

Minutes of the Meeting of EDENBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL, held in Rickards Hall on 19 June 2023 at 7:30 pm.

Present: Cllrs. Jon Aldridge, Angela Baker (*Vice-Chairwoman*), Michael Gemmell Smith, Alan Layland, Margot McArthur, Angela Read, Stephen Sumner, Bob Todd (*Chairman*)
In attendance: Town Clerk; Deputy Clerk; two co-optee candidates

1 To Receive Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received, noted and accepted from Cllrs Compton and McGregor.

2 Declaration of Interests or Predetermination

Cllrs Baker, Layland and McArthur declared a non-pecuniary interest as Members of the Eden Valley Museum Trustees/Committee (item 11.1.1).

3 Public Questions and Statements

19:31 Meeting was adjourned for agenda item 3.

Four applications had been received for co-option; two were present at the meeting and two had submitted written statements. Candidates were received in alphabetical order, each were asked to speak *on why you would like to be a Town Councillor and what you feel you can offer the community*. The Town Clerk and Deputy Clerk each read out a candidate statement, with the two in attendance making a short representation.

19:41 Meeting was reconvened.

4 To receive, adopt and sign the minutes of the Annual and First Meeting of the new Council of Edenbridge Town Council held on 15 May (2023-01/01-12)

Resolved: that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 15 May 2023 be duly signed by the Chairman of the meeting as a true and accurate record of the meeting; pages 2023-01/01-12.

5 To receive County and District Councillor Reports

5.1 County Councillor

County Councillor McArthur mentioned Kent County Council (KCC) were currently looking at what could be done with its closed landfill sites; one site was being fitted with gas extraction and valves to release the nasty gases, and also flood defences were being erected. Another option being considered was to convert these areas to solar energy, this would also generate an income. Referring to potholes, she said that additional funding had been made available to help address the vast and increasing numbers of potholes across the county. She also mentioned that the operators repairing the holes now had to repair for free if they had to go back to redo any. There had been some progress with school buses, and details were in the process of being confirmed. Finally, she mentioned the County Councillors Combined Members Fund had reopened for applications, though had been reduced by half; she had £3.5k between all her allocated parishes.

5.2 District Councillors

District Cllr Baker, said she was delighted to have been elected to represent the North and East ward. She had been appointed to the Development Management Committee, Audit Committee, Scrutiny Committee and Sevenoaks Joint Transportation Board. Cllr Layland, said he was honoured to have been appointed as Chairman for the year. He mentioned his two nominated charities were Eden Valley Museum and West and Edenbridge Citizens Advice. Cllr McArthur had remained on Cabinet as the Cleaner and Greener portfolio holder, and Appointments Committee. She said the new Leader Cllr Julia Thornton was settling in. She also mentioned she and the Town Clerk had attended the Planning Inspectorate Hearing for the Seven Acre Farm Appeal, and had made representation. The Inspectorate found against the applicant and the Appeal was upheld.

Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) enforcement would now take over to ensure the site be return to the number of previously approved pitches. The enforcement action would take some time for the rectification works to be completed.

6 To receive and adopt the following minutes/reports of Committee meetings

6.1 Planning Committee meeting 17 May (2023-02/01-04); Planning Committee 05 June (2023-05/01-03)

Resolved: the minutes of the meetings and numbered – 17 May (2023-02/01-04); and 05 June (2023-05/01-03) be adopted.

6.2 Finance and Governance Committee 22 May (2023-03/01-03)

Resolved: the minutes of the meeting and numbered – 22 May (2023-03/01-03) be adopted.

6.3 Personnel Committee 23 May (2023-04/01-04)

Resolved: the minutes of the meeting and numbered – 23 May (2023-04/01-04) be adopted.

7 To receive recommendations from the Finance and Governance Committee 22 May

7.1 To approve a further three nominated bank signatories

Members unanimously,

Resolved: a further three signatories for the bank accounts, nominated Members details held with the RFO.

8 To receive recommendations from the Personnel Committee meeting 23 May

8.1 To confirm the recruitment of a Grounds Person Apprenticeship scheme with a fixed term contract of two-years; and the apprenticeship scheme training contribution of £300

Members unanimously,

Resolved: to support and ratify the recommendation and recruitment for a grounds person apprenticeship scheme with a fixed term contract of two-years; and the expenditure for the apprenticeship scheme training contribution of £300.

