

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

TONBRIDGE COMMUNITY FORUM

MINUTES

Monday, 19th May, 2025

Present: Cllr L Athwal (Chair), Cllr D W King (Vice-Chair), Friends of Mill Stream (Vice-Chair), Cllr K Barton, Cllr G C Bridge, Cllr J Clokey, Cllr A Cope, Cllr F A Hoskins, Cllr A Mehmet, Cllr B A Parry, Cllr S 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 Bicycle Users Group
Tonbridge Historical Society
Tonbridge Line Commuters
Tonbridge Parish Church
Tonbridge Sports Association
Tonbridge U3A

Apologies for absence were received from Tonbridge Civic Society and Tonbridge Lions Club.

TCF 25/14 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIRS

The appointments of Borough Councillors were confirmed. A nomination of Vice Chair from community representatives was received from Mark Ansdell. As there were no further nominations received, the community representatives agreed that Mark Ansdell be duly appointed as the second Vice Chair of the Tonbridge Community Forum.

TCF 25/15 NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitute Members nominated for this meeting.

TCF 25/16 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

TCF 25/17 UPDATE ON ANY ACTION IDENTIFIED IN THE LAST MINUTES**Minute Number TCF 25/3 (meeting held on 24 February 2025) – Update on Access to Cash**

Sally Pearce provided an update on the 'Access to Cash' campaign during which Members were advised that the Banking Hub had been approved and the location for the Hub had been identified. The Forum expressed their gratitude to Ms Pearce.

TCF 25/18 MEMBERSHIP OF THE TONBRIDGE COMMUNITY FORUM

Members noted that the organisations for EMBER and Tonbridge and Malling Seniors had ceased to exist and therefore were no longer members of the Tonbridge Community Forum; and the appointment of Scotts Project Trust as a member of the Forum was agreed.

TCF 25/19 IMAGO COMMUNITY

Following an invitation from the Forum, Lysette D'Urso, Community Development Co-ordinator provided a brief overview of Imago Community whose services supported vulnerable adults and those in caring roles to maintain independence, navigate challenges and improve overall wellbeing. The organisation offered information, guidance, activities and support to meet people's needs, along with access to a range of community, health and social care services.

TCF 25/20 KENT POLICE UPDATE

Members received an update from Kent Police on neighbouring policing and recent initiatives and operations.

Concern was raised regarding the high level of shoplifting in the town, in particular in and around Cannon Lane. Members asked that consideration be given to the deployment of mobile CCTV in areas where there was a high level of crime.

Members discussed the traveller encampment at Salisbury Road and recognised the joint effort of the Police and the Local Authority in raising the court order and took the opportunity to thank Waste Services for their work in removing the waste that had been left on the land.

MATTERS RAISED IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING**TCF 25/21 HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PLANS**

Members received a briefing note that provided an introduction to the Highways Improvement Plans. The Highways Information Pack was currently in the process of being updated for 2025/26 and the pack

circulated was the most up to date version available. Officers had advised that the best way for the public to input into the Highways Improvement Plan for their areas was to contact their Parish/Town Council or County Member in an unparished area such as Tonbridge.

TCF 25/22 PAVEMENT PARKING

An item on pavement parking and the impact of safe walking had been requested by Tonbridge Bicycle Users Group, in particular pavement parking on the High Street. County Councillor Mark Hood advised that he had raised the enforcement of illegal parking with the Borough Council and the County Councillors had allocated funding for a number of trees to be introduced on the junction in the high street, and the installation of bike stands and benches, to prevent future pavement parking.

TCF 25/23 SAFE CROSSING OF PEMBURY ROAD

Tonbridge Bicycle Users Group had requested a discussion on the safety of school children crossing side roads along Pembury Road. Previously Pembury Road had been restricted to a 20mph limit which had helped to slow traffic, however this speed limit had subsequently been removed, whilst the 20mph limit on the side roads had remained. Concern was raised that vehicles were not given priority to pedestrians crossing the side roads and the safety of school children. During discussion it was suggested that the use of Speed Watch be considered to generate data that supported a change in speed limit to revert Pembury Road back to a 20mph speed limit.

TCF 25/24 ACCIDENT HOT SPOT - THE RIDGEWAY AND HADLOW ROAD JUNCTION

Tonbridge Bicycle Users Group raised concern regarding the accident hot spot at the junction of the Ridgeway and Hadlow Road. During discussion it was noted that the installation of dragon teeth markings has had an impact on reducing driver speeds, however the impact had not been sufficient. County Councillor Mark Hood would identify if there were any resources available on Vision Zero, a road safety strategy aimed at eliminating deaths and serious injuries on roads, to educate drivers.

TCF 25/25 TOWN CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT

Members received an update on the town centre development during which Councillor Adem Mehmet reported that he had been appointed as Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Tonbridge Regeneration. The central location of the new leisure facility had been confirmed as Sovereign Way Mid Car Park however the design of the new leisure centre had yet to be confirmed. Councillor Mehmet provided assurance

that consideration would be given to the archaeological period of the site.

TCF 25/26 PROMOTION OF UPCOMING EVENTS

(1) Council Events

Members were advised that all events booked in with the Council to be held on its open spaces were available to view on the Council's website - <https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/events>. Recent events included the VE Day Community event held on 4 May 2025 and the VE Day Commemorative Beacon lighting on 8 May 2025. The VJ Day Commemorative Beacon lighting would take place on 15 August 2025 and the Asian Market continued to be run every fourth Sunday from April to November.

(2) Tonbridge Lions Community Fete

The annual Tonbridge Lions Community Fete would be held on the Castle Lawn on 1 June 2025 and would include a parade themed 'Read All About It'. This year, there would also be an attempt at a Guinness World Record for odd socks and a request was made for volunteer counters.

(3) Tonbridge Town Council

Members were encouraged to respond to the Council's consultation on a Tonbridge Town Council. The consultation would run for six weeks up until 14 July.

(4) Rotary Club Classic Car Event

The Rotary Club Classic Car show would be held on 21 June 2025, 10am – 4.00pm, at Tonbridge Castle. There was free entry to the event, although charity donations were requested.

(5) Supercar Charity Rally

Over 100 cars would gather on the 29 June 2025 at Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground.

(6) Tonbridge Pride

Members were informed that Tonbridge Pride would be held on 9 August 2025 and were invited to join the town's vibrant LGBTQ+ community for a fun filled day of celebration and acceptance.

(7) Football Fiesta

The football fiesta would be held at Tonbridge Race Course on 18 and 19 June 2025.

(8) Tonbridge Historical Society

A schedule of talks for 2025-26 would be available to view on the Tonbridge Historical Society website from the beginning of June.

TCF 25/27 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(1) Devolution

Members sought an update on devolution and were advised the Council had submitted its initial proposals for new Unitary Councils across Kent and Medway as part of the Government's Local Government Reorganisation Programme.

(1) The use of Cycle Lanes

Concern was raised regarding the use of cycle lanes and noted that until there was a cycling infrastructure, cyclists would continue cycling on pavements due to the dangers of cycling on the roads. County Councillor Mark Hood advised that the Active Travel Plan would form part of the Local Plan and involvement would be sought from Tonbridge Bicycle Users Group.

(2) S106

The Chair advised that she would be submitting a response on the Tonbridge Infrastructure by the deadline of 1 June 2025.

The meeting ended at 8.49 pm