

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL



EXECUTIVE SERVICES

Chief Executive

Julie Beilby BSc (Hons) MBA

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NB - This agenda contains proposals, recommendations and options. These do not represent Council policy or decisions until they have received proper consideration through the full decision making process.

Contact: Democratic Services
committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk

27 October 2021

To: MEMBERS OF THE PARISH PARTNERSHIP PANEL
(Copies to all Members of the Council)

Dear Sir/Madam

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the Parish Partnership Panel to be held in the Council Chamber, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill on Thursday, 4th November, 2021 commencing at 7.30 pm

Yours faithfully

JULIE BEILBY

Chief Executive

A G E N D A

Part 1 - Public

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes

5 - 8

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Partnership Panel held on 2 September 2021

3. Update on action identified in the last Minutes

Matters raised in Advance of the meeting

Details of the matter to be raised should be provided in writing or by email to committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk at least 10 working days before the meeting. This is so that a response can be provided on the evening of the meeting. Only one question may be submitted by a parish council due to the time limitations.

4. Road Safety

At the request of the Parish Partnership Panel, the Road Safety Co-Ordinator (Gabriella Grain) has been invited to provide details of recent deployments and planned activities relating to speeding and hotspots.

5. Review of Parish Partnership Panel - Outcomes

9 - 14

A number of options were presented to the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 7 October 2021 in respect of Tonbridge Forum and the Parish Partnership Panel.

The proposals relating to the Panel are set out at 1.3 of the attached report. The recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were considered by Cabinet on 12 October and Council on 26 October. The decision of Council will be circulated as soon as possible.

6. Appointments of Chairman and Vice-Chairmen

To confirm Borough Council appointments and to seek nominations for a parish council vice-chairman, pending views of the Council.

7. Future Work Programme 2022/23

Information on how parish councils can suggest matters for inclusion on the work programme for 2022/23

8. Future Programme of Meetings

Subject to the views of Council, additional meetings of the Parish Partnership Panel will be included in the Borough Council's programme for 2022/23 which is due to be considered by Council in early 2022.

9. Any Other Business

To consider any other issues raised at the meeting. Any answers, actions and/or outcomes will be provided at the next meeting of the Parish Partnership Panel.

DISTRIBUTION

Borough Council Representatives

Cllr R W Dalton (Chairman)
Cllr M Tatton (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Mrs J A Anderson
Cllr Mrs S Bell
Cllr R P Betts
Cllr M A Coffin
Cllr P M Hickmott
Cllr Mrs F A Kemp
Cllr D Lettington
Cllr B J Luker
Cllr M R Rhodes
Cllr N G Stapleton
Cllr M Taylor

Parish and Town Council Representatives

Addington
Aylesford
Birling
Borough Green
Burham
Ditton
East Malling and Larkfield
East Peckham
Hadlow
Hildenborough
Ightham
Kings Hill
Leybourne
Mereworth
Offham
Platt
Plaxtol
Ryarsh
Shipbourne
Snodland
Stansted
Trottiscliffe
Wateringbury
West Malling
West Peckham
Wouldham
Wrotham

County Councillors

Trudy Dean - KCC, Malling Central
Sarah Hohler - KCC, Malling North
Sarah Hudson - KCC, Malling Rural East
Andrew Kennedy - KCC, Malling North East
Harry Rayner - KCC, Malling West

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TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PARISH PARTNERSHIP PANEL

MINUTES

Thursday, 2nd September, 2021

Present: Cllr R W Dalton (Chairman), Cllr D Lettington (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Mrs J A Anderson, Cllr Mrs S Bell, Cllr M D Boughton, Cllr M A Coffin, Cllr Mrs F A Kemp, Cllr B J Luker, Cllr M R Rhodes, Cllr N G Stapleton and Cllr M Taylor.

