
COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT on Wednesday, 7 September 2022 from 7.00 - 8.25 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Mike Baldock (Substitute for Councillor Elliott Jayes), Cameron Beart, Lloyd Bowen, Steve Davey, Mike Dendor, Oliver Eakin, Tim Gibson, Alastair Gould, James Hall, Peter Macdonald, Lee McCall, Richard Palmer (Chair), Hannah Perkin and Ken Rowles.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Martyn Cassell, Steph Curtis, Philippa Davies and Emma Wiggins.

OFFICERS PRESENT (Virtually): Jay Jenkins and Kellie MacKenzie.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE (Virtually): Councillor Carole Jackson.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Nicholas Hampshire and Elliott Jayes.

283 **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

The Chair outlined the emergency evacuation procedure.

284 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 June 2022 (Minute Nos. 146 – 152) and the Extraordinary Meeting held on 10 August 2022 (Minute Nos. 232 – 234) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record, subject to an amendment to the Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 August 2022 to record that Councillor Mike Baldock was in attendance.

285 **Declarations of Interest**

No interests were declared.

Part B Minutes for Information

286 **Forward Decisions Plan**

Members raised comments and asked questions which included:

- Welcomed the inclusion of the Domestic Abuse Policy onto the Plan for consideration at the meeting on 1 November 2022;
- considered there should be an item on the cost of living crisis;
- would like to see a report on Section 106 agreements on the Plan;
- there should be a Member briefing on the cost of living crisis;
- Full Council should consider the cost of living crisis; and
- could external agencies be invited to a future meeting to speak on the Domestic Abuse Policy?

In response, the Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods explained that the Council was currently working with its partners in terms of the cost of living crisis. She explained that whilst this matter would not go on the Forward Decisions Plan at the moment as there were currently no decisions to make, a briefing note would be provided for all Members to

show the ongoing work that was taking place. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods explained that Section 106 Agreement reports were the remit of the Planning Committee and as such would be considered by them. She added that she would look into whether external agencies could be invited to attend the service committees.

Resolved:

(1) That the report be noted.

287 CCTV Public Space Policy Review 2022

The Community Safety Manager introduced the report which provided an overview of proposed changes made as part of a refresh of the public space CCTV policy. She explained that the first Swale Public Space CCTV Policy was adopted in April 2020 and it covered a range of areas. The policy had been due to be reviewed next year, but had been brought forward. The Community Safety Manager outlined the key amendments that had been made to the policy, as set-out in paragraph 2.5 of the report. She explained that section 5 of the policy, CCTV in Third Party Owned Buildings or Spaces, had the most changes and she explained that the level of fees would be dependent on the level of service required from the Control Centre and would vary from service to service.

Members raised comments and asked questions which included:

- Welcomed the report;
- concerned with the fees being on a case-by-case basis, rather than a set fee as this could end up being more work for officers;
- it would make sense to have a price list, rather than negotiate on a case-by-case basis;
- needed to consider the costs and ensure that the budget costs of matters within the Community Committee's remit were fed into the Council's budget
- needed to consider maintenance costs and the lifespan of each camera; and
- it was useful to have a map showing where all the CCTV cameras were, and the extent of the area they covered.

In response, the Community Safety Manager explained that third parties ranged from private businesses to parish councils and this would be reflected in the charges. She outlined the pricing process and considered it would not be a laborious task. The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods explained that as this was a new scheme, officers were unsure at the moment what the take-up would be. An ongoing review approach would be taken and the scheme would be trialled for a year.

In response to further questions, the Community Safety Manager confirmed that the annual performance report, set-out in paragraph 13.2 of the policy would be available for all Members. She also confirmed that the list of cameras on the website would be updated, and that there were four or five Hawkeye cameras installed throughout the Borough. The Community Safety Manager explained that there was a back-up generator in Swale House, the CCTV equipment was reliant on a maintenance contract, and the lifespan of a camera was about five years. She added that maps could be produced to indicate where the cameras were.

The Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods confirmed that she would ask the Director of Resources about issues raised by Members in terms of the budget setting process and consultation with the committee.

Councillor Lloyd Bowen moved the following amendment: That recommendation (3) be amended to remove the 'case-by-case' wording. This was seconded by Councillor Mike Baldock and on being put to the vote, was agreed.

Resolved:

- (1) That the refreshed Public Space CCTV Policy be adopted.**
- (2) That the principles for charges for third-party CCTV services be agreed.**
- (3) That delegated authority be given to the Head of Housing and Communities and the Director of Resources to enter into third party services and agree a charge.**

288 Coach parking in Sheerness

This item was deferred to a future meeting.

