

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PARISH PARTNERSHIP PANEL

Thursday, 5th September, 2019

Present: Cllr N J Heslop (Chairman), Cllr M A Coffin (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Mrs J A Anderson, Cllr R P Betts, Cllr R W Dalton, Cllr F A Hoskins, Cllr S A Hudson, Cllr Mrs C B Langridge, Cllr D Lettington, Cllr B J Luker and Cllr M Taylor.

Together with Addington, Aylesford, Borough Green, Burham, Ditton, East Malling and Larkfield, Hadlow, Ightham, Kings Hill, Offham, Platt, Snodland, Trottiscliffe, Wateringbury, Wouldham, Wrotham and County Councillor H Rayner.

Councillors H S Rogers, R V Roud and J L Sergison were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P M Hickmott, M R Rhodes, Birling, Hildenborough, Leybourne, Mereworth, Plaxtol, West Malling, West Peckham, Mrs T Dean, Mr M Balfour and Mrs S Hohler.

PART 1 - PUBLIC

PPP 19/18 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

PPP 19/19 UPDATE ON ACTION IDENTIFIED IN THE LAST MINUTES

The Chairman of the Kent Association of Local Councils (Tonbridge and Malling) referred to Minute Number PPP 19/12 (Southern Water – responsibility for fire hydrants) and advised that a Fire Hydrant initiative, established by Kent Fire and Rescue Services in 2017, provided location maps of all fire hydrants in parishes. Further information would be circulated to all parish clerks in due course.

PPP 19/20 SPEEDWATCH

The Chairman advised that apologies had been received from the Speedwatch Co-ordinator (Alan Watson) due to a prior commitment. However, Parish Councils were invited to share their experiences of the initiative and the following points were made:

- There were significant challenges around the setting up of a community scheme, particularly as these were reliant on the support of volunteers;

- Equipment, such as speed indicator devices, were not always financially viable and the purchase of kit was expensive; and
- Active enforcement by Kent Police was decreasing.

The Kent Association of Local Councils referred to the recent cancellation of the annual Speedwatch Conference due to the insufficient numbers of attendees. This illustrated the lack of support for local community schemes.

Kent Police remained committed to Speedwatch but recognised the challenges around staffing which impacted on their availability to offer support. However, it was hoped that this would improve once new police officers were in place. (Minute Number PPP 19/21 refers)

The issues raised would be passed to the Speedwatch Co-Ordinator for addressing at the next meeting of the Panel.

Hadlow and Watlingbury Parish Councils, which had shared their experiences of an active Community Speedwatch, felt that overall the initiative was effective despite the many challenges. Parishes which had operated a Community Speedwatch offered to share any information with other interested communities.

PPP 19/21 KENT POLICE SERVICES UPDATE

Acting Inspector Turtle provided a verbal update on the achievements made in performance and the neighbourhood policing agenda. The headline messages were that a new police constable would be based in the Malling area from November, active recruitment for Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) continued and a new two year programme for graduates (Police Now) had been introduced to encourage recruitment into community policing. Acting Inspector Turtle was pleased to announce that a new recruit would join the Community Safety Unit in November for 18 months as part of this scheme.

During the summer there had been several traveller incursions, including unlawful encampments in Ightham and Platt. The use of Section 61 notices had proved extremely effective and Kent Police would continue to take action immediately. This approach was welcomed by the Panel.

Recent crime trends and activity identified during the 3 month spring period included:

- Increased theft of car keys from homes. It was hoped that this could be improved by educating residents to think differently and putting keys out of sight.
- A Serious and Organised Crime Board met monthly to focus on and identify trends.

- Tom Tugendhat MP for Tonbridge and Malling had recently joined a foot patrol.
- There was an aspiration to extend the Shop Safe initiative to West Malling.

The following trends and initiatives were identified for monitoring during the autumn period:

- There would be a focus on tackling nuisance cycling which continued to be a significant issue throughout the Borough;
- Continued engagement with young people;
- Licensing enforcement in the lead up to Christmas
- Safeguarding of vulnerable people and victims; and
- Seasonal activity during Halloween and Bonfire Night

Several parishes reported evidence of the increased use of nitrous oxide (laughing gas). Kent Police were unaware that this was a significant issue but now that it had been drawn to their attention this would be actively followed up. Acting Inspector Turtle assured Members that tackling drug abuse remained a high priority for Kent Police.

Other parish specific concerns raised were noted for addressing by Kent Police where possible.

