

## TENTERDEN TOWN COUNCIL



### **MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT ASSEMBLY ROOM ON MONDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 2019**

**Councillors Present:** V. Cole, J. Crawford, Mrs. J. Curteis (Mayor), Mrs. S. Ferguson, C. Knowles, Dr. L. Lovelidge, J. Nelson, R. Quinton, Mrs. P. Smith, A. Sugden and Mrs. K. Walder

**Officers Present:** P. Burgess (Town Clerk), Mrs. C. Gilbert (Deputy Town Clerk) and Mrs. L. Owers (Administrative Assistant)

**Others Present:** Canon L. Hammond, Reverend J. Kennett and Cllr. J. Link (ABC) and 10 members of the public.

**Reverend Hammond said prayers.**

3303 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Cllrs. M. Carter, Miss. A. Gardner, M. Hickmott, K. Mulholland, R. Parkin, Borough Councillor P. Clokie, Community Warden Ms. J. Vos and PCSO K. Richards.

3304 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

None.

3305 **MINUTES.**

The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2019 and the Special meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2019 were confirmed and signed as correct records.

3306 **MATTERS ARISING.**

None.

3307 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS.**

- (a) Canon L. Hammond asked the Town Council questions regarding the Town Clerk's forthcoming recommendation to the Council that no funds will be available for St. Mildred's re-ordering project due to legal challenge. Canon Hammond's questions were: (i) when did the issue arise; (ii) why such a rush to rule out the project when no monies have yet been allocated; (iii) is the Town Clerk's recommendation appropriate; (iv) can we delay the decision until an exact legal indication is received.

Canon Hammond made the promise on the Church's side that the project will continue and asked that the Town Council bear in mind the consequences of not supporting the Church. They would urge fair and just consideration. The Town Clerk responded that he will put his

answers to Canon Hammond in writing.

- (b) Mrs. L. Bailey of Rolvenden Road, addressed the Council with her concerns over illegal parking by lorries in the layby near Rolvenden Station. Mrs. Bailey had contacted one of the UK based haulage companies who have now ceased parking in the layby. However, foreign lorries with sometimes two people in the vehicle would still be parking up and wandering round in the unlit area which was causing safety concerns for Mrs. Bailey. Cllr. Mrs. Walder had been assisting Mrs. Bailey with trying to find ways to address the issue and suggested installing non-mandatory bilingual signage in the layby; there were also issues of human waste as well as rubbish being left behind. Cllr. Mrs. Walder asked the Council if with the help of Kent County Council and Ashford Borough Council the issue could be addressed.

Cllr. Mrs. Ferguson reported that ABC were patrolling areas in Ashford for illegal parking and this was now pushing the issue out into the rural communities.

- (c) Cllr. Knowles reported that he had been stopped by many residents and seen the anger and frustration directed at the Town Council and ABC on social media regarding developments in the Town; particularly on retirement homes and the lack of affordable housing. Many comments indicated that people feel the Town Council is in cahoots with developers and 'brown envelopes' are being passed around. Cllr. Knowles reported that as a Town Council we need to dispel this perception; the Town Council oversees that all processes are followed to ensure that this does not happen. Cllr. Knowles also reported that he had written to Ashford Borough Council's Leader, Chief Executive and Head of Planning to seek clarity on certain aspects of planning within the Town, including Environmental Impact Assessments, out of local plan assessments, windfall assessments, etc. and also to try and gain funds and collaboration to try and work with developers and landowners to look at specific dormant plots for developers and to help the children of the Town.
- (d) Cllr. Knowles asked a question which was directed at Cllr. Nelson, regarding the Planning Committee meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019 whereby the decision was made to seek advice from ABC on contact with developers. Cllr. Knowles drew the Council's attention to an email sent from Cllr. Nelson to the Deputy Town Clerk suggesting that ABC Officers should be asked to state that it was not appropriate for them to attend the meeting, but that it should be Borough Councillors. Cllr. Nelson responded that on listening to the audio recording of the meeting, he felt the Planning Committee seemed to be confusing a training session for councillors with a public meeting and did not think it would be helpful for ABC officers to be involved in a public meeting. Cllr. Mrs. Walder reported that she found reference to members of the public as 'MoPs' in the email offensive. Cllr. Nelson responded that it was a well-known abbreviation.
- (e) Cllr. Mrs. Ferguson reported that with regard to the Churchill Developments announcement, people had asked publicly on social media

whether ABC knew about the development; Cllr. Knowles at the time said no. The Council then find out that Churchill had a pre-planning meeting with ABC. Cllr. Mrs. Ferguson also raised the issue of how the decision on whether the Town Council should legally challenge ABC on the EIA decision was not handled appropriately at the 2<sup>nd</sup> September Planning Committee meeting and several councillors who back onto the development should have declared interests when voting.

