



Broadstairs & St Peter's Town Council

ANNUAL TOWN ASSEMBLY

Monday 11th March 2019

PRESENT: The Town Mayor: Cllr. P. Moore, Chairman
Cllrs: R. Bayford, J. Bayford, Buckley, Dexter, D. Saunders, and
M. Saunders
Town Clerk: Danielle Dunn
Town Council Office Staff
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

Binks, Hayton, Leys, Matterface, Parsons, Savage, Shaw and Todd.

2 Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Annual Town Assembly held on Monday 12th March 2018 were received, approved and signed by the Chairman.

3 Matters Arising

A member of the public wished to ask a question about an item in Section 5, but with the agreement of those present decided to wait until that agenda item to speak.

4 Annual Report of the Work of the Town Council

(i) Council Report

The Chairman, Cllr. P. Moore gave a general overview of the work and activities of the Council.

Broadstairs & St Peters Town Council has 15 elected councillors. Councillor Vic Todd, Viking Ward was elected through a bi-election held on the 15th November 2018.

The Town Council has three main committees that report to the Council. The Finance & General Purposes Committee, the Planning Committee and the

Community Assets Committee. The Town Council has six Sub-Committees, they are the Allotments & Land Sub-Committee, the Assets & Budget Review Sub-Committee, Staff Management Sub-Committee, Leisure & Tourism Sub-Committee, Internal Audit Effectiveness Review Sub-Committee and the Neighbourhood Planning Sub-Committee which reports to the Planning Committee. There is also a Town Forum, which is made up of community groups and organisations. During the current civic year, the Council Committee has met five times with one further meeting planned at the end of March.

Staffing: The Town Council has the following staffing structure: Office Staff consist of Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Senior Administrator, Mayor's Secretary and a Marketing & Administration Assistant. Other staff include a Town Sergeant and Caretaker. In the next civic year, the Town Council has budgeted for a self-employed odd job person for eight hours per week to undertake small scale projects to help improve the town and maintain assets. All staff, including the Town Clerk, are part time.

The Town Council is committed to staff training and sees it as an essential component in delivering the best service for the town. During the civic year, the Town Clerk has completed a Certificate In Local Administration (CILCA) and is currently awaiting the results. The Deputy Town Clerk has now also started working towards the CILCA qualification. The marketing apprentice, who was employed in October 2017, has now completed an NVQ Level 2 in Business Administration and has been promoted to marketing and administration assistant. She is now undertaking her NVQ Level 3 in Business Administration at East Kent College.

Council Tax: The Town Council has resolved to instruct Thanet District Council to collect a precept of 567.612 which is 59.49 per year for a household paying Council Tax Band D. This is a 0% increase on the previous year. The Town Council has managed to keep the precept at the same level by negotiating new contracts for the town and forward planning to achieve other income through the booking and letting of Town Council owned assets.

Town Council Activities, Projects and Services: The Town Council has the following functions:

Statutory: To convene public meetings, Town Council website, 16 Town Council notice boards, allotments which consist of Norman Road and Prospect Road sites, accounts and audits.

Civic and Mayoral: Civic events, Civic service, Remembrance Service, Annual Town Assembly, Annual Council Meeting and Mayor Making. Mayor's promotional activities e.g. community events, official visits to other towns, quality status. The non statutory projects are functions that will be reported in the Financial and General Purposes Report.

Policies & Business Plan: The Town Clerk has continued to update and review the working policies. During 2018/19 civic year, the Town Council has updated

and adopted new standing orders and financial regulations, adopted five new policies and updated one other policy. They are the Data Protection policy, Complaints policy, Health & Safety policy, Council Co-option policy, Training & Development policy and the Freedom of Information, which is updated from the original 2015 policy.

In addition, a new transparency policy is currently being drafted and to be adopted shortly. The Town Council has put forward a short and long term business plan which is included in the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

Newsletters: The Town Council has a quarterly newsletter and the meeting saw the publication of the fourth edition of this document. Copies of the fourth edition newsletter were available for collection at this meeting and at the Town Council offices. It is also available to download from the Town Council website.

(ii) Finance and General Purposes Committee

Due to the absence of Cllr. Binks, Cllr. D. Saunders gave the report for the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

The Finance & General Purposes Committee has held four meetings during the financial year. The scheduled January meeting was not held as Cllr. V. Todd signed his declaration of acceptance of the office, so all items due for debate were directly reported to the meeting of the full Council on the same date.