Finally, it was indicated that calling 101 or online was the best way of reporting problems. Alternatively, the Community Safety Unit could be contacted on csu.tonbridge.and.malling@kent.police.uk

PPP 19/22 PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL ELECTION RECHARGE COSTS

In response to a request from the Kent Association of Local Councils (Tonbridge and Malling), the report of the Chief Executive set out details of the costs of parish/town council elections.

There were a number of costs involved in the running of an election and these included clerical and administrative support, notices and stationery, delivery of poll cards, postal vote postage costs, hire of venues and supply of voting equipment, polling and counting staff and the Returning Officer Fee.

The cost of a contested Parish/Town election was based on several factors and these were detailed in paragraph 1.3.3 of the report. However, it was noted that the costs applied to Parish Councils were in accordance with the agreed Kent scale of fees, attached as Annex 1.

PPP 19/23 LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure (Councillor David Lettington) advised that the Borough Council's

responses to the points raised by the Planning Inspector, in a letter dated 23 May 2019, had been submitted in June and July. Both of these could be found on the Local Examination page of the Borough Council's website.

At the current time there was no date for the Local Plan Hearing confirmed.

The Panel noted the progress being made.

The Chairman referred to an issue raised by Aylesford Parish Council, outside the meeting, related to planning decisions and parish councils' submitted comments on applications. The Chief Executive clarified that the request was to seek advice as to how parish council representations could be of as high a quality as possible when commenting on planning applications. Particular reference was made to the training opportunities provided by the Kent Association of Local Councils and the Chairman (Mrs Sarah Barker) offered to attend Aylesford Parish Council to give further information on the courses available.

PPP 19/24 KENT COUNTY COUNCIL SERVICES UPDATE

The County Councillor for Malling West (Councillor Harry Rayner) provided an update on key points of relevance to the Malling Division. The headline messages included the ongoing planning for Brexit, new proposals for a Kent County Council Strategic Plan were under consideration and there were upcoming reviews of the Social Care Charging Policy and the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Reference was also made to the introduction of charges at County recycling sites and these were supporting a targeted approach on fly tipping initiatives. In response to a question from the Panel, it was indicated that there had been no cost analysis undertaken regarding charging for certain items. However, it was hoped that sufficient funds could be used to progress fly tipping enforcement. It was reiterated that there was no evidenced correlation between increased fly tipping and the introduction of charges.

Finally, it was reported that the Leader of the County Council (Paul Carter) had announced that he would stand down from this position in October.

Members asked for an update on the proposed household waste recycling site for Tonbridge and Malling. The Chairman indicated that the County Council had gone out to tender to identify a provider/site and there was no further information. However, it was noted that Medway Council might be amenable to a further extension for the use of the Cuxton site if there was a reasonable financial contribution from Kent County Council.

PPP 19/25 TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL SERVICES UPDATE

The Chairman, in his role as Leader of the Council, provided an update on key points of relevance to Tonbridge and Malling. The headline messages included:

Waste Services Contract

The new collection arrangements would start on 30 September 2019. A leaflet would be posted to all residents outlining new service provision and new collection days. Take up of the new garden waste service was 42% and was the highest in Kent for a similar service.

New brown bins were being delivered and there was an online form for residents to report missing bins.

A number of recycling/bring bank sites were being retained although this would be reduced following the full introduction of new services. Details were set out in the report of the Director of Street Scene, Leisure and Technical Services considered by the Street Scene and Environment Services Advisory Board on [3 September](#).

Shop Front Improvement Scheme

Fifteen grants had been awarded in the Borough, including premises in West Malling, Larkfield, Hadlow, Borough Green and Kings Hill. Further applications were under consideration. The Scheme would close by the end of 2019 and anyone interested should contact the Economic Regeneration Officer (jeremy.whittaker@tmbc.gov.uk) for further information.

A Scheme focusing on local centres and parades would open in the New Year.

Jobs and Training Fair

This would be held from 1000 – 1400 hours on Tuesday 15 October at the Capel Morris Centre, Royal British Legion Village, Aylesford. Thirty local businesses were participating and it was free to attend. All Members were asked to promote this event.

Climate Change Strategy

The Borough Council had declared recognition of global climate change and biodiversity emergencies in July. Services and operations would be reviewed to ensure policies supported climate change mitigation. A draft Strategy would be out for consultation in May 2020 and parishes were encouraged to contribute. Suggestions should be passed to the Scrutiny

and Partnerships Manager (gill.fox@tmbc.gov.uk) who was co-ordinating responses.

The meeting ended at 9.10 pm