

TENTERDEN TOWN COUNCIL – INTERNAL COMMITTEE

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

NOTES OF A MEETING ON 2ND OCTOBER 2018 AT 7.00 PM

Present: Cllrs. Sue Ferguson, John Crawford, Justin Nelson and Alan Sugden; Richard Harvey, Tash Mahoney, Matthew Meredith, Roger Quinton, Sue Quinton, James Sinclair, Seren Welch (Chair) and Graham Wise. Deputy Town Clerk, Claire Gilbert, took notes.

1. **Apologies for Absence.** Cllr. Ken Mulholland.
2. **Minutes.** The notes of the meeting held on 26th June 2018 were agreed.
3. **Matters Arising.** None.
4. **Chairman.** Cllr. Justin Nelson chaired the meeting.
5. **Resident Survey Data.** The Committee went through the list of top priorities for both residents and the Committee and assigned Lead Councillors to each item. The first five priorities were discussed and the remaining five would be discussed at the November meeting in time for recommendations to be forwarded to the Internal Committee for consideration at the meeting on 12th November 2018.
 - 5.1 Parking. Justin Nelson was assigned as Lead Councillor.
 - 5.1.1 Sue Ferguson suggested utilising the Railway car park for Town workers which would require a permit system. This would help generate income for the Railway, however, it would have to be seasonal to avoid clashes with their large events and main tourist season. It was agreed that the Railway should be asked if this was an option.
 - 5.1.2 Sue reported that in some car parks in Ashford free parking after 3pm is offered. This would be a great idea for the Town if Ashford Borough Council (ABC) would consider it.
 - 5.1.3 Alan Sugden raised the issue of people parking illegally on side roads and the Police should be getting involved, i.e. blocking residents' drives. James Sinclair reported that the issues with parking will unfortunately increase as the Town grows.
 - 5.1.4 Sue reported that unfortunately there is not enough parking for both residents and workers. Councillor Brad Bradford is in charge of Parking Services at ABC and would be a good contact. Sue suggested that there needed to be a free weekend or additional day in the Town car parks before Christmas; Bridewell Lane car park is already free on Sundays and Bank Holidays.
 - 5.1.5 Seren Welch suggested asking ABC for the top percentage rates of capacity of the car parks over weekends to see if usage can be measured.

5.1.6 It was agreed that the main items to cover for Parking were:

- (a) ask the railway for potential permit parking for Town workers;
- (b) ask ABC for 'free after 3' parking;
- (c) request the car park statistics from ABC.

5.2 Potholes. Sue Ferguson was assigned as Lead Councillor.

5.2.1 John Crawford reported that residents should be encouraged to use the 'Fix My Street' app which is easy to use.

5.2.2 Sue highlighted how easy it is to report issues on Kent County Council's website. Residents need to report issues direct and it is then easy to track progress. It was suggested that how to report potholes and issues on the highways should be included in the next Council newsletter.

5.3 Town Appearance/Management & High Street Re-generation. Alan Sugden was assigned as Lead Councillor. The two priorities were combined temporarily, however, the Tourism & Business Committee would take the lead on issues regarding High Street re-generation.

5.3.1 Seren reported that the main responses on the surveys were about the grass cutting in the Town. Alan reported that a Caretaker Scheme Sub-Committee has already been set up to review the effectiveness and financial viability of taking the task on. This could also be included in the next Newsletter.

5.3.2 Justin suggested that residents phone in with any issues at the appearance of the Town, although many residents already do this.

5.3.3 James Sinclair suggested contacting Tesco and Waitrose to find out if they would be willing to invest in helping improve the look of the Town. Tash Mahoney commented that both Tesco and Waitrose have the token schemes, however, you have to be a non-profit, charity or Community Interest Group to be considered for the schemes. It was suggested that the Lions Club could be approached to ask if Tesco would support them in improving the flower bed by West Cross.

