

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

TONBRIDGE FORUM

Monday, 12th September, 2011

Present: Cllr M Rhodes (In the Chair), Cllr Ms J A Atkinson, Cllr P F Bolt, Cllr Ms V M C Branson, Cllr T Edmondston-Low, Cllr Mrs M F Heslop, Cllr N J Heslop, Cllr Ms S V Spence, Cllr D J Trice and Cllr M S Worrall.

Councillors Mrs Anderson and Mrs Bates were also in attendance pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No. 15.21.

Members of the Forum: Kent County Councillor Miss A Hohler; Kent Police, Tonbridge Allotments and Gardens Association, Tonbridge Civic Society, Tonbridge District Scout Council, Tonbridge Historical Society, Tonbridge Rotary Club, Tonbridge Sports Association and the Women's Institute.

Apologies for absence were received from Borough Councillors Allison, Baldock (Vice-Chairman), Miss Elks, Lancaster; County Councillor C Smith and the Society of Friends.

ACTION
BY

PART 1 - PUBLIC

TF
11/020

MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Forum held on 6 June be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to noting that the Tonbridge Historical Society was present at the last meeting of the Forum.

TF
11/021

UPDATE ON ANY ACTION IDENTIFIED IN THE LAST MINUTES.

There were no actions identified.

However, Members were reminded of the circulation of a newsletter covering issues raised at the last meeting of the Forum. This had been well received and Members expressed a preference for further newsletters dealing with matters arising.

TF
11/022

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL SERVICES UPDATE

The Chairman welcomed Mr James Harman, Community Engagement Officer at Kent County Council, who provided a Services update. Attention was drawn to the content of a written report which was tabled prior to the meeting, with particular reference being made to the consultation on the Kent Youth Service. The deadline for this consultation was 29 October 2011. The proposed new model of service delivery consisted of commissioning youth work delivery which reflected the general needs and outcomes of the district. A budget for each district had been set aside for community groups to develop and run. Under this proposal the facilities currently used for SAMAYS Youth Centre in Snodland would no longer be used directly by Kent Youth Service. However, they could be available for future provision as decided through the commissioning process.

The Forum was made aware of the following grants, which had a closing date of Monday 31 October 2011:

- § Small Community Capital Grant (Total available to distribute in Tonbridge and Malling = £41,500)
- § Local Schemes Grants (Total available to distribute in Tonbridge and Malling = £18,100)

Application forms and further details could be provided by emailing steve.charman@kent.gov.uk or james.harman@kent.gov.uk

The Chairman thanked Mr Harman for his contribution to the meeting and invited questions from Members. In response to a question regarding the Freedom Pass, Kent County Council recognised the need for post 16 incentives/passes.

The Tonbridge Allotments and Gardens Association thanked the County Council on behalf of local residents for resurfacing Hop Garden Road.

The Borough Council Cabinet Member for Leisure, Youth and Arts (Councillor Mrs Heslop) asked whether the County Council had pre-determined the Youth Service consultation and begun refurbishment works at the Adult Education Centre. Mr Harman did not believe that work had commenced and reiterated that the closing date for the consultation was 29 October 2011. However, he offered to clarify the position regarding the Adult Education Centre and report back to the Forum.

Finally, there was a request for contractors and utilities to liaise on road maintenance work to reduce the amount of disruption to drivers.

TF
11/023

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
UPDATE

The Leader of the Borough Council referred to a number of issues of interest. The headline messages included:

- § The Community Enhancement Fund: The closing date for applications was the end of September. Application forms and further details were available on www.tmbc.gov.uk or by contacting the Scrutiny and Partnerships Manager (Gill Fox) at the Borough Council. Decisions on bids submitted would be made in October.
- § Local Government Boundary Commission: The Forum was advised that the Boundary Commission for England were undertaking a review into ward size and boundaries. The recommendations of the review were expected in November, with local communities being invited to comment on the proposals. Members noted that it was difficult to predict how future wards in Tonbridge and Malling could be configured.
- § Parliamentary Boundary Review: The Boundary Commission for England were also undertaking a review into parliamentary boundaries. The aim of the review was to equalise the number of voters in constituencies. The proposals were due to be announced shortly and there were likely to be significant changes for Tonbridge and Malling, with the borough likely to be split between four parliamentary constituencies. Members were advised of the importance of ensuring that residents were aware of the differences between the parliamentary and local ward boundaries and the difference between the two reviews. In addition, Members questioned whether the Boundary Commission for England would have regard to the seats in the four parliamentary constituencies or whether wards would be split between parliamentary areas. Concern was expressed that this position was not clear at the present time.

TF
11/024

KENT POLICE UPDATE

The Chairman invited Kent Police to provide a brief summary on policing issues within Tonbridge. Inspector Allen reported on significant local events that Kent Police had been involved in since the last meeting of the Forum as

follows:

- § The Tonbridge Carnival on 12 June had run smoothly with only a couple of arrests.
- § The Tonbridge Freedom Parade on 19 June had been a great success. Inspector Allen was pleased to report zero police operation costs for this event. This was because no overtime had been paid as the Parade was covered by officers working their normal shifts.
- § The last Beat Meeting had been well supported and the next one was scheduled for Thursday 22 September. Further details were available on: www.kent.police.uk or via twitter @KentPoliceTon

Particular reference was made to the London riots in August. Members were advised that a number of Tonbridge officers had been deployed to assist the Metropolitan Police. However, there had been no reduction in local policing resource and Tonbridge and Malling had not been affected by disorder related to these events.

