
WESTERN AREA COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Bredgar Village Hall, Bexon Lane, Bredgar, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8HB on Thursday, 1 September 2022 from 7.00 pm - 9.08 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Mike Baldock, Monique Bonney, Roger Clark, James Hunt, Richard Palmer, Paul Stephen, Sarah Stephen (Vice-Chair) and Corrie Woodford (Chair).

NOMINATED PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES: Parish/Town Councillors Graham Addicott (Hartlip PC), Nicola Butlin (Borden PC), Brian Clarke (Bredgar PC), Vivien Rich (Tunstall PC) and Steve Tolhurst (Iwade PC).

OFFICERS PRESENT: Janet Dart and Larissa Reed.

OFFICERS PRESENT (Virtually): Jo Millard.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: David Carey (Chair of The Kent Tree and Pond Partnership).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE (Virtually): Councillors Mike Dendor, Tim Gibson and Carol Jackson, Kent County Councillor Richard Lehman, Divisional Member for Swale and Rebecca O'Neill (The Commissioned Provider of Youth Provision for Kent County Council).

APOLOGY: Councillor Alan Horton.

261 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair read out the emergency evacuation procedure.

262 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

263 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2022 (Minute Nos. 66 – 77) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

264 POND MANAGEMENT

Councillor Mike Baldock said that the Western Area Committee were keen to raise awareness of pond management issues and introduced David Carey, the Chair of the Kent Tree and Pond Partnership, who had been invited to give a presentation.

Mr Carey spoke about the work of the wardens who had been trained by Southern Water. He said that ponds were important in this part of Kent but they had been

under pressure due to pollution and other factors since the 1930s and he added that when thinking about pond maintenance, it was important to consider historical and archaeological factors and to get the input of a wide range of the community to see what they would want from their local pond. Mr Carey said that some visions may not be compatible, for example a wildlife pond would not be suited to being a home to ducks and fish as they would stir up the mud.

In response to questions Mr Carey stated that:

- The Kent Tree and Pond Partnership was a voluntary organisation and did not have the resources to engage with farmers to find old ponds. However, the Kent Wildlife Trust had links with farmers countywide and the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty were keen to set up a Kent ponds rescue project;
- he would be happy to advise Rodmersham Parish Council about dealing with run off from roads and interceptors; and
- The Kent Tree and Pond Partnership were able to signpost where there were enquiries about creating new ponds and managing existing ponds.

Councillor Baldock said that the Western Area Committee would like to provide some funding for the Kent Tree and Pond Partnership to continue their valuable work. The Chair suggested that the Policy & Engagement Officer liaised with Mr Carey to put a proposal together to bring back to the December 2022 meeting for the Area Committee to consider.

265 REVERSAL OF ALLOCATION WAC004 REPORT

The Area Committee Members considered the report which explained that as Kent County Council (KCC) had rejected the applications for three brown tourism signs to be installed in the Parish of Bobbing, the allocation of funding reference WAC004 allocated in 2020/21 for £1,200.00 be reversed and added to the Western Area Committee allocation for 2022/23.

Councillor Richard Palmer moved the following motion: *that the allocation reference WAC004 allocated in 2020/21 for £1,200.00 be reversed and added to the Western Area Committee allocation for 2022/23.* This was seconded by Councillor James Hunt and on being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

Councillor Mike Baldock moved the following motion: *that the Chair of the Western Area Committee write to Kent County Council expressing Members' disappointment about the rejection of the applications and explained that the Committee felt the criteria was unhelpful.* This was seconded by Councillor Monique Bonney and on being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

Resolved:

- 1) ***That the allocation reference WAC004 allocated in 2020/21 for £1,200.00 be reversed and added to the Western Area Committee allocation for 2022/23.***
- 2) ***That the Chair of the Western Area Committee write to Kent County Council expressing the Western Area Committee Members'***

disappointment about the rejection of the applications and that the criteria was unhelpful.

266 UPDATE ON WORK PLAN

At the June 2022 Western Area Committee Meeting, Members requested proposals for funding be brought back to the September meeting for consideration. The Chair reminded Members that the Constitution stated that “*Any amount for which an allocation has not been agreed by the Area Committee by the end of the financial year will be forfeited, and no rollovers will be permitted. Any funding allocation agreed by the Committee but unspent by the end of each electoral cycle (ie May 2023) will also be forfeited.*”

A discussion took place on each proposal:

Youth Provision Project – Rebecca O’Neill, the Commissioned Provider of Youth Provision for KCC confirmed that The Meads could be added to the list of areas to be visited by the Vibe youth workers to engage with young people. She also confirmed that the project could be repeated two further times. Councillor Richard Palmer moved the following motion: *that the Youth Provision Project should be carried out three times and include The Meads.* The amount allocated for this project was £6,930.00. This was seconded by Councillor Roger Clark and on being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

