

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

TONBRIDGE COMMUNITY FORUM

MINUTES

Monday, 2nd September, 2024

Present: Cllr L Athwal (Chair), Cllr D W King (Vice-Chair), Friends of Mill Stream (Vice-Chair), Cllr K Barton, Cllr G C Bridge, Cllr J Clokey, Cllr A Cope, Cllr F A Hoskins, Cllr A Mehmet, Cllr B A Parry, Cllr S Pilgrim, Cllr M R Rhodes, County Cllr P Stepto and County Cllr M Hood

Together with representatives from:

- Rotary Club of Tonbridge
- Tonbridge Bicycle Users Group
- Tonbridge Civic Society
- Tonbridge Line Commuters
- Tonbridge Lions Club
- Tonbridge and Malling Seniors
- Tonbridge Town Team
- Tonbridge U3A

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R W G Oliver and K S Tunstall, Angel Indoor Bowls Club, Tonbridge Dementia Friendly Community and Tonbridge Historical Society.

TCF 24/25 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

The appointment of Councillor Lee Athwal as Chair of the Tonbridge Community Forum was confirmed.

TCF 24/26 NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitute Members nominated for this meeting.

TCF 24/27 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2024 be approved as a correct record..

TCF 24/28 UPDATE ON ANY ACTION IDENTIFIED IN THE LAST MINUTES

(1) Minute Number TCF 24/17 - Update on Any Action Identified in the Last Minutes

(i) Minute Number TCF 24/6 (meeting held on 26 February 2024) – Review of the Tonbridge Community Forum

Members were advised that a scoping report would be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 September 2024. It was noted that the report was previously going to be considered by the Committee on 27 June 2024, however the meeting was cancelled due to the General Election.

(ii) Minute Number TCF 24/9 (meeting held on 26 February 2024) – Request for Membership

Members were informed that Barden Residents Group and West Kent Asian Association had been invited to attend a future meeting of the Forum, however at this stage no response from either organisation had been received.

(2) Minute Number TCF 24/18 – Kent Police Update

Members received a verbal update from Kent Police on neighbourhood policing and recent initiatives and operations. In particular, it was noted that there had been a reduction in crime over the last year across the borough and that good progress continued to be made in recruitment and the full quota would be reached by the end of September.

(3) Minute Number TCF 24/29 – Bus to Bluewater

County Councillor Stepto provided an update from Kent County Council regarding the retender of a contract for a school bus 223 which ran from Gravesend to Tonbridge Schools. Members were informed that outside of the contract and essentially unbeknown to Kent County Council, Redroute had previously used the same vehicle to operate the 228 on a commercial unsubsidised basis outside of the contract.

The new contract was awarded to Brian Jones Coaches following tender and as a result Redroute cancelled the 228. Brian Jones Coaches had been approached and provided passenger figures for the 228 service but they did not feel that this was something that they could operate presumably based on use of the service or different demands on the vehicle and / or driver between the school runs.

(4) Minute Number TCF 24/22 – Town Centre Redevelopment

The Chair advised that the Town Centre Redevelopment would be a standing item on future agendas and that the first meeting of the Programme Board was scheduled to be held week commencing 2 September 2024.

TCF 24/29 ACCESS TO CASH

Sally Pearce provided an update on the 'Access to Cash' campaign during which Members were advised that a new regulatory regime had been established to maintain reasonable access to cash for consumer and businesses in the UK and which followed new powers granted to the Financial Conduct Authority by the Financial Services and Markets Act 2023 to ensure the reasonable provision of cash access services in the UK. Under the new rules, banks and building societies would have to weigh up whether local communities lacked access to cash services and provide additional services where they found significant gaps.

Members of the public and community groups were encouraged to submit a request for a review of the community's access to cash via [LINK / Request Access to Cash](#).

TCF 24/30 PROMOTION OF UPCOMING EVENTS

(1) Run Kent Tonbridge Half Marathon

The Run Kent Tonbridge Half marathon, 5km and 10km event, supported by Tonbridge Lions Club and the Rotary Club of Tonbridge would be held on 29 September 2024. The event would start and finish in the outskirts of Tonbridge and would head out into the Kent countryside. Road closures would be in place for the duration of the event.

(2) River Walk Music

There was free Friday night music by the river in Tonbridge from 19 July to 6 September 2024.

(3) The Hound of the Baskervilles

Illyria would be performing the Hound of the Baskervilles at Tonbridge Castle on 8 September 2024.

(4) Supercar Rally 2024

The Mason Foundation Supercar Rally would be held on 8 September 2024, 11.45am – 3.00pm. The supercars would be making their way through Tonbridge High Street to Tonbridge Castle and there would be an opportunity to view the cars and speak to the drivers. The event was

free to attend and there would be an opportunity to donate to Propel, supporting young people with additional learning needs to thrive in employment.

(5) Walk Tonbridge Festival Marathon

The marathon would be taking place on 22 September 2024 and would follow a challenging 26.2 mile route from Tonbridge Baptist Church to Tonbridge Old Fire Station.

(6) Artisan Market

Members were invited to explore a diverse range of offerings, from culinary delights and bespoke gifts to household necessities at the Tonbridge Artisan Market to be held in the Tonbridge Castle Car Park on 7 October 2024.

(7) Tonbridge Charity Fireworks

The Tonbridge Annual Fireworks Display would return to the Racecourse Sports Ground at Tonbridge Park on 3 November 2024. The gates would open at 5.00pm and the display was scheduled to start at 6.30pm.

(8) Remembrance Service and Parade

The Remembrance Service and Parade would be held on 10 November 2024 at Tonbridge Memorial Gardens and Castle Bailey Lawn.

(9) Tonbridge Christmas Festival/Fireworks

The Christmas Festival would be held on 24 November 2024, 2.00pm to 6.00pm on the High Street. The festival would include entertainment, stalls, funfair, the Christmas Light Switch On and fireworks.

(10) Illuminate Light Show

Illuminate would be returning to Tonbridge Castle from 24 November 2024 to 31 December 2024 with magical light displays.

(11) Information and Advice Day

The Tonbridge and Malling Seniors would be holding an information and advice day at the Angel Centre, Tonbridge on 30 September 2024, 11.00am to 1.00pm.

TCF 24/31 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**(1) Local Plan**

An update on the process and timelines for the Local Plan public consultation and submission to the Planning Inspectorate had been requested by Tonbridge Historical Society.

Members were advised that following the Government's announcement to make significant changes to national planning policy, the Borough Council had made the decision to wait for more details before proceeding to the next stage of developing its Local Plan. The proposals were out for consultation until September 2024 and could be viewed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system>.

The outcomes of the proposed standard method were also included. A report would be presented to the Housing and Planning Scrutiny Select Committee in September 2024 outlining the position for Tonbridge and Malling in light of emerging central government policy changes. The consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework was still live and there were further announcements to come from Government on the detail of their proposed approach and therefore officers cannot provide a more detailed update to the Tonbridge Community Forum at this time.

(2) Litter

Concern was raised regarding the amount of overflowing litter bins at some events, partly due to the lack of bins available when large events took place simultaneously. In addition, the segregation of recycling at events was encouraged.

(3) Constitutions

In order to gain a greater understanding of each of the community groups represented on the Forum and their aims, the Chair requested a copy of their constitutions.

The meeting ended at 8.25 pm