



Broadstairs & St Peter's Town Council

Draft MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN ASSEMBLY

Monday 14th May 2025 at 7:00 PM

Location: Pierremont Hall, Broadstairs

PRESENT:

Broadstairs and St Peter Town Councillors including the Town Mayor and the Deputy Town Mayor.

Members of the Public

The Town Mayor, Cllr Mike Garner, chaired the meeting in accordance with Part III, Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Town Clerk, Kirsty Holroyd took the minutes.

The Chairman welcomed councillors and members of the public.

1 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Annual Town Assembly held on Monday 29th April 2024 were approved and could be signed by the Chairman.

2 MATTERS ARISING

A member of the public asked whether the trouble experienced by volunteers in the town as reported last year had abated. No-one present was able to comment. The Town Clerk will enquire.

3. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE WORK OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

Cllr Garner presented a series of slides depicting the work of the Council over the past year. Cllr Joanne Bright then presented on the specific projects of the Environment Committee and the Allotments and Land Committee. Cllr Kristian Bright presented some images detailing the various events and services now offered at Pierremont Hall, and Cllr Garner finished by reporting on the work of the planning committee – this in the absence of Cllr Roberts who was delayed and unable to attend.

4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESTRUCTURING

Cllr Kristian Bright gave a short presentation on the government's plans for decentralisation and unitarisation and what they may mean at the local level. Members of the public expressed concern that they will have no say in the outcome of the restructuring and that the role of Town and Parish Councils had not been made clear, although they agreed that more powerful Town Councils would be a positive move.

5. QUESTION AND DEBATE

Alignment of tourism services and facilities in the town

There was concern amongst representatives of the hospitality industry that toilet opening times, the Viking Bay lift, summer parking fees and times and increased litter collection do not align with the start of the school holidays each year. The approach seems fragmented. Dual-hatted councillors (those who are both Town and District Councillors) shared these frustrations but responded that efforts were being made for a more joined up approach.

Boundary changes

The changes discussed in 2024 as detailed by the Boundary Commission for England have not been implemented and seem to have disappeared. Will they be implemented or has the issue been sidelined whilst the LGR is considered? It was discussed that although the two are separate issues they are linked. We will have to wait and see.

House in Multiple Occupation

There was discussion over the resubmission of a planning application for an HMO in the already congested area of Northwood Road. Cllr Garner explained that the Town Council is a consultee in planning applications but that all its meetings are open to the public and all are welcome to attend and speak. The decision will lie with Thanet District Council whose meetings are also open to the public and live streamed.

Public Conveniences

A member of the public reported that the disabled community in Thanet is still poorly served in the matter of accessible toilets. They always seem to be closed or designed in such a way that disabled people cannot easily use them, particularly if they are on their own. This being a TDC issue, dual-hatted councillors responded that an extensive refurbishment of the Victoria Gardens is underway and should be completed mid-May and a new block to include accessible facilities was being built at Stone Bay ready for summer 2026. But they conceded more can be done and they will ensure accessibility is at the forefront of decision making.

Role of the Town Council.

An attendee asked how the Town Council measured its impact on the town, and how the organisation fitted into the bigger picture. Cllr Garner explained that at the beginning of the current term councillors had consulted with local people and drafted an action plan around the priorities of a Cleaner, Safer, Kinder town. The plan was now being implemented but at every stage other local groups are involved so that the Town Council is never working in isolation, but in partnership with others.

Responsibilities of different councils

Throughout the discussions Councillors acknowledged that the different responsibilities and duties of each tier of local government is confusing and difficult for members of the public to understand. The Town Council's Civic and Support Officer had produced a graphic to clearly illustrate the distinct and

separate areas of responsibility for Kent County Council, Thanet District Council and Broadstairs and St Peter's Town Council. The image was referred back to several times during the meeting as attendees found it useful and asked that it be displayed on the Town Council noticeboards to assist the wider community. It was also noted that the noticeboards are well-kept, clean and tidy with relevant information clearly displayed in an engaging format.

Concern about possible increase in racism

A member of the public sent in an enquiry about what the Town Council proposed to do to ensure that safety of local people from ethnic minority backgrounds now that the Reform party ideologies appear to be gaining in popularity.

Cllr Garner responded that the Cleaner, Safer, Kinder motto of the Town Council would prevail and that racism of any kind would not be tolerated. Cllr Roopa Farooki confirmed that as women from ethnic minority backgrounds, both she and a fellow councillor have found the Town Council to be collegiate in its approach and its welcome to all. Cllr Joanne Bright confirmed that TDC now has an Equalities Cabinet Advisory Group which will work to improve community cohesion. A member of the public reminded those present of the existence of Community Shield, a project set up several years ago to encourage shops and businesses to offer safe spaces for vulnerable people or those feeling under threat whilst out in the town. Officers will contact the Community Safety Partnership at TDC to reinvigorate the programme.

Verge cutting

It was agreed that the number of verge cuts could be reduced in order to encourage wild flowers and biodiversity. Attendees were dismayed to acknowledge that KCC still use glyphosate but it was noted that some residents have put "Please don't cut" signs outside their houses and these appear to have been heeded.

E-scooters and bicycles

There were comments about the speed of bicycles and e-scooters – which are illegal - on the promenade. The Police will be asked to patrol and enforce if necessary but signage can also be installed to inform and educate. This is a TDC responsibility and will be followed up.

Defibrillators

Members of the public were pleased to see the Town Council has installed another defibrillator – this time outside the Library. They asked whether some training for use of defibs and CPR could be provided. The Town Clerk will look into arranging this.

Members of the public thanked staff and councillors for their hard work in successfully improving the town.

There being no further questions or comments, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

Meeting closed at 8:48 pm