

To Councillors: J Aldridge, A Baker (Vice-Chairwoman), S Compton, M Gemmell Smith, A Layland, 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 15 January 2024 at 7:30 pm, which Councillors are summonsed to attend.

Town Clerk
10 January 2024

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 04 December 2023-021/01-08**

 Full Council | 04 December 2023 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-031/1-7)


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 Committee meetings 11 December 2023-032/1-2; 08 January 2024-033/1-3**

 Planning and Transport | 11 December 2023 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-032/1-2)

 Planning and Transport | 08 January 2024 v.1 - Minutes (Pages 2023-033/1-3)

7 **To receive recommendations from Committees**

None.

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

Clerk's Report

Byelaws update: The next stage is for a letter this month to be submitted to the Secretary of State to confirming the public notice period and Council resolution.

Car parking issues in Council car parks: Complaints continue to be received about residential parking at Blossoms Park restricting park users from parking and accessing the facilities. Signage has been damaged.

The abandoned vehicle at Market Yard car park has been resolved and the streetlight has been able to be carried out (December). Blossoms car park abandoned vehicle is taxed and MOT but has flat tyres. A meeting with the Parking Working Group will be arranged for January to receive feedback and suggestions following a car parking management company assessment of the sites.

Cemeteries: The past couple of months we have been working through the in cemeteries three and four, contacting families where the space for permitted Memorials had been expanded beyond what is allowed. Now that the Christmas period is over, we are working through the cemeteries removing any additional memorials, memorabilia, kerb stones, shingle, and artificial flowers. There are some burial plots we have not been able to write to the families, I have agreed that these should also be cleared. Some residents have rectified the issues, themselves. Over the years, the regulations have been upheld with requests for grander memorials, photos, badges, artificial flowers/plant all declined. The Open Spaces Committee will receive an update at its next meeting.

Electric Vehicle Chargers (EVCs): The final stage for the installation works for four EVCs at Market Yard car park are expected to be completed 12 January with the charging units being fitted. At the time of preparing these papers, I had been advised that the chargers should then be good to use. The cost per kWh for the end user is 50p and the charge speed is 7kWh per hour. Payment system is through a QR code that can be scanned and will direct the end user to an app.

Emergency Planning: The new Community Warden and Open Spaces Officer have familiarised themselves with the Council's resources and monitoring the river. The volunteer helpers have been contacted to update the list – several are no longer available to help, but there remains a strong list. Salt grit supplies and sandbag replacements were received November/December last year. Flood Warden training is being looked in to for new staff. Next EPC meeting 22 April.

Forge Singers: The new draft Lease was sent in December.

Land outside the old Police Station: Details are with their solicitor who are preparing the necessary transfer paperwork.

Lease meetings: The annual lease meetings with Cricket, Nomads and Rugby should have been booked for December/January. I am in the process of arranging these.

Local Plan: The Town Council's responses have been submitted. These are published on the website and are available to view on the link with agenda item 10.

Market: The market had a good December, the Council's initiative to 'write your letter to Santa, with a post box to the North Pole', and meet Santa and his Elves on 21 December was well received. Second week on January the market had seven stalls confirmed, so we now have a consistent base with others coming some weeks. Delighted we have a cheese back as well. Guy is doing really well keeping traders and attracting new ones.

Meeting dates 2024: Reminder the annual meeting dates are published on the website under meetings (there may be some changes/additions to this throughout the year).

Pavilion: Replacement windows and ne shutters – the draft contract has been issued to the contractor. However, the Rugby Club has asked if these works could be delayed to coincide with after its end of season as they will also be looking to carry out some internal improvements. The contractor is checking with suppliers to confirm prices.

Improving ventilation and exploring options will be explored over the coming months.

Personnel: Appraisals are in the process of being organised.

Post Office: Edenbridge Post Office has reopened in Costcutter, High Street, on 29 December. This is great news, and although this is currently a temporary arrangement, the Post Office is working to hopefully make this a permanent service.

Recreation Ground unauthorised access gates: There are two cases of unauthorised access. I am delighted that one has now settled, and we have received a settlement towards the costs incurred by the Council. The second, the hedging has been replaced which is hoped will prevent the access being used further. Advice continues to be taken with the solicitors accordingly.

SES Water – Lingfield Road and Stangrove Road Closures: We have been advised of series of road work schemes in Edenbridge to replace water main pipes that have reached the end of their operational life – some of the pipes dating back to pre-1930s. It's important these pipes are replaced to ensure a resilient water network for customers in the area and reduce the risk of future supply interruptions. The work will take place on the following three roads:

- Lingfield Road – closed from 19 February 2024 to July 2024
- Springfield Road – closed from 29 April 2024 to October 2024 (dates tbc)
- Stangrove Road – closed from 8 July 2024 to November 2024 (dates tbc)

Each road will need to be closed for the duration of the work for the safety and wellbeing of our staff and other road users.

SES has confirmed access will be maintained to for residents and Recreation Ground users from the by-pass end (at the traffic lights). The road will have a dead-end closure just past the last bungalow and before Skeynes Farm. Traffic will not be able to access from the Haxted Road end. Diversions and signage will be in place. As with any rolling road closure, the diversion route / access will change for them as SES make their way past the junction of the specific road. The site manager will also separately be contacting the Rugby Club and Fire Station to discuss specific details and any impact. We have also had a TEAMS meeting to discuss access issues. SES is sending out nearly 2,000 letters to residents and will contact the industrial estates, the Town Council will publish a copy of this letter on its website.

Streetlights – Four Elms Road: The new streetlights at Four Elms Road which were installed as part of the new Medical Centre works, are not working. Before Christmas the office reported to Kent Highways and was advised it was because KCC had not adopted them. The contractor for the Medical Centre, advised the delay was with KCC to get the lights powered up but were hopeful the lights would be on week 18 December. I have contacted Kent Highways again: the lighting is being installed as part of a section 278 agreement, prior to adoption by KCC, the developer is responsible for all maintenance and energy cost prior to the handover to KCC. In this case it appears the developer is questioning the energy costs and will not enter into an unmetered supply agreement with UKPN to pay for the energy prior to adoption, and without an agreement UKPN will not connect the new streetlights.

War Memorial: With the closure of the Hospital, I have had some success contacting NHS Properties. I hope to have a meeting in the coming weeks to discuss the site and future of

the Memorial. In the meantime, should anyone need to access the War Memorial, I have a contact to arrange this as needed.

8.2

Community Warden's Report **Community Wardens Report - January 2024**

I have now completed three months in the CW role. During this time,

I have familiarised myself with the objectives of the Council for the CW, spent time connecting with key partners and getting to know the volunteers. I have also attended training on spending a lot of time getting to know the volunteers. I have also attended an Action Counter Terrorism awareness training session.

Volunteer activities:

I have organised 4 litter picks 3 before Christmas and 1 upcoming. These have been in different areas around the town which have been reasonably well attended and have been very successful.

There have been 4 bulb planting sessions. The Great Stone Bridge Trust (GSBT) provided a grant to fund the spring bulbs. I have also given some bulbs to a resident at Roman Court retirement home to plant in some planters on the High Street.

Games Club

I have attended numerous of the sessions getting to know those that attend and the volunteers, The group is going strong with an average of 12-15 people attending every week. On Monday 15 January, I have arranged for West Kent Health and Care Partnership to pop along to chat to attendees about ask people about their priorities for health and wellbeing, and what would make the most difference to them to stay well.

Portable Speed Indicator Device (SID)

The SID has been out twice in the town, going forward this will be out on a more regular basis around the five approved sites. I am now up to speed on how it works and also, we had a problem with charging the batteries so had to buy new ones.

Speedwatch

I have met with Kent Police Speedwatch officers on a couple of occasions, and I have also completed the online training. I am in the process of organising sessions over the coming months with the Speedwatch volunteers, however these are subject to safe weather conditions. The first session is week commencing 22 January.

Graffiti, vandalism and fly-tipping

I have had a few issues with graffiti around the town, which I have attended with the help of the groundstaff in a couple of cases. There has only been one issue with fly tipping which was dealt with by Sevenoaks very promptly.

Emergency Planning

I have been familiarising myself with the operations for flooding and the office role as well as monitoring the river levels. I have also been updating the database of volunteers.

Other activities and meetings attended

I have met with both the House project & ECT youth clubs organisers and attended youth club meetings. I am going to attend both again going forward, as it was busy for them leading up to Christmas so I suggested I return after the new year to see how we can benefit each other going forward.

I have had a meeting with the Citizens Advice at the Eden Centre to make them aware of myself. I have also spoken with the people in the foodbank, and I have been added to their

database where I am able to recommend people who need help. I have also met with the some of the people on the GSBT.

I have met our local Police Officer, Harry Kemp and established a good relationship. I went out with the Police and Cllr Angela Baker on Friday 15 December to assist them with filling in questionnaires with regards to a campaign Violence Against Woman & Girls (VAWG); overall, it was a successful evening with lots of feedback which the police are still collating. The main issues appear to be lack of lighting in some areas notably Stangrove Park, and a request for more police presence would be better.

I have had two recent cases of rough sleepers; the first person wanted no help from us and was gone the following day; the second case was just before Christmas I contacted Porchlight and they were already in touch with him.

An update on a previous person was given who was now in accommodation.

Future activity

I am attending an open night at Manor Care home on Thursday 11 January. I have a meeting at the Bridges café on Friday 12 January which I am speaking at. I will also attend the forget me not café at the end of the month to introduce myself. I have a meeting organised with West Kent Housing Association in February where they are setting up a community van in the Spitals estate to speak with residents and asking them to fill in a survey.

I am also currently trying to set up a coffee & tea morning as a thank you to all the volunteers, and we are also going to coincide this to try and get new volunteers onboard. This will be advertised in the Council's newsletter in the Edenbridge magazine and Facebook. Myself and Debbie are also looking into repeating last year's afternoon tea event in the courtyard in June to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings, subject to grant funding application. We have also been researching the official D-Day anniversary on the 6th June and the Council possibly being part of the national lighting of beacons with its Beacon in Stangrove Park and possibly having a fish and chip van on site and other forms of entertainment leading up to the lighting of the beacon.

I would like to go into the primary school in Edenbridge to speak about litter, speeding etc as I think this is the best age to get kids involved and we thought we could maybe run a competition where we get the children to do a drawing about litter and the winning entry could have their entry printed and posted around the town. I know that PC Harry Kemp wanted to go into the schools also so we could maybe do that at the same time.

Kevin McGovern

9

To approve the Budget and Precept for 2024-25

The statement for the draft budget and Precept recommendations from the December Council meeting was published on the website in December (*see below link*).

Total budgeted expenditure was £858,575; known budgeted other income £113,390; Precept income needed £745,185 to achieve a balanced budget. The conclusion and recommendation was to support a balanced budget, not to draw down on the reserves which had taken several years to strengthen and bring back to a stable level, and to Precept for the difference between expenditure and anticipated income.

At the time of Council, Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) had not issued the new tax base figure so Council had to make a best estimate using the current 2023-24 figure of 3891.91 to consider the Precept and Band D calculation at this stage. To achieve a Precept of £745,185, this would take a Band D level to £191.47, an £11.04 per year increase (or £0.92p per month). Should the tax base increase the Band D tax would decrease.

After Council the tax base was issued, 3957.01 (1.67% increase on last year's figure). This would take a Band D tax level to £188.32, a £7.89 per year increase, or £0.66p per month (4.37% increase, and below the October RPI of 6.1%). *This was reflected in the statement published on the website.*

Do Members confirm the budget for 2024-25: expenditure £858,575; other income £113,390; Precept needed £745,185?

Do Members confirm, based on the Band D tax level 3957.01, an increase to a Band D tax level to £188.32, a £7.89 per year increase, or £0.66p per month?

<https://www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/231220-statement-for-DRAFT-Budget-and-Precept-for-2024-25-webiste.pdf>

10 **Draft Local Plan - Regulation 18 consultation (23 November 2023 to 11 January 2024).- update**

The Town Council facilitated two pop up sessions for residents to chat to councillors about the proposals for Edenbridge in the draft Local Plan consultation (part 2) on 12 December and 4 January. These were in addition to the SDC session on on 6 December. The Council has engaged a consultant to help with reviewing the Plan, looking at the proposals for Edenbridge and responding to policies ST1 - Balanced Strategy for Growth; and ST2 - Site Allocations in the Green Belt. Responses to the other site allocations and policies have also been prepared and submitted to SDC. See link below for response.

A meeting with SDC Planning Officers has also been requested to discuss the specific issues for Edenbridge.

<https://www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk/news/consultation-responses/>

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

11.1 **Council Casual Vacancy - update**

Following the resignation of Nicola Martindale in December, confirmation has been received from SDC that no requests have been received to fill the casual vacancy in the Parish by election. It is the responsibility of your Members, therefore, to co-opt to fill the vacancy "as soon as practicable" (Rule 8(3) of The Local Elections (Parishes & Communities) Rules 1986). The person co-opted must, of course, be qualified for holding office and I enclose extracts from the Local Government Act 1972 for your assistance in this regard.

Council has three vacancies: all three are for the South and West Ward.

