
EXTRAORDINARY SHEPPEY AREA COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Sheerness East Working Men's Club, 47 Queenborough Road, Minster-on-Sea, Sheerness, ME12 3BZ on Tuesday, 8 February 2022 from 6.30 pm - 8.26 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Cameron Beart (Vice-Chairman), Richard Darby, Oliver Eakin, Simon Fowle, Angela Harrison, Ken Ingleton (Chairman), Elliott Jayes (remotely), Peter Macdonald, Peter Marchington, Lee McCall, Pete Neal, Padmini Nissanga, Ken Pugh (remotely) and Bill Tatton.

NOMINATED PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES: Parish/Town Councillors Linda Brinklow, Matthew Bromley, Chris Reed, Brian Spoor, and Dolley White (all Sheerness TC), Mike Brown (Eastchurch PC) and Ashley Sheil (Queenborough TC).

OFFICERS PRESENT: Christopher Blandford, Martyn Cassell, David Clifford (remotely), Janet Dart (remotely), Sharon Dormedy (remotely), Joanne Johnson, Kieren Mansfield, Larissa Reed (remotely) and Emma Wiggins.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Monique Bonney, Steve Davey (remotely), Tim Gibson (remotely), Sarah Stephen (remotely), Roger Truelove, and Tony Winckless (remotely).

Kent County Councillor Andy Booth, Divisional Member for Sheppey.

Graham Razey, Alan Salter and Paul Sayers, East Kent College Group.

575 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chairman read out the emergency evacuation procedure.

576 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

577 SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL'S LEVELLING-UP FUND BID

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the hybrid Extraordinary Sheppey Area Committee Meeting and introduced the visiting Swale Borough Council (SBC) Councillors and Officers, both physically and remotely.

The Council Leader, Councillor Roger Truelove, gave an overview of the purpose of the meeting and explained that Swale was in a high priority position to receive funding from the central government concept Levelling-up. He said that bids needed to be aligned to the Sittingbourne and Sheppey parliamentary seat and that MP Gordon Henderson was being kept fully updated on the progress. He clarified that as Sittingbourne had already received regeneration funding, it was clear that

Sheppey should be the main focus of the bid. The value of the bid would be £20 million and if successful would start momentum for change and growth. The timescales for submitting the bid were tight and community input and support was needed.

The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development gave a presentation which set out the parameters of the Fund. The presentation was included in the agenda pack.

The Head of Environment and Leisure spoke about proposals for a new swimming pool. Attendees were asked what they would like to see inside the new swimming pool building/refurbished leisure centre and comments made included:

- Residents, especially the young, could not always afford to access facilities such as gyms and swimming pools;
- rent in shops could be subsidised;
- improvements could be made to the seafront, extending to Barton's Point;
- Sheppey Blue Tits requested a tidal pool be considered and suggested it be free and benefit health and wellbeing;
- people looked for places to go wild swimming;
- a tidal pool would put Sheppey on the map nationally;
- children should be asked for ideas on what could be included;
- the management group should be taken out of the Swale Leisure Centre;
- there needed to be investment in Sheerness town centre;
- a good quality soft play centre would be welcomed; and
- the tennis courts were of a poor standard and not maintained.

The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development asked what residents would like to see in the wider Beachfields footprint and comments made included:

- The issue with Neptune Terrace steps needed to be resolved;
- the flood gates should be kept open and only shut in bad weather;
- some beach huts and kiosks could be built into the sea wall by the church;
- large empty shops could be used for an arts and crafts revival;
- history boards could be made to go in empty shop windows;
- improved cycle paths and bike hire provided;
- improved facilities at Barton's Point;
- reduced speed limits;
- markets in Sheerness High Street;
- install bus stops behind Masters House;
- maintain the community gardens;
- build a bandstand in the gardens;
- develop the Sheppey FM building so they could develop their services and provide further tourist information;
- the groynes on the beach were in disrepair;
- maximise sea views;
- install sand volleyball pits;
- an improved skatepark;
- address general poor appearance of the area; and

- a raised level at Beachfields so there were views out to sea.

Graham Razey from East Kent College (EKC) Group spoke about the proposed extension of Sheppey College and how it could create new courses in engineering and creative industries. Comments made included:

- There have been years of ‘talking shops’ on the Island which had not achieved anything, this proposal would increase skills; and
- there needed to be places for people to park.

There was general agreement that this would be a good idea.

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods asked how the projects could benefit the town centre and waterfront with particular emphasis on placemaking and connectivity. Comments made are summarised as follows:

- The SS Montgomery masts should remain onshore as an important part of the Island’s heritage;
- get rid of the mermaid mural;
- consider making Sheppey a coastal studies centre of excellence, holding courses could put the Island on the map which would benefit the town centre and seafront;
- pedestrianise areas of the town centre and install architectural arched gates by the entrances;
- don’t include things like crazy golf;
- access to the beach at Beachfields was an issue;
- needed to look at transport links; and
- future projects needed to include Blue Town.

The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development thanked everyone for attending and providing input. She encouraged people to write any further comments on the post-it notes in the hall and for remote attendees to add comments in the chat. The consultation would close on 25 February 2022 and officers were working towards completing the bid by 15 April 2022. If successful, delivery would need to take place by March 2025.

The Council Leader said he appreciated such good attendance and the ideas that had been put forward. He summarised that there was a desire to improve Beachfields and the college expansion seemed to have wide support.

The Chairman concluded by saying that when the dockyards shut, the Isle of Sheppey did not completely recover but if successful, this funding would help Sheppey to get back to where it was before.

578 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No issues were raised.

Chairman

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