



BROADSTAIRS & ST. PETER'S
TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL TOWN ASSEMBLY

Monday 13th March 2017

PRESENT: The Town Mayor Cllr. Peter Shaw, Chairman
Cllrs. J. Bayford, Binks, Buckley, Dexter, Matterface, Savage, D.
Saunders, M. Saunders, Taylor-Smith.
Town Clerk: Danielle Dunn
Members of the public

Introduction: The Chairman welcomed members of the public and introduced all Councillors present to the Assembly.

The Chairman announced that the Council had no objection to the proceedings being filmed, subject to any person at the Assembly objecting to being personally filmed.

1. Apologies for Absence.

Cllrs. B. Bayford, Hayton, Lees, Moore, Parsons.

2. Minutes.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Annual Town Assembly held on Monday 7th March 2016 were received, approved, and signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters Arising.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4. Annual Report of the Work of the Town Council.

Cllr. David Saunders, Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes committee gave a general overview of the work and activities of the Council.

Cllr. Saunders described the workings of the Council and explained that the working parties and sub-committees report to the Planning or Finance and General Purposes committee, and the two committees report to full Council. The Town Council convenes a minimum of six ordinary Council meetings per year, co-ordinates the quarterly Town Forum and is legally bound to arrange the annual Town Assembly during the month of March.

Cllr. Saunders advised that the Town Council has resolved to increase the precept by £9.90 for a Band D Council Tax payer for the year 2017 – 2018, which is an increase of 24.94% on the 2016/17 precept, and to instruct TDC to collect a precept of £463,352.10 (£49.59 a year for a household paying Council Tax Band D). He explained that this is to enable the town council to provide extra services for residents and to continue some services which TDC will no longer provide. Plans include taking ownership of Pierremont Hall and Retort House, and ensuring that our town meets the standards that residents expect. Concentration will be on maintaining the pleasing appearance of the seafront, enhancing floral displays and decorative lighting, as well as ensuring a litter-free environment.

Cllr. Saunders reported that the Town Council has a commitment to manage and maintain, in partnership with the 'Friends of Mockett's Wood', an area of public amenity woodland located in St Peter's. The Council also manages Culmer's public amenity land alongside the Culmer's Allotments, and also manages the Norman Road and Prospect Road allotment sites.

Activities and events include: Fireworks Displays, programme of summer entertainment, Punch & Judy, Broadstairs in Bloom floral campaign. The Town Council is again financially supporting the Visitor Information Kiosk, extending the Viking Bay beach lift seasonal opening period and the Albion Street Car Park toilets.

In 2016 – 2017, grants totaling £66,000 were made to events, town promotion and organisations, plus £10,000 to Broadstairs In Bloom. £18,000 was provided by TDC for events funding; further funding is not expected in future years from TDC.

Planning Matters.

Cllr. Dexter, Chair of Planning, gave a report on the activities of the planning committee and explained that the committee consists of six members plus the Mayor and Deputy Mayor who attend ex-officio. *[Dates of meetings are available from the Town Clerk's office, or the 'Calendar of Meetings' can be read or downloaded from the Town Council's web site.]*

There are usually 12 planning meetings held per year. The Town Clerk and Councillors have formal discussions with the Planning Officers on all reserved Broadstairs & St. Peter's planning applications. The planning committee meetings also provide the public with an opportunity to speak for and against applications.

Over the past year 326 applications were submitted, a 27% increase on the previous year. Approximately 90% of applications relate to home improvements including extensions, change of use, conservatories, roof conversions and garages. The remaining 10% included new housing, school and retail developments, flat

conversions, and signage. There are powers available to combat eyesore buildings, and councillors and the Town Clerk forward to TDC details of any building or land that is derelict or in a bad state of repair. The Broadstairs Conservation Area Advisory Group also target eyesore buildings in the conservation areas.

There were 44 recommendations for refusal, which represents 14% of the total applications. Examples of concerns include over-development, detrimental to the street scene, not in keeping with the character of the surrounding development, poor elevation design, overlooking leading to loss of privacy, parking issues, conservation area restrictions, areas of high townscape value, restrictions and boundary clearance. Cllr. Dexter explained that the majority of refusals only required minor amendments to resolve the concerns when planning issues cannot be mutually resolved; applicants have the right to appeal to the Planning Inspectorate.

Recent communication with Mr Iain Livingston, the District's Planning Applications Manager, confirmed that currently his department is resolving on average 95% of all applications; the remaining contentious applications are referred to the district's planning committee for consideration. If necessary a district councillor also has the power to 'call in' and refer a Broadstairs & St. Peter's application to TDC's committee.

Contentious applications of local interest included: Westwood Lodge, Poorhole Lane – proposal for 153 dwellings: application refused by district council; Hopeville Farm, land rear of Mocketts Wood – proposal for 140 houses: waiting to see if outline planning application is lodged.

