

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

TONBRIDGE FORUM

Monday, 6th September, 2021

Present: Cllr J R S Lark (Chairman), Cllr M D Boughton (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Mrs P A Bates, Cllr V M C Branson, Cllr G C Bridge, Cllr A E Clark, Cllr N Foyle, Cllr N J Heslop, Cllr D W King and Cllr M R Rhodes.

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

- The Bridge Trust,
- Kent Police (Tonbridge),
- Tonbridge Civic Society,
- Tonbridge District Scout Council,
- Tonbridge Historical Society,
- Tonbridge Philharmonic Society, and
- Tonbridge Town Team

Councillors Mrs J A Anderson, R W Dalton, D Keers, K King, D Lettington, B J Luker, H S Rogers, J L Sergison and K B Tanner participated via MS Teams and joined the discussion when invited to do so by the Chairman in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M O Davis and University of the Third Age.

TF 21/9 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

TF 21/10 UPDATE ON ANY ACTION IDENTIFIED IN THE LAST MINUTES

There were no actions identified.

TF 21/11 KENT POLICE UPDATE

Inspector Elizabeth Jones provided a verbal update on the achievements made in the performance and neighbourhood policing agenda.

Tonbridge and Malling were currently one of the top three safest places in Kent, alongside Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells. Domestic abuse continued to be the highest crime trend, which accounted for approximately 20% of all crime recorded in the region. In order to

reduce domestic abuse and support victims, Operation Heart was underway, ensuring the safety of women in the area and making sure that women felt safe during the night time economy.

Tackling anti-social behaviour continued to be a priority, with Operation Pool seeking to end the anti-social behaviour at waterside locations such as Tonbridge Lock and Leybourne and Holborough Lakes. Operation Recess, an operation to positively engage with young people across the area at key times and location, had been undertaken during the summer, to ensure that young people were safe and did not engage in harmful anti-social behaviour or drinking alcohol in public spaces. There had been a 31% reduction in drug crime in the area, with the Community Policing Team focusing on dismantling the drug network in Tonbridge and Malling.

Inspector Jones provided an update on tackling the anti-social behaviour in the Longmead area and supported the option of CCTV and a mobile camera system in Tonbridge and Malling. Kent Police continued to work with its partners at Ember Trust and St Giles to ensure that young people were safe and also identify offending individuals.

Following concern raised regarding illegal parking on Woodgate Way, Members were reassured that where legal conditions existed, these were enforced and local businesses had been requested to park elsewhere.

TF 21/12 KENT COUNTY COUNCIL SERVICES UPDATE

The County Councillors for Tonbridge (Mark Hood and Paul Stepto) provided an update on County initiatives and consultations, in particular their work with Kent Police, Kent Highways and Medway Borough Councillors to resolve the issue of parked cars along Woodgate Way. Consideration had been given to various options including additional signage to allow Kent Police to issue penalty notices, to permit local businesses to park in resident parking zones, the introduction of parking restrictions such as double yellow lines, and incorporation of cycle lanes.

County Councillor Hood advised that Hadlow College, in partnership with North Kent College, would be terminating their contract as care providers at Princess Christian's Farm, and Kent County Council would go out to tender for a new care provider to ensure continuity of service.

The County Councillors for Tonbridge had met with the Leader and Deputy Leader of Tonbridge and Malling and officers at Kent County Council to discuss the new nationwide Bus Strategy and would work together to draft a Bus Improvement Plan.

Councillor Hood reported that many local organisations had been supported financially via the Combined Members Fund and Covid Recovery Fund, including the Tonbridge Child Contact Centre, the

EMBER Community Interest Company, the Hygiene Bank, Tonbridge Lions and the Reconnect Programme.

With regards to highways work, Councillor Hood advised that resurfacing work continued and responded to comments on the delay in utility works at Pembury Road.

TF 21/13 TONBRIDGE AND MALLING SERVICES UPDATE

The Leader of the Council advised that consideration was being given to reforming the Tonbridge Forum in parallel with the Parish Partnership Panel, in order to promote inclusivity. Members were invited to present their views and suggestions on improving the Forum and these would be taken into consideration when the future structure was determined by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 7 October 2021.

The meeting ended at 8.47 pm