The Finance & General Purposes Committee reports to Full Council.

The following Sub-Committees report directly to the Finance & General Purposes Committee: Leisure & Tourism Sub-Committee, Staff Management Sub-Committee, Allotments & Land Sub-Committee, Assets & Budget Review Sub-Committee and the Internal Audit Effectiveness Review Sub-Committee.

Leisure & Tourism Sub-Committee: The Committee discuss annual Town Council grants to promote the town's tourism and also to enhance the quality of life for the residents. This includes applications for individual events held in the town as well as support to civic and other organisations that make a real difference to various sectors of the community. Thanet District Council no longer provides any additional support via the Town Council for town events.

Each application is considered and recommendations are made to the Finance & General Purposes Committee for the 2018/19 financial year, the following sums were awarded last April: Events £42,100. Organisational Support of our civic grants which included Friends of Mockett's Wood and the Tourism Information Kiosk: £13,500. A total of £55,600. For the coming financial year 2019/2020, the following grants have been awarded: Events £35,450, Organisational Support or Civic Grants, again including Friends of Mockett's Wood and the Tourist Information Kiosk, £14,845. A total of £50,295. The slightly lower amount is due to fewer applications for grants from the organisational support sector this year. Organisations interested in applying for these support grants were requested to write to the Town Clerk after the 1st April, so they can be discussed at the next Leisure & Tourism Sub-Committee.

Allotments & Land Sub-Committee: The Town Council manage two allotment sites, one at Norman Road and the other at Prospect Road, along with Mockett's Wood in St. Peter's and the area of Pierremont Park immediately surrounding Pierremont Hall, The Cottage and The Music Room. The Town Council also has a long lease on Culmers Amenity Land which is owned by the CT10 Parochial Charities.

The Town Council undertook a formal tender process to appoint a grounds maintenance company to maintain the Culmer's Amenity land and the Pierremont Park land. From the 1st April 2019, these sites will be maintained by Box Green Horticulture Limited and overseen by the Town Council.

Mr Peter Cartier was thanked for the sterling job done in maintaining the land fronting Pierremont Hall over the past year.

Projects and Activities:

Major Projects: The refurbishment of Pierremont Hall and Retort House, the Neighbourhood Development Plan & Design Statement which is overseen by the Planning Committee, decorative lighting (Broadstairs High Street Christmas, St Peter's Christmas tree lights, the promenade festoon lighting. New decorative lights for St Peters will be reviewed over the summer.)

Other projects and services: Broadstairs & St Peter's in Bloom, summer entertainment, which includes a programme of bands, special events, Punch & Judy on Viking Bay beach, November 5th fireworks, funding extended opening hours for the toilets and the beach lift, the bandstand and bandstand kiosk arena (leased from Thanet District Council), Town Crier, replacement of Town Trail notice boards and other street furniture where necessary and providing funding support for a memory bench and increased security in Pierremont Park, to help protect the town's buildings that we now Town Council owned

The next financial year has a budget for environmental improvements in the town and work will continue with Community Pay Back on town improvements.

The Town Clerk and all of the staff were thanked for their invaluable support throughout the past year.

(iii) Planning Committee

Cllr. Dexter, gave a general overview of the work and activities of the Planning Committee.

The Planning Committee convenes on a monthly basis and consists of six members: Cllrs. Dexter (Chairman), J. Bayford (Vice Chairman), R. Binks, J. Buckley, M. Saunders and V. Todd. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor, Cllrs. P. Moore and C. Leys sit ex officio.

General planning information can be obtained from the Town Clerk's office and the annual calendar of meetings, weekly planning application lists, current and historic agenda and minutes are available to read or download from the Town Council's website. Thanet District Council's planning portal is also available to access for all details of all current and recently determined planning applications.

The Town Council, as a statutory consultee, receives a weekly list of all Broadstairs & St Peters planning applications. Members personally review all new and amended applications and if concerned, they will request the application be presented to the Town Council's Planning Committee for consideration. The Committee will then discuss, resolve and make recommendations to the District Council's Planning Department.

