

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

TONBRIDGE FORUM

Monday, 24th May, 2010

Present: Cllr M S Worrall (Chairman), Cllr N J Heslop (Vice-Chairman), Cllr D J Aikman, Cllr Mrs J A Anderson, Cllr O C Baldock, Cllr P F Bolt, Cllr Ms V Branson, Cllr M J Dobson and Cllr D Thornewell.

Councillors Court and Mrs Murray were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Members of the Forum:

Kent County Councillors Mrs Dagers and Horne, Kent Police, The Skinners Company, Society of Friends, Tonbridge Historical Society, Tonbridge Lions Club, Tonbridge Rotary Club, Tonbridge Sports Association, Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club, University of the Third Age and Women's Institute.

Other organisations in attendance were members of the Green Party.

Apologies for absence were received from Borough Councillors Allison, Ms Atkinson, Ms Spence and Thornewell; Kent County Councillor C Smith, The Bridge Trust, Tonbridge Area Churches Together, Tonbridge Art Group, Tonbridge District Scouts, Tonbridge Music Club and Tonbridge Volunteer Centre.

ACTION
BY

PART 1 - PUBLIC

TF
10/009

MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 8 February 2010 were received and agreed as a correct record of the proceedings, subject to the following issue being raised by Mrs Dawe:-

§ Minute TF/10/005 Kent County Council
Environmental Strategy:

Clarification was sought as to whether Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council officers, in liaison with Carolyn McKenzie of Kent County Council, intended to organise a public event to demonstrate the various options for retro fitting existing properties with energy efficient and water saving measures. The Chairman responded that the

County Council were understood to be organising an event outlining eco friendly options, although no further details were known. Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council were supportive of eco friendly measures and initiatives and would follow this with interest. The Kent County Council Community Engagement Manager, Loic Flory, volunteered to find out whether more information was available.

TF
10/010

UPDATE ON ANY ACTION IDENTIFIED IN THE LAST MINUTES.

§ Minute TF/10/003 Pedestrianisation of High Street, Tonbridge:

In response to a query by Mrs Dawe, County Councillor Mrs V Dagger confirmed that the petition urging the closure of Tonbridge High Street to cars and lorries at weekends between 1000 and 1600 hours had been passed to Kent County Council. However, it was not possible to confirm which Service had received the petition and County Councillor Mrs Dagger promised to chase progress as there had been a lack of response.

TF
10/011

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL SERVICES UPDATE

The Kent County Council Community Engagement Manager, Loic Flory, provided an update and invited questions from the Forum. He reported that Katherine Kerswell had been appointed as the new Group Managing Director, replacing Peter Gilroy, and the role included the responsibilities of being Head of Paid Service and leading the Chief Officer's Group. The County Council also confirmed the election of Mr Bill Hayton as Chairman of the Council for 2010/11.

Particular attention was drawn to the pothole fixing campaign, which had received a £1 million boost after the County Council's Cabinet had agreed a significant cash injection. The money would fund small and medium sized local specialist tarmac firms carrying out repairs on the County's minor roads. Repairs on Kent's network of A and B roads were being carried out by Kent Highway Services. A weekly update on which roads were being worked on could be found at:

<https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/roads-and-transport/roads-and-pavements/Roads-17-5-10.pdf>

The Vice-Chairman raised concerns about the dangerous pot holes along Station Approach in Tonbridge. These

were particularly hazardous for cyclists and he asked for this to be alerted as urgent work. The Community Engagement Manager promised to pass this request to the relevant department.

Kent County Councillor Horne provided brief updates on issues that the Borough Council might wish to follow progress with. These included the recent Bidborough application seeking permission to look for oil in the area, the future of Community Hospitals and the creation of Community Trusts and the Street Lighting Committee. The Chairman reminded Members that many Kent County Council related issues were reported to the Joint Transportation Board and it would be possible to monitor progress via this route in most cases.

TF
10/012

MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENT

The Forum was advised that the former Deputy Mayor, Councillor G Court had decided on health grounds not to accept a nomination to serve as Mayor for the year 2010/11. Therefore, the current Mayor, Councillor Mrs Murray had been asked to continue in the role for a second term.

The Mayor indicated that her nominated charities for the year were those that would have been chosen by Councillor Court had he become Mayor. These were The Pickering Cancer Drop-in Centre and Spadework at Offham and she was pleased to be supporting these worthwhile charities.

Councillor Court gave a brief explanation of the work undertaken by The Pickering Cancer Drop-in Centre, who offered support to those affected by cancer.

TF
10/013

‘HOW RESIDENTS CAN BE GREENER’

This item was **WITHDRAWN** from the agenda

TF
10/014

‘LIVING LATER LIFE TO THE FULL’

The Chairman introduced Debra Exall, Head of Strategic Policy at Kent County Council, who provided an update on work undertaken so far to address older person issues. It was explained that the 'Living Later Life to the Full' policy framework, which outlined the key themes and strategic objectives to help older persons live later life to the full had been adopted by the Kent Partnership in February 2009. The main aim was to ensure that the views and needs of

older people were understood and taken into account.

A conference to discuss progress on the policy was due to take place on 24 June 2010 and the Forum was invited to provide feedback on what initiatives worked well in Tonbridge, identify areas of improvement and which priorities/themes required greater focus in the Borough. Current action underway in Tonbridge and Malling included a programme of community safety events to promote crime reduction measures, Gateway, Warm Home Grants, falls prevention, the creation of an Older Persons Forum and Health Action Teams developing projects to address the needs of the local population, including older people.

