
EASTERN AREA COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT on Tuesday, 22 March 2022 from 7.00 pm - 8.38 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Lloyd Bowen, Alastair Gould, Mike Henderson, Carole Jackson, Denise Knights (Chairman), Ben J Martin, Hannah Perkin, Julian Saunders (Vice-Chairman), David Simmons, Eddie Thomas and Tim Valentine.

NOMINATED PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT (Virtually): Parish/Town Councillors Louise Bareham (Faversham TC), Beverley Ferrell (Oare PC) and Alan Stewart (Graveney with Goodnestone PC).

OFFICER PRESENT: Janet Dart.

OFFICERS PRESENT (Virtually): David Clifford and Jo Millard.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE (Virtually): Councillors Monique Bonney, Tim Gibson, Ken Rowles and Tony Winckless.

Kent County Councillor Rich Lehmann, Divisional Member for Swale East.

APOLOGY: Councillor Mike Whiting.

702 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chairman read out the emergency evacuation procedure.

703 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Mike Henderson, Ben J Martin and Tim Valentine disclosed a non-pecuniary interest as they were Trustees of Faversham Swimming Pools Management Committee Ltd.

Councillor Mike Henderson disclosed a non-pecuniary interest as Chairman of The Friends of Oare Gunpowder Works Steering Group.

Councillor Eddie Thomas disclosed a non-pecuniary interest as a Trustee of Oare Gunpowder Works Steering Group.

Councillor Carole Jackson disclosed a non-pecuniary interest as a Trustee of West Faversham Community Association.

704 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 February 2022 (Minute Nos. 566 – 574) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the following amendment:

Minute No. 569 the following to be added:

“That the Greenspaces Manager advised Faversham Recreation Ground was a contributing factor to the flooding in Whitstable Road.”

705 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Members noted the progress on actions.

Flooding in Faversham

Since the meeting arranged by Helen Whately MP on 12 November 2021 and the update given at the Eastern Area Committee meeting on 3 February 2022, the Chairman advised the following actions had taken place:

- On 4 March 2022, Helen Whately MP called a virtual meeting where Swale Borough Council (SBC), Kent County Council (KCC), and Southern Water (SW) representatives were in attendance and the issue of flooding in Faversham, including Whitstable Road, Church Road, The Brents, and Tanners Street were discussed. The Cabinet Member for Environment gave a summary of the discussion and shared the slides from that meeting.
- A site meeting took place on 9 March 2022 with Councillor Denise Knights, SW and a representative from the Cooksditch Stream volunteer team in attendance. The drains around the flooding area were inspected and plans to clear them were put in place. After the site meeting the KCC Asset Manager for Drainage & Structure advised: *“As discussed once the ditch outfall is unblocked, I will arrange for a tanker to flood test the system to ensure the water is reaching the ditch, if not then I will then arrange a full CCTV survey but I do not believe this will be necessary.”* SW confirmed that they had a plan of action to carry out maintenance and repair work in April 2022, full details of the full action plan were yet to be received.
- On the same day Councillor Denise Knights met with the SBC Head of Environment and Leisure, and the Greenspaces Manager and discussed plans on how to slow and minimise the run-off water from Faversham Recreation Ground and identified where water naturally gathered. Methods to minimise debris which entered and blocked drains were discussed. Following the meeting the Head of Environment and Leisure provided the following feedback: *“We have recently attended the site to discuss the issue with the Ward Member. We explained the measures that have already been taken in recent years including two soakaway drainage solutions and the specifications of the pathways. However we have committed to looking at some measures that may be effective in slowing the flow down during peak storms. We welcome the intentions of partners to work with us to try and resolve this issue.”*

The Chairman undertook to prepare a full report on the progress which she would circulate to the Eastern Area Committee Members.

A Member of the public in attendance welcomed the progress that had taken place and asked that the matter remained on the Eastern Area Committee agenda to

keep the momentum up. Another member of the public spoke about how frightening the flooding could be and stressed that sewage in the flood water was a public health issue.

The Chairman requested that the Cabinet Member for Environment write to SW to request a full update and action plan.

Defibrillators in the Eastern Area

The Interim Area Committees Coordinator advised that an action that came out of the Eastern Area Committee meeting on 3 February 2022 was to collate information on defibrillators in the Eastern Area with a view to producing a map to show where there were gaps. On checking with officers, the Ambulance Service were recently contacted by SBC for a similar exercise across the borough but even after submitting an FOI, they would not release the information.

However, there was a national database [The National Defibrillator Database | \(nddb.uk\)](http://TheNationalDefibrillatorDatabase.org.uk) which could produce maps but the information on the database was not up-to-date. Officers suggested that all Eastern Parish and Town Councils be contacted and encouraged to check the database and add the details of local defibrillators. It was also suggested that Eastern Area Committee Members also checked the database as they might have local knowledge of defibrillators in their wards. Maps could then be pulled down from the system for the Area Committee to use to identify gaps.

Although Committee Members were in favour of this approach, they felt it did not address the importance of ensuring the defibrillators were maintained. It was suggested that when Parish and Town Councils were contacted, they should be reminded that the defibrillators needed to be kept in working order. It was also suggested that Shepherd Neame be contacted as they had units at their establishments.

Area Committees Review Working Group

The Chairman advised that following Benjamin A Martin standing down as Ward Councillor, there was currently only one representative from Eastern Area Committee on the Review Working Group. She asked if any Member wished to nominate themselves to sit on the Working Group. Councillor Mike Henderson nominated himself and was seconded by Councillor Eddie Thomas. It was agreed that Councillor Mike Henderson would be the Eastern Area Committee's representative along with Councillor Julian Saunders.

706 PUBLIC FORUM

No issues were raised.