Together with representatives of Aylesford, Birling, Borough Green, Burham, Hildenborough, Ightham, Platt, Plaxtol, Shipbourne, Ryarsh, West Malling, West Peckham, Wouldham Parish Councils and County Councillors Mrs T Dean and Cllr H Rayner.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R P Betts, P M Hickmott, Kent Police and Snodland Town Council.

PART 1 - PUBLIC

PPP 21/7 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

PPP 21/8 UPDATE ON ACTION IDENTIFIED IN THE LAST MINUTES

PPP 20/17 – Invitation to Southern Water

Due to a period of maternity leave, Southern Water were unable to attend meetings of the Parish Partnership Panel for the immediate future. Borough Green Parish Council, who had initially requested Southern Water attendance, indicated that there had been an improvement in communication and was pleased to report that ongoing works in the parish were due to finish shortly.

PPP 20/22 (c) – Climate Change Strategy

The Chairman advised that the Minutes of the inaugural Climate Change Forum had been presented to the Street Scene and Environment Services Advisory Board on Tuesday 31 August 2021. The Minutes were available on the website for those interested in viewing them.

PPP 20/27 – Update on Waste Services

The Chairman advised that the Street Scene and Environment Services Advisory Board had also received an update on waste services. The reports and livestreaming of the meeting were available on the Borough Council's website.

PPP 21/9 KENT POLICE SERVICES UPDATE

As a result of operational pressures, Kent Police were not in attendance. However, Acting Chief Inspector Elizabeth Jones had provided a written report setting out the latest initiatives, activities and operations that had taken place since the last meeting. The report had been circulated to all parish clerks in advance of the meeting and would be attached to the Minutes for convenience.

Any specific community or parish issues that Members wished to raise with Kent Police were to be emailed to allison.parris@tmbc.gov.uk for onward circulation to Acting Chief Inspector Jones for addressing.

PPP 21/10 WEBSITE DEMONSTRATION

The Head of Communications provided a demonstration of the Borough Council's new website which had been launched in June 2021. Early feedback had been extremely positive as users found it easier to navigate to points of interest and undertake key tasks and transactions.

Particular reference was made to the 'my account' application which enabled residents to create a personalised online account to pay council tax bills, apply for permits and find information relevant to their local area, such as bin collections.

During the discussion the Head of Communications noted a number of concerns and points raised and these areas would be monitored, reviewed and/or progressed by the Media Team and IT developers.

In summary the key matters raised related to:

- the search area radius related to planning applications needed to be extended to reflect a wider area;
- improving how planning applications could be viewed including reinstating the ability to select multiple documents for downloading;
- the availability of historic planning applications on the website, which parish councils found a useful reference tool;
- enabling reporting of littering and flytipping.

PPP 21/11 KENT COUNTY COUNCIL SERVICES UPDATE

The County Member for Malling West (Councillor Harry Rayner) advised that the County Council were currently consulting on 'Booking to visit a Kent Household Waste Recycling Centre' and 'Budget 2022-23'. All were encouraged to submit a response as the views of individuals were important in setting targets and priorities.

All Kent County Council consultations could be viewed online at:

<https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/>

PPP 21/12 TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL SERVICES UPDATE

The Leader of the Borough Council (Councillor Matt Boughton) reminded Members of the ongoing review into the operation of the Parish Partnership Panel. A number of options would be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee later in the year and it was hoped that a revised Panel would be launched as soon as possible.

Members welcomed the opportunity to express their views and to work in partnership with the Borough Council in identifying improvements that would benefit all those involved in the Panel. In addition, Members recognised that the Panel was an important forum for communication between all tiers of local government.

However, parish councils indicated that they would like more involvement in setting the agenda for meetings and to ensure that matters discussed were relevant and appropriate. There was also an acknowledgement that larger and smaller parishes had different challenges and all views should be accommodated.

