

Matters Arising update

Sittingbourne Area Committee meeting: 13 December 2022

No.	Item	Background	Update on actions
1.	Entrance to skate park and Dolphin Barge Museum	<p>The Head of Housing and Community Services advised that conversations had taken place between SBC and the organisations regarding widening the access so everyone could have appropriate access.</p> <p>The Head of Housing and Community Services advised a meeting had been arranged early October 2022 with key parties to progress design and implementation. Unfortunately, the meeting had to be rearranged due to organisations not being able to make the original date.</p>	The meeting with relevant partners has to be rearranged.
2.	Sittingbourne Tennis Club	<p>It was reported at the September 2021 meeting there were still ongoing issues regarding the legal agreement to be finalised. The Club would like to take on the toilets and facilities at Milton Recreation Ground, an SBC officer was looking into the lease arrangements and would report back.</p> <p>The Leisure & Technical Services Manager advised Swale Borough Council have had an initial meeting with the LTA regarding potential funding but deadlines were short and required SBC to commit to revenue funding over a 15 year period. Lighting towers have been structurally tested (awaiting report) ahead of potential new lighting project. A meeting with club is to be confirmed.</p>	The Leisure & Technical Services Manager advised that a recent meeting with Tennis club has taken place. LTA meetings have resulted in confirmation of financial requirements from SBC, this has been escalated top senior officers for consideration and will then go to the Community committee for discussion. Milton is currently deemed as 'multi usage' this would need to be changed for LTA funding to proceed.

3.	Kemsley Arms	<p>The KCC Divisional Member for Sittingbourne North advised that Planning officers were recommending refusal of the application and therefore it had been called into Planning Committee to determine. He commented on issues relating to non-communication by SBC Planning and the length of time to get to this point.</p> <p>It was agreed by Members to raise the issue of lack of communication from the SBC Planning Team and the length of time to deal with the Kemsley Arms application with the Chair of the Planning Committee.</p>	<p>The Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods along with the team met the developer last month about the scheme. The scheme is not viable as it stands and the meeting explored options that may be available to help make it viable and these were left with the developer to pursue.</p>
4.	Bus services	<p>The Chair and Councillor Tony Winckless met with Jackie Davidson and would pursue some ideas to help improve Sittingbourne's bus services. The KCC Divisional Member for Sittingbourne added that he had met with Chalkwell and was arranging a meeting with the KCC Cabinet Member about school buses</p> <p>Mr Davidson advised that Arriva had announced that from 2 October 2022 they would not be providing a service in Sittingbourne on Sundays. It was unlikely that Stagecoach would provide a service as they had previously said they would not come to Sittingbourne without a depot.</p>	<p>The Chair will provide a verbal update.</p>
5.	Improvements to lighting in Milton Regis area	<p>It was noted that the clock had been reinstated in Milton Regis and the Chair would be exploring how lighting in the area could be improved.</p> <p>At the March 2022 meeting the Chair advised he and the Milton Regis Society were looking to resolve this with KCC as soon as possible.</p>	<p>The Chair will provide a verbal update.</p>

6.	Creekside Plan	<p>At the December 2021 meeting, the Chairman advised that he had spoken with charities about developing an overarching project to rejuvenate the Wharf. He already had a number of ideas from the charities and was in discussion with the Legal Team about forming a group and taking this forward. The Chairman circulated the ideas to the Area Committee Members.</p> <p>The Head of Housing & Community Services advised there had been a few operational issues but once these were resolved, the wider plan for the site could be considered.</p>	No further update.
7.	Options for Roman Square & Square opposite Swale House	<p>At the September 2021 meeting the Chair advised that he spoke to the occupants of Roman Square and the Working Group about brightening up the area.</p> <p>The Roman Square sign at the junction with the High Street is being painted as part of the Phase 2 works that are currently in progress.</p> <p>Future spend on the greening initiative has been deferred while officers consider whether funds available can be increased via UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF). The Chair advised he has been invited to be on the panel for the UKSPF.</p>	The Chair will provide a verbal update.
8.	Swale Borough Council website	A Member raised concerns about the difficulties residents and Councillors experienced when trying to navigate the Swale Borough Council website. Some items appeared to be 'buried' and took a number of steps to find.	The next step is to conduct a survey with officers and the public. Discussions are ongoing to achieve this in a meaningful and cost-effective way.

		The Communications Manager advised three surveys will be carried out, one each for councillors, officers and the public. Following the Member survey, 8 responses were received which are being assessed.	
9.	Swale Media Arts Centre Lease	Councillor Ken Rowles advised that although both sides had signed the lease, their solicitor had still not received a copy. He advised that they would be changing from a CIC (Community Interest Company) to a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) for funding reasons and had formed a committee. The cost of heating would be an issue this winter. Councillor Rowles will provide a list of the outstanding repairs.	Councillor Ken Rowles submitted the following update: “Swale Media Arts Centre has helped improve the High Street since we gave 34 a fresh venue with the support of early community grants. In our first year we have on the ground floor an art gallery that has held a verity of art exhibitions and events that can be seen from a photographic record seen on social media and our website. Events have included works from local artists and workshops, schools, art exhibitions from celebration Queens 70th anniversary, the Pride event, artwork from local prisons, the children's art with Sittingbourne in bloom, Sheppey Artist fortnight, school's half term workshop, Sittingbourne Brief Encounters on 3rd December community venues including the Old Forge War time tour Swale Media Arts Centre and The Yellow Stocks 40's event and now going into the Christmas Gallery activities. We are starting to take on booking for 2023. We plan to work with Canterbury College students in their media and arts training.