To assist the Committee when determining reserved applications, members will take into account written support and complaints, comments from the Broadstairs Society, feedback from District Council planning officers and will listen to public, neighbours or developers' representations at meeting. Members also make use of a number of planning guides, for example the 2006 and the draft 2015-2031 Local Plan, flat conversion guidelines and the Broadstairs & St Peter's Town Design Statement and the impending Broadstairs & St Peter's Neighbourhood Plan that will become an integral component of the emerging Local Plan.

Over the past year, the 12 Town Council planning meetings considered a total of 301 applications which equates to an 18.5% increase on the previous year. Approximately 80% of the applications relate to home improvements which include single and two storey extensions, conservatories, loft conversions and dormer windows. The remaining 15% include housing, retail and commercial development, flat conversion and signage. There were 48 recommendations for refusal which equates for approximately 16% of the total applications. Examples of concern included over development, detrimental to the street scene, cramming, in an area of high townscape value, not in keeping with the character and pattern of surrounding development, overlooking, loss of trees, highways issues, poor elevation design, density of housing and encroaching on the green wedge. However, a number of refusals just require a minor change to resolve concerns. For example, design improvements, boundary clearances or a change of scale, location and materials. Applicants that cannot mutually resolve issues and object to a resolution of refusal have the right to appeal to the Planning Inspector.

The District Council's Planning Applications Manager confirmed that currently his department, through delegated powers, are resolving on average 95% of all applications. The remaining contentious applications are referred to the District Council's Planning Committee for consideration. If necessary, the District Councillor also has the power to 'call in' and refer a Broadstairs & St Peter's application to Thanet District Council Planning Committee.

The Town Council's Planning Committee considered 73 applications for tree works last year ranging from crown thinning and pollarding to felling. Felling of healthy trees are always recommended for refusal unless the tree is dying or diseased, the roots are affecting the foundations 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 replanting of a suitable replacement. All trees in a Conservation Area are protected and other trees that have street scene amenity value have or will incur a Preservation Order. Trees along the highway come under the control of Kent County Council.

Cllr. Dexter advised that everyone is here to help protect and enhance our built and landscaped environment. If any member of our community is aware of any mature tree under threat or has concerns regarding eye sore land or buildings, they can contact Thanet District Council, the Town Clerk or the relevant Ward Councillor.

Over the past year, there has been one significant development that has attracted public interest, application 16/0294 - Club Union Convalescent Home in Reading Street which is in Beacon Road Ward. This is still ongoing.

(iv) Community Assets Committee

Due to the absence of Cllr. R. Binks, Cllr. B. Bayford gave a general overview of the work and activities of the Community Assets Committee.

On the 23rd July 2018, the Town Council approved the establishment of a Community Assets Committee to oversee the refurbishment of Pierremont Hall, its ancillary buildings, Retort House and any future purchases or transfers of community assets for the town. The Committee superseded the former Community Building & Asset Sub-Committee and reports directly to Council.

The Council's financial regulations were updated in September 2018 to reflect the delegated spending limits and powers of the new Committee. The new regulations for the Community Assets Committee have been time limited to a two-year period to reflect the expected running period of the Committee's current projects. The Committee has met eight times since its inception, approximately once a month. It has discussed a number of important projects regarding the assets and land including a new roof for Pierremont Hall, a new water proof coating for the roof at Retort House and the building work specifications and designs for both of these properties. Additionally, refurbishment of The Cottage previously known as The Town Shed and The Music Room have been commissioned as well as the demolition of both the pre-fab known as the Community Centre and the much vandalised wooden building, Park Hall.

The Community Assets Committee has also been given delegated powers by the Council to choose suitable community and commercial tenants for each of the properties.

Cllr. B. Bayford advised that this is very much a work in progress and residents were encouraged to read the Town Clerk's quarterly newsletters to keep up to date with all of the ongoing building works on assets owned by the Council.

Cllr. Bayford personally thanked the Town Clerk for her invaluable work and support through these projects.

5 Answers to Questions Session:

CT10 Charities, designation of Culmer's Amenity Land as green open space in the Local Plan and the development now taking place at Culmer's Amenity Land.

A resident referred to the discussion minuted at the previous assembly, regarding the concern of a CT10 Charities representative that the inclusion of Culmer's Amenity Land as a green open space could devalue the land although there was no intention to build on it.

The same resident noted that a former Town Councillor, two current Town Councillors and a Town Council employee are on the board of Trustees for CT10 Charities.

