

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL



EXECUTIVE SERVICES

Chief Executive
Damian Roberts

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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

14 February 2025

To: MEMBERS OF THE TONBRIDGE COMMUNITY FORUM
(Copies to all Members of the Council)

Dear Sir/Madam

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the Tonbridge Community Forum to be held in the Tonbridge Methodist Church, Highham Lane, Tonbridge TN10 4JG on Monday, 24th February, 2025 commencing at 7.30 pm

Yours faithfully

DAMIAN ROBERTS

Chief Executive

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for absence
2. Notification of Substitute Members

5 - 6

3. Minutes

7 - 10

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of Tonbridge Community Forum held on 25 November 2024.

4. Update on any action identified in the last Minutes

(1) Minute No. TCF 24/36 - Update on Access to Cash

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 an organisation due to the time limitations.

5. Appointment of Barden Residents Association

Members are asked to consider the appointment of Barden Residents Association to the Tonbridge Community Forum.

6. Imago Community

To receive an introduction to the Imago Community from Lysette D'Urso, Community Development Coordinator.

7. Scotts Project Trust

To receive an introduction to the Scotts Project Trust from Karen Wallin, Fundraising, Community Engagement and PR Manager.

8. S.106 Contributions

To receive a presentation on S.106 contributions from the Head of Planning, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council.

9. Archaeological Knowns and Unknowns

To receive a presentation on historical sites around the borough by the Historical Society.

10. Devolution

To receive a presentation on devolution from Councillor Boughton, Leader of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council.

11. Town Centre Redevelopment

To receive an update on the Town Centre Redevelopment, if any.

12. Update on Graffiti

11 - 14

To receive a report providing an update on graffiti.

13. Promotion of Upcoming Events

14. 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 Tonbridge Community Forum.

DISTRIBUTION

Borough Council Representatives:

Cllr L Athwal (Chair)
Cllr D W King (Vice-Chair)
Cllr K Barton
Cllr G C Bridge
Cllr J Clokey
Cllr A Cope
Cllr F A Hoskins
Cllr A Mehmet
Cllr R W G Oliver
Cllr B A Parry
Cllr Stacey Pilgrim
Cllr M R Rhodes
Cllr K S Tunstall

Members of the Forum:

Mr M Hood (County Councillor)
Mr P Stepto (County Councillor)

Friends of Mill Stream (Vice-Chair)
Angel Indoor Bowls Club
EMBER Community Interest Group
Feast
Rotary Club of Tonbridge
Tonbridge and Malling Seniors
Tonbridge Bicycle Users Group
Tonbridge Civic Society
Tonbridge Dementia Friendly Community
Tonbridge District Scout Council
Tonbridge Historical Society
Tonbridge Line Commuters
Tonbridge Lions Club
Tonbridge Parish Church
Tonbridge Sports Association
Tonbridge Town Team
Tonbridge U3A

Tonbridge Community Forum

	Conservative	Liberal Democratic	Green	Ind. Kent Alliance	Labour
1	Matt Boughton				
2	Martin Coffin				
3	Robin Betts				
4	Des Keers				
5	Kim Tanner				

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TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

TONBRIDGE COMMUNITY FORUM

MINUTES

Monday, 25th November, 2024

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

Together with representatives from:

- Angel Indoor Bowls Club
- Rotary Club of Tonbridge
- Tonbridge and Malling Seniors
- Tonbridge Civic Society
- Tonbridge District Scout Council
- Tonbridge Historical Society
- Tonbridge Lions Club
- Tonbridge Sports Association

Apologies for absence were received from Feast and Tonbridge Dementia Friendly Community.

TCF 24/32 NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitute Members nominated for this meeting.

TCF 24/33 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

TCF 24/34 UPDATE ON ANY ACTION IDENTIFIED IN THE LAST MINUTES

Minute Number TCF 24/28 – Update on any action identified in the last minutes - Kent Police Update

Members received an update on neighbourhood policing and recent initiatives and operations. In particular it was noted that the staffing of the Community Safety Unit was up to capacity with additional funding available to increase patrolling for the Town. Safer Business Week had taken place in October with work around local businesses including the

Town Centre and a number of offenders were brought to justice. Halloween and Fireworks passed without any significant issues reported.

