

**TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**TONBRIDGE FORUM**

**Monday, 9th February, 2009**

**Present:** Cllr M S Worrall (Chairman), Cllr N J Heslop (Vice-Chairman), Cllr A W Allison, Cllr Ms J A Atkinson, Cllr O C Baldock, Cllr P F Bolt, Cllr Ms V Branson, Cllr M J Dobson and Cllr Ms S V Spence.

Councillors Coffin, Court and Cure were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

**Members of the Forum:**

Kent County Councillor Mrs V Dagger, Kent Police, The Skinners Company, Tonbridge Allotments and Gardens Association, Tonbridge Civic Society, Tonbridge Lions Club, Tonbridge Rotary Club, Tonbridge Sports Association, Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club and Women's Institute.

Apologies for absence were received from Borough Councillor Mrs Anderson, Society of Friends, Tonbridge District Scout Council, Tonbridge Music Club and the West Kent Primary Care Trust.

**ACTION**  
**BY**

**PART 1 - PUBLIC**

**TF**  
**09/001**

**MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 24 November 2008 were received and agreed as a correct record of the proceedings

**TF**  
**09/002**

**UPDATE ON ANY ACTION IDENTIFIED IN THE LAST MINUTES**

No matters were identified, although the Chairman took the opportunity of advising Members of ongoing discussions with Kent County Council to enable co-operation and joint working on future meetings. Kent County Councillor Mrs Dagger was welcomed to the Forum.

**TF**  
**09/003**

## **KENT COUNTY COUNCIL SERVICES UPDATE**

The Kent County Council Liaison Manager, Loic Flory, provided an update which would be circulated with the Minutes and invited questions from the Forum. The items included within his report related to the footbridge over the Botany Stream, which would be ready for use by early Summer; streetlights at Lansdowne and River Lawn roads and the new Kent Highways Permit Scheme. The Forum was also advised that work to install a puffin crossing in Hadlow had commenced on Monday 9 February 2009.

The Chairman thanked Mr Flory for his update and suggested that Kent Highway Services be invited to a future meeting of the Forum to explain how the permit scheme operated.

Members expressed their gratitude at the good news about the Botany Stream footbridge and asked that drawings of the design be shared at the next meeting of the Forum.

Councillor Ms Atkinson declared a personal interest in matters related to Special Schools before asking about Kent County Council's decision to reduce funding for building works at special schools. She explained the difficulties for parents, highlighting the vital need to have a facility where children were looked after in a safe environment. Members were disappointed to note the current situation and asked if a more detailed answer could be explored relating to the School Building Programme. Mr Flory promised to investigate further and report back to local Members.

**TF**  
**09/004**

## **TONBRIDGE GATEWAY**

Members received a presentation on the Gateway project from Jane Kendall, Delivery Manager at Kent County Council, and Charlie Steel, Personnel and Customer Services Manager, at the Borough Council, which explained the service delivery approach, shared partnership and joint working with different agencies and the creation of a high quality customer experience. It was anticipated that the Tonbridge Gateway would open in July 2009. Members were reassured that existing services would continue at the Castle whilst building works were in progress.

The Tonbridge Volunteer Bureau expressed interest in becoming one of the potential partners in the Gateway. Ms Kendall confirmed that voluntary organisations were recognised as an important link to the community and the Bureau's interest would be noted. The importance of

understanding funding streams and associated issues needed to be explored further with the Bureau.

The Forum was advised that an effective communication strategy was being considered which could involve a media campaign. The importance of listening to residents and their requirements of what they expected from a Gateway was recognised.

The Chairman asked that regular updates on the Gateway project be given to the Customer Service Improvement Advisory Board and suggested that a site visit by the Forum might be beneficial.

At the request of the Chairman copies of the presentation would be circulated with the Minutes.

**TF**  
**09/005**

### **COMMUNITY PAYBACK SCHEME**

Alison Majuqwana, the Community Payback Manager, gave a presentation on Kent Probation's Community Payback Scheme. The project involved offenders doing unpaid work in the community as part of a community order sentenced by the court with schools, parish councils, local authorities, charities, communities and any non-profit making organisations benefiting. The type of work undertaken varied from painting and decorating local halls and schools, ground clearance to restore public areas as safe, clean places to enjoy and leaflet distribution. In summary, the Forum was advised that every week around 1,000 offenders carried out nearly 6,000 hours of unpaid and supervised work across Kent as part of their community sentence. Members were invited to consider projects that the Pay Back scheme could undertake on their behalf and were advised that the Pay Back Scheme was an effective punishment and had an impressive record of reducing reoffending.

The Cabinet Member for Community Safety advised the Forum that Kent Probation worked in collaboration with the Community Safety Partnership and welcomed the close co-ordination of joint working.

At the request of the Chairman copies of the presentation would be circulated to Members of the Forum.

**TF**  
**09/006**

## **POLICE ACTIVITIES IN TONBRIDGE**

The Chairman welcomed Temporary Inspector J Watts to the Forum who provided a police update of activities within Tonbridge and Malling.

The enforcement activity and initiatives carried out in the Borough were outlined and included Operation Safer Streets, targeted on shoplifters and the night time economy; SNAP discos; Operation Motor, dealing with anti social vehicles in Tonbridge; PACT Panels; Shopsafe and Pubwatch.

Others items of interest highlighted dealt with the recent discovery of a cannabis factory in Tonbridge and the introduction of an alcohol control zone in Tonbridge.

The Forum was pleased to note that compared to previous years Tonbridge and Malling had seen the biggest reduction in crime in Kent. Members were reminded that the Borough was a safe place to live and work and that the fear of crime was actually greater than crime itself. Members of the Forum were asked to promote the good work undertaken to help reduce the fear of crime.

**TF**  
**09/007**

## **MANAGING DEVELOPMENT AND THE ENVIRONMENT DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT - PUBLICATION**

Members received a presentation from the Chief Planner (Policy) which outlined how the Managing Development and the Environment Development Plan Document linked in with the Local Development Framework.

The Forum was advised that the document dealt with the quality and character of development; the environmental impact of development; the environmental performance of development; the protection and enhancement of the landscape, biodiversity, the built environment and open spaces and the provision of new open spaces.

The publication of the draft plan was anticipated for 20 March 2009 with a deadline for comments of 8 May 2009. The importance of Members advising of issues significant to them was emphasised.

The Chairman thanked the Chief Planner and his team for their hard work on the Local Development Framework which had enabled the Borough Council to be leading other local authorities.

**ACTION**  
**BY**

Copies of the presentation would be circulated with the Minutes at the request of the Chairman.

Members were reminded that the date of the next Forum was Monday 1 June 2009.

The meeting ended at 2100 hours.