

Queenborough Town Council

Minutes of the Queenborough Town Council held on **Monday 14th August 2023**

at the Queenborough Guildhall at 19:00 Queenborough Guildhall

ALL MINUTES ARE WATERMARKED 'DRAFT' AND REMAIN A DRAFT COPY UNTIL THEY ARE AGREED AT THE NEXT RELEVANT COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE MEETING.

Present: Councillors Ashley Shiel (Mayor), Jackie Constable, Peter Marchington, Janet Flew, Paula Telford, Richard Darby, Zoe Swarbrick, Sandra Fowle.

Councillor Mike Whiting – Kent County Council and Swale Borough Council

Steven Gale – Swale Borough Council Greenspace Amenities Officer

Thomas Maybank – PC

James Hickford and Zac Carley – VIBE

1 no. public member

1. Emergency Evacuation – The Mayor made all aware of the Council procedures in an emergency on exiting the building and the meeting point across the Road.

2. Apologies and grounds for absence – Councillors Sue Simpson – Holiday and Zoe Stockbridge – other business.

3. Declarations of Interest – Cllr Marchington as Swale Borough Councillor and Secretary of Rushenden Club.

Item 6, brought forward in the meeting by the Mayor.

6. Policing Matters

The police report had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting.

PC Maybank reported on issues in the town and the Isle of Sheppey.

The action being taken to increase youth attendance in schools, action against parents in a program in fighting against anti-social behavior.

There are action days planned to work with Peel Ports to combat the Jet Ski issues.

Sheerness Police Station opening is dependent on staffing levels. Opening times are incorrect outside the Station, Thomas will feedback for these to be corrected.

Sittingbourne Police Station is open most of the time.

Shoplifting in the Town is higher and some of this is due to the cost-of-living crisis. Once further officers are available then local business support will increase.

The Local inspector will be attending SAC in September and Cllr Whiting encouraged Town Councillors to come along at the Criterion Bluetown, where there will be a good opportunity to ask wider questions about Sheppey.

There is a Facebook petition regarding the policing problems on Sheppey, to support the police in getting more government funding for Kent.

Continue to report to 101, this is more amination for extra officers to the area.

Will look at police surgeries again when the number of officers increase.

PC Maybank was thanked for his attendance and left the meeting.

Item 4, brought forward in the meeting by the Mayor.

4. VIBE Community Group

James and Zac introduced themselves as part of the youth team under Brogdale CIC. Working from Rushenden and Sheerness on the Island and Faversham, Newington, Sittingbourne and Teynham on the mainland.

Looking at poor school attendance, attendance dropping or not attending, looking at the reasons behind and root cause of the problem.

Moved the Group from Rushenden House to Rushenden Hall Association with 20/30 per week in attendance.

The team are experienced youth workers and open to talking about their home life where they are not judged and can be supported.

Current threats of closure with the current open Kent County Council consultation, a lot of people are against youth clubs running out of youth hubs where young mothers might be creating an environment not suitable for youths in the same place.

The Consultation is long winded.

Moving all Queenborough and Rushenden services to the Queenborough library is too small and youths do not want to go to a library.

Cllr Whiting reported on seeing a lot regarding the consultation on social media but urged people to contact him directly where he can write to the cabinet member.

The group is advertised by interval leafleting around the surrounding area, one member of staff to 10 youth's ratios.

Follow VIBE on Facebook due to the current website being updated.

James and Zac were thanked for their time in attending this evening and left the meeting.

Item 10, brought forward in the meeting by the Mayor.

10. Queenborough Castle Site Ash Tree

Following previous residents contact with the Town Council and hearing their views on the felling of the tree, a meeting with SBC and QTC took place to establish SBC view on the tree. Steven Gale reported on the subsidence claim of the Ash Tree.

The resident's valuation of the tree was questioned in the sum of £500,000, SBC use the Capital Asset Value for Trees giving the tree a valuation of approximately £35,000.

The insurance company, requesting the removal of the tree, had issued surveys and reports, all reviewed by SBC, and provided enough evidence for the subsidence claim on 2 Castle Street for removing the tree.

Further trees will be replanted on the Castle Site this year by Swale Borough Council.

None of the Town Councillors' are tree experts and this is the specialist opinion on the subsidence claim, the Town Council has gone as far as it can with any involvement without the cost of using public money for further legal advice and it was the consensus by Councillors, that the tree is now left in the hands of the professionals and Swale Borough Council.

By resolution of all Councillors present, the Queenborough Castle Site Ash Tree will be left in the hands of the legal professionals and Swale Borough Council.

5. Public questions

Resident reported on the travellers who had arrived today in the layby along Rushenden Road and Thompsett Way path.

Requesting concrete bollards at both ends of the layby to prevent further encampments, this was a matter for Kent County Council.

Cllr Whiting will contact the relevant teams at KCC and SBC to serve notice to move the travellers.

Cllr Whiting spoke of the closed car park at Sheppey Hall and the problems created by this to residents in Main Road.

Cllr Whiting reported on the closure of the Sheerness Tip, which has been postponed and the option to close is now not an option.

The resident and Cllr Whiting left the meeting, Cllr Whiting inviting the resident to speak with him directly.

6. As above.

7. Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Monday 3rd July 2023

The minutes were reviewed and adopted as a true copy, and signed as a true copy by the Mayor, Cllr Ashley Shiel.

8. Review of Matters arising from previous meeting held on Monday 3rd July 2023

Cllr Jackie Constable reported that the shed was now intact and would no longer be a lean too.

