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## SITTINGBOURNE AREA COMMITTEE

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**MINUTES** of the Meeting held in The Clock Tower Hall, Adisham Green, Kemsley, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 2SR on Tuesday, 13 December 2022 from 7.00 pm - 8.32 pm.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Derek Carnell, Steve Davey (Chair), Tim Gibson, James Hall, Ann Hampshire, Ken Rowles, Roger Truelove and Tony Winckless.

**PRESENT (Virtually):** Councillors Mike Dendor and Ghlin Whelan.

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** David Clifford, Janet Dart and Graeme Tuff.

**OFFICER PRESENT (Virtually):** Adrian Oliver.

**APOLOGY:** Councillor Simon Clark.

### 512 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair read out the emergency evacuation procedure.

### 513 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Steve Davey and Tony Winckless both disclosed a non-pecuniary interest as members of the Milton Regis Society.

Councillor Ken Rowles disclosed a non-pecuniary interest as a Trustee of Swale Media Arts.

### 514 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 September 2022 (Minute Nos. 272 – 282) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

### 515 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Members noted the progress on actions.

Entrance to the Skate Park and Dolphin Barge Museum – the Chair advised that Essential Land had put in an application to build which could be viewed on the Mid-Kent Planning Portal.

Kemsley Arms – Councillor Mike Dendor advised he had not been kept updated on progress on this matter in his Ward. Councillor Tim Gibson added that discussions were ongoing with the applicant.

Bus services – the Chair advised that he and Councillor Tony Winckless would be meeting with Jackie Davidson to discuss his concerns about bus services. He said he would be inviting representatives from the bus services to attend a future Sittingbourne Area Committee meeting. Kent County Council (KCC) Divisional Member for Sittingbourne North, Councillor Mike Dendor, said that more would be

known about which services would be cut when the KCC budget was agreed in February 2023.

Improvements to lighting in Milton Regis area – the Policy and Engagement Officer would chase the response on the clock tower lights with Swale Borough Council (SBC) officers.

Options for Roman Square and square opposite Swale House – The Chair gave an update on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). Funding for Sittingbourne Town Centre of £60k had been agreed for 2024/25. There needed to be some preliminary work for the greening initiative.

Town Centre Volunteer Group – the Chair advised that many of the planned tasks had been cancelled due to the weather.

Great Easthall Pond – Councillor Ann Hampshire spoke about the sad news of children losing their lives after playing on ice on a lake in Solihull and asked about the depth of the water in Great Easthall Pond. The Green Spaces Manager said he would need to find out but it was deep enough to be dangerous. A discussion took place on what could be done about the safety of ponds in Swale. Councillor Ann Hampshire moved the following motion: *That the Chair of the Sittingbourne Area Committee write to the Swale Kent Fire and Rescue Service to see what sessions they could hold to educate children and parents about safety around ponds.* This was seconded by Councillor Tim Gibson and on being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

**Resolved:**

- 1) *That the Chair of the Sittingbourne Area Committee write to the Swale Kent Fire and Rescue Service to see what sessions they could hold to educate children and parents about safety around ponds.***

**516 ACTIVE TRAVEL FUND TRANCHE 4**

The Active Travel Coordinator gave a presentation on the Active Travel Fund (ATF) Tranche 4. Three tranches of funding had come forward from the Government since 2020. Tranche 4 was announced in July 2022 by the Active Travel Fund which included a three-year capital fund of £470m and a one year £250 million revenue fund and the deadline for bids was 23 December 2022. KCC submitted its self-assessment in August 2022 and it was assessed as a Level 1 (Level 4 was the highest and Level 0 was the lowest).

SBC had put in a £165k Capability & Ambition Fund bid to improve an existing bid. Since October SBC had been pulling together ideas for the ATF process, there was no criteria but there was guidance. The Government launched 'Gear Change' in 2020, the strategy to make the country more accessible.

The Active Travel Coordinator presented the AFT 4 proposals for Sittingbourne which included traffic light cycle filters, footway improvements and additional/improved cycle paths. After the meeting the link to the maps would be shared.

A discussion took place and the following comments were raised:

- Although the proposals were encouraging, there needed to be connectivity across the railway line;
- a question was asked about extending the cycle paths further west; and
- improvements to Public Rights of Way (PROWs) were requested.