289 Rebuild and Repairs to Churchyard Wall at St Peter and St Paul's Church, Lynsted

The Head of Environment and Leisure introduced the report which set-out the issues relating from a collapse of the churchyard wall at St Peter and Paul church in Lynsted and included proposed solutions to repairs. He explained that Lynsted churchyard was one of the closed churchyards maintained by the Council and it had collapsed in January 2021. The Head of Environment and Leisure explained that the wall abutted the highway and the Council had worked closely with Kent County Council (KCC) to get the matter resolved. A temporary fix had been carried out and he explained that £16,000 had been spent on the wall so far. Inspections had been carried out on the wall and during this time it was noticed that other areas needed attention. A structural engineer had been employed by the Council. The matter was complicated as the wall abutted the highway. The Head of Environment and Leisure advised that there were two options in the report and KCC had approved Option 1. However, it was considered by stonemasons working on the wall that a more traditional build would be the preferred option. He explained that since the report was written, officers had liaised further with KCC and they had stated that they were against the traditional option. The Head of Environment and Leisure explained that delegation would allow further negotiation with KCC.

The Chair passed on comments from a Ward Member who was in support of the recommendations to repair the churchyard wall and had sent his apologies as he was unable to attend the meeting.

Members raised comments and asked questions which included:

- KCC's position was unacceptable;
- did not like the concrete wall option;
- this was an historic wall made of flint and should be restored using traditional methods;
- this could set a precedent with any wall which abutted a highway;
- the concrete option would destroy the nature of our villages;
- Historic England (HE) should be approached for comments;

- did not favour delegation to officers on the KCC option, this needed to be challenged;
- concerned with the water damage on the wall and which option would be best to mitigate this;
- what were KCC's issues with Option 2?; and
- how many closed churchyards were there in the Borough?

In response, the Head of Environment and Leisure explained that the concrete wall option would be faced with flint to fit in with the existing wall. The more traditional wall allowed permeability of water.

Councillor Hannah Perkin moved the following motion: That a letter be written to the Council's two MPs requesting that Government repealed the Burial Act 1853 as the continued upkeep of closed churchyards by the local authority was not sustainable. This was seconded by Councillor Cameron Beart and on being put to the vote, was agreed. The Head of Environment and Leisure confirmed that he would draft a letter in the Chair's name. He responded to some of the issues raised and explained that there were technical build requirements for a wall when it was next to a road. The Leisure Services Manager confirmed that there were 17 closed churchyards in the Borough and that KCC's view was that they needed to make the wall structurally safe.

Further comments included:

- Concrete with flint might look good at first, but might not last long;
- the traditional method was preferred;
- lime was more flexible than concrete and could cope better with water;
- the wall should be repaired back to its original state;
- concrete + flint could be a good option, subject to good workmanship;
- the repairs needed to be carried out quickly and properly;
- it could be beneficial to look at other concrete walls for comparison;
- a good quality repair would last a long time; and
- concerned with the cost implications of maintenance of this type of wall.

There was some discussion on the four recommendations in the report.

Councillor Mike Baldock moved the following amendment: That recommendation (1) be amended to delete reference to Option 1. This was seconded by Councillor Alastair Gould and on being put to the vote, was agreed.

Resolved:

- (1) That the repair of the collapsed section of wall and the commencement of tender proceedings for option 2 be agreed and that delegated authority be given to the Head of Environment to proceed.**
- (2) That the additional works to repair the braced section, bulging section and general repairs be undertaken.**
- (3) That £120,000 be added to the capital programme funded from capital receipts.**
- (4) That delegated authority be given to the Head of Environment and Leisure in consultation with the Director of Resources to award the contract if above £100k but within the budget allocation.**

(5) That a letter be written to the Council's two MPs requesting that Government repealed the Burial Act 1853 as the continued upkeep of closed churchyards by the local authority was not sustainable.

290 **Member appointment - Council Leisure Service**

The Head of Environment and Leisure introduced the report which asked the Committee to agree the Council's member representation for the municipal year 2022/23 on the Swale Community Leisure (SCL) Board. He explained that the nominated Member would be a representative for the Council, but the role was not as a Trustee, but to attend Board meetings.

There was some discussion on whether the decision made by this Committee would need to be ratified by Full Council. The Head of Environment and Leisure explained that this appointment was similar to decisions made at other service committees where the appointment fell within the remit of that particular service.

The Chair asked for nominations for the one place on the Board.

Councillor Hannah Perkin nominated Councillor Richard Palmer and this was seconded by Councillor Steve Davey.

Councillor Mike Dendor nominated Councillor Oliver Eakin and this was seconded by Councillor Cameron Beart.

On being put to the vote Members voted in favour of Councillor Richard Palmer to be appointed as SBC's representative on the SCL Board.

Resolved:

(1) That Councillor Richard Palmer be appointed as SBC's representative on the Swale Community Leisure Board.

Chair

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