

**Minutes of a meeting of the Sandwich Town Council Heritage and Townscape Committee held in the Council Chamber, Guildhall on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2022 at 6.30pm.**

**Present: Councillors: C Ungerson (Chair)**  
**J Franklin**  
**N Gray**  
**K Heaven**  
**D Sivrikaya**  
**C Wiles**

**Officer: Chief Executive (Minutes)**

**Also Present: Cllrs P Carter and P Graeme**

**12.10.22 CHAIR'S WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed Councillor members and members of the public who were in attendance to the first meeting of the Heritage and Townscape Committee. She said that she hoped this new committee, which brought together the business of a number of previous committees, would be pro-active rather than re-active, and would allow for full and intensive discussion about issues covered by the Terms of Reference of this new committee.

Cllr Heaven arrived.

**13.10.22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Sampson (work commitment), Marie (work commitment) and Friend (work commitment).

**14.10.22 DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER SIGNIFICANT INTERESTS**

None.

**15.10.22 PUBLIC RIGHT TO SPEAK**

None.

**16.10.22 TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee received the Terms of Reference resolved by Council (minute number 25.07.22).

In discussion, the Chair explained that a review of the new committee structure will take place in January 2023 and that the committee will be able to request up to three appropriate co-optees. Before appointments are made, this committee may consider whether they wish to appoint co-optees on the basis that they represent Sandwich organisations with an interest in the issues covered by this committee

or be individuals who have particular expertise in the issues outlined in the committee's Terms of Reference.

Cllr Heaven requested that the review in January should include strengthening the Terms of Reference in relation to the environment of Sandwich.

**RECOMMENDATION: Note the approved Terms of Reference as per Council resolution 25.07.22**

#### **17.10.22 SANDWICH WATERWAYS**

The committee received and considered a report from the Chief Executive offering an update from DDC in relation to Sandwich Waterways.

Chair stated the waterways are a very important part of Sandwich and many residents are concerned about their state. The Mayor advised the committee that the waterways are not within STC's remit. In further discussion, members felt it was important for the Council to fully understand how and why the waterways had come to be in their current state and that it would be advantageous for STC to have a representative on the Internal Drainage Board. The Chair said that there may be external funding available.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- **CEO to write to IDB and request that STC has a representative on the board.**
- **That the CEO's report of Sandwich Waterways be discussed by full Council at its October meeting.**
- **To establish a Working Group to look intensively at why and how the Waterways had come to be in their current state, how they might be improved and whether there may be external funding available to help.**

#### **18.10.22 EMPTY BUILDINGS**

The committee received and considered a report from the Chief Executive offering an update from KCC/DDC regarding empty properties within the town.

Each building was discussed in turn. Cllr Sivrikaya offered to supply a screen shot of information found relating to Wayfarers, indicating that it is still being marketed. Cllr Chandler should be asked to talk to the committee regarding the infant school to establish why the School House next door remains empty, despite requests from the school that it be made available for Sandwich Infant School use. In relation to The Limes in New Street and other buildings currently standing empty, Cllr Wiles suggested that it would be helpful to invite the DDC Planning Enforcement Officer or DDC Director of Planning to Council to talk about planning enforcement and wide issues within planning.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- **CEO will write to Cllr Chandler to invite her to talk to the committee regarding the infant school and School House being empty.**
- **CEO to invite DDC Planning Director and/or Planning**

**Enforcement Officer to Council to talk about planning enforcement and wider planning issues.**

**19.10.22 TOURIST INFORMATION**

The committee received and considered information regarding Council's Visitor Information service, to include feedback relating to new Visitor Information Assistants, visitor contact and reception opening hours.

A lengthy discussion ensued. VIC offering was felt to be inadequate and the opening hours of the current VIC too limited. Some Cllrs argued that the VIC should return to the front of the Guildhall. It was suggested that a working group should be set up to consider the delivery of tourist information in Sandwich offering pros and cons, together with comparative costs of different kinds of operation. Cllr Wiles was suggested as the Chair of this working group.

**RECOMMENDATION: Set up a working group to consider the delivery of tourist information in Sandwich offering pros and cons and comparative costs. Cllr Wiles was suggested as the Chair of this working group.**

**20.10.22 SECOND HOMES, HOLIDAY LETS AND AIRBNB**

The committee discussed and considered the exploration of the extent of second home ownership within Sandwich and the impact on the environment.

In discussion, the following points were made: second home owners in some parts of the country are charged additional council tax; it is the responsibility of owners to ensure rubbish is removed; AirBnB owners are running businesses which, as such, should contract with companies that collect business rubbish.

**RECOMMENDATION: CEO to write to DDC asking if they have a policy for second homes and Airbnb regarding both council tax and rubbish collection for these types of properties.**

**21.10.22 TREE PROTECTION, PLANTING AND MAINTENANCE**

(i) The committee discussed and considered a plan for tree planting, protection, ongoing care and maintenance and also explore the potential for volunteers.

(ii) The committee received and considered a tree planting proposal from the Tree Warden.

Cllr Franklin suggested committee members should walk the areas suggested by the voluntary Tree Warden as possible sites for tree planting and look at the young trees planted by various organisations such as DDC, the EA and property developers.

**RECOMMENDATION: The committee should walk the areas Suggested by the voluntary Tree Warden for tree planting and look at the young trees recently planted by other agencies. Committee will then consider the issues outlined by the voluntary Tree Warden at the next meeting, equipped with information gained.**

**22.10.22 HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

The committee received a report from the Chief Executive offering an update in relation to the progress made.

Cllr Sivrikaya requested that a 20mph limit be introduced on the Woodnesborough Road. To that end, she asked the CEO to attach all 83 items of the Highway Improvement Plan to the next Agenda.

**RECOMMENDATION: Add Woodnesborough Road speed reduction to the HIP and committee to see the entire Highway Improvement Plan at the next meeting.**

**23.10.22 BOWLING STREET LIGHT**

The committee received a report from the Chief Executive in relation to street lighting on Bowling Street.

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the history of this long-standing issue and why the current lamps in Bowling Street were not in the Heritage style that was being installed through the rest of the Conservation Area.

**RECOMMENDATION: The CEO to write to the leader of KCC asking him to advise us of the justification for non-heritage lighting given that Heritage lamps have been and are being installed by KCC in the rest of the Conservation area.**

**24.10.22 UPDATE FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR ON MATTERS DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE HERITAGE AND TOWNSCAPE COMMITTEE**

No update due to Cllr Friend's apologies due to a work commitment.

**25.10.22 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2022 at 6:30pm.