9. Mayors remarks

The Mayor thanked everyone for coming and for those Councillors' who attended the Sunset Stroll on Saturday.

10. as above

11. Parking in the Community

The closure of Sheppey Hall car park was reportedly because of vandalism on the site. The ambulance station parking was again raised.

Report from the local paper with interview from SBC/KCC Cllr Mike Whiting was noted.

To forward to the Environment Committee.

12. Keeping Dogs under Control

The Clerk reported on her contact with SBC, reporting they do not have signs to erect re keeping dogs leashed, they are happy to place them in the town if the town council purchase them.

The Clerk will look at Wildlife Trust signs.

To forward to Environment Committee for considered purchase of signs under Environmental Improvements budget.

13. Policy for Queenborough Town Council representation on outside bodies.

The policy was reviewed and adopted by resolution.

14. Discretionary Grant to Children and Families Ltd, Seashells

As proposed by the Finance and General Purposes Committee by resolution it was agreed to not make a grant at this time.

15. Financial reports

i) Cashbook and Bank Reconciliation

The Cashbook and Bank Reconciliations for June 2023 as approved by the Finance & General Purposes Committee, was approved by Full Council with no matters arising.

ii) Review of payments made between the Finance and Full Council meetings and authorisation of proposed payments due

Payment reports were approved for payments made between the meetings.

Authorisation of payments due was approved for HMRC.

16. Committees and Working Party Reports

(i) Environment Committee

Draft minutes of the previous Environment Committee meeting had been circulated to all councillors by the Clerk, prior to the meeting.

No matters arising and no chairperson present to report on the meeting.

The Council approved the actions of the Environment Committee

(ii) Environment Committee working parties:

a) In Bloom

Cllr Paula Telford reported on a future meeting to plan dates.

The bird box event will be on Monday.

Cllr Sandra Fowle reported on the possible advertisement for the event in this week's local paper.

b) Allotments

The Clerk reported on Plots 18a and 18b given up at Park Avenue and the Council removing the rubbish heap alongside the site.

Plot 18a or 18b could be offered to other allotment holders wanting bigger plots.

c) Christmas Lights

Minutes of the working party had been circulated to all Councillors by the Clerk, prior to the meeting.

The Mayor and Clerk will walk the town on Thursday looking at light locations etc.,

d) Community Crisis Plan – currently under review.

e) Emergency Food Bank

Cllr Darby reported it is busy. Cllr Jackie Constable read a thank you message, which was gratefully received.

The Mayor reported on the purchase of the planned CCTV camera today, following an incident with an intoxicated public member entering the premises, it was confirmed that this was not a food bank resident.

The Council approved the actions of the working parties.

(ii) Finance and General Purposes Committee –

Draft minutes for the previous F&GP Committee meeting had been circulated to all Councillors by the Clerk, prior to the meeting.

Cllr Marchington reported everything was good at the meeting which he chaired.

The Council approved the actions of the F&GP Committee.

(iii) Planning Committee –

Draft minutes for the previous Planning Committee meeting had been circulated to all Councillors by the Clerk, prior to the meeting. There were no further matters discussed.

The Council approved the actions of the Planning Committee.

17. Local Community bodies

a) Queenborough Town Community Centre – None.

b) Queenborough Fishery Trust – None.

- c) **Queenborough Harbour Trust** – Cllr Fowle reported figures will be out soon for, but it had been busy. The trot boat is not working.
- d) **Queenborough School and Nursery** – None
- e) **Rushenden Community Hall Association** – Cllr Marchington reported that they are looking for a new manager, serious financial crisis.
- f) **Rushenden Community House** – None, there are planned events in the future which Cllr Fowle will try to pop into.

Swale Area Bodies

- g) **KALC Swale Area Committee** – None.
- h) **Local council's Liaison forum of SBC** – None.
- i) **SBC Swale Area Committee**– None.
- j) **Swale Joint Transport Board** – None.
- k) **Swale Rail** – None.
- l) **VEL Surgery PPG** – Cllr Telford reported on recent two meetings.

18. Correspondence

- a) The Clerk reported on using Survey Monkey for future community engagement.
- b) The Clerk reported on an invitation to visit the CCTV recording station at Sittingbourne. Councillors were asked to email her if they would like to attend. The date will be confirmed by Swale Borough Council for some time in September.

19. Late inclusions previously notified to the Mayor

The Mayor reported on a Town Plan Policy, creating a steering group with chairs of F&GP, Environment and Planning committees, the Mayor and Clerk. Also, inviting outside bodies with the chair of the Queenborough Society and Queenborough School. First stage to create a Section 14 policy, to be put out to community consultation for their opinion then move on to Section 16 policy for SBC officer's review.

17. Any other Business

Cllr Fowle reported on respect your neighbours' signs after reporting on recent incidents in the High Street and South Street. Contact with SBC licensing.

The Mayor reported on the leak along Rushenden Road with repairs expected in the next 10 days.

FC: 14/08/2023

The Clerk reported on the continuous drain blockages at Park Road and the High Street, KCC had informed her they had been cleared of silt and mud and tree roots had been found to be blocking, which now required survey.

The Clerk reported on the Pye Fund held and request by the family for ways to spend the funding. Ideas of Queenborough School and repairs to the climbing wall in Wildfire Park.

Cllr Jackie Constable reported on glass in the Castle Site Play area, which she had reported.

There being no further business the meeting was declared closed at 21.18.

Date of next meeting – Monday 25th September 2023