

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL



EXECUTIVE SERVICES

Interim Chief Executive
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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

21 May 2024

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, 30th May, 2024 commencing at 7.30 pm

Members of the Panel should attend in person wherever possible. Those Members of the Panel who cannot attend in person have the opportunity to participate online. Other Members of the Council are encouraged to participate online.

Information on how to observe the meeting will be published on the Council's website.

Yours faithfully

ADRIAN STANFIELD

Interim Chief Executive

A G E N D A

1. Guidance on the Conduct of Meetings

5 - 6

Part 1 - Public

2. Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chairs

To confirm Borough Council appointments and to seek nominations for vice-chair from the parish/town council representatives

3. Apologies for absence

4. Notification of Substitute Members

7 - 8

5. Minutes

9 - 16

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Partnership Panel held on 9 November 2024

6. 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.

7. Managing Space for Nature (MS4N)

An update to be provided by the Chair of Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC)(Tonbridge and Malling) following attendance at the KALC Planning Conference and discussion with KCC MS4N officers.

8. Climate Change

At the request of the Chair, the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Regeneration and Property is invited to update on climate change initiatives within the Borough Council.

9. Green Flag Awards - How to Apply

At the request of the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee, Parish/Town Councils to be advised how to apply for the Green Flag Award.

10. Any Other Business

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

DISTRIBUTION

Borough Council Representatives

Cllr R W Dalton (Chair)
Cllr Mrs M Tatton (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Mrs S Bell
Cllr R P Betts
Cllr B Banks
Cllr M D Boughton
Cllr P Boxall
Cllr M A Coffin
Cllr S Crisp
Cllr S M Hammond
Cllr P M Hickmott
Cllr M Taylor
Vacancy

Parish and Town Council Representatives

Addington
Aylesford
Birling
Borough Green (Vice-Chair)
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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GUIDANCE ON HOW MEETINGS WILL BE CONDUCTED

- (1) All meetings of the Borough Council will be livestreamed to YouTube here, unless there is exempt or confidential business be discussed:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPp-IJISNgoF-ugSzxjAPfw/featured>
- (2) There are no fire drills planned during the time a meeting is being held. For the benefit of those in the meeting room, the fire alarm is a long continuous bell and the exits are via the doors used to enter the room. An officer on site will lead any evacuation.
- (3) Should you need this agenda or any of the reports in a different format, or have any other queries concerning the meeting, please contact Democratic Services on committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk in the first instance.

Attendance:

- Meetings of the Panel will alternate between 'in person' or online meetings. Please check the agenda as this will set out the meeting venue.
- Members of the Panel should attend in person wherever possible those meetings that are to be held in person.
- Those Members of the Panel who cannot attend in person have the opportunity to participate online.
- Other Members of the Council are encouraged to participate online.
- Officers can participate in person or online.

Before formal proceedings start there will be a sound check of Members/Officers in the room. This is to ensure that those participating online can hear those in the meeting room and confirms attendance.

Ground Rules:

The meeting will operate under the following ground rules:

- Members in the Chamber should indicate to speak in the usual way and use the fixed microphones in front of them. These need to be switched on when

speaking or comments will not be heard by those participating online. Please switch off microphones when not speaking.

- If there any technical issues the meeting will be adjourned to try and rectify them. If this is not possible there are a number of options that can be taken to enable the meeting to continue. These will be explained if it becomes necessary.

