- promotion of the meetings should be in all mediums; and
- hybrid meetings would be better as not everyone could attend physical meetings.

The Area Committees Coordinator agreed to feed the comments back to the Working Group.

**58 FUNDING**

The Chairman advised that full monitoring reports would be presented to the Area Committee in September 2021 on the progress of the projects awarded funding in 2020/21.

Brief updates were given on the allocations which are summarised below:

Swale Media Arts Centre – work was progressing, the problem with the lease not being signed continued. The Council Leader would chase.

Brogdale CIC – the items have been ordered and are waiting to be installed. Looking to fund more bins.

Milton Creek Country Park Trust – pictures were presented to the Committee showing progress.

Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway – chasing the agreement with SBC. Hoped to install the signs soon.

Kemsley Community Centre Trust – delays had been caused by the need for an asbestos survey to be carried out. Ceiling panels would need to be removed before the doors could be replaced.

Flowers in Bloom – work should start in the next few weeks.

Dolphin Sailing Barge Museum Trust – delays had been caused by a change in the power company, hope to move this on soon.

The Raybel – work was commencing.

Tennis Courts at Milton Recreation Ground – the order for moving the switch gear had been placed, it was hoped the work would be done in advance of darker nights.

**59 MATTERS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE BY CABINET**

No issues were raised.

**60 MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET BY COMMITTEE**

The Chairman suggested a few items needed further discussion before referring to Cabinet.

Chairman

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