5.3.4 Seren suggested asking ABC for help with a bulb planting scheme which they run.

5.3.5 Alan commented that many of the High Street shops seem to be less caring out their frontages, some of which are very tatty. Sue Quinton suggested running a competition of the best kept window display or shop front.

5.3.6 Sue commented on the leaf issues in the Town. Claire reported that Biffa are supposed to collect the leaves on the footpaths as part of the daily Town litter pick. Claire also reported that the Council now have a Billy Goat leaf collector so there should be an improvement this year on the greens.

5.3.7 Alan reported that the benches need to be painted/maintained and the phone box at the top of Station Road needs to be re-painted. The Council maintain the benches on a cycle, however, the phone box could be painted by the TCAT team (as was the one near the sorting office). Seren suggested adopting the phone box, however, Claire reported that this had been

attempted before in order for a defibrillator to be installed. BT would not sign it over as it was still being used by the public (namely one).

5.3.8 Roger Quinton raised his concerns about the number of A Boards throughout the High Street. Claire apologised for the admin team not issuing the agreed notices to the shops/businesses, but this is in hand. The Council now have the delegated authority to remove A Boards if those businesses are not adhering to the rules.

5.3.9 Richard Harvey suggested that the Council meet up with the Chamber members and shop owners to discuss ways of improving the High Street. Seren commented that not all shops, particularly the independents, can afford to repair their shop frontages. There is the fear that if the landlord was asked, rent rates would increase.

5.3.10 Tash suggested the Council producing a business focussed newsletter which would highlight the issues raised in the survey. Richard agreed to put something together to give to businesses around working together to improve the High Street. This would dovetail with the Destination Management Plan produced by Seren. As part of the DMP, a Town Manager role had been suggested who would work three days per week pro rata. Seren reported that ABC could be approached for funding towards this role for the first and maybe second year of employment. John Crawford reported that this should be considered as part of the precept.

5.4 Policing. Ken Mulholland was assigned as Lead Councillor.

5.4.1 Alan reported that a Police Forum meeting had taken place and it was reiterated that Tenterden is not a high crime area. It is certainly better than it was 50 years ago. It is deemed a safe area therefore you would not normally see police officers patrolling the streets. Reporting crimes/incidents is still an issue as members of the public are not doing this. Again, this could be included in the next Council newsletter. More Neighbourhood Watch Schemes also needed to be set up across the whole Town.

5.4.2 Tash reported that there are drug dealing issues in the Town and again this needs to be reported.

6. Social Media Policy. Justin asked the public members of the Sub-committee for their views on the Social Media Policy. They were happy with it as it stood but suggested that it was reviewed annually.

7. Code of Conduct. The public members of the Committee were not comfortable with signing the Code of Conduct as it seemed more relevant to Councillors; the Sub-Committee made recommendations to the Internal Committee, not vote on motions. It was agreed that a sheet would be made available at each meeting should a confidential item be discussed; members were happy to sign this.

8. How it works – Tenterden Town Council and New Residents Welcome Pack. Justin requested comments on the residents guide he had produced; members agreed to forward any comments direct to Justin. The Welcome Pack which would be issued to new residents was a self-funding

project whereby income would be obtained from advertising. It was a collaboration of the Lions Club, Churches Together and the Town Council.

- 9. Public Participation at Standing Committee Meetings.** The public members of the Committee had reviewed the proposal from the Internal Committee regarding changes to public participation at standing committee meetings. It was agreed that an explanation agenda item at the end of each meeting was not required. It was felt that the Council had come far in building better relationships with members of the public and to not allow any input from the public apart from at the beginning of a meeting would be a step back. Therefore, it was recommended that the Chair of each Committee would use their discretion when members of the public request to speak on an item and adhere to the time limits of each meeting.
- 10. The Future of the Public Engagement Sub-Committee.** It was agreed that this Committee should be more of a sounding board for issues put forward by the Council.
- 11. Any Other Business.** None.
- 12. Date of Next Meeting.** Monday, 5th November 2018 at 7.00 pm.

Meeting Closed at 8.45 pm.