They raised concerns about the lack of website or Facebook page for CT10 Charities and the lack of income and expenditure information for CT10 Charities on the Charity Commission website. They asked, why it is minuted at the previous assembly that there was no intention to build on the land when a section had already been sold and was in the final stages of completion and why is there a lack of any information about the area that had been cleared for development. The Town Clerk agreed that she was also unable to find a website for the charity. The Town Clerk advised that the Neighbourhood Plan designated the land as a local green space to protect it and it is included in the emerging Local Plan. She is aware that CT10 Charities are unhappy at this, but it was a unanimous decision by the Town Council at an extra-ordinary meeting to keep the designation. The Neighbourhood Plan is going for examination followed by a referendum, when the community can vote.

Cllr. D. Saunders clarified that the area in the green space designation did not include the part now being developed and is also not included in the lease.

There was further discussion about the development and the pedestrian pathway through the land to Alexandra Road, including the width and disabled access and the possible encroachment of turning point.

Cllr. D. Saunders advised that outline planning permission for town houses had been granted for the development.

The Town Clerk explained about outline planning permission.

Cllr. Dexter clarified that he was a trustee of CT10 Charities and that Cllr. Matterface was the Chair of the charity. He explained that the charity provides financial support to the poor and needy living in a CT10 postcode. However, the full details of the recipients of support are not advised to the trustees.

The member of the public advised that the charity could establish greater transparency if it had a website and/or Facebook page that made the public aware of its work and how to apply.

Cllr. Dexter confirmed that the charity have posters on the Town Council noticeboards and are considering other ways of promoting themselves and that he would suggest at the next charity meeting that other charity website and Facebook pages are reviewed for ideas on how best to raise the profile of the charity.

Tourism cuts at Thanet District Council e.g. no ladies toilet open on the beach due to problems:

Cllr. Moore advised that Thanet District Council were undertaking a full survey of the toilets.

Cllr. R. Bayford confirmed that a total review of public toilet provision across the island was going to be undertaken. However, it is not a statutory requirement that toilets are provided by the District Council, but they intend to have a total overhaul of the provision and look for different ways to deliver a service that's fit for the 21st Century.

Cllr. Bayford agreed that there are some cuts in the tourism budget, but exactly where those cuts are going to fall hasn't actually been determined yet. However, there has to be a different approach to the way the whole tourism service is offered. A new person is in post at Thanet District Council and they are looking at the whole of the offering of the seafronts which are under the District's control to provide more things, more amenities for the public and actually other ways of making money to provide for those. Thanet District Council, probably along with every other council in the land at the moment is having to grapple with vastly reduced resources.

The member of the public asked if the review included considering charging for the toilets. Cllr. R. Bayford advised that nothing is ruled in and nothing is ruled out. There are all sorts of things under consideration. There are examples of Councils in the country who have schemes with businesses who, in return for a fee from the local authority, will allow people to use their toilets. There are companies looking to do business with councils whereby they share the cost of refurbishing a toilet and then they are charged for, so there is a mechanism to receive payment and the revenue from that is divided between the business and the council to a certain point. The Council gets revenue, but you also get the toilets maintained to a very high standard. The problems that Thanet District Council face is that many of the toilets are very old and they have not been refurbished or maintained over the years and they are almost the end of their useful life.

The member of the public went on to ask about the overall tourist economy of the town and what is going to be done to help it, as the winter season has been pretty poor.

The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council has budgeted this year for an amount that could be used for portable toilets, should they be required as and when. The Town Council appreciate the tourists are the main economy so other ideas that are over and above for the Town Council to provide are always greatly received.

The member of the public commented that there may not be a legal obligation to provide toilets, but as a town wanting to attract tourists there's a moral duty, surely to provide toilets.

Cllr. P. Moore agreed, but there was a need to wait for the outcome of the District Council review, however the Town Council hoped to be able to do more in the future.

Cllr. R. Bayford clarified that although the District Council do not have statutory responsibility, that did not mean that they were not going to provide them.

He also advised that the information available to Thanet District Council suggests that the tourism sector in Thanet has actually been doing above average across the UK.

The Chairman, Cllr. P. Moore thanked the members of the Town Council, the Town Clerk and the members of the public for attending the 2019 Assembly.

Meeting closed at 8:25p.m.