For those Members participating online:

- please request to speak using the 'chat or hand raised function';
- please turn off cameras and microphones when not speaking;
- please do not use the 'chat function' for other matters as comments can be seen by all;
- Members may wish to blur the background on their camera using the facility on Microsoft teams.
- Please avoid distractions and general chat if not addressing the meeting
- Please remember to turn off or silence mobile phones

Parish Partnership Panel					
	Conservative	Liberal Democratic	Green	Ind. Kent Alliance	Labour
1	Robert Cannon		Kath Barton		Angus Bennison
2	James Lark		Anna Cope		Wayne Mallard
3	Alex McDermott		George Hines		
4	Colin Williams		Mark Hood		
5	Kim Tanner		Robert Oliver		

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TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PARISH PARTNERSHIP PANEL

MINUTES

Thursday, 9th November, 2023

Present: Cllr R W Dalton (Chair), Cllr Mrs M Tatton (Vice-Chair), Cllr R P Betts, Cllr B Banks, Cllr M D Boughton, Cllr P Boxall, Cllr D Harman, Cllr P M Hickmott, and Cllr M Taylor.

Together with representatives of Birling, Borough Green (Vice-Chair), Burham, Ditton, East Malling and Larkfield, Hadlow, Ightham, Offham, Platt, Plaxtol, Shipbourne, Snodland, West Malling, Wrotham Parish/Town Councils and County Cllrs Mrs T Dean and County Cllr H Rayner.

Virtual attendance: Councillor D Keers* were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs S Bell*, M A Coffin; Kings Hill, Ryarsh and Wateringbury Parish Councils; and County Cllrs Mrs S Hohler and S Hudson* and the Kent Association of Local Councils (Tonbridge and Malling).

*attended via MS Teams.

(Note: Apologies had been received from Cllr Bell for in-person attendance.)

PART 1 - PUBLIC

PPP 23/24 NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitute members.

PPP 23/25 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 31 August 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

PPP 23/26 UPDATE ON ACTION IDENTIFIED IN THE LAST MINUTES

There were no actions identified that didn't appear elsewhere on the agenda.

PPP 23/27 TONBRIDGE AND MALLING SENIORS

Apologies had been received from the Chair of the Tonbridge and Malling Seniors (TAMs) Forum. In their absence, the Principle Democratic Services Officer read out a prepared statement which outlined the role of the organisation in informing and representing the views of senior people in the Borough.

The TAMs Forum was an independent group run by local older people for local older people and communicated with the County and Borough Councils; other local service providers and local agencies. A Management Committee met regularly to organise meetings, events and promote the needs of older residents.

Meetings of the Forum were free, open to all and were held every two months at the Angel Centre, Tonbridge. These meetings were generally planned around a specific theme such as health and other support services for older residents. The next meeting would be held at 1200 on Friday 24 November where Robin Betts (TMBC environmental spokesperson) and Steve Harman (Head Gardner at Tonbridge School) were guest speakers.

The Forum was keen to engage with the wider Tonbridge and Malling areas and had provided promotional leaflets advising of upcoming activities in the Borough and these were shared with parish/town council representatives. Anyone requiring further information were asked to contact tams.forum@gmail.com

An invitation would be extended to the organisation to provide a presentation in Spring of 2024, subject to the views of Members.

PPP 23/28 JOINT STANDARDS COMMITTEE - PARISH/TOWN REPRESENTATIVES AND VOTING ALLOCATIONS

The report of the Principal Democratic Services Officer confirmed parish/town council representatives for the Joint Standards Committee and allocated voting rights for the period 2024-2025, as set out in Annex 1.

In response to a question regarding substitutes for parish/town council voting members, the Panel was advised that whilst this was supported in principle the use of substitute members would need to be agreed by the Joint Standards Committee, by the Borough Council's Full Council and at each Parish Council.

RECOMMENDED*: That

- (1) The revised 'pool' of parish and town council representatives and the voting allocations for 2024 – 2025 (as set out at Annex 1) be

endorsed by the Joint Standards Committee at its first meeting in 2024; and

- (2) Options for the use of substitute parish/town council voting representatives be investigated and presented to the Joint Standards Committee for consideration in due course.

***Recommended to Joint Standards Committee**

MATTERS RAISED IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING

PPP 23/29 KENT POLICE UPDATE

Inspector Newman provided a verbal update on the achievements made in performance and the neighbourhood policing agenda. The Panel was advised that the ongoing restructure of Kent Police was due to be completed by September 2024. Good progress was being made in recruitment with beat officer positions up by 57% and it was hoped to increase this further.

