

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

TONBRIDGE COMMUNITY FORUM

MINUTES

Monday, 28th February, 2022

Present: Cllr J R S Lark (Chairman), Cllr G C Bridge (Vice-Chairman), Cllr J L Botten, Cllr M D Boughton, Cllr V M C Branson, Cllr M O Davis, Cllr F A Hoskins, Cllr D W King, Cllr Miss G E Thomas and Cllr F G Tombolis.

Together with County Councillors M Hood and P Stepto and representatives of:

- Angel Indoor Bowls Club
- EMBER Community Interest Company
- Feast
- Friends of Mill Stream
- Rotary Club of Tonbridge
- Tonbridge and Malling Seniors
- Tonbridge Civic Society
- Tonbridge District Scout Council
- Tonbridge Historical Society
- Tonbridge Line Commuters
- Tonbridge Lions Club
- Tonbridge Sports Association
- Tonbridge Town Team

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs P A Bates and A E Clark and the representative of Tonbridge Parish Church and Tonbridge U3A.

TF 22/1 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Tonbridge Forum held on the 6 September 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

TF 22/2 UPDATE ON ANY ACTION IDENTIFIED IN THE LAST MINUTES

There were no actions identified. Members were informed that Kent Police Authority would be invited to future meetings if matters that required their comment were on the agenda for that meeting.

MATTERS RAISED IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING

TF 22/3 REVIEW OF TONBRIDGE FORUM - OUTCOMES

The Chairman provided a verbal statement on the outcomes of the review of Tonbridge Forum. The proposals relating to the review of the Forum and engagement were set out at paragraph 1.2 of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee report of the 7 October 2021 which were subsequently agreed by Cabinet on 12 October 2021 and Council on 26 October 2021.

The Chairman advised that the Forum was initially set up as a means for disseminating information between the Council and groups working in the Tonbridge Community and had therefore been renamed as the Tonbridge Community Forum as it better illustrated that the forum was a town group focussed on residents of the town and not the wider borough.

The purpose of the forum was to enable the Borough Council and Tonbridge based organisations to share information, consult and communicate on enhancing the well-being of the town through the identification of problems and the joint working towards solutions. The hope was for the groups to work together with the sole purpose of co-operation to benefit the residents, to enhance the experience for the residents of the town and for the voluntary groups/organisations to exchange ideas, work collaboratively and seek advice and guidance from Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, Kent County Council and the Kent Police.

The Chairmanship of the Forum would consist of a Chairman from the majority group of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council and two vice chairman, one from an opposition party and one from the Community Group membership (who must not be a Councillor). The membership of the Forum would be councillors from each of the Tonbridge Wards plus the Chairman. It was highlighted that all member groups must be a recognised bona fide group with regular meetings, records of Minutes of Meetings and not be affiliated with any particular political party.

With regards to the agenda for meetings, this would be agreed by the Chairman and Vice Chair at least 10 days before the meeting date and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Councillors, Kent County Council and Kent Police may be called to the meeting to make official statements if there was relevant news to report and respond to questions.

TF 22/4 APPOINTMENTS OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMEN

Councillor James Lark advised that his appointment as Chairman would continue for the remainder of the current municipal year and that Council had approved the appointment of Councillor Gary Bridge as vice-chairman with immediate effect.

Nominations were sought for a second vice-chairman from the community representatives and it was requested that nominations be submitted by email to the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Committee Services by the deadline of 31 March 2022.

TF 22/5 COMMUNITY GROUP REPRESENTATIVES

Members reviewed and endorsed the community group representatives for the Tonbridge Community Forum as set out at in the agenda and noted that these had been approved by the Council. Each community group representative was invited to provide a brief introduction to the group that they were representing.

TF 22/6 FUTURE PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS

Members noted that a recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was to increase the frequency of meetings of the Tonbridge Community Forum, and that this view was supported by Cabinet and Council. There would be four meetings of the Forum per year and these would be included in the Borough Council's programme of meetings 2022/23 which was due to be considered by Council. Members agreed that the meetings be alternated between in-person and online and agreed the following meeting dates for the 2022-23 municipal year:

- 9 May 2022 (to be held online)
- 5 September 2022 (to be held in person)
- 28 November 2022 (to be held online).

TF 22/7 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME 2022-23

Members were invited to submit any matters/items they wished to be considered for inclusion in the Work Programme for the next year by notifying the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Committee Services by 31 March 2022.

TF 22/8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Leader of the Council, Councillor M Boughton advised that a bid would be submitted for a British Railway hub in the Borough and asked that members support the local authority's intention of interest which if successful, would generate new jobs and employment opportunities across the Borough.

The Leader requested the Active Travel Strategy be included as an agenda item for the next meeting and offered to provide an update on the Council's asset review.

Members sought an update on the Council's approach to the Local Plan and noted the Civic Society's contribution to legal fees. Details of available research data was sought, and members directed to contact the Strategic Economic Regeneration Manager, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council.

The Chairman paid tribute to Brian Davison who had sadly recently passed away. Brian Davison was a community champion who was recognised for taking an active role in the Scout and Guide band.

The meeting ended at 8.35 pm