Bredgar and Hartlip Conservation Area Reviews – Councillor Mike Baldock spoke about the proposal which had been highlighted in 2021 as a priority of Western Area Committee. The proposal set out officer comments about the workload of the Conservation & Design Team but Councillor Baldock said the Area Committee should not be put off agreeing the proposal as the Consultant would be carrying out the reviews and the Graphics Officer would be producing the documents. There was general agreement that Peter Bell should be appointed to carry out the work. Councillor Richard Palmer moved the following motion: *that Western Area Committee allocate £8,400.00 for Peter Bell to carry out Conservation Area Reviews at Bredgar and Hartlip.* This was seconded by Councillor Monique Bonney and on being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

King George V Toilet Refurbishment – Councillor Sarah Stephen explained that the toilet at King George V Playing Field was in need of renovation and officers had obtained a quote to complete the work. Members were supportive of the proposal but questioned if there was an alternative hard wearing wall covering which would have an improved appearance to white roc. Councillor Sarah Stephen moved the following motion: *That Western Area Committee allocate £5,054.00 to refurbish the King George V toilet and officers look for an alternative wall covering.* This was seconded by Councillor Mike Baldock and on being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

Donation to Foodbank – Councillor Corrie Woodford spoke about the proposal that stated the Swale Foodbank was the appropriate Foodbank for the Western Area. Members commented that some residents would find it difficult to travel to the Foodbank centres due to lack of public transport. It was suggested that the Bus Shelter Foodbank would also be able to support residents in the Western Area.

Members would want any funding allocated to benefit residents in the Western Area rather than the whole of Swale. A Member spoke about the difficulties residents would have obtaining alternative heating fuels such as heating oil and Calor Gas. Councillor Corrie Woodford moved the following motion: *that Western Area Committee allocated £10,000.00 as a donation to Foodbanks providing they could provide guarantees that the funding would be directed to residents in the Western Area, deliveries to be made to residents who could not travel and that officers worked on a funding proposal to bring to the December 2022 meeting which would support residents who were having difficulties purchasing alternative heating products.* This was seconded by Councillor Mike Baldock and on being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

The Chair concluded that £30,384.00 had been allocated from the 2022/23 funding of £35,200.00 which left £4,816.00 remaining to be allocated at the December 2022 Western Area Committee meeting.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Youth Provision Project be carried out three times and include The Meads and the amount allocated for this project was £6,930.00.**
- 2) That the Western Area Committee allocates £8,400.00 for Peter Bell to carry out Conservation Area Reviews at Bredgar and Hartlip.**
- 3) That the Western Area Committee allocates £5,054.00 to refurbish the King George V toilet and officers look for an alternative wall covering.**
- 4) That the Western Area Committee allocates £10,000.00 as a donation to Foodbanks providing they could give guarantees that the funding would be directed to residents in the Western Area and deliveries will be made to residents who could not travel.**
- 5) That officers work on a funding proposal and bring to the December 2022 meeting which would support residents who were having difficulties purchasing alternative heating products.**

267 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Members noted the progress on actions.

Councillor Mike Baldock advised that with reference to looking into where the Section 106 funding was spent, he was waiting for a complete list and he would report back at the December 2022 meeting.

The Friends of Rose Hill Woods and The Meads Woodland Groups should provide the Policy & Engagement Officer with their bank account details so the suggested funding could be transferred to them. It was agreed that they should provide the Western Area Committee with annual updates and a Borough Councillor should sit on each group.

268 PUBLIC FORUM

A resident of Bredgar, raised an issue about reduced funding for bus services and how this impacted residents in villages. She said that there was no incentive for residents to use buses which would reduce the number of cars on the roads.

Councillor Mike Baldock responded that it was important to hear how cuts affected people and it should be fed back to those who made the decisions at KCC.

Councillor Monique Bonney said that was fair for the resident to raise the issue in this forum and the option of using the Kent Carrier service costs £3 a time which was an extra cost to residents. She added that KCC did not take the opportunity to use the Kent Science Park Section 106 funding to make a subsidised bus service viable by providing a timetable that would have benefitted the residents in the villages. Councillor Bonney moved the following motion: *that the Chair of the Western Area Committee write to KCC about the effect the cuts to bus services would have on residents living in villages in the Western Area and request that the timetabling and routes of remaining services were reviewed as they were not viable.* This was seconded by Councillor Richard Palmer and on being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Chair of the Western Area Committee write to KCC about the effect the cuts to bus services would have on residents living in villages in the Western Area and request that the timetabling and routes of remaining services were reviewed as they were not currently viable.**

269 LOCAL ISSUES TO BE RAISED

No issues were raised.

270 MATTERS REFERRED TO AREA COMMITTEE BY SERVICE COMMITTEES

No issues were raised.

271 MATTERS TO BE REFERRED TO SERVICE COMMITTEE CHAIRS FOR CONSIDERATION

The letter that the Chair of the Western Area Committee sent to KCC about bus services in rural areas, should be copied to the Chair of the Planning & Transport Policy Working Group.

Chair

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