Details of recent initiatives and operations in the Borough were also outlined. It was indicated that the Neighbour Taskforce had doubled in size and was working to address issues in Snodland and Holborough Lakes where there had been a spate of anti-social behaviour and thefts of motor vehicles. Kent Police continued to work with key stakeholders on a variety of issues and had a good working relationship with the Borough Council via the Community Safety Unit. It was noted that the co-location at the Borough Council offices was valuable and effective for both parties.

Reference was made to the low crime figures within Tonbridge and Malling and it was reported that although there had been a marginal increase of 0.1% for all crime the Borough continued to be safe place to live. There had been a 0.1% reduction in ASB in Tonbridge and Malling despite an overall increase in Kent. This demonstrated that the targeted approach adopted by the Neighbour Taskforce was achieving results. Violent crime, domestic abuse and stalking/harassment had also seen improving results.

In response to a question raised by Wouldham Parish Council regarding the use of CCTV evidence if provided by a parish council, Inspector Newman indicated this would be dependent upon the integrity of the evidence and quality of film provided. The best solution in respect of road traffic management continued to be 'designing out' of issues. However, Inspector Newman offered to discuss this further out of meeting.

There was a question regarding the support provided to shopkeepers when reporting instances of shoplifting. The Panel was advised that each time a crime was reported it was recorded and assessed. If

individuals felt they were not getting adequate support from Kent Police they were encouraged to contact Inspector Newman to raise their concerns.

PPP 23/30 UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGILE PROJECT

The Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health explained that the Borough Council was transferring a number of service-based platforms to a new software provider called Agile. The Services affected included planning, building control and land charges. This was a significant change and the systems had 'gone live' in October.

Unfortunately, services were experiencing technical difficulties due to a number of outstanding issues which were creating backlogs in planning cases. The Borough Council was working closely with the software provider on resolving data and transfer issues.

Members were advised that the weekly list was now available as a basic function. The enhanced 'click link' directing to the case files on the planning portal was being worked on. Consultation comments could also now be submitted via the portal. The issues around the 21-day notice period for call-in and the new system were noted. To ensure that parish/town councils did not miss the opportunity to comment, consultation emails were also being sent out in tandem with the weekly list. It was also clarified that the 21-day notice period for parish/town councils to call-in an application was not a new process. If parish/town councils had concerns about an application they were encouraged to discuss a potential call-in with their local ward members, even if the ultimate decision was that the call-in didn't need to proceed following consultation with residents. Parish/town councils were encouraged to raise concerns with Planning Services if they felt there were discrepancies between the weekly list and the consultation emails.

It was also confirmed that it was now possible to see other comments on the planning portal. If this was not the case, Members were asked to report this to the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health for investigation.

Concern was expressed that parish/town councils had not been notified of the changes to systems and it was difficult to get information. The Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health indicated that it had been expected that the implementation of the new system would be quicker and with minimal downtime/change apparent to external users.

In response to a question regarding why parish/town councils were no longer consulted on trees, it was confirmed that this was not as a result of the new Agile system and the position on when the Council can consult had been confirmed to all Parishes in January 2022. Details of the new process had been circulated, via the weekly list, upon its introduction. The Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental

Health offered to include a reminder in respect of trees on the next weekly list. It was also clarified that Tree Protection Orders (TPOs) were assessed on risk and if there was an immediate issue it would be taken as a matter of urgency.

There was detailed discussion regarding potential implications for new and/or major applications and the risk of non-determination of applications. Regarding the latter, the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health would hope to engage with the developer to avoid the application proceeding direct to appeal.

The Cabinet Member for Planning (Cllr Taylor) and the Leader (Cllr Boughton) recognised the challenging position faced by Officers in identifying and resolving the technical issues, dealing with the software provider and addressing the increasing backlog of cases. It was also confirmed that the Borough Council were actively monitoring progress and would only be paying for services once they had been introduced appropriately.