Cllr. Knowles responded that when he made the comment about Churchill Developments he had asked the Head of Development and to her knowledge there had not been a meeting. On further questioning, Cllr. Knowles had discovered that a meeting had been requested. Cllr. Knowles had spoken to the ABC Leader and Head of Planning and 'Commercial in Confidence' trumps Borough Councillors involvement. The Borough Council offers a confidential service for developers to come up with ideas.

Cllr. Knowles also responded to the comment regarding declaration of interests and stated that several members of the Planning Committee who did have conflicts should not have voted and a councillor who has a business interest with one of the parties involved in the sale of land should not have taken part. Cllr. Knowles reminded all Planning Councillors to carefully consider their declarations of interests.

- (f) Cllr. Mrs. Ferguson asked for clarification as to why the discussion regarding the Church funding was in closed session. The Town Clerk responded that the Council had a right to move to closed session under the Public Bodies (Admissions to meetings) Act 1960, whereby the press and public can be excluded due to discussion of confidential financial negotiations. Cllr. Mrs. Ferguson also asked why the Confidential session was not at the end of the meeting as per Standing Order 3x.

### 3308 **COMMITTEE REPORTS.**

Subject to any specific questions or objections, the Minutes and Reports of the under-mentioned Committees were taken as read and, being duly seconded, were approved and **ADOPTED** as part of the proceedings of the Town Council subject to the following recommendations which were voted upon by a show of hands.

**Internal Committee; 8<sup>th</sup> July 2019 and 12<sup>th</sup> August 2019.** Presented by Cllr. Mrs. Smith.

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**External Committee; 8<sup>th</sup> July 2019 and 12<sup>th</sup> August 2019.** Presented by Cllr. Nelson.

Minute 0380 - Cinema Project. It was agreed that the Council would obtain reports from KCC Highways and transportation for pre-application advice and from Wessex Archaeology for a Desk Based Heritage Environment Record assessment expenditure totalling £2,515.00 prior to the building feasibility stage.

**The Committee moved into closed session.** *Under the Public Bodies (Admissions to meetings) Act 1960, the public and press will be excluded from the closed session due to the confidential nature of this part of the meeting which involves the discussion of confidential staffing matters and confidential financial negotiations.*

Confidential Minute 614M - Project Expenditure & Land Purchase. Confidential Minute 616M refers.

**End of closed session.**

Cllr. Knowles left the meeting.

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**Planning; 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019 and 5<sup>th</sup> August 2019.** Presented by Cllr. Crawford.

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3309 **COMMUNITY WARDEN.**

None received.

3310 **KENT POLICE.**

No report received, however, PCSO K. Richards circulates to Parishes a monthly update which will be included on the Town Council's website.

3311 **REPORTS FROM APPOINTED TRUSTEES AND FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER ORGANISATIONS.**

A report had been received and circulated from the Tenterden Museum, and an update provided by the Twinning Association regarding the recent visit by Avallon.

A brief update from Cllr. Crawford regarding the Tenterden & District Residents Association was tabled. Cllr. Mrs. Walder reported as Homewood School Representative, that Homewood School were moving towards Schools Super 8 Project, which is a weekly meeting with the six formers. Cllr. Mrs. Walder was arranging to meet the new Headmaster soon and productive discussions regarding the School Farm and Garden were taking place with the possibility of getting the Social Hub involved.

Cllr. Mrs. Smith thanked Mrs. D. Greaves, colleagues and volunteers on behalf of the Town Council for all their hard work at the museum.

3312 **TENTERDEN & DISTRICT TWINNING ASSOCIATION.**

It was **RESOLVED** to apply the Town Seal to the Charter of Friendship with Avallon, France.

3313 **APPOINTMENT OF COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATIVES.**

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr. Dr. Lovelidge as Town Council representative with Tenterden and Cllr. Mrs. Smith as Town Council representative with the Tenterden Bowls Club.

3314 **CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT RURAL ENGLAND.**

It was **RESOLVED** to become a member of the Campaign to Protect Rural England at a cost of £35.00 per annum.

3315 **MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

- (a) The Town Mayor expressed her deep sadness at the incident that took place after the Planning Committee meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019 and felt that it was time to draw a line under the incident and try and work together. The Mayor also expressed her sadness that a Councillor felt it necessary to report the incident straightaway to the local paper rather than allow it to be dealt with in-house.
- (b) The Town Mayor reminded the public and Councillors of the Archives & Regalia Exhibition which will take place on Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup> September 2019 and would be grateful if Councillors could volunteer to assist over the three days.

**The meeting opened at 7.00 pm and closed at 8.52 pm**

The foregoing Minutes and Report were confirmed and signed at a meeting of the Town Council held on Monday, 11 November 2019.

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_ (Monday, 11 November 2019)