

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING FOR SANDWICH
FRIDAY 31ST MAY 2019 AT 7PM, GUILDHALL

Attendees:

Sandwich Town Council:

The Mayor, Cllr Jeff Franklin (in the Chair)
Cllr HJ Bragg
Cllr P Carter
Cllr D Friend
Cllr Mrs A Fox
Cllr P Graeme
Cllr M Lintott
Cllr H Sampson
Cllr B Staple
Cllr Ms D Sivrikaya
Cllr D Wood
Miss L Fidler, Clerk (Minutes)

Dover District & Kent County Councils:

Cllr Mrs S Chandler

Town Team:

Mr R Ralph

Sandwich Medieval Centre:

Mr S Laslett

Local residents:

65 attendees

1. MAYOR'S WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION TO REPRESENTATIVES (INCL. NEWLY ELECTED TOWN COUNCILLORS)

The Mayor welcomed those present and asked the newly elected councillors to introduce themselves. The Mayor explained that this is a somewhat unusual town meeting, as usually it is held before Mayor Making, but the previous council had resolved that the newly elected council would host this meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Clerk provided the following apologies:

Matthew Scott, Police & Crime Commissioner Kent Police

C/I Stuart Norris, Kent Police

Cllr Paul Carter, Leader KCC

Mr Nadeem Aziz, Chief Executive DDC

Cllr Keith Morris, Leader DDC

Cllr Michael Connolly, Deputy Leader of the Council DDC

Craig Mackinlay MP, Parliament

Mr Ian Nunn, Operations Manager Environment Agency

Tim Read, Head of Transportation KCC

Tim Ingleton, DDC

Paul Neagle, DDC

Karl Aylett, Community Warden KCC

Cllr Ms C Felton, STC

Cllr K Heaven, STC

Cllr M Holloway, STC

Cllr Mrs D Carter, STC

Cllr T Broun, STC

A local resident asked if a second meeting will be held in the year at which more representatives might be present? The Mayor responded that the next Annual Town Meeting will be in March 2020 and with more time available for inviting representatives it is hoped that more people will attend next year.

3. 2018/19 MAYOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

The Clerk read out a report from former town councillor Veronica Liote, who was Mayor in the 2018/19 year. This report is attached to the official Minutes.

4. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Sandwich, held on Wednesday 21st March 2018 were approved.

5. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Questions were invited in respect of the Sandwich Town Council & Sandwich Toll Bridge Fund (unaudited) accounts for 2018/19, which were available at www.sandwichtowncouncil.gov.uk. There were no questions received, however, a local resident asked if printed copies could be available at the meeting in future as well as being on the website.

6. UPDATES

(i) Cllr Friend read out a report on the Guildhall Museum & Archives from the Museum & Heritage Manager, a copy of which is attached to the official Minutes.

(ii) Cllr Carter read out an update from Dover District Council regarding both the Woodnesborough Road & Dover Road developments, a copy of which is attached to the official Minutes.

There was some criticism of DDC's Planning Department in response to this information, Cllr S Chandler responded that the planning department agreed with the local residents objections and concerns around highways and transport issues and turned both these applications down. It is the Planning Inspector (a government department) that has rejected these considerations.

A local resident complained about Sandwich Town Councils handling of the Woodnesborough Road application and the use of a Planning Committee to process planning applications, the local resident also reported that the town council had not issued the final agenda for the Planning Committee on its website, the Council/Committee should have listened to the Woodnesborough Road Action Group, and a thorough detailed objection should have been submitted [NB. The Planning Committee did indeed object to this application].

(iii) The Mayor reported that the Police & Crime Commissioner, Matthew Scott, has agreed to meet with Town Council and local residents on Friday 19th July between 10am and 12noon at the Guildhall. This event will be well publicised nearer the time.