8.2 To confirm the recruitment for two positions: Open Spaces Officer; and the Community Warden

Members unanimously,

Resolved: to confirm and ratify the recruitment for the two replacements: Open Spaces and Administration Officer; and Community Warden.

8.3 Employees Handbook - to be updated to reflect current practices for Parental and Shared Leave, and to offering the first week of Paternity Leave at full pay, with the second week 90% of average weekly earnings.

Members unanimously,

Resolved: to confirm and ratify the Employee Handbook to be updated to reflect the Green Book current practices for Parental and Shared Leave; and to confirm the first week of Paternity Leave at full pay, with the second week 90% of average weekly earnings.

9 Co-options for Councillors (there are four seats vacant)

The Chairman thanked the two candidates in attendance for their applications and earlier presentations. He said that Members had previously agreed to fill the vacancies by co-option, an advert inviting interested candidates to apply had been placed on the Council's website, Facebook page and noticeboards 24 May, closing date for applications was 8 June; there were four vacancies

and four applications had been received. Under the co-option procedures, where there is more than one vacancy and the number of candidates equals the number of vacancies, all the vacancies may be filled by a single composite resolution; in this case the four applicants were listed on the ballot form and Members had up to four optional votes to exercise. The person(s) co-opted must receive an absolute majority vote of the councillors present and voting (Local Government Act 1972 Sch 12, para 39). The candidates were Andy Eyre, Nicola Martindale, Vince Parker and Jeff Streets.

9.1 To receive co-option applications and vote to fill the vacancies

Members voted and by majority ballot vote,

Resolved: to fill all four vacancies by co-option; successful candidates appointed by co-option to the Council were Andy Eyre, Nicola Martindale, Vince Parker and Jeff Streets.

9.2 To receive the Councillor(s) Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Andy Eyre and Jeff Streets both signed the Acceptance of Office book as Councillors of Edenbridge Town Councillor, and signed before the Town Clerk (Proper Officer). Nicola Martindale and Vince Parker, were not in attendance and arrangements would be made for them to sign within 28-days in front of the Town Clerk.

10 To receive reports and recommendations from the Town Clerk and Officers; Working Groups; and Delegated Reports

10.1 Clerk's Report

The Clerk's reported was received and noted.

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

11.1 To ratify the annual Service Level Agreement grants for 2023 to:

11.1.1 Eden Valley Museum £6,500

Members unanimously,

Ratified: the Service Level Agreements (SLA) grant as budgeted for the Eden Valley Museum £6,500.

11.1.2 HOUSE £8,000

Members unanimously,

Ratified: the SLA grant as budgeted for HOUSE £8,000.

11.1.3 Twinning Association £500

Members unanimously,

Ratified: SLA grant as budgeted for the Twinning Association £500. Members noted this was the 50th Anniversary year and the last year of the SLA; any unspent funds the Association would return to the Council.

12 To receive an update on the new Council logo and rebranding identity

Members received the update on the Council logo and branding as reported in the Town Clerk's report, and noted the the Communications Officer had done an excellent job bringing together all the detail and an implementation timetable. The logo would start to to be used on email signatures, the website and other communications from 21 June. The new logo and branding presented a fresh, clean and professional identity, and would be used on all new Council literature being produced from now on; existing signage would be updated as and when appropriate to replace.

13 Consultations

13.1 Public Consultation on draft Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-39 Further Proposed Changes Consultation Document (Regulation 18) - opens 13 June, closes 25 July 2023

Noted.

13.2 Public Consultation on draft Kent Mineral Sites Plan Including Details of Nominated Hard Rock Site (Regulation 18) - opens 13 June, closes 25 July 2023

Noted.

14 To receive reports from councillors who have attended meetings of outside bodies

Cllr Aldridge said he had attended the Sevenoaks Kent Association Local Councils (KALC) meeting on 9 June, an interesting presentation had been given by Linda Larter, Sevenoaks Town Council Clerk on its Neighbourhood Plan which had proceeded through its Regulation 19, and successfully voted in and adopted. He wondered if Edenbridge Town Council should reconsider its plans for a Neighbourhood Plan. The Town Clerk said that Planning Committee could consider and make a recommendation for the Visioning session (September) to consider and part of the Forward Planning.

Cllr McArthur mentioned she had attended a meeting on the new Edenbridge Memorial Medical Centre, but nothing new had been raised.

15 To consider any press releases

New co-opted councillors.

16 Matters for future agendas

None.

17 Date of next meeting - Monday 3 July 2023

Members are asked to attend for a group photograph.

Meeting closed 20:13.