			<p>The Board are looking at developing the venues income that will take us forward and transferring from a CIC to CIO charity status that will enable further funding and changing the name to Swale Community Arts Centre. We have the team working on various issues with standards need for health and safety and proof required by funding bodies.</p> <p>When writing this paper we have not received the Lease having been told by SBC properties it is with their solicitors. We will progress to build a Community venue that will fulfil the needs of Sittingbourne making the Swale Community Arts Centre that will attract the local residents and visitors to Swale.”</p>
10.	Sports facilities in the area	<p>At the June 2021 meeting the Chair suggested reviewing sports facilities in the Sittingbourne area to see if any required work.</p> <p>The Head of Environment & Leisure advised that the Built Facilities strategy (BFS) work is well underway with assessments of all facilities across the Borough undertaken and they are now working on the analysis. The BFS has reached Stage B - Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation phase which includes colleagues in Planning.</p>	<p>Consultants are working through recently provided planning details to conclude next stage of review. Stage B completed. The intention is to take the findings to the Community Committee in the new year.</p>
11.	Town Centre Volunteer Group	<p>The Chair spoke about the lack of parish council representation in the Sittingbourne area and suggested setting up a Town Centre Volunteer Group which would carry out tasks to improve the area. The Chair</p>	<p>The Chair will provide a verbal update.</p>

		planned to flesh out the idea for the next meeting should any Members be interested in joining an unofficial group.	
12.	Parking and cleansing issues	A member of the public asked why wardens were not seen in Murston as cars and vans were often parked on council land. He asked why only Tonge Road and Murston Road were cleaned. The Chair suggested that these issues should be raised with the Head of Environment & Leisure via Councillor James Hall.	<p>Civil enforcement officers are dispersed across the Borough to undertake parking enforcement. We spend approx. 70% of our contracted hours patrolling on-street locations and 30% on car parks. Members of the public and Councillors can report problem roads to the Council and we will schedule in visits to hot spot areas.</p> <p>In terms of street cleansing our contract requires inspection of each road depending on its zone classification (in accordance with national guidance). Roads will only be cleansed if they fall below the expected standard when inspected. This allows us to put the contracted cleansing resource into the areas that need it most. Again, members of the public can report roads they feel need a cleanse and our monitoring officers will visit to inspect.</p>
13.	Great Easthall Pond	A member of the public spoke about anti-social behaviour issues at Great Easthall Pond. The lifebuoys had been removed, littering, fires, fishing line and hooks left behind caused harm to wildlife and residents. She asked if the SBC wardens could supervise the pond as they had in other areas. The Chair responded that incidents should be reported to the Police via 101 and the concerns would be raised with the wardens so they could prioritise the area.	Officers from a range of departments including Environment Wardens and Greenspaces do visit the location periodically to check on water safety equipment and keep an eye on litter/maintenance issues. Contractors will also report issues of littering as they come across it.

			Anti-social behaviour to be reported as advised to Kent police.
14.	Coombe Drive	A resident raised the issue of vandalism taking place in the alleyway at the back of houses on Coombe Drive, Sittingbourne. Residents had requested that the alleyway be shut and had raised this with SBC. The officer previously contacted at SBC was looking into ownership of the alley, but this had taken seven months so far. The Head of Housing & Community Services said that she would look into this and liaise with Councillor James Hall.	Swale Borough Council has been working with other agencies including Kent Police, Network Rail and Optivo regarding the criminal damage and other anti-social behaviour being experienced by residents adjacent to this alleyway. One measure being considered by Swale BC is a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) that would enable us to gate this alleyway. In order to comply with the legislation to undertake this, we have to have in place a level of evidence to prove that the behaviour being experienced is persistent and that we have also tried a range of less restrictive measures. We are also currently review the costs to implement such a gating scheme and how this could be funded before moving to any next steps.
15.	Heritage issues	The Sittingbourne High Street Conservation Area Review and Milton Regis Conservation Area Review.	<p>Sittingbourne High Street Conservation Area Review</p> <p>The Conservation Area appraisal document is being finalised that includes changes made as a result of the public consultation and agreement for adoption by the Cabinet.</p> <p>The document will be published on the Swale Borough Council website within the next fortnight and will be subject to 21-day notification period.</p>

			<p>Milton Regis Conservation Area Review The Conservation Area appraisal is on a high priority list and depending on funds and resources available, we are expecting to make a start on the review work, in the new year.</p>
16.	Periwinkle Water Mill Site	At the September 2022 meeting an update was given on the current situation.	Unfortunately, only one fee proposal came back from the contractors invited to tender, and this came in much higher than expected and significantly above the available budget. Officers are therefore making arrangements to go back out to tender on a much wider basis with a wider range of work options to try and ensure project implementation within the available budget.
17.	Local Heritage List	At the September 2022 meeting the timescales for the publication of the nomination process were advised.	The final adopted listing criteria for Local Heritage List along with the associated process for nomination, review and adoption is being finalised for publication on the Swale Borough Council website within the next fortnight. In tandem with the publication, a letter inviting nominations will be sent out to all the parish councils within Swale, all local amenity societies and any relevant public bodies.