On the lead up to Christmas the team would be running several operations in the town centre focussed on Violence Against Women and Girls, shoplifting and anti-social behaviour. The Neighbourhood Task Team had made several significant arrests in relation to drug dealing which had resulted in prison sentences and the Child Centred Policing Team had been working in partnership with schools and youth partner agencies to educate around anti-social behaviour, drink spiking and Violence Against Women and Girls.

MATTERS RAISED IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING

TCF 24/35 BARDEN RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Following an invitation from the Forum, the Chair of the Barden Resident Association provided a brief overview of the organisation during which it was noted that the Association was established in 2015 to promote the facilities, environment and community in the Barden area.

TCF 24/36 UPDATE ON ACCESS TO CASH

Sally Pearce provided an update on the 'Access to Cash' campaign during which Members were advised that Link had denied Tonbridge a banking hub. The concern regarding the decision had been escalated via Link's complaints process and support would be sought from MP Tom Tugendhat. The Treasury Committee were investigating whether to force some businesses to accept cash and it was felt that this would be a fatal blow for many businesses if they did not have access to local banking services.

TCF 24/37 REVIEW OF THE TONBRIDGE COMMUNITY FORUM

Members were informed that following a review of the Tonbridge Community Forum, all meetings would be held in person and the venue would be moved to Tonbridge Methodist Church on a trial basis for all meetings in 2025. Furthermore, following a topic or item raised at the meeting, a section would be dedicated to open discussion to provide an opportunity for all members to discuss and respond to the matter.

TCF 24/38 TOWN CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT

Members received an update on the town centre redevelopment. The Council were progressing work on the regeneration programme and this would include the consideration of the Angel Centre and other leisure facilities, the use of the land east of the high street and Tonbridge Farm. The Council were at the stage of appointing consultants to develop a plan for the east of the high street area and this would be part of a public engagement at the appropriate time. Much of the work was confidential

at present as it contained commercially sensitive information. A group of Council officers, led by a Programme Manager, were taking this forward.

A Programme Board had been convened to contribute to the strategy and agree recommendations that would be sent to the Cabinet for decisions. The membership of the Programme Board included two Cabinet members and four local councillors who represented Tonbridge wards. Further updates would be presented to the Forum as appropriate. Members requested an update on Sainsbury's at the next meeting.

TCF 24/39 PROMOTION OF UPCOMING EVENTS

(1) Tonbridge Repair Café

Members noted that the Repair Café would be at St Stephens Church on 11 January, 8 February and 8 March 2025, 10.00am to 12.30pm.

(2) Tonbridge Folk Club

The Tonbridge Folk Club continued to meet at Ye Olde Chequers Inn on the first and third Monday of the month, 7.30pm to 10.30pm.

(3) Historical Society

A lecture on Lost Pubs, Hotels and Breweries of Tonbridge would be held on 12 December 2024 at 7.45pm at the Angel Centre, Tonbridge. The speaker for the event was Cathy Rishman. A full programme of lectures for 2024-25 was available to view on the Historical Society's website.

(4) Tonbridge Town Council

Members were reminded that the petition for Tonbridge Town Council was live.

(5) Lions Club

Since 1950, the Lions Club had been supporting local charities, good causes and disadvantaged individuals. The club would be collecting donations throughout December on Fridays and Saturdays in Iceland and Waitrose car parks in Tonbridge.

(6) Illuminate Light Show

Illuminate was at Tonbridge Castle until 31 December 2024 with their magical light displays.

(7) Tonbridge and Malling Seniors

Kent Police had been invited to speak to residents on 6 December 2024 on the subject of scams and fraud.

TCF 24/40 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(1) S.106 Contributions

The Chair requested that S.106 contributions be an item on the agenda for the next meeting.

(2) Imago Community

Following receipt of an expression of interest in becoming a member of the Tonbridge Community Forum, Imago Community would be invited to attend the next meeting to provide an overview of the organisation.

The organisation were currently funded from KCCs Infrastructure Support Fund to provide Infrastructure Support to charities and community groups in Tonbridge and Malling and were providing Volunteer Centre services to Tonbridge and Malling organisations.