(iv) Mr Richard Ralph provided the following update on behalf of the Town Team

- The Town Team continues to support the proposed remodelling of the Guildhall Forecourt and the continued efforts to find funding. This work followed a major public consultation and must be progressed.
- The Town Team undertook a Residents Traffic Survey in which every household in Sandwich was canvassed. There have been over 400 responses, with the main concerns being speeding, rat running, noise, pollution, heavy vehicles (vibrations) and noise of motorbikes on Monks Way. This information will now inform a "Highway Improvement Plan" that the town council will submit to KCC and a traffic working group that Craig Mackinlay MP has set up. Mr Ralph hopes to see some actual progress over the next few years. A series of proposals around disability access are also covered within this work.
- There have been some improvements on the matter of litter with volunteer clean ups and a positive response from DDC, and hopefully the town is looking cleaner. However, there remains some problem areas such as the Delf Stream.
- Sandwich in Bloom is not Town Team driven, but is a Town Team initiative and the team are incredibly proud of the achievements made thus far as SiB work towards entering the regional competition for Most Beautiful Town; more volunteers are always required.
- The Town Team continues to support the local objections to the proposed developments at Woodnesborough Road and Dover Road.
- The Town Team has a Facebook page on which you can find updates and make contact with the team. The next AGM will be on the 24th June.

(v) Mr Steve Laslett provided an update on the Sandwich Medieval Centre (on Sandwich Quay). The Centre will be open to the public on the 8th/9th June for local residents to find out about the plans from the Sandwich Medieval Trust (a registered charity). The Centre will focus on teaching and showing skills from 1330-1480s when Sandwich was a premier Cinque Port and a great deal was happening. The Centre will develop as a visitor and learning centre that aims to engage with young people to teach a range of skills; ironmongery

and baking will be the first projects. Volunteers are needed and Mr Laslett looks forward to seeing everyone on the 8th/9th June.

7. QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

Question received in advance:

(i) **Motorbike Speeding & Noise Pollution**

Mrs JL : “I would like to submit a question about the motorbike noise which has regularly disturbed our Wednesday evenings by racing at Monks Way, the Ash bypass etc. Calling 101 is a waste of time as (if you can get through, which is often after a long wait) they just give you an incident number and nothing ever seems to be done. It is not just Wednesday evenings lately - last weekend it happened on both days and today, Sunday 26 May, there was noise before 8 am. We should not have to put up with this ruining our summer evenings and afternoons. I hope there will be a police presence at the meeting who can do something about this”.

RESPONSE: Cllr Holloway responded by email that “I raised this with Inspector Stuart Norris last week, in my capacity as DDC Portfolio Holder for Community Safety. He replied saying the police are aware of the problem which has persisted for years, they didn't have the resource at the moment to undertake any speed checks, there were no reports of any accidents involving motorcycles along this stretch of the road etc etc....I won't let it rest there....and have put it on the agenda of the District's next Community Partnership Executive meeting (next month) which I chair and which includes participation of Insp Norris and Chief Inspector Weller.”

(ii) **Monks Wall Nature Reserve:**

Ms GC of Sandwich Hoppers NHS Walking Group asked when will the Monks Wall Nature Reserve re-open?

RESPONSE: Sandwich Town Council were very much hoping to have the reserve open in time for Easter 2019, unfortunately, due to water levels being too high we were unable to repair a sluice and fit new lifebuoys as planned, and now we're in the nesting season and unable to undertake this work until August or later. We are very hopeful that we will open in September.

If you do walk or drive pass, please keep an eye open for our new signage which will offer a good indication that we are getting to ready to open to the public.

(iii) **Household & Garden Waste in Roadside Bins:**

Ms CG reported that “the Stone Cross Leas bin at the entrance to Hazelwood Meadow was almost empty at 8.00am on Monday morning and then by 8.30am it was full of bagged waste including green garden refuse. The bin was not full due to weekend visitors, as had been suggested to Ms Gifford. Too many residents in the town deposit their household waste into the pavement bins and this needs to stop. No wonder there is so much litter when the bins are being used for the wrong reason”.

RESPONSE: Mandy Pile (DDC's Waste Services Manager) has responded by email that “I have advised that an officer in my team will check on the litter bins and also speak with Veolia to see whether any evidence can be found to establish who is using the bin(s) in this way.

I also said that I would highlight this with our Environmental Crime team which I shall do so that they are aware.

If any resident has any information as to who may be using the litter bin in this way I would ask that they let us know on 01304 872428 so that we can investigate this further.

If there are any issues with overflowing bins these can be reported online <https://forms.dover.gov.uk/BinProblem> this will provide evidence of which bins are regularly being used and / or whether Veolia are performing to their contract standards.”

We then received the following update from James Forsyth (a Waste Services Officer) “I just wanted you to know that I have already begun searching litter bins in the town for evidence of persons placing their residential waste into them. I am pleased to advise

that on my second day of looking I have found 2 separate pieces of evidence which we will now be following up. I shall continue looking and if any further evidence is found we will also deal with this as well.”