The Leader invited all parish councils to submit their views as soon as possible to inform the options to be discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

There was also a discussion on the performance of the waste service collections and the Leader set out the difficulties related to the operating model of the contractor and the national shortage of HGV drivers. The Borough Council continued to work with the contractor to resolve the issue.

In concluding the meeting, Councillor Roger Dalton indicated that it was a great honour to be invited to be Chairman of this Panel and having served as a parish councillor for 30+ years he would encourage communication with and participation of all parishes.

The meeting ended at 9.00 pm

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TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

07 October 2021

Report of the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet

1 REVIEW OF TONBRIDGE FORUM AND PARISH PARTNERSHIP PANEL

To review the format and engagement of Tonbridge Forum and Parish Partnership Panel, considering options for improvement.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Tonbridge Forum and Parish Partnership Panel (PPP) have been operating for several years, to enhance engagement between the Borough Council and Tonbridge based community representatives, and between the Borough Council and Parish Councils across Tonbridge and Malling.

1.1.2 The Terms of Reference for each group are defined in the Council's constitution, as follows:

Tonbridge Forum:

A vehicle for the exchange of information, consultation and a structured dialogue between the Borough Council and those Tonbridge-based organisations with a shared interest in enhancing the well-being of the town through the identification of problems and joint working towards solutions

Parish Partnership Panel:

A vehicle for the exchange of information, consultation and a structured dialogue between the Borough Council and the parish councils in the Borough

1.1.3 For both Tonbridge Forum and PPP, the Council has sought views from its members (including any potential new members, in respect of Tonbridge Forum), regarding how they would like to see the meetings operate in the future. It was apparent that a reform was required for both, with a desire for change and improvement to the existing operation provided by most of the respondents.

1.2 Tonbridge Forum

- 1.2.1 An email was sent out to all existing community representatives on Tonbridge Forum, inviting them to have their say and help shape the future operation of the Forum. In addition, the Council sent out social media posts asking any other Tonbridge based groups, to share their thoughts or suggestions relating to a reform of the Forum.
- 1.2.2 A number of responses were received, which have been very helpful and allowed us to shape and plan for a Forum that best facilitates a relationship between the Borough Council and community groups across the town.
- 1.2.3 From the comments received, it was apparent that;
- Standing item agendas with a one-way information update were not popular
 - A greater diversity of members, including faith, under-represented groups, youth, and school representatives would be beneficial
 - A greater opportunity to hear from community groups in the town, regarding key events or activities that are taking place, would help with partnership working between different community groups
- 1.2.4 Having considered all the suggestions, the following is being proposed:
- Operate a more community focused forum, renaming it Tonbridge Community Forum.
 - Meetings to operate as a two-way discussion, with no standing agenda items.
 - The informal question session at the start of the meeting to be cancelled, instead each member can put questions for the Community Forum in advance of the meeting. Notice of the question shall be given in writing or by email not less than 10 working days before the date of the meeting. Issues that need to be raised on the evening, can be covered during the AOB section.
 - Agree a forward plan or work programme at the start of the year, to ensure that agendas are much more focused on the needs of the community groups.
 - Increase the frequency of meetings from 2 per year, to 4 meetings per year. Meetings will alternate with 2 meetings per year held “in person” and 2 meetings to be held virtually. The “in person” meetings will be held at the

Angel Centre and will not be live streamed (the Angel Centre does not have live streaming facilities).

- The Chairmanship of the meeting to be changed to a chairman from the majority group of TMBC and two vice chairmen, one from an opposition party and one from community group membership. The Chairman should not be a member of the Executive/Cabinet. The two vice chairman to be selected by the relevant groups.
- Membership from TMBC to consist of all Borough Councillors representing wards in Tonbridge.
- Membership from the community to include recognised, constituted groups, not affiliated with a political party. All existing and new members to complete an application form to ensure a balance of organisations that are representative of the town and to avoid multiple representatives from the same/ similar institutions.
- An AOB item included at each meeting to provide an opportunity for members to share forthcoming key events for the town.

