
EASTERN AREA COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Committee Room - Swale House on Wednesday, 20 December 2023 from 7.00 pm - 8.38 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Charles Gibson, Kieran Golding, Alastair Gould, Mike Henderson, Carole Jackson, Hannah Perkin (Chair), Julien Speed and Terry Thompson.

NOMINATED PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES: Parish/Town Councillor Josh Rowlands (Faversham Town Council (TC)).

NOMINATED PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES (Virtually): Parish/Town Councillors Susan Elworthy (Newnham Parish Council (PC)), Alan Stewart (Graveney with Goodnestone PC), Beverley Ferrell (Oare PC), Kevin Fraser (Doddington PC) and Jeff Tutt (Dunkirk PC).

OFFICERS PRESENT: Martyn Cassell, Steph Curtis, Janet Dart and Jhilmil Kishore.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Lloyd Bowen, Rich Lehmann, Claire Martin and Ben J Martin.

531 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Resolved:

1) That Councillor Ben J Martin be elected Vice-Chair for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2023/24.

532 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair read out the emergency evacuation procedure.

533 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

534 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 September 2023 (Minute Nos. 318 – 330) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

535 COMMUNITY SAFETY PRIORITIES

The Community Safety Manager started her presentation by explaining that the Swale Community Safety Partnership (CSP) was a statutory partnership which brought together a number of public sector agencies tackling crime, disorder, anti-social behaviours and substance misuse, and it aimed to reduce re-offending.

The agencies included Swale Borough Council (SBC), Kent County Council (KCC), Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, probation services, and health services. They worked closely with local housing associations such as Southern Housing, voluntary and community sector organisations and His Majesty's Prison Service.

A Community Safety Plan was created each year, which set out the priorities for the Partnership, based upon data and consultation with partners and the public.

The Community Safety Manager said she was asking each Area Committee for their views on what the priorities for their area should be for the period April 2024 to March 2025.

All those in attendance broke out into small groups to consider the questions asked, and fed back as follows:

What current Community Safety Issues were being experienced within your community?:

- Anti-social behaviour – specifically Faversham and Teynham residents doors being kicked;
- rural fly-tipping;
- illegal hunting with dogs;
- shoplifting – public and retail staff wary of reporting to the Police in fear of repercussions;
- could the Licensing and Planning teams be involved with resolving some problems?;
- suggested improving communication when Members reported problems which were dealt with by partner organisations, Members needed to receive feedback on outcomes;
- residents reported difficulties when reporting incidents on 101; and
- domestic violence.

The Community Safety Manager thanked everyone for their input and said this would be captured and shared with the CSP at their January 2024 meeting, when their priorities would be agreed. A refreshed Community Safety Plan would then be created by the end of March 2024 and would detail how the CSP could tackle those identified priorities. If Members had any specific issues they would like to report, they could email csu@swale.gov.uk

536 CELLAR HILL & GREENSTREET CONSERVATION AREA

The Senior Conservation Design Officer went through the proposed boundary changes and management strategy for the Cellar Hill and Greenstreet Conservation Areas. The six-week consultation period commenced on Friday 10 November 2023 and was scheduled to conclude on 22 December 2023, however, the deadline had been extended to 2 January 2024. So far the officers had received only 4 responses to the ongoing consultation. The officer reported that Historic England had recommended in their response *'reconsidering extending the Conservation Area's boundary to include the section of London Road falling between Station*

Road and Lynsted Lane, Teynham which encompasses a cluster of listed buildings of a similar quality to those to the east and within the Conservation Area.'

Consultation responses and any further amendments to the appraisal documents were estimated to be presented to the Policy and Resources Committee on 7 February 2024. It was envisaged that the adopted version of the Conservation Areas would be published on the SBC website by Easter 2024. However, if a decision was made to extend the conservation area as per Historic England's recommendation, then a re-consultation would need to be undertaken to include the properties affected by the proposed extension.

The following comments were made:

- Members reported that the parishes within their wards, that fell within the conservation areas, supported the proposals;
- there needed to be robust enforcement for any contraventions;
- could residents affected by the proposed extension of the conservation area be contacted?; and
- residents sometimes found it difficult to respond to the consultations as they were complex documents and they often waited to see the parish council response as that provided more clarity.

537 ENHANCED BUS PARTNERSHIP - SWALE LOCAL FOCUS GROUP

The Policy & Engagement Officer introduced the report and said that KCC used to manage and run Quality Bus Partnerships for each district to raise and discuss local issues. Those meetings ceased when the government started developing its National Bus Strategy.

The National Bus Strategy was launched in March 2021 and was the blueprint to help improve issues such as infrastructure, bus travel, and air quality.