The Active Travel Coordinator agreed that the issue of connectivity across the railway line needed to be resolved and he would be meeting with Network Rail and Southeastern Railway in January 2023, however, this was a longer term plan. There were discussions with Sustrans about an off-road cycle path to the west of Sittingbourne. Discussions were ongoing with the KCC PROW Team about improvements.

#### 517 **LAWN TENNIS ASSOCIATION TENNIS COURT REFURBISHMENT PROPOSAL**

The Green Spaces Manager went through a proposal from the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) to refurbish the King George's Playing Fields and Milton Recreation Ground Tennis Courts. There was a certain level of criteria SBC would need to meet, Milton Recreation Ground would need to commit to tennis alone, this site was originally built as a multi-use site (tennis, football and basketball). SBC would be required to commit to maintaining the refurbished tennis courts for 15-years and provide a sinking fund. The courts would be available to use on a pay-by-play basis, season tickets and some sessions would be free.

The Sittingbourne Area Committee's views were being sought in advance of taking the proposal to the Community Committee.

A discussion took place and the following comments were made:

- Kevin Kelly, attending on behalf of Sittingbourne Tennis Club, said the Club fully supported the proposal;
- there was a lack of facilities in Swale and this proposal was an opportunity to gain improved facilities linked to a club;
- although SBC had supported multi-sport facilities in the past, this opportunity must not be missed; and
- it was suggested it would be beneficial to have a club connection at King George's Playing Field;

Councillor Roger Truelove moved the following motion: *That the Sittingbourne Area Committee support the Lawn Tennis Association proposal to refurbish the King George's Playing Field and Milton Recreation Ground Tennis Courts and that there was a tennis club connection at King George's Playing Field.* This was seconded by Councillor Tony Winckless and on being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

#### **Resolved:**

- 1) ***That the Sittingbourne Area Committee support the Lawn Tennis Association proposal to refurbish the King George's Playing Field and***

***Milton Recreation Ground tennis courts and that there was a tennis club connection at King George's Playing Field.***

**518 HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

KCC Councillor Mike Dendor, Divisional Member for Sittingbourne North said that he had received requests to explain Highway Improvement Plans. He said they were a mechanism to allow parishes to put forward suggestions for highway improvements with a particular focus on safety and active travel. They were also a means to improve communication between parishes and KCC Highways. The suggestions were logged but were unfunded by KCC. Parishes had precepts to put funds towards the projects. For unparished areas who did not have funds to put forward, community groups could put suggestions forward via their local Member and the funding for projects could come from Member Grants.

**519 UPDATE ON WORK PLAN**

The Policy and Engagement Officer presented the proposal put forward by the Milton Regis Society to repurpose funding awarded to them by the Sittingbourne Area Committee in 2021/22, bid reference SITT015. They had not been able to start the project and requested the funding of £568.80 go towards their project to install a new double sided village sign. That bid reference SITT030 was awarded £3,841.71 at the September 2022 meeting which was just over 48% of their original request. The repurposing of the SITT015 funding would go towards making up the shortfall.

Councillor Roger Truelove moved the following motion: That the award of funding to the Milton Regis Society in 2021/22 reference SITT015 be repurposed and go towards the partially funded project SITT030, this was seconded by Councillor Tim Gibson.

On being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

The Chair and Councillor Tony Winckless recused themselves from the vote as they were Members of the Milton Regis Society.

***Resolved:***

- 1) That the award of funding to the Milton Regis Society in 2021/22 reference SITT015 be repurposed and go towards the partially funded project SITT030.***

**520 PUBLIC FORUM**

No issues were raised.

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

No issues were raised.

**522 MATTERS TO BE REFERRED TO SERVICE COMMITTEE CHAIRS FOR CONSIDERATION**

Councillor Ken Rowles raised the issue of the bollard installed to stop vehicles using Nellie's Alley, Sittingbourne between 7 am and 5 pm on Saturdays. He asked who should hold the key and be responsible for removing the bollard at 5 pm on Saturdays. The Area Committee agreed that the Policy and Engagement Officer should take away an action to investigate with SBC officers and report back to the Area Committee.

Chair

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