

ANNUAL TOWN ASSEMBLY

Monday 7th March 2016

PRESENT: The Town Mayor Cllr. Rosalind Binks, Chairman
Cllrs. J. Bayford, Binks, Buckley, Dexter, Hayton, Leys,
Matterface, D. Saunders, M. Saunders, Savage, Shaw, Taylor-Smith.
Town Clerk: Sarah Pengelly
Members of the public

INTRODUCTION. The Chairman welcomed members of the public and introduced all Councillors present to the Assembly.

The Chairman announced that the Council had no objection to the proceedings being filmed, subject to any person at the Assembly objecting to being personally filmed.

1. Apologies for Absence.

Cllrs. Parsons, Bayford and Moore.

2. Minutes.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Annual Town Assembly held on Monday 30th March 2015 were received, approved, and signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters Arising.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4. Annual Report of the Work of the Town Council.

Cllr. David Saunders, Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes committee gave a general overview of the work and activities of the Council.

Cllr. Saunders described the workings of the Council and explained that the working parties and sub-committees report to the planning or finance and general purposes committee, and the two committees report to full Council. The Town Council convenes a minimum of six ordinary Council meetings per year, co-ordinates the quarterly Town Forum and is legally bound to arrange the annual Town Assembly during the month of March.

Cllr. Saunders advised that the 2016/2017 precept has been set at £39.69 for a Band D property. This will generate an income during 2016/17 of £364,295.00.

Cllr. Saunders reported that the Town Council has a commitment to manage and maintain, in partnership with the 'Friends of Mockett's Wood', an area of public amenity woodland located in St Peter's. The Council also manages Culmer's public amenity land alongside the Culmer's Allotments, and also manages the Norman Road and Prospect Road allotment sites.

A monthly events diary has been produced and can be viewed from the website. Regular events are also listed on the Town Council's website and shared with various other organisations such as Visit Kent.

Activities and events include: Fireworks Displays, programme of summer entertainment and the Broadstairs in Bloom floral campaign. Town Council is again match funding the cost of keeping open the Viking Bay beach lift throughout the 2016 summer season. The Town Council is again paying Thanet District Council to keep open the Albion Street Toilet facilities from late March to early October 2016.

In 2015 – 2016, grants totaling £67,800 were made to events, town promotion and organisations, plus £11,000 to Broadstairs In Bloom. £30,000 was provided by TDC for events funding.

It was confirmed that Thanet District Council had accepted the Town Council's bid for the purchase of Pierremont Hall and Retort House.

5. Planning Matters.

Cllr. Dexter, Chair of Planning, gave a report on the activities of the planning committee and explained that the committee, which convenes every three weeks, consists of six members plus the Mayor and Deputy Mayor who attend ex-officio. *[Dates of meetings are available from the Town Clerk's office, or the 'Calendar of Meetings' can be read or downloaded from the Town Council's web site.]*

There are usually 15-16 planning meetings held per year. The Town Clerk and Councillors have formal discussions with the Planning Officers on all reserved Broadstairs & St. Peter's planning applications. The planning committee meetings also provide the public with an opportunity to speak for and against applications.

Over the past year there have been 13 planning meetings and 256 applications were submitted. Approximately 90% of applications relate to home improvements including extensions, change of use, conservatories, roof conversions and garages. There are powers available to combat eyesore buildings, and councillors and the Town Clerk forward to TDC details of any building or land that is derelict or in a bad state of repair. The Broadstairs Conservation Area Advisory Group also target eyesore buildings in the conservation areas.

There were 36 recommendations for refusal. Examples of concerns include over-development, detrimental to the street scene, not in keeping with the character of the surrounding development, poor elevation design, overlooking leading to loss of privacy, parking issues, conservation area restrictions, areas of high townscape value restrictions and boundary clearance. Cllr. Dexter explained that the majority of refusals only required minor amendments to resolve the concerns when planning issues cannot be mutually resolved; applicants have the right to appeal to the Planning Inspectorate.

Cllr. Dexter explained that planning officers resolve on average 90% of all applications; the remaining contentious applications are presented to Thanet District Council's planning committee for consideration. However, District Council's planning committee and officers, when making their decisions, take into consideration the comments, concerns and resolutions of the Town Council's planning committee and, if necessary, any District Councillor can request that a contentious planning application be placed before the District's planning committee for consideration. The electorate always have the opportunity to address the Town and/or District planning committees on any application.

Contentious applications of local interest included: Westwood Lodge, Poorhole Lane – proposal for 153 dwellings: application refused by district council; Hopeville Farm, land rear of Mocketts Wood – proposal for 140 houses: waiting to see if outline planning application is lodged.

The planning committee also considered 77 applications for tree works last year ranging from light pruning to felling. Felling of trees that have a preservation order is always refused unless the tree is diseased, the roots are affecting foundations or the tree is encroaching on the highway. New developments are encouraged to plan around existing trees and diseased trees that require felling are usually subject to the re-planting of a suitable replacement. Cllr. Dexter also explained that all trees in conservation areas are protected and all specimen trees receive a TPO. Trees along the highway are regulated by Kent County Council.

6. Answers to Questions Session.

Fly tipping in Fair Street: Cllr. Dexter advised that the land was owned by TDC and they are aware of the fly-tipping problem. He will follow this up with TDC.

Empty properties at 8-12 High Street: Cllr. Hayton advised that the issue is ongoing and pressure will continue to be applied to the developers.

Mocketts Wood: Camille Sutton thanked the volunteers for the organised clean-up of the woods and car park. She advised that the bridleway maintained by KCC needs some proper surfacing, as it becomes very muddy. Cllr. Binks advised that KCC have been approached about this and it will be taken up with the KCC councillor for the area.

Croft Place Public Toilets: Cllr. Saunders advised that whilst there is no statutory provision to provide public toilets, the town council will continue to lobby for improvements.

Public Toilets: The town council may consider taking over the public toilets if they are included in TDC's asset disposal list. They are owned by TDC at present.

Street Art project: Cllr. Saunders advised that a site was identified at Croft place; he will follow this up. Cllr. Hayton advised that as it is in a conservation area, a planning permission would need to be sought.

Bollards at Victoria Gardens: member of public advised that the drop-down bollards are rusty and need attention, and was advised to contact TDC as they are owned by them.

New traffic system at Queen's Road: Rights of way still unclear/road markings need repainting. Cllr. Saunders advised that he will raise the issue with the Joint Transportation Committee.

The Chairman Cllr. Binks thanked members of the Town Council, the Town Clerk and members of the public for attending the 2016 Annual Town Assembly.

Meeting Closed at 20:40 pm