
WESTERN AREA COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Virtual Meeting held via Skype on Tuesday, 1 December 2020 from 7.00pm - 9.44pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Mike Baldock (Chairman), Monique Bonney, Roger Clark, Nicholas Hampshire, Alan Horton, James Hunt, Richard Palmer, Paul Stephen, Sarah Stephen and Corrie Woodford (Vice-Chairman).

OFFICERS PRESENT: Alister Andrews, Martyn Cassell, Janet Dart and Bob Pullen.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Cameron Beart, Steve Davey, Mike Dendor, Tim Gibson, Ken Ingleton, Carole Jackson, Denise Knights, Ken Rowles, Julian Saunders, David Simmons, Tim Valentine (Cabinet Member for Environment), Ghlin Whelan, KCC Councillor Mike Whiting (Swale West) and Tony Winckless.

Parish Councillors Nicola Butlin (Borden PC), Simon Cheeseman (Iwade PC), Nikki Clare (Bobbing PC), Brian Clarke (Bredgar PC), Tony Mould (Newington PC), Tyrone Ripley (Upchurch PC), and Louisa Roberts (Tunstall PC).

289 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No interests were declared.

290 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 September 2020 (Minute Nos. 51 – 58) were taken as read, signed and approved subject to the following amendment to Minute No. 56:

Delete "*Resolved: To work up more detailed proposals, including criteria for selecting areas for review, seek views of parish councils and bring item back to meeting scheduled for 1 December 2020*" and replace with "*Resolved: To get quotes for the 3 proposed CA reviews – Tunstall, Bredgar and Rodmersham. To seek comments and quotes on possible new CAs for Iwade and Bobbing. To seek views of the affected Parishes to see if they would contribute to them.*"

291 **MATTERS ARISING**

The action on brown tourism signs was noted and would be considered again at the next meeting scheduled for 2 March 2021. Funding for additional Conservation Area reviews was considered under Agenda Item 8. The update regarding conservation areas was noted.

Members thought that the Committee still had a role to play in identifying suitable recreational cycling and walking routes over and above any input it could have into the Local Plan/Transport Strategy process. The Policy and Performance Officer would discuss how this might be taken forward with officers.

Members discussed how they might try to ensure that local woodlands were maintained, for example, through incentivising local 'friends' groups. Councillor Palmer agreed to consider this further and bring a paper back to the next meeting.

It was noted that Swale's Community Safety Unit had been in contact with the member who had raised instances of anti-social behaviour at a particular location at the previous meeting and that various actions were being deployed to address it.

292 PUBLIC FORUM

No issues were raised.

293 WASTE COLLECTION AND STREET CLEANSING - FUTURE PROVISION

Councillor Tim Valentine, Cabinet Member for Environment, introduced this item which sought to raise awareness that the current Mid Kent Waste contract was due to end in October 2023 and the work that has already started in preparation for the new contract, and to seek the views of the Committee. The current contractors also provided the street cleansing functions at Swale.

The current contract has a fully 'co-mingled' collection where all recycling is collected within a single wheeled bin. The disposal authority prefer the 'twin-stream' collection method, whereby paper and cardboard are collected separately to the other recycling, although this system would require an additional container for Swale residents.

Members were generally against the prospect of additional bins as residents already complained that they had to store and separate waste into different bins. One possible solution was inserts for existing bins, although that then reduced the space of other recyclables. It was noted that cardboard could already be folded up and placed alongside the recycle bin for collection.

Members discussed air quality and the potential to introduce cleaner and greener waste collection freighter as part of a new contract. Members raised issues around the costs of more expensive freighters, the length of the contract and how soon these 'greener' freighters would become obsolete, new technologies such as liquid natural gas and hydrogen as greener fuel sources, and reliability of whatever mode of freighter used.

Food waste recycling had always been a big challenge for Swale and by 2023, every house in England must be able to recycle food waste. The vast majority of houses in Swale already have this option and campaigns have been undertaken to reduce the amount of food waste created in the first place to increase the number of households in the Borough that separate food waste if created.

Issues discussed included encouragement for home composting and providing compostable bags to encourage more use of the waste caddies.

Contamination in wheelie bins affects recycling figures and costs much more to dispose of. Food waste, garden waste, textiles, black plastic bags and used

nappies were all items that regularly get placed in the recycling incorrectly leading to collections being rejected by the disposal authority.

Members considered that the only means of tackling this was educating those who were not placing certain items in the correct bins.

On street cleansing, members said they regularly reported overflowing bins, although this seemed to be a problem more in the rural than town areas and fly tipping was a big issue. Some incidences of fly tipping took longer to deal with than others, especially where highways management needed to be put in place to enable operatives to work safely or when evidence was being sought on who was responsible for the illegal tipping. Many of the parish councils present reported incidences of fast food wrappers being discarded in rural areas, many miles away from outlets. It was noted that the Kent Association for Local Councils and the national body had a campaign under way to force fast food outlets to print the registration number of customers cars on packaging at point of sale. On the positive side, some fast food outlets were very responsive to requests to undertake litter picks in the vicinity of their premises.

294 LOCAL ISSUES

Members discussed the local issues on the agenda including road safety, youth provision and Phoenix House, Sittingbourne.

It was noted that the first two were county-led matters but a member was concerned that these were still matters which the Area Committee had an interest in and wondered how district area committees elsewhere in the country were considering them. The Policy and Performance Officer undertook to undertake some research and feed that into the next meeting. The KCC also agreed to take these issues away and report back to the next meeting in the Kent context.

Members discussed the closure of Phoenix House in Sittingbourne. This facility had been used by a wide range of voluntary and community groups. All but two had managed to find alternative premises from which to operate, albeit some on a temporary basis.

295 FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS - GRANT APPLICATIONS

Two bids for the funds held by the Committee had been received and details of these had been included with the meeting reports.

Councillor Horton proposed and Councillor Palmer seconded that the request from Upchurch Parish Council for £4,655 towards the installation of adult gym equipment at Upchurch Recreation Ground be approved.

Councillor Palmer proposed and Councillor Horton seconded that the request from Newington Parish Council for £4,000 towards refurbish the car park and track at Newington Recreation Ground be approved.

Councillor Baldock proposed and Councillor Bonney seconded that £6270 be allocated to a firm of consultants to undertake Conservation Area reviews in

Rodmersham, Bredgar and Tunstall in line with the quote that had been circulated to members.

Discussion ensued on the allocation of the funds held by the Committee including:

- Ward members supporting projects which would have no benefit to their local areas;
- Parish councils weren't informed they could make bids;
- Not all of the area parished;
- Decision in principle to fund Conservation Area reviews given at last meeting.

Councillor Bonney proposed and Councillor Horton seconded a proposal that all three bids be approved and that the value was proportioned equally across each members allocation. On being put to the vote, members agreed.

Resolved: That £1,492.50 from each members allocation be made to the three projects at a combined value of £14,925.

296 MATTERS REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY CABINET

No issues were raised.

297 MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET BY THE COMMITTEE

No issues were raised.

Chairman

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All Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel