

To Councillors: J Aldridge, A Baker (*Vice-Chairwoman*), S Compton, M Gemmell Smith, A Layland, N Martindale, M McArthur, S McGregor, V Parker, A Read, J Streets, S Sumner, B Todd (*Chairman*).

Notice is hereby given of a Council Meeting of Edenbridge Town Council to be held in Rickards Hall on 11 September 2023 at 7:30 pm, which Councillors are summonsed to attend.

Town Clerk
6 September 2023

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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Meeting Papers & Report

1 **To Receive Apologies for Absence**

2 **Declaration of Interests or Predetermination**


The disclosure must include the nature of the interest. If an interest becomes apparent to a member during the course of a meeting that has not been disclosed under this item, the member must immediately disclose it.

3 **Public Questions and Statements**

Members of the public, and members with prejudicial interests on items on the Agenda, may make representations, answer, ask questions and give evidence at this meeting in respect of items on the Agenda. (This is the only opportunity for members of the public to make a contribution during the meeting.)

Both public and members are limited to three minutes per person to speak and the total time designated for public questions shall not exceed fifteen minutes unless directed by the Chairman of the meeting.

4 **To receive, adopt and sign the minutes of the Council meeting held on 03 July 2023 (2023-009/01-06)**

 Full Council | 03 July 2023 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-009/1-6)


5 **To receive County and District Councillor Reports**

5.1 **County Councillor**


5.2 **District Councillors**

6 **To adopt the following reports/minutes of meetings**


6.1 **Planning & Transportation Committee meeting 17 July 2023-011/01-04; Planning Committee meetings: 14 August 2023-014/01-03; 04 September 2023-014/01-04**


 Planning and Transport | 17 July 2023 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-011/1-4)

 Planning and Transport | 14 August 2023 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-014/1-3)

 Planning and Transport | 04 September 2023 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-015/1-4)


6.2 **Open Spaces Committee meetings: 12 June 2023-006/01-06; 10 July 2023-010/01-03**

 Open Spaces | 12 June 2023 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-006/1-5)

 Open Spaces | 10 July 2023 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-010/1-3)

6.3 **Finance Committee 24 July 2023**

Finance Committee meeting 24 July - minutes are awaiting publication, so will be presented to the next full Council meeting for approval. Full meeting papers and reports are on the website.

 Finance and Governance | 24 July 2023 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-012/1-2)

6.4 **Norman Foundation Charity 24 July 2023-013**

Charities Committee - Norman Foundation meeting 24 July - minutes are awaiting publication, so will be presented to the next full Council meeting. Meeting agenda is on the website.

6.5 **Personnel Committee 05 September 2023-016/01-03**

Minutes from the Personnel Committee will aim to be published prior to full Council.

 Personnel | 05 September 2023 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-016/1-3)

7 **To receive reports and any recommendations from working groups; delegated reports; clerk's and officers' reports**

7.1 **To note delegated decisions from Planning Committee (August)**

7.1.1 **Pavilion: Internal reconfiguration permitted to the Rugby Club for expanding the female changing facilities within the Pavilion**

To note: Members received a request from the Rugby Club to support upgrading the female changing/shower area in the Pavilion. With the growth of the women's rugby team, now 25-30 members, there is a need to improve their facilities. The preferred option for this was to expand one of the changing rooms by knocking through the wall into an unused officials room on the women's corridor side - this had been inspected by a structural engineer and building contractor, confirming that the wall to be knocked through is not load bearing. **Resolution:** supported and consent given to the above work as a redesignation of the rooms and space within the Pavilion.

Update - works were completed over the summer period, including redecorating the Rugby changing rooms.

7.2 **To receive recommendations from the Personnel Committee 05 September**

7.2.1 **To support the proposal for Personnel Committee meeting papers/report to remain confidential circulated to Personnel Committee members only**

Currently, Personnel Committee papers are circulated to all councillors, not just Personnel Committee Members, this is because a) the 'Council' is the employer and has overall responsibility for staffing; b) all councillors have the right to attend any committee meeting though only committee members can vote on decisions.

Under s101, LGA 1972 the council can arrange for the discharge of any of its functions by an officer as well as by a committee. Resolutions (Standing Orders provide provide for decisions to be delegated). The Council's Terms of Reference outline delegated authority including for Personnel (sub) Committee (p13&14). The Committee has delegated authority to make a number of staffing decisions. Any updates/changes will be presented

to Governance to amend the TORs.

The Personnel Committee discussed at its meeting if it was necessary for all councillors to receive personnel papers especially where there is sensitive information, and commented just committee members should be privy to this information. The recommendation was supported for circulation of papers/reports to Committee members only. It was noted minutes are published on the website.

Do Members support circulation of Personnel Committee meeting papers/reports to committee members only.

7.2.2 **To adopt the updated Employee Handbook**

Worknest recently reviewed the Employee Handbook, following the corrections to reflect paternity leave (as approved May meeting). It was noted that the 2017 handbook required some regulation updates and also copied into a more up to date format. Committee Members reviewed the handbook and were satisfied with the regulatory and procedural changes. (This was circulated with Personnel papers.)

Does Council agree to adopt the updated Employee Handbook.

7.2.3 **To support new office hours**

Personnel Committee received the staff hours evaluation, which span over an 87 week period (January 2022 to 31 August 2023). This supported the excessive additional hours office staff are working, and rarely leaving before 6.00 pm.

In addition, a summary of daily/weekly visits to the office was presented for August. The weekly totals ranged from 84 to 122 visitors. People access the office for a wide range of reasons not just Town Council services, but also matters relating to other agencies and councils, mental health issues, environmental and more.

The work and expectations of the Council has changed over the years, the diverse range of activities and projects of the Council, its meetings (min 45 public meetings a year), the buildings and open spaces management, emails, social media and an open office, mean there is a lot going on and the cumulative effect of addressing issues which require immediate attention is impacting on managing staff hours and resources.

Members also noted the two recent retirements and current vacancies, the work from these vacancies is added to remaining officers and the Clerk, and the potential lone working issues with reduced staff to cover the current hours. Several measures were considered and it was agreed to:

- Change the office hours 'open to the public' to Monday to Thursday 9.00 am to 3.30 pm; closed Fridays to the public. This is to allow uninterrupted work time for other office operations/tasks (Monday to Friday 9.00 am - 5.00pm)
- 9-day fortnight for the Town Clerk and RFO

Do Members support new office opening hours and 9-day fortnight for two officers, as above?

7.2.4 **To approve staff remuneration in view of additional work loads/hours**

Members noted the recent additional responsibility for the Planning and Administration Officer. Members supported a one point NJC pay scale increment in recognition of additional work and expertise. Also, whilst the office has two vacancies, with existing officers undertaking elements of these job roles, to pay a nominal monthly bonus in

recognition of the extra work load.

Do Members support the remuneration recognition for Planning and Administration Officer?

8

Council Casual Vacancy

To note (vacancy one): Following the resignation of Steve Taylor in July, there was no call for a by-election therefore the Council may consider filling this vacancy by co-option.

To note (vacancy two): A new casual vacancy has arisen recently following the resignation of Andy Eyre. SDC has been informed, and The Notice of Casual Vacancy has been published on the Council's website and noticeboard. As it stands, it is not known if a by-election will be called or if the Council can decide to co-opt to fill the vacancy; the deadline for residents to write to SDC should they wish a by-election is 26 September. The outcome for by-election or co-option will be reported to the next Council meeting (30 October).

Under the co-option procedures (3); extract...

3.1 If no request for an election is received after the expiry of the fourteen day casual vacancy notice period, the council must co-opt a person to fill the vacancy as soon as is practicable. The person must be qualified to be a councillor (see point 5).

3.2. Some councils advertise for expressions of interest in being co-opted. Although there is no legal requirement to do this, it is generally regarded as good practice to make the vacancy known as widely as possible.

3.3. A vacancy for co-option will be acknowledged by the full Council. If there are already candidate(s) known to members, it may not be necessary to advertise.

How do Members wish to proceed with vacancy one and co-option process?

<https://www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/21-02-co-option-guidance-and-procedure-policy-adopted-15.02.21.pdf>

9

To receive reports and any recommendations from working groups; delegated reports; clerk's and officers' reports

9.1

Clerk's Report

Building Bridges for Dementia Friendly Edenbridge: We are hoping hold another awareness training session on Thursday 12 October (time tbc) for local businesses, groups and organisations enrolling onto the initiative. The new logo and window stickers are still awaiting approval from Kent Dementia Alliance.

Edenbridge Community Christmas Association: This year the ECCA will only be organising the Town's Christmas Lights. Father Christmas will be in his grotto at the Crown on Saturday 25 November.

Electric Vehicle Chargers (EVCs): Kent Smarter Travel Scheme (KSTS) are finalising details with the contractor, so it is looking hopeful that the four EVCs at Market Yard car park will have an installation date soon.

Family Fun Days: This year's four events, held Thursday afternoons in July and August at Stangrove Park, all funded by the Town Council, were again well received. One parent came in to the office to say, "what a brilliant thing for the Council to host, my son had a fabulous time and loves his dinosaur and his huggy wuggy clay model which he made".

Father Stephen Mitchell: Father Stephen has been the Parish Priest in Edenbridge and

Crockham Hill for 33 years, stepping aside to retire in October. During his time, he has exercised his responsibility for all the inhabitants of the parish of Edenbridge, available on call to any of them at any hour of the day or night every day of the year. Fr. Stephen has contributed a great deal of his time and expertise to other community voluntary activities including the Twinning Association, his fluency in German and French has helped several young students at GCSE and A-level with their conversational skills, and as a military historian he has engaged with the activities of the Royal British Legion, as well as the Naval Association and the Air Cadets when those organisations functioned in the town. He has been a keen supporter of the Eden Valley Museum since its inception. He has also expressed his concerns for the wellbeing of young people by volunteering as a helper with Eden Christian Trust, supporting its Youth Workers since 1996, and assisting at the Youth Club sessions on Friday evenings. He has similarly supported and encouraged fundraising for the EHAS holiday scheme, and the former Allsorts After-School Club held at the Astor Centre, Eden Valley School. He and his wife have for decades been regular befrienders at BRIDGES and supporters of the initiative since 1991. Both ECT and BRIDGES are independent charities established and run by volunteers. Neither charity falls under the remit of the Vicar, or of the Parochial Church Council of Edenbridge Parish Church. Many people in Edenbridge will feel the loss of his departure to retirement.

Forge Singers: Working with the Council's solicitor on a new Lease Agreement, this has now been drafted and sent to the Forge Singers. (Resolution Council May 2023.)

Gardening Competition – Ready Steady Grow - Presentation evening 5 September:

Entrants attended an event with certificates and prizes presented by Cllr Bob Todd (Chairman). Unfortunately, the guest speaker (Head Groundsman from Hever Castle and Gardens) had to cancel due to a family emergency. However, all who attended seemed to enjoy it and were pleased with their certificates and awards.

Grants: The Council's grants invitation for applications has been published on the website and Facebook, 3 September closing date 20 October. Reminder the Grants meeting 13 November.

In Bloom: The presentations for South and South East In Bloom competition is on 29 September. The Council has entries for the Cemeteries and Parks categories.

Pavilion mould issue: The Rugby Club has raised an issue with black spores/mould appearing in the football changing room area and corridor. We have inspected and concluded that the dark spots attributed with mould has been there for quite sometime, most likely a result of condensation from the showers over a period of time. Under the Lease, the Club are responsible for the cleaning and decoration. However, it would appear there is no ventilation for that section. Together with the Buildings Manger, we will investigate potential ventilation solutions and costs, which can be discussed at the annual Lease meeting later this year.

Policing and PACT meeting: Edenbridge's Police officer PC Michael Sexton has now been replaced by PC Harry Kemp. He has already visited the Council offices and is keen to forge relationships with local groups in the town. He will be attending the next PACT meeting - **Monday 9 October, 2.00 pm Rickards Hall.**

Post Office update: The most recent update the Council has had from the Post Office says they have a couple of applications from local businesses, who are currently formalising their business plans which Post Office will assess as part of the process.

Silver Sunday (SDC programme): This year's district programme (soon to be published) includes the Games Club for over 55s, Rickards Hall; several activities run by Bridges; Steps to Wellbeing walks in Edenbridge on first and third Wednesday of the month starting 10.30 am from Church Street; Pop-up-Sue exercise sessions; and some events organised by SDC at the Eden Centre. These events include: Seniors Information morning Monday 13

November (the Town Council will have an information stand at this event); Tea Dance Friday 24 November.

Training - Councillors:

- Thursday 21 September (time tbc)- SDC Standards/Code of Conduct training – Sevenoaks District Council (remote/Zoom)
- Thursday 5 October - Finance Training on Councillors responsibilities, understanding the AGAR, budgeting and planning ahead, with a general Q&A on finances (external trainer). Please try to attend this as for all Members benefit.

Training - Visioning exercise feedback: Earlier this month several members attended a training session, with an external trainer, looking at visioning and planning for council projects. The session covered, what is a strategic plan, the role of the council and projects, and a view of preparing a Plan which should differentiate between what the council controls and therefore realistically can deliver, and where it does not control but can work to influence. It also covered how to carry out public engagement and support for the Council's vision. This was a good interactive session. The feedback report will be presented to the Forward Planning Steering Group meeting (23 October) to help with planning projects/activities for the Council term.

Vacancies: Two vacancies, Open Spaces & Admin Officer and Community Warden, were advertised in June, and re-advertised from 29 August, including an advert in South East Recruitment paper for 2 weeks (editions 7 and 14 September), closing date 25 September.

9.1.1 **To note: Tender Notice for the Replacement window frames and glass, with new shutters was published on the Contract Finder (and Council's website) 21 August, closing date 22 September**

To note: The tender specification for replacement windows and new shutters at the Pavilion was prepared in August, and the invitation to tender published; closing date 22 September. Seven packs have been sent out so far. Funding was supported by CIL Board November 2022, up to £85k.

9.1.2 **To approve the office Christmas working arrangements**

Each year the office closes for the main Christmas week, with staff using the two statutory dates, and the option to use annual leave for other dates. This year Christmas Day falls on a Monday.

Office last day open to the public - Thursday 21 December (closes 3.30 pm). Friday 22 December, closed to public but phone cover until 1.00 pm. Reopen Tuesday 2 January. Monday 25 & Tuesday 26 Bank Holiday days; Wednesday 27 & Thursday 28 close two stat day; Friday 29 closed using annual leave/or normal day off. Monday 1 January Bank Holiday.

Do Members confirm Christmas closure from Friday 22 December, 1.00 pm reopening Tuesday 2 January?

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

10.1 **To receive an update on the case for the unauthorised access gate at the Recreation Ground**

The matter remains to be managed by the Council's solicitor.

10.2 **Thursday Market: To consider allocating a budget of £300 for activities for December: and £300 for additional general advertising boards/banners**
Over the summer months the Market has maintained at least 10 stalls week, peaking at 15. A newsletter was distributed to traders also with an update on Council promotion/investment in the market. (*Copy attached, traders only.*)

Summer activities budget of £600 was allocated. Last Christmas £300 was allocated. Any additional support the Council has provided to help traders and enjoyment for the public has been received well.

Do Members support a Christmas Market activities budget of up to £300?

The Market Officer has suggested additional notices such as estate agency style boards and banners could be strategically placed at locations outside Edenbridge/neighbouring villages. The cost for an estate agent style board would be £120 plus post. Banners range from £50 upwards.

Do Members support a budget of £300 to trail additional market signage/boards?

 Confidential Annex 1 (omitted from public documents):

10.3 **To receive an update on maintenance work for Rickards Hall**
Since the July meeting, we have received four building contractors assessment view and quotes on the maintenance works required for Rickards Hall. Three have provided similar views, quotes for external and internal works ranging in the region of £10-£20k. A fourth quote provided less detail but could be re-approached. A quote was also requested to replace the shutter between the hall and kitchen, which was raised under the building fire risk assessment, c.£1,500. A like for like comparison is difficult due to some variations in the assessments.

Three quotes for a surveyor ranged from £1,000 to £2,000. We have appointed the lower quote to survey and produce a 10 year maintenance schedule. They will visit 21 September and provide their report soon after.

A grant was submitted to West Kent Rural Grants (WKRK) for a 50/50 contribution. However, as the work is maintenance and not capital project, the grant was not successful. WKRK feedback did say they would have liked to have supported the project as a community hall, but the type of maintenance work did not meet the criteria.

10.3.1 **To approve instruction for external building repair works to Rickards Hall following receipt of the surveyor's report and advice, thus permitting works could commence this autumn**

The following resolutions were made in July:

- support, acknowledging the need for repair works to Rickards Hall, and ideally before the coming winter subject to the work proposals being reviewed and prioritised.
- to appoint a Surveyor to carry out a report on Rickards Hall and the adjoining section with Church House to ascertain the repair and maintenance works needed.
- the expenditure for a Surveyor report and the maintenance repairs for Rickards Hall to come from the earmarked Building Reserves, and the expenditure of up to £9,000 (additional funding would need to be approved if needed); with a more detailed proposal presented to the next Council 11 September (or Planning Committee 14 August if the information was available).

As we have had four building contractors view the maintenance needs for Rickards Hall, and a surveyor has been appointed to provide a report and prioritise the essential works and produce a 10-year maintenance plan,

Are Members satisfied that subject to the surveyors recommendations for essential external works that need to be carried out this year, that officers (the Town Clerk and Building Manager) obtain revised quotes for these works and then engage with a contractor that is a) able to attend to these works this autumn and b) offers best value?

10.4 **Annual Community Event - to receive an update**

At the July meeting, Members **resolved**: to support investigating costs and a proposal for an event to coincide with D-Day 80th anniversary celebrations and to appoint a Working Group (WG) to prepare a proposal for Council. WG members: Cllrs Baker, Gemmell Smith, Parker, Streets and Todd. It was also **agreed** to raise 'events' at the September Visioning/Forward Planning exercise.

Update to be given at meeting.

11 **OTHER BUSINESS including items referred from Committees for decision**

11.1 **To ratify the Energy renewal agreement for 01 February 2025 to 29 September 2027**

Total Energies contacted the Council in July advising that businesses are encouraged to consider their renewals - energy firms now have an obligation to provide best advice and opportunity for businesses to budget. The market prices change daily and they now already that in August prices would increase a further 20-22%. Whilst it is difficult to predict charges for 2025, the strong advice was to proceed asap to lock prices for the 2025 renewal. Prices had already increased from the initial quote 3 July to a new quote date 27 July; and quotes were valid only for one day as they use the live prices. Whilst I know very little about the energy markets, bills do not usually go down.

Some research on commercial business tariffs which showed higher than quoted: . Business Energy Tariff Prices per kWh | MoneySuperMarket reported electricity around 29p per/kWh in June; and gas at 9p. Another article reported higher electricity charges at 31p per/kWh.

Current charges

Gas: 0.04p per/kWh with no standing charge

Electricity: 00.1511p per/kWh standing daily charge 25.1564p

Agreed and signed for:

Gas: 0.095p per/kWh with no standing charge

Electricity: 00.28p per/kWh standing daily charge £1.15p

Having consulted with the Vice-Chair of the Finance Committee and the RFO, it was felt there was an operational decision to act on. Based on consumption estimates for the 3 July quote (which are higher than the estimate on to days quote), the electricity increase of 0.005p on todays quote (was 0.275 now 0.28) the extra cost is £353 over a 27 month period. I have gone ahead and signed the two renewals. This cannot be cancelled unless we move, or go bust.

Do Members ratify the energy renewal.

11.2 **To consider free hire for Rickards Hall for a fundraising event for the Museum hosted by Cllr Alan Layland (Chairman SDC) on evening Friday 22 September**

Chairman of SDC, Cllr Layland, as one of his Chairman's charities, has this year nominated the Eden Valley Museum. An event has been organised in Edenbridge to showcase the Museum and raise funds. As this is a fundraising events with all proceeds to the Museum, Cllr Layland has asked for this Council's support.

Do Members support free hire for Rickards Hall for a fundraising event for the Museum hosted by Cllr Alan Layland (Chairman SDC) on evening Friday 22 September?

11.3 **Bonfire Society: To approve the expenditure for this year's annual clean-up of c. £1,200**
This expenditure is budgeted each year. **Do Members support the continued funding for the Bonfire event clear-up?**

The Bonfire Society has requested the event be raised with the Police at the next PACT meeting.

11.4 **Edenbridge Remembrance Sunday 12th November 2023**

A meeting with other community groups and partners has been scheduled for Tuesday 12 September to discuss potential plans and preparations for this year's service and wreath laying. Details will be circulated by email and published once details have been confirmed. An update will be reported to the next Council meeting on 30 October.

11.5 **Proposal to cancel CIL Board meeting 13 November; next meeting February 2024**

In view of limited CIL funds, currently unallocated £10,874, and reduced staffing, the proposal is to cancel November's Board meeting. The next meeting will be scheduled with the calendar of meetings for 2024.

Do Members support cancelling the CIL Board meeting 13 November?

11.6 **To approve the expenditure of c.£1,025 for a replacement cooker for Rickards Hall**

The gas engineer visited 06 September for the annual gas service. Whilst here we asked him to look at the cooker which has not been working for a while (there has been hirers complaints for not fixing the cooker, but we have not been able to find a cooker engineer). In short, he condemned it - element burnt out not replaceable. He recommended the Council purchase a reputable cooker brand (it was not necessary to spend £2,500 - £3,500 on a commercial cooker). A suitable cooker, plus disconnection and reconnection and dispose of, would be in the region of £1,025.

Do Members approve the expenditure of c.£1,025 for a replacement cooker for Rickards Hall?

11.7 **To approve a budget of £600 for investigation into the rates paid for the Market Yard Car Park and Toilets (£5,364 pa)**

The Visioning Trainer was amazed the Business Rate relief which abolished rates on public toilets was not applied to the Council's public toilets despite raising this with SDC and NALC. He was also surprised that a free carpark was also ne exempt. In his experience, and a successful challenge to the VOA, he advised to check the legislation and request a VOA revaluation. The Council currently pays for the Market Yard Car Park and toilets, £5,364 pa; in addition a further £1,571.85 for the market.

Investigates and completing the VOA forms will take an officer several hours. He has quote to look in to this for the Council £60 per hour. Not knowing the time involved I have proposed a budget for 10 hours/£600.

Do Members approve a budget of £600 to provide for investigation into the law and challenge the rates paid for the Market Yard Car Park and Toilets?

- 11.8 **SDC annual Liaison Meeting – Thursday 02 November (10.00 am) – proposed agenda items**
Do Members have any agenda items to propose for the annual liaison meeting with SDC?

11.9 **Cyber Insurance**

The Council's insurance company recently contacted us to advise that the Council should consider taking out a Cyber Insurance policy. There are two quotes ranging from £614 to £807.

In March, the Council considered a new fully managed IT support complete with cyber security and compliance service upgrading the current support service which would have then been an additional annual expenditure of £4,603.62, to current IT Service package. Members noted the current agreement covered the Server, IT support services, Sophos security and Microsoft 365 licenses for officers and councillors. This did not provide enhanced cyber and compliance service: 24/7 eye on screen monitoring, rapid detection for response to cyber-attacks, managed risk and compliance with wide range of global standards and early detection reducing response time and reputational losses. Following a recent conversation with PS Tech, they confirmed that the current level of cover was adequate, but recommend that with rapid advancements in technology and cyber-attacks, Council should consider enhancing its cover to a fully all encompassed IT Managed service to meet full cyber protection and compliance. Members discussed and noted that the new SharePoint storage was a step in the right direction improving IT Security. However, as data held by Council had minimal personal data, Members agreed this was not urgent and to wait until the IT/SharePoint transition had been completed before fully considering.

