



# Edenbridge Town Council



Town Clerk: Caroline Leet

Forward Planning | 04 Oct 2021 | Short Agenda (Excludes Confidential Items) | v:1

To Councillors: J Aldridge, A Baker, S Compton, A Damodaran, V Jennings, A Layland, N Lloyd, M McArthur, S McGregor (Chair), A Read, P Smith, S Sumner, S Taylor, B Todd.

Notice is hereby given of a Forward Planning Committee to be held in Rickards Hall on 4 October 2021 at 7:30 pm, which Councillors are summonsed to attend.

Town Clerk  
29 September 2021

To assist in the speedy and efficient dispatch of business members wishing to obtain factual information on items included on the Agenda are asked to enquire of the Town Clerk prior to the day of the meeting. Council Meetings may be recorded.

Any person intending to make recordings is advised to notify the Clerk in advance so that appropriate arrangements can be made

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1 **To Appoint the Chairman for The Ensuing Year for The Forward Planning Steering Group**  
Current Chairman is Cllr McGregor.

**Members to propose and vote a Chairman for the FPSG.**

**Misc. Note:** In the Terms of Reference (TOR), the generic terms for the Working/Steering Groups says, 'the Group will appoint a Chairman who should remain the same throughout the project where possible'. For the Forward Planning Steering Group (FPSG), it says, 'the Chairman of the subcommittee will be appointed by the Committee at the first meeting after the AMTC in accordance with Standing Orders'.

As the FPSG does not have delegated powers and makes its recommendations to Council or the Finance and Governance Committee (FGC), and it meets once a year (although can hold meetings as needed), I will propose to the next FGC that the TOR be amended for the appointment of the Chairman to be the same as the generic terms of other steering groups.

2 **Apologies for Absence**

3 **To receive a presentation from PS Technology on the Council's current IT file storage system and the benefits of a move to cloud based storage solutions**

Paul Stanyer, PS Technology will provide a presentation and answer questions on the Council's IT solutions. The FPSG will consider this under agenda item 7.1.

**Reminder:** The full Council considered this at its January meeting. Below is the summary and decisions from the meeting agenda:

**To consider the Council's IT file storage system and to move to cloud based storage solutions:**

The Town Clerk referred to the Clerk's report and summarised: The current server was installed over 5-years ago, and no-longer under warranty; some parts had already been replaced. There were now more versatile cloud-based options available to the Council for file storage, and which could be more suitable for remote working. The existing remote access to the server had been problematic and not all staff were able to access. To replace the existing sever with setup and migration would cost approximatly £10-12K, against migrating to a cloud-based storage option using Microsoft 365 environment at £7k as detailed in the proposal from PS Technology. This would provide enhanced communication tools; improved remote working ability; secure data storage; device management and security. The Council already uses Microsoft 365 and Exchange licences, but there would be a requirement to upgrade all staff to Microsoft 365 Business Premium and all councillors to Microsoft 365 Business Basic. The current licences cost £1,356 and would increase to a total of £2,135. With more and more applications and services moving to the cloud, PS Technology had also advised to consider a dedicated fibre Ethernet connection to the Internet. This would provide an uncontended (not shared) connection with high bandwidth speeds. The Council was already running all telephony and IT services through the Internet and this will provide the necessary high-availability and highcapacity connection you can rely on.

Members discussed. The advantages of the upgraded cloud-storage solutions were noted, but there were concerns that the expenditure had not been budgeted. Three Members with IT expertise advised that it would be unlucky if the server failed, and that the Council did hold back-ups. The consensus was that replacing the server was not critical but that the situation should be monitored.

Discussions to upgrade the broadband facility noted that the phone facility used the broadband facility and if there was a connection issue, the phones could also be impacted. When comparing it to the existing connection line and ethernet it did sound expensive but was comparative. It was recognised with a cloud-based storage facility, upgrading the broadband would be necessary.