707 LOCAL ISSUES TO BE RAISED

A Member raised the issue of the green space at the bottom of Whiting Crescent, Faversham, lacking play facilities. She said that she would like to see some progress on this as there were many young families in the area who would benefit from such equipment. She asked that the Eastern Area Committee noted this matter.

A Member spoke on behalf of residents in Newnham and Doddington who were experiencing problems with Shaw Haulage lorries travelling between the A20 and A2 transporting spoil. Residents at Doddington had tried to get a weight restriction on that road but with no success so far. KCC were concerned that would divert the lorries through other villages with less suitable roads. The KCC Councillor for Swale East advised that he had attended a meeting last week at the Golf Club in Tonge which was the end destination for many of the Shaw Haulage lorries. Shaw Haulage made assurances that the movements should reduce or stop by the time the Tonge site opened in mid-June. Some residents were dubious that would resolve the problem. The Maidstone Borough Council's schemes officer recommended a much wider weight restriction which would cover about 30 roads and displace lorries to either the A251 or the A249.

A Member raised the following two issues regarding KCC Education matters:

- KCC changed their travel provider for pupils with Special Education Needs (SEN) who needed access to special schools. Subsequently, a lot of those children were left for about a week without any transport to school; and
- families with children awaiting diagnosis for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and autism faced a waiting list of up to five years in Kent. That meant a lot of children would not be able to access the provision they required. The waiting list for private assessments was currently 12 to 16 weeks but cost up to about £3,000.00.

It was agreed that as these were borough-wide matters, they should be referred to the relevant Cabinet Member to write to KCC to highlight these issues.

708 BUS CONSULTATION PROJECT

The Vice-Chairman introduced the update report regarding the public consultation on local bus services. He said that at its meeting in December 2021, Eastern Area Committee Members agreed to award £10,000.00 to undertake a public consultation on local bus services. Due to SBC resource issues there was a recommendation by the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development to explore an alternative delivery option such as project management by a town or parish council.

A discussion ensued and a Member questioned if a parish or town council would have the resources to carry out this consultation and felt that it would be better for SBC to run this project, which was of huge importance to the residents of the Eastern Area.

Councillor Lloyd Bowen moved the following motion: that the matter should be referred back to Cabinet to request that SBC carry out the public consultation on local bus services. This was seconded by Councillor David Simmons and on being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

Resolved:

- 1) ***That Cabinet be asked if SBC could carry out the public consultation on local bus services.***

709 FUNDING ALLOCATIONS FOR 2021-22

The Eastern Area Committee was allocated a total of £48,000.00 for the financial year 2021/22. At the Eastern Area Committee Meeting on Thursday 3 February 2022, £33,246.00 of funding was awarded. At that meeting, Committee Members agreed that the unallocated funding of £14,754.00 should be made available for external organisations via a second funding round.

The deadline for the second round of applications was Thursday 17 February 2022 and £29,736.37 of bids were received for consideration by the Committee. This meant that there was £14,982.37 worth of bids in excess of the remaining allocation. All applications were assessed for eligibility by officers and a scoring process carried out. Officers submitted 4 options for allocating funds for the Committee to vote on, as set out on pages 9 to 11 of the report.

A discussion ensued on each of the options. Councillor Mike Henderson proposed and Councillor Eddie Thomas seconded a motion that Committee Members selected Option 1 to allocate the remaining funding which would allow the three highest scoring applications to receive 100% funding from the scheme. That would leave £17.63 of funds unallocated at year end. Therefore the funding be allocated as follows:

Painters Forstal Community Association, cycle destination project - £1,266.37;
Faversham Swimming Pools Management Committee Ltd, pool pump replacement - £8,670.00; and
Friends of Oare Gunpowder Works, restoration of the Leat system - £4,800.00.

On being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

Resolved:

- 1) ***That Committee Members selected Option 1 to allocate the remaining funding which would allow the three highest scoring applications to receive 100% funding from the scheme. Therefore £14,736.37 funding be awarded to projects in the following proportions:***
 - a) ***Painters Forstal Community Association - £1,266.37;***
 - b) ***Faversham Swimming Pools Management Committee Ltd - £8,670.00; and***
 - c) ***Friends of Oare Gunpowder Works - £4,800.00.***

710 CRITERIA FOR FUNDING ALLOCATIONS 2022-23

The Chairman spoke about the need for Eastern Area Committee Members to develop a work programme for 2022-23 and how the funding could be used to achieve the Committee's ambitions. She said this needed to be decided at the June 2022 meeting and asked Members to consider ideas to bring to that meeting. Committee Members commented as follows:

- The funding should not just be a grant scheme for outside bodies;
- allocation of funding needed to be linked to a work programme;
- allocating funds should take place earlier in the year;
- the work programme needed to be deliverable;
- officer capacity needed to be kept in mind;
- there should not be lower restrictions on the amounts organisations could bid for;
- there needed to be active engagement with Members to develop the work programme for the June 2022 meeting;
- the purpose should be to support SBC priorities, ambitions could link in with ongoing streams of work; and
- communication was key to ensure the Area Committee focussed on the projects that aligned with the corporate priorities.

711 MATTERS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE BY CABINET

No issues were raised.

712 MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET BY COMMITTEE

Eastern Area Committees agreed that the following items should be referred to Cabinet:

Resolved:

- 1) That the Cabinet Member for Environment writes to Southern Water to ask for their plan of action for the flooding issues in the Eastern area;***
- 2) That the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing writes to KCC to raise the matter of SEN pupils not being able to travel to school due to the change-over of travel provider; and***
- 3) That the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing writes to KCC to raise the matter of lengthy waiting lists for ADHD and autism assessments.***

Chairman

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