Operation Poodle had been running since 1 September to deter shoplifting and anti-social behaviour in the town centre. There was a very visible police presence in Tonbridge due to this initiative.

In response to an issue raised at the last meeting of the Forum regarding youth gangs in Hildenborough, Inspector Allen reported that the police presence had increased in the village.

Finally, the Forum was advised that a reconfiguration of Kent Police began on 16 November. The 'twenty-four seven' 365 days policing would continue but would be part of a countywide model. Members were reassured that residents would not notice the difference. Inspector Allen was pleased to report that the neighbourhood team would increase its hours of coverage and have extra officers on the street. These officers would have a broader role than currently and undertake more investigative and problem solving work.

In response to a question asked from the floor, Inspector Allen assured Members that local community officers' presence would not be reduced, despite their greater involvement in investigations. It was noted that although officers would be undertaking a larger role there would be

extra resource available to support and continue the effective operation of policing.

TF
11/025

YMCA

This item was **WITHDRAWN**.

TF
11/026

DIGITAL SWITCHOVER

Mr Matthew Underwood of Digital UK outlined the support available to help elderly and vulnerable residents make the change to digital. It was explained that the entire television network was to be upgraded, with the Meridian region due to switch in May/June 2012.

Members were advised what steps viewers needed to take to switch to digital. As satellite and cable customers were already on digital they had no action to take. Residents using Freeview had to retune their box and those on analogue needed to get a Freeview box. It was stressed that the switchover did not affect radios and a new television set was not necessary. In addition, it was emphasised that there was no such thing as a digital aerial.

Residents aged 75 or over, or in receipt of Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance, Constant Attendance Allowance or mobility supplement; or had lived in a care home for six months or more, or were registered blind or partially sighted were eligible for help in converting their television to digital, via the Switchover Help Scheme. The Scheme was free of charge if the eligible person also received income related benefits, such as Pension Credit. There was a charge of £40 for all other recipients to cover equipment, installation and a year of aftercare.

Information packs containing further details of the switchover were due to be circulated in November. In addition, the switchover would be promoted via television advertisements, information leaflets and posters. Digital UK would also be in the town centre at some point in the future and this would be published in the local press.

Further details and advice were available from the Digital UK website: www.digitaluk.co.uk

In response to question regarding social housing tenants, Mr Underwood advised that these generally fell under the jurisdiction of the housing provider or local authority. However, Digital UK would be happy to convert television

sets if asked. It was also confirmed that the £40 was a one off fee and not available via instalments. It was reiterated that those on benefits would receive this service free.

Finally, Mr Underwood emphasised that there was no need to touch the television aerial and it was only necessary to retune the set or Freeview box, which could be done by the remote control. A comprehensive guide on doing this would be included in the information pack.

Local Members urged all attendees to warn residents of potential scams and advise them that no action was necessary, other than to retune the box. Inspector Allen confirmed that this message would be included in the Neighbourhood Watch newsletter.

The Chairman thanked Mr Underwood for his valuable contribution to the meeting.

TF
11/027

‘LOVE WHERE YOU LIVE’

The Head of Waste and Street Scene Services began his presentation by advising that littering cost the Borough Council £1.1M a year to deal with. Therefore, it was important for the Borough Council to tackle the problem at its roots to reduce these costs and to keep streets clean for residents. A clean street scene had been identified as important to local people in a recent residents' survey. Members were reminded of the zero tolerance policy adopted by the Borough Council and advised that prosecutions and fixed penalty notices were undertaken by Tonbridge and Malling.

The presentation set out the Borough Council's involvement in the 'Love Where You Live' initiative and highlighted that Tonbridge and Malling was the first of only five local authorities in the country to be chosen by Keep Britain Tidy as an 'Ambassador' partner in an exciting new national anti-littering campaign entitled 'Love Where You Live'.

The campaign was due to be launched nationally next week (19 - 25 September) and aimed to inspire and encourage everyone to take action to reduce littering and improve the quality of local places. The campaign had been developed in partnership with businesses, national and local government, land managers and civil society organisations and had developed a single, unified 'anti-littering' banner 'Love Where You Live'.

A Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council 'Love Where You

Live' film would be available on the website once the initiative was launched.

The next steps of the local campaign included monthly newsletters updating partners on key achievements and milestones. It would also be supported and promoted by a range of social networking sites including Facebook and Twitter.

Members welcomed the campaign and the Borough Council's involvement in it and recognised the importance of finding the correct balance between behavioural change and enforcement.

The Head of Waste and Street Scene Services advised that the Borough Council had contributed £10,000 to the campaign but a significant amount of funding had come from Keep Britain Tidy and local businesses. It was noted that this funding contribution was smaller than the cost of clearing up litter.

A wide discussion followed on the impact of littering with reference being made to working with smaller takeaway outlets, the Environment Agency on waterways and with tobacco companies, seeking better ways of regulating and reducing packaging, the zero tolerance approach to not clearing up after a dog, the number of litter bins in Tonbridge and the promotion of the Streetscene Hotline Number.

In conclusion the Head of Waste and Street Scene Services advised that the Borough Council would continue to deal with street scene and enforcement issues as normal but hoped that local communities would be encouraged to commit to do a little bit more as part of this campaign. It was reiterated that the main aim of the campaign was to educate, reward and motivate people not to litter.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Waste and Street Scene Services for his valuable contribution to the meeting.

The meeting ended at 2105 hours