

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

TONBRIDGE COMMUNITY FORUM

MINUTES

Monday, 26th February, 2024

Present: Cllr G B Hines (Chair), Cllr D W King (Vice-Chair), Cllr L Athwal, 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 M R Rhodes, Cllr K S Tunstall and County Cllr M Hood

Together with representatives from:

- Angel Indoor Bowls Club
- Feast
- Tonbridge Bicycle Users Group
- Tonbridge Civic Society
- Tonbridge Line Commuters
- Tonbridge Lions Club
- Tonbridge Sports Association
- Tonbridge U3A

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor K Barton, Friends of Mill Stream, Rotary Club of Tonbridge and Tonbridge Parish Church.

TCF 24/1 NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitute members for this meeting.

TCF 24/2 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

TCF 24/3 UPDATE ON ANY ACTION IDENTIFIED IN THE LAST MINUTES

Minute Number TCF 23/31 (meeting held on 27 November 2023) - Update on the bus stop outside Café Nero

Members were informed that the replacement bus shelter at the bus stop outside of Café Nero on Tonbridge High Street would be installed on 24 March 2024.

TCF 24/4 KENT POLICE UPDATE

Members received a verbal update from Kent Police on neighbouring policing and recent initiatives and operations. Good progress continued to be made in recruitment and the plan was for the full quota to be reached by September 2024.

There was currently motorcycle nuisance in the town and surrounding rural areas and a concentration of organised retail thefts in Tonbridge. There had been vehicle speed concerns on Old Hadlow Road and antisocial behaviour and littering in Hadlow.

TCF 24/5 PRESENTATION ON ELECTIONS

The Head of Electoral Services provided an overview on the Tanche 2 changes arising from the Election Bill and summarised details in respect of changes to overseas electors, postal vote handling and EU citizens.

TCF 24/6 REVIEW OF THE TONBRIDGE COMMUNITY FORUM

Members were requested to give consideration to whether the Cabinet and/or the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be requested to undertake a review of the Tonbridge Community Forum in order to make the meetings more relevant and accessible in the community.

During discussion, views were sought on the frequency of meetings, venue and means, whether in person or virtually. It was felt that the frequency of meetings should be increased to bi-monthly to allow the Forum to address live issues in a timely manner, particularly during a time of potential development change in the Town Centre. Members indicated their preference for in person meetings, whilst recognising that there were cost implications. It was suggested that church halls provided a cost effective option as a meeting venue.

Consideration was given to the current membership groups and agreed that they were properly constituted and met the criteria for the Forum.

TCF 24/7 SECTION 106 DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

The Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health provided an explanation of the key aspects of Section 106 developer contributions and the legal obligations entered into to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

Reference was made to the use of Section 106 funding to pay for the infrastructure needed to support new developments, the role of parishes and community groups and the Council's requirement to publish an annual Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS), reporting on Section 106 income and expenditure.

During discussion, it was explained that local planning authorities were expected to use all of the funding received by way of Section 106 contributions in order to make developments acceptable in planning terms and that the agreements included an expiry date which limited the amount of time available to spend the funding and that these expiry dates were reviewed on a regular basis.

TCF 24/8 REQUEST FOR MEMBERSHIP

Following a request for Barden Residents Group and West Kent British Asian Association to be appointed to the Tonbridge Community Forum, it was agreed that representatives from each be invited to attend the next meeting of the Forum to provide a presentation on their respective organisation.

TCF 24/9 ANGEL CENTRE

The Leader provided an update on the Angel Centre, during which he advised that in January 2024, Cabinet had agreed in principle, that the Angel Centre be demolished and replacement leisure and community facilities be provided in Tonbridge and, in principle, all options be kept on the table for the future location and nature of such replacement leisure and community facilities within Tonbridge. The Council was currently undertaking a review of assets in the Town Centre and the Forum would receive an update when the work had been completed.

TCF 24/10 GRAFFITI IN AND AROUND THE TOWN CENTRE

The Head of Customer Services, Licensing and CSU provided an update on graffiti in and around the Town Centre, during which Members were encouraged to respond to the consultation on graffiti which was open until 29 February 2024, the results of which would be reported back to an appropriate Council meeting for discussion/consideration.

The services of the Community Payback scheme had been secured by the Council to help remove graffiti from private owned premises. Furthermore, funding had been secured to purchase graffiti removal kits, to be kept at Tonbridge Castle for Councillors to access if they wished.

The Council received a low number of reports of graffiti, with six reports of graffiti in the town having been received this year, three of which were on private structures. Tagging was the main issue and the Council worked with the Police to catch/identify the offenders and continued to work to remove the graffiti and carry out preventative work with young people, through the Police and other agencies.

Members were encouraged to report instances of graffiti on the Council's website - [Report a graffiti incident – Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council \(tmbc.gov.uk\)](https://www.tonbridgeandmalling.gov.uk/report-graffiti).

TCF 24/11 ILLUMINATE

The Head of Customer Services, Licensing and CSU reported on the success of the Christmas event at Tonbridge Castle held in 2023.

Members were provided the opportunity to give feedback during which concern was raised regarding the accessibility of the event, the negative impact on local residents, inadequate signage and parking provision in particular around residential areas and lack of clarity regarding the opening times of stalls outside of the Castle grounds.

During discussion, Members welcomed the event being held in Tonbridge and suggested that the market be extended to Cannon Lawn or moved to Baron Walk.

TCF 24/12 PROMOTION OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Members were advised that consideration had been given to the creation of an events calendar on the Council's website. Following discussions with the Council's Communications Team, it was accepted that the suggestion would not be viable, however, the profile of the forum would be raised through the Council's social media.

Members noted the forthcoming events to be held in Tonbridge and the surrounding area:

(1) Mass Bicycle Ride

Members were informed that the next mass bicycle ride would be held on the 20 April 2024 and further details would be published on social media in due course.

(2) Free PSA Testing

Members were informed that PCaSO Prostrate Cancer Support Organisation, supported by Tonbridge Lions Club would be providing free PSA screening on 18 May 2024 at the Angel Centre, for men aged 40-80 years. Testing would be by appointment only at www.pcsaso.mypsatests.org.uk.

(3) Tonbridge Lions Community Fete

Members were informed that the Tonbridge Lions Community Fete and 'Parade of Superheroes' would be held on at Tonbridge Castle on 9 June 2024, 12pm – 4pm.

TCF 24/13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

The meeting ended at 9.11 pm