**14.1 The expenditure of up to £7,000 (one off set-up cost) to update and upgrade the Council's IT storage solutions;**

**Resolved:** to keep this under review and include in the budget within the next two-years

**14.2 To upgrade the Microsoft software licences with additional licences annual expenditure of £813;**

**Resolved:** to upgrade the licence to Microsoft 365 Business Premium as needed and with the new home-working laptops

**14.3 To consider upgrading the broadband telecommunications and additional annual expenditure of £3,000 per year**

**Resolved:** to keep the broadband service under review, and to budget with the potential IT storage solutions.

4 **Declarations of interests or predetermination**

5 **To receive, adopt and sign the minutes of the Forward Planning Committee meeting held on 5 October 2020**

6 **Matters arising from the minutes for report and not elsewhere on the agenda**

6.1 **To receive an update of the Forward Plan from last meeting**

The Plan was reviewed at length at the meeting October 2020. The new layout was approved with three categories: Council Projects; projects supported by the Town Council and action by external bodies; aspirations for the town (supported by the Town Council and for action by external bodies). An update has been provided on the Plan with comments noted in red.

Projects achieved include: 31 replacement street light columns; defence barriers; outdoor gym and multi games area; new tourism website; office refurbishment; new online hall booking system; card payments; improved electronic presentation facilities for Rickards Hall and meetings; Mowshurst car park resurfacing. Skate ramps are due to be installed

currently, and the Recreation Ground playground refurbishment project is out to tender. In addition, home working facilities have been provided; and facilitated the Food Bank location to operate from.

 Annex 1: Edenbridge Town Council - Forward Plan 2021.pdf

## 7 To Consider Future Projects

### 7.1 To consider the Council's IT file storage system and to move to cloud based storage solutions, and the potential expenditure for budget

To summarise some of the issues with the current Council storage. The current server was installed over 6-years ago and is out of warranty. There are now new more versatile cloud based options available to the Council for file storage, and which could be more suitable for remote working. To replace the existing server with setup and migration would cost approximate £7K (quoted 2020; will need requote).

**Proposal to upgrade the software includes:**

#### **1) To move from a server (which will need replacing at some point) to Cloud based storage facility:**

A cloud-centric based environment would provide the following high-level improvements:

- Cloud-based identity control
- Enhanced communication tools
- Collaborative working
- Improved remote working ability
- Secure data storage
- Device management and security

Project objectives:

- Setup a new Microsoft 365 environment with all of the benefits listed in the proposal document, and that is aligned to Edenbridge Town Council policies and business/security requirements
- Work with Edenbridge Town Council to design an organisational structure that improves security around council data
- Create storage sites inside Microsoft 365 (SharePoint) to securely store company files as per the agreed design
- Develop a standard build of software/apps for each computer (device)
- Develop configuration profiles to ensure devices meet Edenbridge Town Council policies and compliance/security requirements
- Enrol Edenbridge Town Council computers into the new environment
- Provide suitable documentation, training and on-boarding assistance to Edenbridge Town Council personnel
- The end result will be a cloud managed network, where users, computers, apps and data are all managed centrally. Remote working will be just like working in the office.

**Do Members support improvements to the IT file storage system and to move to cloud**

based storage solutions, and the potential expenditure for budget? How do Members want to proceed with its recommendation to Finance and Governance Committee and Council for the budget preparations?

**7.2 To Consider if The Council Is Willing to Review Its Assets and Consider Selling Any to Lower Its Reserves Deficit**

Council at its January meeting, asked the FPSG to consider if there is any value in commissioning a review of the Council’s assets. This would need to be a medium/long-term project as it would require appropriate resources available to investigate, and consider valuations and professional fees.