1.2.5 The above suggested proposals will ensure that the focus is to provide voluntary and community groups an opportunity to work collaboratively for the benefit of the town.

1.2.6 A 'call for members' will be issued if this composition is accepted for community groups to apply for membership of Tonbridge Forum.

1.3 Parish Partnership Panel

1.3.1 As with the Forum, PPP members were contacted to seek their views on the existing structure of the meetings, to enable a better working relationship. From the comments received, it was apparent that:

- Some members felt that the discussions at the meeting were dominated by a vocal minority, making it difficult to contribute
- It would be useful to request that Cabinet Members and Council officers be present to answer pre-sent questions on a particular topic
- It would be useful for parishes to be able to call outside officers (e.g. police, utility companies, and public service providers) to the meetings, to enable a joint parish-borough voice on certain issues
- The Panel should be more action focused, with actions reviewed at subsequent meetings
- There was a preference noted by some to retain online meetings

- There was a suggestion that the chair should rotate between a Borough Councillor and a Parish Councillor
- The venue could be changed to a parish hall or community centre
- There should be more input from parishes when setting the agenda

1.3.2 Having considered all the suggestions, the following is being proposed in relation to PPP:

- PPP will enable the Borough and Parish Councils to share information and communicate on enhancing the well-being of the community through the identification of problems (within the remit of the borough and parishes) and the joint working towards solutions
- The chair of PPP will be a Borough Councillor. There will be two vice chairs, one a Borough Councillor from a different political party and another a parish councillor, selected by KALC T&M Area Committee. Neither the chair nor vice chair should be a member of TMBC executive
- Increase the frequency of meetings from 3 per year, to 4 meetings per year. Meetings will alternate with 2 meetings per year held “in person” at the Borough Council Offices and 2 meetings to be held virtually.
- Each Parish Council to nominate a representative (total: 27 Parish representatives). The 5 County Councillors covering parished areas in Tonbridge and Malling will be members. There will also be 13 Borough Council representatives, to include cross party representation. These members must represent the parished areas of Tonbridge and Malling.
- If a nominated representative of a parish cannot attend, then they may send a nominated substitute.
- Members who are both Borough and Parish Councillors cannot be on PPP in both capacities. If they are representatives of a parish on PPP, then they cannot sit as a borough representative, and vice versa.
- There will be no standing items on agendas, however it is within the gift of the chair/vice Chairs to invite whoever they wish to the meeting (such as local businesses, utility providers, police etc). The question-and-answer session will be retained, providing questions are submitted in advance of the meeting. Issues that need to be raised on the evening, can be covered during the AOB section.
- A forward plan of agenda items will be agreed each year.

- 1.3.3 The above proposals will enable a reformed PPP that will improve and enhance the relationship between Parishes and the Council, helping to achieve solutions collaboratively for the benefit of residents.

1.4 Legal Implications

- 1.4.1 The Forum and PPP are not decision-making bodies.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.5.1 There is no set budget for PPP, although costs will be incurred in relation to staff time (administration, plus caretaking when meetings are held in the Council Chamber).
- 1.5.2 For the Forum, in addition to the cost of staff time, there is also room hire charges. During 2019/20 room hire was £128.25 per meeting, catering was £20.83 per meeting and audio services were £561.00 per meeting.

1.6 Risk Assessment

- 1.6.1 N/A

1.7 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.7.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

1.8 Policy Considerations

- 1.8.1 Communications
- 1.8.2 Community
- 1.8.3 Customer Contact

1.9 Recommendations

- 1.9.1 That Members **ENDORSE** the proposed changes to Tonbridge Forum as set out in section 1.2.4
- 1.9.2 That Members **ENDORSE** the proposed changes to Parish Partnership Panel as set out in section 1.3.2

Background papers:

contact: Gill Fox

Nil

Cllr Matt Boughton
Leader of the Council

Julie Beilby
Chief Executive