KCC received funding from the government for various initiatives which were detailed in the report. As part of the funding, each area was required to set up an Enhanced Bus Partnership which was a statutory board. Other high-level groups had been set up but with no district level representation.

To bridge that gap KCC had suggested that Enhanced Bus Partnership, Local Focus Groups were set up in each district. KCC would send along representatives to these meetings but could not resource them.

It was agreed by the Policy & Resources Committee to set up a Swale Local Focus Group which would meet twice a year. It would be managed by the Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods who would chair and coordinate the meetings. SBC would be a conduit to bring partners together rather than leading or delivering any work directly.

Given the interest locally in bus infrastructure, it was proposed that issues to be raised were requested from each Area Committee prior to the Local Focus Group with feedback to the Area Committee after the Local Focus Group had met.

It was anticipated that the Swale Local Focus Group would hold their first meeting at the end of January/beginning of February 2024 and each Area Committee were invited to nominate one representative to sit on the Swale Local Focus Group.

Councillor Alastair Gould nominated himself as the Eastern Area Committee representative on the Enhanced Bus Partnership Swale Local Focus Group. This was seconded by Councillor Hannah Perkin and on being put to the vote was agreed.

Members commented as follows:

- Areas such as Lower Road and Ospringe Road, Faversham were effectively cut off as there were only two buses timetabled per day with the last but at 2 pm;
- Boughton, Faversham was often bypassed by the buses which left school children unable to get to school;
- if residents could not rely on bus services, they would stop using them;
- requested a breakdown of how much of the funding allocated to KCC by the Government would be spent in the Eastern Area;
- due to the changes to family hubs in Kent, families had to travel further to get to them. If they used the bus service from Bysingwood, Faversham, there was only room for 2 pushchairs;
- a Member asked if there were any allocated funds for rural services which had been lost? and
- there were no bus services from Oare, North Preston, Faversham Lakes, Lakeside Avenue into Faversham.

The Policy & Engagement Officer agreed to request responses to the questions on funding and feedback after the meeting.

Resolved:

1) That Councillor Alastair Gould represented the Eastern Area Committee on the Enhanced Bus Partnership Swale Local Focus Group.

538 FLOODING IN THE EASTERN AREA

The Chair said that at the last meeting, Cllr Williams agreed to be the Area Committee lead on flooding matters in the Eastern Area. Following his resignation and the subsequent by-election, the Chair asked if any other Area Committee Member would like to take the lead on this matter.

Councillor Mike Henderson proposed that Councillor Charles Gibson become the Member lead on flooding issues in the Eastern area. This was seconded by Councillor Hannah Perkin and on being put to the vote was agreed.

Members were asked to forward any areas of flooding that were missing from the paper in the agenda pack to Councillor Charles Gibson.

Resolved:

2) That Councillor Charles Gibson become the Member lead on flooding issues in the Eastern area.

539 PUBLIC FORUM

A member of the public, Mr Taylor, said that there was poor lighting in Faversham Recreation Ground and believed that encouraged anti-social behaviour. The Head of Environment & Leisure responded that the Recreation Ground was a critical heritage area and lighting was focused on the Lodge area and diagonal path. SBC were in the process of replacing lights under their control in open spaces with Light-Emitting Diodes (LEDs). Once the lights in the Recreation Ground had been replaced, they would be assessed and if necessary extra lighting could be considered.

Mr Taylor said that the Memoria Crematorium, Faversham, Staple Street, were using the pond for overflowing storm water. He said he believed this was a breach of planning conditions and asked what SBC were going to do about it. It was agreed that Planning officers would be consulted on this matter.

540 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Members noted the progress on actions.

Request for play equipment at Whiting Crescent, Faversham – Councillor Carole Jackson said she was disappointed that the position was unchanged. The Head of Environment & Leisure said that there were criteria that officers used when siting playground equipment and suggested that it might be better to raise this at the Community Committee.

541 LOCAL ISSUES TO BE RAISED

Councillor Terry Thompson asked what could be done if a resident installed bright white lighting in their home which was visible on the road and could be confusing to motorists. It was agreed to consult with KCC Highways to find out what could be done.

Councillor Terry Thompson raised the matter of reporting fly-tipping. The Head of Environment & Leisure advised that the best way to report it was via the SBC website via this link [Littering - Report fly-tipping \(swale.gov.uk\)](https://www.swale.gov.uk/littering-report-fly-tipping)

542 MATTERS REFERRED TO SERVICE COMMITTEE CHAIRS FOR CONSIDERATION

It was agreed to refer the request to install playground equipment at Whiting Crescent, Faversham, to the Community Committee.

Chair

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