**Do Members want to consider recommendation of a review of its Assets and investigate the costs for commissioning a review for inclusion in the new budget?**

**7.3 To consider the Council’s role with the Thursday Market and future strategy to enhance the current Market**

In January 2021 Council agreed to tender the management of the Thursday Market following Brays notice. In May, the Town Council took over the management of the Thursday Market. The officers of the Council oversee the traders, rents, and promotional activity, with the groundstaff helping with the notices in the car park and marking out the area. Since taking on the Market it has grown from 4 regular traders to 6-7 traders. There are plans to run a December promotion for seasonal craft traders

The Town Clerk and RFO recently attended a presentation by the National Association of British Market Authorities (NAMBA). It promotes markets on the national stage and also provides a wide portfolio of services for its members. This includes helping to build a community asset, creating a policy which protects the market and the powers it operated, and developing partnerships. The presentation show cased other market authorities (towns and parishes) who spoke about their experiences, issues and how they overcame them. In some cases, the markets increased their operation days. In all cases, they had a dedicated person who worked at creating and maintaining a thriving a community market asset. A copy of NAMBA’s booklet is attached (confidential doc), and a link to its website and Members support information is below.


Market expenditure / Income				
	Expenditure	Income		
Rates (annual)	£ 1,571.85			
advertising (est.)	£ 250.00			
Pitches income - Estimated		£ 5,453.36		
Est annual balance	£ 1,821.85	£ 5,453.36		
			Surplus	£ 3,631.51

Current staff hours taken (Estimated). This does not included meetings, promotion, email enquiries				
Thursdays only	104	based on 2hrs per week		
Estimated Groundstaff hours prep	52	based on 1 hr per week		
Total	156			
Estimated staff cost	£ 3,640.00			

**Recommendation:**

- To join NAMBA (current membership offer is until 31 March 2023) £500 plus VAT.
- To create Markets Policy (to formalise Edenbridge as the Market Authority)
- To recruit on a fixed term contract for 1 year (to be reviewed) a person to oversee the Market on Thursdays and to work to increase the number of traders, the profile of the market and organise promotional activities. Est. 8-10 hours per week, £5,500 annual salary budget

**How do Members want to proceed? Do members support the above recommendation and to recommend to be included in the new budget? Do Members want to recommend NAMBA membership to the October Council meeting for the current budget year?**

 Confidential Annex 2 (omitted from public documents): NABMA Manual.pdf

**7.4 To receive a proposal for Friends of Edenbridge Parks initiative**

Cllr Baker has researched volunteer groups around the country that support council run parks. They are set up as Friends of Parks and operate as its own trust. Is this an initiative that Edenbridge could benefit from with a similar partnership scheme?

Some are created when the parks are run down, but many seem to be created from an idea to improve the facilities and to enable funding via grants and fundraising for the council's green spaces. They are created with the council, so the council is an integral part of the volunteer group.

An example of such group is Friends of Hednesford Park set up in 2011 because Cannock Chase Council wanted to apply for a Heritage Lottery Fund Grant as part of the improvements to the park and war memorial.

The Council would need to support officer time to investigate the viability of such a group and preparing its constitution and objectives. A charity trust would also need to be set-up. A group of volunteers would need to be willing to work to get this Friends Group established. On the Forward Plan, this would likely be a medium term/view project.

Proposal would be to have one councillor to take the lead and work with an officer, until it is ready to be handed to the new volunteer group to manage entirely (with Council representative on the group).

**Do members support the principle of investigating establishing Friends of Edenbridge Parks and the officer(s) costs to investigate and prepare a detailed viability proposal? What is the recommendation for the Forward Plan and budget considerations?**

<https://www.friendsofhednesfordpark.org.uk/category/news/>

7.5 **To receive an updated Forward Plan and consider any additional future projects and/or changes to the Plan:**

Attached is an updated Plan with projects removed that have been completed and would form the Plan for 2022/23.

**Do members have any changes and/or additions to the plan?**

 Annex 3: Edenbridge Town Council - Forward Plan 2021 updates.pdf

8 **Town centre strategy - to discuss key issues facing the town centre and aspirations for its future**

Cllr Layland has asked Members to consider what the key issues are facing our town centre and the aspirations for its future. Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) is looking at a study for local high streets and would like to hear about any projects or any other context for the town.

**Do Members have any feedback for SDC on views regarding the future of our Town Centre?**

9 **To make recommendation to the Finance Committee any additional increases to the budget and precept to cover any proposals from the forward plan update**  
**What is the Members recommendation for the new draft budget?**

10 **To Consider Any Press Releases**