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## SHEPPEY AREA COMMITTEE

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**MINUTES** of the Virtual Meeting held via Skype on Tuesday, 15 December 2020 from 7.00pm - 9.01pm.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Cameron Beart (Vice-Chairman), Richard Darby, Mark Ellen, Simon Fowle, Angela Harrison, Ken Ingleton (Chairman), Elliott Jayes, Peter Macdonald, Peter Marchington, Pete Neal, Padmini Nissanga and Ken Pugh.

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Janet Dart, Bob Pullen and Kelly Upson.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillors Monique Bonney, Steve Davey, Mike Dendor, Tim Gibson, Carole Jackson, Denise Knights, Ken Rowles, Julian Saunders, Tim Valentine (Cabinet Member for Environment), Tony Winckless and Corrie Woodford.

Kent County Councillor Andy Booth (Sheppey Division).

Parish/Town Councillors Mike Brown (Eastchurch PC), Paul Day (Leysdown PC), Thomas Nundy (Minster-on-Sea PC), Chris Reed (Sheerness TC) and Ashley Shiel (Queenborough TC).

### 332 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Peter Macdonald and Ken Pugh declared a non-pecuniary interests in Isle of Sheppey War Memorial, Sheerness. Councillor Elliott Jayes declared a non-pecuniary interest in the Thistle Hill Community Centre of which he was a Trustee.

### 333 **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 September 2020 (Minute Nos. 114 – 120) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to Councillor Bill Tatton being added to those present.

### 334 **MATTERS ARISING**

The Chairman reported on the various matters arising from the previous meeting, including that information was being collected on brown tourism signed, no proposals for Conservation Area reviews had come forward and that officers were seeking information about ponds.

The Council was also seeking information to feed into the Transport Strategy being developed as part of the new Local Plan to improve connectivity.

It was noted that a petition had been submitted to the Council in respect of access to Marine Terrace, Sheerness. Consideration of petitions under Swale Borough Council's (SBC) Constitution was normally done by either a Cabinet Member, Cabinet or the Council, so it was not proper for an Area Committee to consider it.

Restoration of the war memorial at Sheerness had been the subject of a question to Council on 11 November 2020. The response had indicated that funds would be forthcoming from the Council to support this.

**335 PUBLIC FORUM**

Local resident Dolley White gave an update on the work of the Sheppey Community Development Forum and invited those present to get involved. The Forum had been considering similar items to the Area Committee including brown tourism signs. They had coordinated the various organisations who were providing food support to local families during the current pandemic and responding to the needs of local people. They had conducted an online tourism and jobs conference which had been supported by SBC's Cabinet Member for Economy and Property.

Local resident Linda Brinklow spoke in her capacity as the Chair of the Swale section of the Kent Rail Community Partnership which existed to promote more people using the railways. They worked in the community on projects and had achieved national recognition with an award for a project involving Sheppey College.

Ray Butcher spoke in his capacity as a trustee of Castle Connections on the anticipated closure of the Post Office at Queenborough. There were very few opportunities to house a post office in Queenborough and the nearest alternatives for residents were in either Minster, Sheerness or Halfway. He explained that he had been having conversations with the post office about possibly using space at Castle Connections. The Post Office would be happy to convert an existing building for use and fit it out with counters, and support training, but they could not fund the running of it. Discussion ensued on whether the Area Committee could support the idea of a community run post office at Queenborough.

A resident of one of the Island's holiday parks enquired about the status of holiday park residents during lockdown after 1 January 2021. Lots of elderly people were resident at the parks and were either shielding or self-isolating.

Post-meeting note: SBC issued a press release on 16 December 2020 saying that the Council had written to holiday parks in Swale to confirm that they could remain open this winter due to Covid-19.

**336 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, the work that had 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 was collected within a single wheeled bin. The disposal authority preferred the 'twin-stream' collection method, whereby paper and cardboard were collected separately to the other recycling, although this system would require an additional container for Swale residents.

Members generally thought that residents would not welcome extra bins. More communal bins for recycling as happened on the continent might be an idea worth exploring. Others thought it was time a single standardised system was rolled

across the entire country, although this was a matter for central government. It was noted that parts of the Isle of Sheppey, such as Marine Town, were roads made up of mainly terraced houses with no front gardens which made bin storage a challenge.

Members discussed air quality and the potential to introduce cleaner and greener waste collection freighters as part of a new contract. Members discussed the various alternatives to freighters fueled by diesel including electric, hybrid, LNG and hydrogen.

Food waste recycling had always been a big challenge for Swale and by 2023, every household in England must be able to recycle food waste. The vast majority of houses in Swale already had this option and campaigns had 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.

It was noted that the holiday parks on the Isle of Sheppey tended to have communal bins which took all refuse, so little recycling was done.

Contamination in wheelie bins affected recycling figures and cost much more to dispose of. Food waste, garden waste, textiles, black plastic bags and used nappies were all items that regularly got placed in the recycling incorrectly leading to collections being rejected by the disposal authority.

It was noted that the advice was for food containers to be rinsed before putting in the blue bins. Many islanders suffered fuel and water poverty. It was also noted that the lids on blue bins could fly open with the wind leading to contamination of any paper or cardboard as a result of rainwater.

On street cleansing, it was noted that areas such as Leysdown had a high proportion of take-away food shops. In the summer season the bins regularly filled up. The move to covered bins had some success in preventing gulls from picking the wrappers out of the bins. Seasonal adjustments and possibly taking street cleansing back in-house were actively being considered.

### **337 LOCAL ISSUES**

Councillor Simon Fowle referred to the concerns made earlier in the meeting to post office provision. The Chairman suggested Members liaised with local community groups to put a proposal together for a community post office in Queenborough and bring that back to the next meeting of the Committee.

### **338 FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS**

The Committee considered markers for a number of potential funding proposals including environmental improvements at The Glen, Thistle Hill Community Centre solar panels, surfacing public footpath ZB50 linking Queenborough to Neats Court, replacing banners in Sheerness High Street, adult exercise equipment, and seafront lighting at Sheerness, Queenborough Castle play area, and the play area at Halfway.

The Chairman invited project sponsors to submit detailed costings to the next meeting of the Committee on 16 March 2021 so that they could be considered for possible funding.

**339 MATTERS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE BY CABINET**

There were none.

**340 MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET BY THE COMMITTEE**

The Vice-Chairman referred to the request by Councillor Bill Tatton for CCTV at Leysdown to be considered for funding by the Committee. The location and operation of CCTV was a matter for SBC to review and decide on, so the Vice-Chairman suggested the matter be referred to the Cabinet Member for Community.

Chairman

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