(iv) Building Enforcement

Mr CW “I would like to ask a question at the Annual Town Meeting on 31st May about the legal and other actions that could be taken by the relevant authorities to bring the following properties back into use.

25/27 Strand Street
Newgate House 57 New Street
The East Kent Car company waiting room”

RESPONSE: Cllr Mrs Chandler responded that there are powers available to DDC and considerable action has already been taken in respect of 57 New Street but it is a lengthy process and DDC are restrained by this process – changing ownership has also hampered any progress. Cllr Mrs Chandler is aware of some correspondence in relation to 25/27 Strand Street and she knows the East Kent Road Car building but DDC have not received any complaints about it. Cllr Mrs Chandler will provide Sandwich Town Council with an update regarding all three properties at the next Council meeting.

(v) Problems at “Breezy Corner”

A letter was read out from Mrs JB that detailed safety problems for pedestrians on Breezy Corner and provided a number of solutions that might help.

RESPONSE: Cllr Mrs Chandler will ask KCC officers to consider how to make the junction safer and signage clearer; this query will also be included in the Highways Improvement Plan.

Questions received on the night:

(vi) Health & Safety

Mr SL raised three health & safety concerns that he wanted to have minuted in a public record; the granite sets on the Guildhall Forecourt, the Mill Wall steps, and the deteriorating condition of 57 New Street.

(vii) Antisocial Behaviour

A local resident of Willowbank described a serious instance of threatening behaviour that they’d experienced and the lack of a satisfactory investigation by Kent Police (the resident had provided the Police with a vehicle registration number but had been told that no action could be taken because the car is registered in another county). Cllr Wood suggested that additional CCTV coverage would be desirable. Cllr Mrs Chandler responded that DDC are in the process of upgrading the improving the CCTV provisions across the district and the town council may wish to discuss if an extension to the system is required. It was confirmed that the new CCTV cameras will be of a better quality. A local resident responded that they have shared clear photos with the police in relation to a crime and still no action what taken – evidence is not useful if the Police won’t act upon it.

RESPONSE: This matter will be raised with the Police & Crime Commissioner.

(viii) Expansion to Doctor’s Surgery

A local resident asked for an update on the expansion to the doctors surgery. Cllr Mrs Chandler responded that the Market Place Surgery has been successful in their update for funding, this is the first stage.

(ix) Fishergate

Ms VT expressed concern about how the lease for the Fishergate was issued and asked what is being done to get the property back into public ownership. Local residents should have a full and proper answer.

RESPONSE: The Mayor responded that the town council is fully committed to bringing the property back into public ownership and discussions are currently taking place to negotiate this. Local residents will need to wait for an update.

(x) Ash Road Showground

Mr RL asked if the agricultural building on the Sandwich Showground is going to be utilised for non-agricultural activities, such as during the Open 2020.

RESPONSE: Cllr Mrs Chandler responded that DDC is closely monitoring the activities and usage at this site due to its prominent position and permission from DDC will be required for anything other than agricultural usage.

(xi) Sandwich Sprucer

Can the Sandwich Sprucer project be reinvigorated (possible as a Sandwich Handyman as people are unclear what a Sprucer will do?)

RESPONSE: Cllr Friend will return this to June's council agenda for consideration.

(xii) Wayfarers

There is KCC consultation currently underway on "The Future of Wayfarers Care Home". Cllr Carter encouraged everyone to respond to this consultation as this is the last care home in Sandwich and one of our few facilities for the elderly.

RESPONSE: Cllr Mrs Chandler responded that there are only two residents in Wayfarers Care Home who come from Sandwich and although KCC's preferred option is closure – all options are currently still available. Cllr Mrs Chandler explained that the type of care required is changing and Wayfarers no longer fits the model or standards that are required of a modern care home and KCC has not been able to find a provider who is willing to take over Wayfarers. Cllr Mrs Chandler stressed that she is passionate about providing the right care and the best care for local residents and that doesn't mean keeping provisions operational that aren't suitable. KCC's Cabinet Member will consider the responses before making a decision.

8. CLOSE OF MEETING

The Mayor thanked everyone for coming and the meeting was closed at 21:05hrs

Signed.....

Date.....