The planning committee also considered 73 applications for tree works last year ranging from crown thinning and pollarding to felling. Felling of healthy trees that have a preservation order is always refused unless the tree is dying or diseased, the roots are affecting foundations and/or drains, or the tree is encroaching on the highway. New developments are encouraged to plan around existing trees and diseased trees that require felling are usually subject to the re-planting of a suitable replacement. Cllr. Dexter also explained that all trees in conservation areas are protected and other trees that have a 'street scene amenity value' have, or will incur, a Preservation Order. Trees along the highway are regulated by Kent County Council; however KCC will listen if you have any concerns relating to road tree works.

Cllr Dexter added on a final note that the Planning Committee exists to help protect and enhance the build and landscaped environment so if any member of the community is aware of any mature tree under threat or has concern regarding eyesore land and buildings, please notify either TDC, the relevant ward councillor or the Town Clerk.

CLr Dexter advised that over the past year there have been four large developments which have attracted significant public interest:

- (i) **Proposed development at Westwood Lodge, Poorhole Lane (application no 15/0788):** This is an outline application for a mixed development of 153 dwellings. The application was recommended for refusal by the Town Council's planning committee as an unacceptable development within the green wedge, on highway safety issues, loss of trees and the area not being identified as a site for development in the current or draft local plan. The application was subsequently also refused by the District Council. However the applicant appealed to the Planning Inspectorate against this decision. The appointed inspector's site visit and hearing was held on 15th November 2017 and on the 13th February the Inspector's decision was to grant permission.
- (ii) **Proposed development of plot adjacent to Holy Trinity School, Dumpton Park Drive (application no. 15/0956):** Outline application for 28 new 3-5 bedroom dwellings. The application was recommended for refusal by the Town Council on the grounds of loss of the green division between Ramsgate and Broadstairs and contrary to the draft local plan. This application was also subsequently refused by the District Council and once again the applicant appealed to the Planning Inspectorate against this decision, and on the 9th February the inspector's decision was to grant permission.
- (iii) **Proposed development on land at the rear of Mocketts Wood, and adjacent former British Gas site, Northdown Road (application no. 16/0394):** This is an outline application for a proposed mixed development of 140 houses, a 70 bed care home, land set aside for a scout hut, plus additional facilities. It is also proposed that there will be improvements to the pinch point at the railway bridge in Northdown Road together with a new road that will run from the bridge bypassing the junction on the corner of Northdown Road and Church Street. The Town Council has recommended refusal on the grounds of Incursion into the green wedge, in contravention of the Local Plan, highways issues, housing density, increased pollution, and detrimental to the wellbeing of village residents. A decision from TDC is awaited.
- (iv) **Proposed development of land formerly used as the Club Union Convalescent Home, Reading Street (application no. 16/0924):** Proposed development of 30 new dwellings with vehicle access in Convent Rd and Reading Street with pedestrian access to Astor Road. The Town Council has recommended refusal on the grounds of over-development, overlooking, highway safety, and detrimental impact on the adjacent conservation area. A decision from TDC is awaited.

5. Answers to Questions Session.

Events: Criticism of TDC was received from members of the public who felt that TDC doesn't support the infrastructure for tourism in the town, for example increased parking charges, poor maintenance of car parks, lack of public toilets and increased charges for putting on events. Cllr D. Saunders reported that district council were looking at charging the commercial rate for events due to the increased health and safety considerations when putting on an event, and charging an initial fee to deter spurious applications.

Albion Street Car Park & toilets: Cllr D. Saunders reported that TDC are hoping to make improvements to the car park once Retort House is renovated, which will include public access toilets.

Social Media: The Town Clerk advised that in the next few months the Town Council will have a PR campaign promoting the role of the organisation and to also use a variety of formats of social media (Facebook, twitter etc.) to impart information to the public about local events, issues and projects, and the town council's role in them. A member of the public raised that there was poor attendance at the meeting, and the town clerk responded she hoped the improvements in social media would combat this next year.

Planning applications: A member of the public voiced concern about the developments mentioned above about which decisions were overturned on appeal, and wondered just how detrimental to the community an application would have to be in order for the inspectorate to uphold a refusal. Cllr. Dexter advised that the Neighbourhood Plan has been under development for 2 years and is 50% complete. It will be presented to the TDC Planning Department in November 2017, and will protect against 'rogue' developments in the future. Cllr D. Saunders noted also that the Inspectorate is based in Bristol and is following an edict from Central Government for more housing in the South East. The Town Council at present are merely consultees in the planning process, but is looking to change the procedure so it has more authority in the decision-making process.

Decorative Lighting: DS reported that the Town Council has committed to funding a decorative lighting project for the town and various schemes were under consideration, including cross-road displays, lights in trees, and lamp column decorations. The lights along the promenade have all been upgraded to more modern, robust materials but due to the hostile environment of wind, moisture and salt, will have a limited life span. There has also been an issue of condensation causing issues with the digital timers. The globe lights along the promenade (which belong to TDC) are run from solar cells and do not rely on time switches.

The Chairman Cllr. Binks thanked members of the Town Council, the Town Clerk and members of the public for attending the 2016 Annual Town Assembly.

Meeting Closed at 20:22 pm