I have spoken with PS Tech for advice as to whether the Council should have/needs cyber insurance. In short yes, but it is for the Council to calculate its risks. Insurance companies would expect the Council to be compliant with the insurance requirements, for example, Cyber Essentials which is a government-backed, industry-supported scheme to help organisations protect themselves against common online threats. There are two levels, basic which is a self-assessment and Cyber Essentials Certificate which goes deeper and is assessor accredited, cost est. £500 per year. *The government requires all suppliers bidding for contracts involving the handling of certain sensitive and personal information to hold an up to date Cyber Essentials certificate.*

Simply, for cyber security/cyber safe there are three levels:

- 1) IT support services (PS Technology), Sophos security and Microsoft 365 licenses, Sharepoint - in other words, basic cover - *This is what ETC currently has*
- 2) Improved security services with a 'fully managed system' (as previously considered) and includes in additional cyber awareness training for all staff and councillors; phishing protection, PS Tech checking latest MS security updates implemented accordingly for council (currently optional for users), help with achieving Cyber Essentials accreditation certificate
- 3) Cyber insurance as well, but would need to complete step 2 to be compliant.

Why is cyber protection important? For the Council, it holds personnel records, banking records, residents correspondence and some confidential documents are received from other organisations, authorities, business for the Council's information.

My advise is Council considers budgeting to move to the full managed IT support service. I have requested an updated quote, which I hope to circulate prior to the meeting.

Do members support improving its cyber protection moving to a full IT managed support service package and budget for 2024/25?

Do Members want to proceed with Cyber Insurance and the expenditure of up to £807, or wait until it has tighter cyber compliance and budget for 2024/25?

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cyber-essentials-scheme-overview>

12 **To approve the proposed Council and Committees Meeting schedule for 2024**
Do Members confirm the Council and Committees Meeting schedule for 2024?

 Confidential Annex 2 (omitted from public documents):

13 **FORWARD PLANNING STEERING GROUP (FPSG) – the next meeting is 23 October – are there any specific future projects Members would like to be considered by the FPSG and as part of the the new visioning for this Council**

The FPSG considers and make recommendations to full Council or Finance and Governance Committee on the following matters:

- The long-term future development of the town, in line with the Town Council's agreed vision and fundamental principles
- Monitor, update and maintain the Town Council's long, medium, and short-term plan
- Review the Town Council's five-year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments and make any proposals for revising the forecast as necessary
- Recommendations, for the level of Precept increase, based on the above plans, to guide the Council and its Committees' budget setting processes
- Recommendations on policy and capital expenditure to Council
- Consider wider partnership schemes for Edenbridge and if it is appropriate for the Town Council to be involved

Following the visioning training (2 September) the group will receive the summary report with a number of recommendations and advice how to structure its Vision Plan and prioritise Council objectives and projects. The current plan is published on the website with last year's minutes (link below).

Do Members have any specific items they would like included on the agenda for the FPSG meeting?

https://www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk/mc-events/forward-planning-steering-group-2/?mc_id=733

14 **Consultations**

14.1 **Kent & Medway Partnership Domestic Abuse Strategy 2024-2029 - Public consultation opened 24 July - Closes 9 October 2023**

This consultation was notified to the Council in July, posters were displayed in the Council's noticeboards.

<https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/domestic-abuse-strategy-2024-2029>

14.2 **Kent Family Hub Services - Opened 19 July closes 13 September**

KCC is proposing to introduce Family Hubs in order to create savings and bring together and integrate support services for children, young people and families, so that they are easier for people to access. This will include children's centres, youth hubs and provision, health visiting and community based midwifery.

As part of the consultation, KCC is proposing that the following youth activities and clubs may stop:

- Edenbridge - Eden Centre youth group, House (Tues, Wed & Fri), 8-12s session, Olympia Boxing (Thurs) and Nurture Group (Thurs)

A Facebook post was published also on the Council's website in August.

<https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/family-hubs-and-start-for-life-offer>

14.3 **Kent Mineral Sites Plan: Second Call for Sites - Hard Rock - closing date 12 October 2023**

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

16 **To consider any press releases**

17 **Matters for future agendas**

18 **Date of next meeting - 30 October**