The meeting ended at 8.22 pm

Graffiti update for Tonbridge Forum

24 February 2025

1. **Background**

- 1.1 Graffiti is regarded by most as a form of criminal damage and can be defined as ‘any inscription, marking, writing, painting or drawing, illicitly scratched, scribbled, drawn, cut, carved, posted, pasted sprayed or painted on any surface’.
- 1.2 Graffiti takes many forms including tags, slogans and political messages, advertising, cartoons, and highly colourful and complex artistic creations. Graffiti is sometimes regarded as an art form by those doing it, but by members of the public it is often seen as a nuisance and frequently associated with anti-social behaviour. It is also costly to get rid of and recent estimates put the clean-up costs for graffiti in the UK at more than £1billion.
- 1.3 The ‘broken windows’ theory is a criminological theory that states that visible signs of crime, anti-social behaviour, and civil disorder create an urban environment that encourages further crime and disorder, including serious crimes.
- 1.4 Graffiti can be considered an act of criminal damage. Under the Criminal Damage Act 1971, anyone caught doing graffiti can face a prison sentence of up to ten years or fined if the damage costs more than £5,000. If the damage caused is less than £5,000, an offender could face three months in prison or a fine of £2,500. Spray paint was also made illegal to under-16s. Any shopkeeper who sells it to an under-16 can be fined up to £2,500.
- 1.5 Tonbridge Town Centre and surrounding areas, specifically the area around Medway Wharf, have recently experienced an increase in ‘tags’ and this has been noted by Borough Council Members, business owners and residents. A previous report has been presented to Borough Council Members at the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee and a graffiti policy was developed and is now available on our website.
- 1.6 I have been asked to provide an update to Tonbridge Forum on progress made to tackle graffiti since the report to Members and this report will give details of the scale of the problem and how we have been able to tackle (some) of the graffiti.

2. **What is the scale of the problem?**

- 2.1 During 2024, the Borough Council’s Waste Services received 35 reports of graffiti from across the borough (it is not possible to break these figures down into more specific locations). The amount of graffiti reported to the police is also low (although exact figures are not available).

2.2 We do know however, that having graffiti in an area can make residents feel unsafe and can make an area seem unattractive.

3. How is the Council tackling the problem?

3.1 The Council's approach, as stated on our website, is that we will remove graffiti from council-owned land and public property. We aim to remove all offensive, racist and abusive graffiti on our land within 48 hours of it being reported to us. Areas on or close to main roads, main town areas and schools will be given priority. Residents can report any incidents of graffiti to us via our website - [Report a graffiti incident | User registration – Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council](#)

3.2 We will not remove graffiti from privately owned property, railway structures or telephone boxes and we will encourage residents to report this graffiti to the police or directly to the landowners.

3.3 Some residents do contact us directly about graffiti on privately owned property and where this happens, we will try to identify and contact the landowner. We can then request that they remove the graffiti, or we can potentially use Community Payback to help remove this and we have had some success in using this scheme to remove graffiti. The Community Payback scheme uses people who have been convicted of a crime by a court but not sent to prison to undertake unpaid community work (such as removing graffiti).

3.4 The photographs below show graffiti on the side of 'Cook' on Tonbridge High Street. With the permission of Cook, and following a road closure, Community Payback were able to paint over this graffiti.

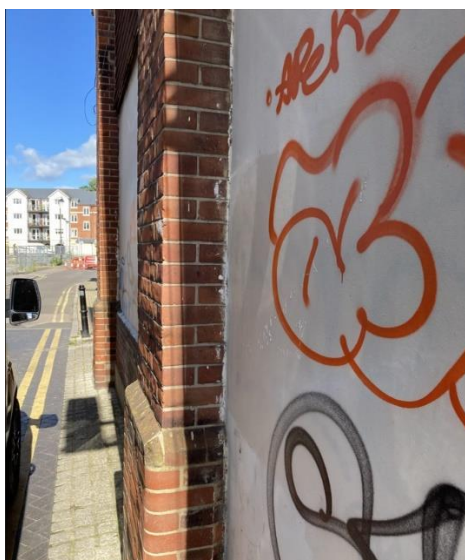


Photo showing graffiti before removal



Photo after graffiti removed (June 2024)

