

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