A notice has been published on the website inviting applicants as well as posters in the noticeboards. Deadline for interest is 16 February, and will be presented to March Council.

<https://www.edenbridgetowncouncil.gov.uk/your-opportunity-to-become-a-councillor/>

11.2 **To receive an update on maintenance work for Rickards Hall**

The surveyor's report and 10-year maintenance plan proposal was received mid December. Building maintenance can now be prioritised, and as noted previously, some of these works being commissioned by the Town Clerk, Buildings Manager and Cllr Baker as already agreed by Council, to facilitate the more urgent works. The recommendations from the surveyor would be reported to Finance Committee for the maintenance plans update.

11.3 **SDC Annual Liaison Meeting - amended date - Thursday 18 January**

A reminder of the annual SDC Liaison meeting. Details have been circulated by email and Members who are able to attend have confirmed.

11.4 **Annual Community Event - D-Day 80th Anniversary 6 June**

Extract from guide for Town, Parish and Community Councils issued by Pageantmaster for D-Day 80:

D-Day 80 - 6th June 2024, throughout the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man and UK Overseas Territories in Commemoration/Celebration of the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings on the five Beaches in Normandy, France, which took place on 6th June 1944, enabling your Council and local community to use this occasion to pay 'tribute' to the many, many thousands that sacrificed so much in helping to secure the freedom we all enjoy today. With this in mind, we have developed several ways in which your Council and community can take part in this special occasion.

BEACON: Light a Beacon at 9.15pm on 6th June, as encouraged by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak to take part. Information can be viewed and downloaded from the D-Day 80 website - www.d-day80beacons.co.uk. Other suggestions included Lamp Light of Peace; Ringing out for Peace with the assistance of Church Bell ringers.

Council has set aside a budget of £5k. The office has started to look at potential options.

How do Members want to proceed?

<https://www.d-day80beacons.co.uk/>

11.5 **Food Bank: to receive an update on the Food Bank and to consider continuing supporting the Food Bank arrangements to run out of Rickards Hall on Tuesday mornings**

Council has previously agreed to annually review its agreement to permit the Food Bank use of Rickards Hall Tuesday mornings free of charge.

An update from the Food Bank will be given at the meeting.

Do Members confirm the continue with the arrangements with the Food Bank, and free use of Rickards Hall on Tuesday mornings?

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

12.1 **To confirm the Bulky Waste collection dates for 2024-25**

SDC has confirmed the dates for next year's bulky waste collections, and the last one for the current financial year. In view that the later is prior to the next Open Spaces Committee meeting, Members are asked to confirm the dates and locations. Fly-tipping has been an issue previously at the sites, and should this happen again, it will jeopardise any future collections.

Locations: Church Street; Skeynes Road; Stangrove Estate; Spitals Cross (Fircroft Way)

Collection dates: 10 February 2024 (current financial year); 22 June; 21 September; 16 November; 15 March 2025.

Cost per site, £485 per dates (or £121.25 location); this is within budget (£2k 2024-25 budget).

Do Members confirm the February bulky waste collections (Committee has previously noted that the budget of £1,300 was not sufficient and there would be an overspend. Budget set £1,300 over spend est £600)?

Do Members confirm the four dates for 2024-25?

12.2 **Spitals Cross playground, Farmstead Drive: Licence for SDC to relocate existing playground**

SDC has drafted a new licence for the Town Council to agree. The essence of the licence is to allow the closure of the existing playground on Farmstead Drive, its movement/replacement and the ongoing status of the playground which it is not proposing anything that is really out of keeping with how the Town Council has been running it in recent years. (*Confidential papers include the draft Licence and schedule. Not included in attachments: Schedule 3 photographs of site; Schedule 4 revised quote for works from Wicksteed.*)

Are Members happy to confirm the Licence for signing?

 Confidential Annex 1 (omitted from public documents):

 Confidential Annex 2 (omitted from public documents):

 Confidential Annex 3 (omitted from public documents):

13 **Annual Town Meeting - Monday 11 March - to agree the agenda, invited speakers and set a date to review the content**

To propose an agenda and speakers. Already confirm Youth Groups HOUSE.


14 **Consultations**

14.1 **Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2024-34 - closes 30 January 2023**

December Council agreed to refer to January Council to consider.

 <https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/local-flood-risk>

14.2 **Examination of Gatwick Airport Northern Runway project - Notice of Hearing dates February 2024**

 <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/TR020005/TR020005-001330-TR020005%20-%20Rule%206%20Letter.pdf>

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 - 4 March 2024**