Finally, the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health indicated that the main priority continued to be resolving 'bugs'; identifying 'fixes' and getting back to business as usual as soon as possible.

PPP 23/31 ELECTIONS - PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARY CHANGES, REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND STATIONS AND PCC ELECTIONS

The Head of Electoral Services provided an overview on the parliamentary boundary changes, the Tranche 2 changes arising from the Election Bill and summarised details in respect of new constituencies, polling district and polling station reviews and changes to postal and proxy votes.

There were no changes proposed to polling districts as the current configuration aligned with the new constituencies. However, a polling station review would be undertaken with consultation starting on 1 December for a four week period. Final proposals arising from this review/consultation would be considered by the General Purposes Committee on 24 January 2024.

Reference was made to new application forms for postal and proxy votes from 31st October 2023, which now included boxes for National Insurance number to enable verification checks on electors to be completed. Existing postal voters would change to new system when renewing.

It was noted that the Parliamentary Election had to take place before 25 January 2025. However, the next election would be the Police and Crime Commissioner on Thursday 2 May 2024. Booking forms for

community/village halls to host polling stations would be sent to parish/town councils early in 2024.

There was also a request for anyone interested in working on elections to contact the Elections Team as there was an extreme shortage of election staff.

The presentation would be shared with parish/town councils after the meeting for information.

PPP 23/32 LOCAL PLAN

The Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health provided an update on the progress of the Local Plan. The Local Development Scheme, setting out the timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan, had been approved by [Cabinet](#) in July 2023 and good progress continued to be made towards a Regulation 18b consultation in Spring 2024.

There had been a number of briefings with Borough Councillors on key issues and sites, Officers were liaising with developers/agents on deliverability as part of the overall assessment of sites and collection of evidence. Engagement was also taking place with infrastructure providers.

Reference was made to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill which had recently been enacted. There remained uncertainty around housing targets and the green belt and it was anticipated that this detail would be included in the technical guidance to the Bill.

Future reports to the Housing and Planning Scrutiny Select would provide more information in relation to evidence base and the progress of the Local Plan.

The Cabinet Member for Planning (Cllr Taylor) indicated the importance of sharing the burden across the borough as a whole to avoid uncontrolled development as a result of not having a Local Plan in place. The Leader (Cllr M Boughton) encouraged all communities to work together to achieve the best outcome for the borough.

Members referred to the additional sites identified following further consultation and it was indicated that information relating to these would be published as part of the Regulation 18b Consultation to remain consistent with the approach adopted for the Regulation 18 Consultation.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that development in the Green Belt or in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty would be carefully assessed and special circumstances would need to be evidenced to enable development to take place.

PPP 23/33 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**(1) Terms of Reference**

It was confirmed that Terms of Reference for the Parish Partnership Panel were set out in Part 3 (Responsibilities) of the Borough Council's Constitution which was available on the [website](#). However, the Panel was intended as 'A vehicle for the exchange of information, consultation and a structured dialogue between the Borough Council and the parish councils in the Borough.'

The Leader advised that there had been a review of the Parish Partnership Panel in 2021 and the outcomes of this review had been reported to the Panel on 4 November 2021. [Minute Number PPP 21/16 refers](#). To reflect the responses provided, the role of second Vice-Chair, to be a parish/town councillor, had been introduced.

If there were any suggestions for improving the format of the Parish Partnership Panel, Members were invited to share these with the Chair, Vice-Chairs and Kent Association of Local Councils in the first instance.

(2) Tackling Graffiti

The Chair referred to discussions at the [Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select](#) Committee on 6 November 2023 on proposals for tackling graffiti in the Borough. The Committee had recommended that parish/town councils be included in the public consultation into the introduction of graffiti walls.

The meeting ended at 9.20 pm

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