- 3.5 Unfortunately, not all properties with graffiti on may be suitable for removal by Community Payback, due to the position of the graffiti (e.g. too close to a road or to a river) or the need for scaffolding/ladders etc.
- 3.6 We have also had other successes in contacting the owners of properties where there has been graffiti. Most of these do want to be able to remove the graffiti from their buildings, although there is obviously a cost involved for them to do this. During 2024 I contacted the Head of Maintenance at Peacocks, as graffiti had been sprayed onto the doorway of their empty store in the High Street. He confirmed that the store was due for refurbishment and the graffiti was removed during this process. I was also able to contact Network Rail, as we had received reports that there was graffiti on a bridge by the railway line which was owned by them. Again, they arranged for their contractor to remove this graffiti.
- 3.7 I was also able to contact the Managing Director of Wharf House, who arranged for the graffiti on the side of their building to be removed. They were aware of the graffiti and the need to remove this and worked as quickly as possible to arrange for this to be cleaned. The photographs below show this removal.



Photo before removal

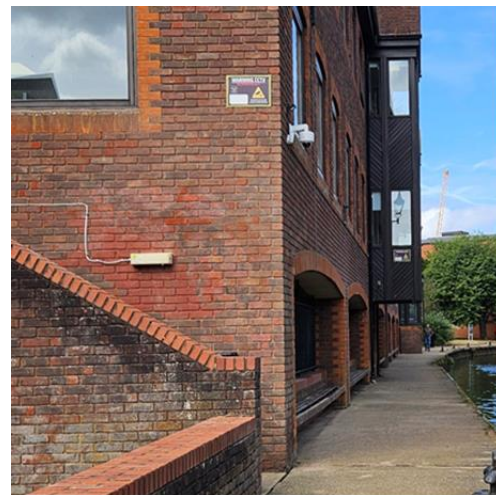


Photo after removal (August 2024)

- 3.8 More recently, I have also had success in contacting the Post Office on Quarry Hill who had graffiti on the rear of their building. They were able to arrange for the removal of this.

4. **Is there anything further that we can do?**

- 4.1 As stated above, there have been successes in removing graffiti and this should be recognised. Unfortunately, graffiti does continue to be put onto buildings around Tonbridge (and other areas in the borough), albeit on a relatively low level compared to other areas. The Borough Council will continue to remove graffiti from our property, and we will continue to encourage privately owned properties to remove graffiti as quickly as possible.
- 4.2 We have encouraged businesses to install CCTV cameras to try and stop people from committing graffiti and to try to identify anyone who does the graffiti

and to use anti-graffiti paint where possible/appropriate. We have also been working with the police to identify anyone doing graffiti. Unfortunately, it can be difficult to catch offenders, but we are continuing to try. The Police are also going into schools to talk to young people about graffiti and we hope that this might prevent some of the issues. We're also working with organisations who engage with young people on the streets so that they can also talk to the young people about graffiti and the effects that this can have on an area and on residents/businesses in an area.

- 4.3 Unfortunately, it can sometimes be difficult to identify the owner of a property and can sometimes take some time. However, once identified we would look to work with them and encourage them as quickly as possible to remove the graffiti. In some cases, we may be able to provide funding to enable them to remove this graffiti (if the removal is proving too costly for them), although this funding is limited.
- 4.4 If anyone does become aware of graffiti in Tonbridge (or anywhere in the borough) then this can be reported to the Borough Council. If we are not aware of the issues, then we cannot tackle this. Please report issues via [Report a graffiti incident | User registration – Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council](#). Any graffiti reported via the online form which is on our land will be removed by the borough council and any that are on private land are passed to me to try and contact the landowner.
- 4.5 I hope this provides reassurance that the Borough Council is working with private landowners to remove graffiti where possible and as quickly as possible and that in general, these landowners also want to work with us to remove the graffiti. If you do have any areas where you have seen graffiti, then please do report these via the online reporting form so that these can be dealt with as appropriate. If anyone does have any specific queries, then please feel free to email me at alison.finch@tmbc.gov.uk.

Alison Finch
Safer & Stronger Communities Manager
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