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## WESTERN AREA COMMITTEE

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**MINUTES** of the Meeting held in Newington Village Hall, off the High Street, Newington MR9 7JJ on Thursday, 1 December 2022 from 7.00 pm - 8.07 pm.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Mike Baldock, Nicholas Hampshire, Alan Horton, James Hunt, Richard Palmer, Paul Stephen and Corrie Woodford (Chair).

**PRESENT (Virtually):** Councillors Monique Bonney and Roger Clark.

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

**NOMINATED PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES (Virtually):** Councillor Nicola Butlin (Borden PC).

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Janet Dart and Larissa Reed.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE (Virtually):** Councillors Mike Dendor and Tim Gibson and Kent County Councillor Richard Lehmann, Divisional Member for Swale.

**APOLOGY:** Councillor Sarah Stephen (Vice-Chair).

### 466 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair read out the emergency evacuation procedure.

### 467 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

### 468 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 September 2022 (Minute Nos. 261 – 271) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

### 469 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Members noted the progress on actions.

Bredgar and Hartlip Conservation Area Reviews – Members noted the update and asked that the Policy and Engagement Officer spoke to the Conservation & Design Team in January 2023, to ensure that the consultant could take on the work and that the Finance Team confirmed the consultant could be awarded the contract. Members requested that officers presented the review to the Western Area Committee in the Autumn of 2023, in addition to the Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group.

Members noted the update on the Walking and Cycling Project and confirmed they were very happy with the progress.

Bus services – further to the letter the Chair sent to Kent County Council (KCC) about the effect the cuts to bus services had on residents, no reply had yet been received. The Policy and Engagement Officer was asked to chase a reply. Parish Councillor John Wright, who was in attendance on behalf of Tunstall Parish Council and as KCC Divisional Member for Sittingbourne South, advised that KCC had announced funding for community groups to run their own bus services. There were opportunities for parishes to get together to form their own bus services.

Councillor Mike Baldock went through the list of Section 106 funding for Youth Services in the Western Area. Some discrepancies were noted and Councillor Baldock suggested it would be useful to monitor where the money was being spent. It was agreed that the Chair would write to KCC to find out what the Section 106 funding had been spent on for Application 16/501266/FULL Newington and report back to the Western Area Committee at the next meeting.

**Resolved:**

- 1) That the Chair of Western Area Committee writes to Kent County Council to find out what the Section 106 funding had been spent on for Application 16/501266/FULL Newington and report back to the Western Area Committee at the next meeting.**

**470 PUBLIC FORUM**

No issues were raised.

**471 LOCAL ISSUES TO BE RAISED**

Councillor Alan Horton referred to the Policy & Resources Committee meeting on 30 November 2022 when Members authorised a consultation on the draft budget for 2023/24. He noted that there was no opportunity for Area Committees to spend beyond May 2023 and said it would be wise for parish councils to highlight this as part of their consultation responses.

Councillor Mike Baldock raised the issue of flooding in rural areas. Due to changing weather patterns, drains were not able to cope and this was now a problem for some residents in the Western area. Members felt that this matter was beyond KCC and should be taken up with the Government as a proper funding package was needed to deal with the issue. It was agreed that the Chair would refer the matter to the Environment Committee Chair.

Parish Councillor John Wright spoke about the speculative development in College Road, Sittingbourne and asked where it stood as the Swale Borough Council (SBC) Local Plan was delayed. Councillor Mike Baldock responded that the situation did not have any great bearing as all applications were looked at on merit to ensure they were sustainable. KCC Highways & Transportation would comment to ensure it should not put strain on infrastructure. In response to comments about Local

Plans providing protection to the community, Councillor Baldock said that SBC were right to wait to see what announcements were made by the Government.

Councillor Richard Palmer spoke about the reduction in Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and the effect in the Western area. The Chief Executive said that she had met with the Chief Inspector who acknowledged this was an issue in Kent. Councillor Mike Baldock moved the following motion: *That the Chair of the Western Area Committee formally contact the Swale Borough Council representatives on Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to request that they take up the matter of no PCSOs in the Western area with the CSP.* This was seconded by Councillor Alan Horton and on being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

**Resolved:**

- 1) *That the Chair of the Western Area Committee raised the matter of increased incidences of flooding due to changing weather patterns to the Chair of the Environment Committee with a view to this being taken up with the Government as a proper funding package was needed to deal with the issue.***
- 2) *That the Chair of the Western Area Committee formally contact the Swale Borough Council representatives on Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to request that they take up the matter of no PCSOs in the Western area with the CSP.***

**472 UPDATE ON WORK PLAN**

At the September 2022 Western Area Committee meeting, Members allocated £30,384.00 of funding, which left £4,816.00 of funding remaining to allocate. Members asked for proposals to come back to the December 2022 meeting on assisting homeowners in the Western area with energy costs and assisting the Kent Pond Wardens with their work.

**Kent Pond Wardens proposal**

Councillor Mike Baldock spoke about the valuable work the Kent Pond Wardens carried out and how this proposal to purchase equipment would assist them. Councillor Baldock moved the following motion: *That the Western Area Committee allocated £292.87 to assist the Kent Pond Wardens to carry out their work.* This was seconded by Councillor Alan Horton and on being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

**Assisting homeowners in the Western area with energy costs**

The Chair spoke about the proposal to help homeowners in the Western area with reducing their energy costs. SBC provided a Fuel and Water Home Advisor Service, managed by the Swale charity Children and Families. One of the services provided by the Advisor was to give households advice on ways to reduce their use of energy and thereby reducing costs. As part of the service, energy efficient packs could be given out which contained items like radiator reflectors, draft excluders,

LED light bulbs and timers. The content of the packs were tailored to the needs of the household. Each pack costed approximately £50. The proposal was to allocate funds to the Fuel & Water Home Advisor Service via the charity Children and Families so the Advisor could provide energy efficient packs to households in the Western area.

Members discussed the proposal and commented as follows:

- It was important that advice was given before packs were handed out;
- Members suggested that the Fuel & Water Home Advisor held drop-in sessions in locations that would be accessible to residents in the Western area;
- Members would be happy to assist with delivering packs to homes if residents had difficulties travelling to the Swale CVS office which was currently the closest collection point; and
- residents in the Western Area were made aware of this service through various communication methods and signposting.

The Chair moved the following motion: *That Western Area Committee allocated £4,523.13 to the Fuel and Water Home Advisor Service, via Children and Families, to provide homeowners with energy efficient packs to be given out after advice was given.* This was seconded by Councillor Mike Baldock and on being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

**Resolved:**

- 1) That the Western Area Committee allocated £292.87 to assist the Kent Pond Wardens to carry out their work.**
- 2) That the Western Area Committee allocated £4,523.13 to the Fuel and Water Home Advisor Service, via Children and Families, to provide homeowners with energy efficient packs to be given out after advice was given.**

**473 MATTERS REFERRED TO AREA COMMITTEE BY SERVICE COMMITTEES**

No issues were raised.

**474 MATTERS REFERRED TO SERVICE COMMITTEE CHAIRS FOR CONSIDERATION**

As agreed under the item Local issues to be raised, the Chair of the Western Area Committee raised the matter of increased incidences of flooding due to changing weather patterns to the Chair of the Environment Committee with a view to this being taken up with the Government as a proper funding package was needed to deal with the issue.

Chair

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