The Women's Institute queried the loss of adult education funding for older people which had caused a potential loss of social networking opportunities, increasing the sense of isolation. Ms Exall and the Chairman agreed that the lack of learning and skills funding was unfortunate and the knock-on effects were acknowledged. The importance for older people to continue learning was recognised. However, the Forum was reminded that voluntary sector organisations offered good alternatives to gain experience especially in modern technology. The University of the Third Age was cited as an excellent provider of older persons continued learning courses. The existence of two excellent colleges in Tonbridge was highlighted and Kent County Council was advised to contact these to see what courses were popular with older people. It was believed that many residents were not aware of what adult education courses were available to them and that extra promotion and publicity would be worthwhile.

The Corporate Services Manager at Tonbridge and Malling Council reported that the Borough Council was committed to older persons' issues and had created an Older Persons Issues Advisory Board to deal with initiatives and improve links with relevant organisations. It was anticipated that this new Advisory Board would feed into an Older Persons' Forum, being set up in conjunction with Age Concern and Age UK, and be an important part of the Older Persons' Strategy. Two launch events for the Older Persons Forum would be held in Tonbridge and Borough Green to inspire and encourage older people to get involved. The Borough Council hoped to tie the inaugural meeting of the Older Persons Forum in with the national Older People Day on 1 October 2010. Progress on these measures would be reported to a future meeting of the Tonbridge Forum.

Kent County Councillor Horne reminded Members that

Mike Angel had been selected as the county's Older Person Champion and it was expected he would be a willing participant in the Older Persons Forum.

The Chairman also reminded Members that Larkfield Leisure Centre and the Angel Centre offered dedicated courses and fitness classes for older people. He also reported that consideration was being given to a joint scheme, in partnership with the Primary Care Trust, for an improved and centralised health facility for Tonbridge Centre.

The Society of Friends raised an issue surrounding residential developments for older people, indicating that older people did not want to be isolated and that segregated areas on housing developments would not be ideal. The Chairman reassured Members that integration was very important and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council took this seriously. However, this needed to be balanced with the need to avoid tensions with younger families and perceptions of fear.

TF
10/015

YOUTH PERCEPTION EVENT

Members of the Tonbridge and Malling Youth Forum and Members of Summer Event Steering Group, Jack Heskett, Joe Heskett and Chris Bailey, provided details of a Youth Perception Event scheduled for 1000 - 1600 hours on Saturday 17 July 2010 at Tonbridge School. It was explained that youth perception challenged the views that people, young or older, had of young people by promoting the achievements and efforts of young people and counteracting negative stereotypes.

During a recent Tonbridge and Malling Youth Forum meeting the members came to the conclusion that young people were unfairly represented in their own communities. It was decided that they wanted to try and combat the negative youth perception that existed in local communities. The idea to showcase all of the positive things young people do and could do in the local area was the reason behind the Youth Perception Event, where it was hoped to educate people about youth and to combat the negative image painted in the national press.

Members were reminded that addressing youth issues was a key priority for the Borough Council and it was important to promote a positive image and encourage participation in the Youth Forum. Funding had been secured from the Local Strategic Partnership to assist with initiatives for

young people and the Forum was invited to identify any projects.

The Youth Forum thanked the Youth and Play Development Officer at the Borough Council, Jeni Ashmore, for her support and encouragement.

The Chairman thanked the contributors for their presentation and wished them every success for the event in July.

TF
10/016

**PROJECT TO IMPROVE AND ENHANCE THE
TONBRIDGE WAR MEMORIAL GARDEN**

The Chief Leisure Officer at Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council reported on a project intended to improve and enhance the Tonbridge War Memorial Garden.

The current issues affecting the Memorial Gardens were outlined and included the deterioration of the Memorial, limited hard standing areas, the poor condition of the paving, inadequate security measures, the need for an effective PA system, difficult access for people with disabilities and a lack of public awareness.

Proposed improvements would address the current issues by providing a high quality scheme and retaining the fundamental purpose of the Memorial Garden. The Chief Leisure Officer indicated that costs would be significant and were estimated to be in the region of £100,000. Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council had made a commitment to contribute £25,000 to the scheme, with the remainder of monies to be sought from donations. An Appeals Committee, chaired by Group Captain Patrick Tootal OBE DL RAP (ret'd) had been created to secure additional money by either seeking further contributions or initiating a variety of fund raising measures.

It was noted that the project would be a partnership scheme working with the Royal British Legion, the Lord Lieutenant's Office, the Tonbridge Civic Society and other local organisations and individuals.

A project launch had been held on 12 May 2010 which had been extremely positive with unanimous support for the proposal.

The Chief Leisure Officer anticipated that the appeal would be launched in the near future once the Appeals Committee had secured registered charity status.

Members of the Forum welcomed the project and asked whether consideration could be given to the planting of shrubs, particularly white, to create a pleasant environment of remembrance. The Chief Leisure Officer assured Members that a proper landscape design would be discussed with an external consultant.

The Women's Institute suggested a 'tree donation' scheme in remembrance of loved ones. This idea would be shared with the Appeals Committee as the Chairman had experience of this type of project.

TF
10/017

KENT POLICE UPDATE

The Chairman invited Kent Police to provide a brief summary on policing issues within Tonbridge.

Inspector Allen reported that an event had been held on Friday 14 May 2010 targeted at nuisance vehicles. This had been a successful night, sending out a strong message which would result in reduction of offences. These events would continue to be held at regular intervals.

Members were advised that additional patrols would be scheduled during the summer evenings, particularly during the World Cup.

Inspector Allen also reminded the Forum of a local Police presence at the Gateway every Wednesday between 1500-1700 hours.

The Vice-Chairman was reassured that Kent Police were delivering targeted activity, especially dealing with nuisance vehicles. The approach and success of evening patrols on anti-social behaviour was also welcomed.

The Chairman reminded Members that the next meeting of the Forum was scheduled for Monday 13 September 2010 where it was hoped to have a health related theme.

The meeting ended at 2050 hours