

Minutes of the Meeting of Full Council held in Rickards Hall on 12 May 2025 at 7:00 pm

Present: Cllrs. Jon Aldridge, Angela Baker (*Vice-Chairwoman*), Sarah Compton, Michael Gemmell Smith, Carey Jacques, Alan Layland, Margot McArthur, Vince Parker, Angela Read, Michael Stockdale, Jeff Streets, Stephen Sumner, Bob Todd (*Chairman*)

In attendance: Town Clerk; Deputy Clerk/RFO; and Cllr Robert Mayall (County Cllr) There were no members of the public or press.

19:00 The meeting opened.

1 Elections

Cllr Todd, opened the meeting confirming that he would not be standing for Chairman of the Council this year. He thanked his fellow councillors expressing they were all excellent people to work with and thanked them for their support throughout his four year tenure.

1.1 Election of Chairman for the ensuing year

Cllr Todd proposed Cllr Baker to continue as Chairman; Cllr Layland seconded. Members unanimously,

Resolved: Cllr Angela Baker as Chair of the Town Council.

1.1.1 To receive the Chairman's declaration of office

Received: Cllr Baker signed the Declaration of Office book.

1.2 Election of the Vice-Chairman

Cllr Baker proposed Cllr Aldridge as Vice Chairman; Cllr Layland seconded. Members unanimously,

Resolved: Cllr Jon Aldridge as Vice Chairman of the Town Council.

1.2.1 To receive the Vice-Chairman's declaration of office

Received: Cllr Aldridge signed the Declaration of Office book.

2 To Receive Apologies for Absence

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

3 Declaration of Interests or Predetermination

Cllr Baker declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 29.1.2; Cllr Layland also declared a non-pecuniary interest, being a Trustee of Eden Valley Museum. Due to potential sensitive nature of the matter, previous advice from the Town Clerk is to withdraw from voting. Item 29.1.2 had no motions proposed, therefore both councillors would remain for that item (this had been confirmed acceptable by the Town Clerk as there was no pecuniary implications).

4 To receive, adopt and sign the minutes of the Council meeting held on 03 March 2025 (087/1-11)

Resolved: to adopt the minutes of the Council meeting held on 03 March, and that they be signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record, 087/1-11.

5 To adopt the following reports/minutes of meetings

5.1 Planning Committee 10 March 089/1-3; 07 April 089/1-3; 28 April 093/1-5

Resolved: to adopt the minutes of Planning Committee meetings held 10 March 089/1-3; 07 April 089/1-3; 28 April 093/1-5.

5.2 Finance and Governance Committee 24 March 090/1-3

Resolved: to adopt the minutes of Finance and Governance Committee meeting held 24 March 090/1-3.

5.3 Open Spaces Committee 14 April 092/1-8

Resolved: to adopt the minutes of Open Spaces Committee meeting held 14 April 092/1-8.

5.4 Personnel Committee 10 March 088/1-4

Resolved: to adopt the minutes of the Personnel Committee 10 March 088/1-4.

6 To receive recommendations from Committees

6.1 Personnel Committee Recommendations

6.1.2 Annual Leave and time owed carryover from 2024-25 to 2025-26

Resolved: Annual Leave and time owed carryover from 2024-25 to 2025-26 for the Town Clerk (9 days annual leave and 23.5 hours time owed); and Deputy Clerk (1 days annual leave).

6.1.3 To confirm Kai Day to be issued a permanent contract following completion of his apprenticeship level 2

Resolved: the permanent contract to Kai Day following completion of his apprenticeship, and recognising the qualification in the pay scales from level 4 to 5 (once achieved the Horticultural level 2 qualification); and to confirm the contract be offered on LC scales, LC point 5 up to LC1 12.

6.2 Finance and Governance Committee

6.2.1 Financial Regulations: To receive recommendation and confirm amendments to section 5 - Procurement

Resolved: confirm the updates to the Financial Regulations section 5 Procurement.

6.2.2 To confirm the recommendations to move budget funds into earmarked reserves 2025-26

Resolved: to confirm the recommendation of £60,545 to be moved into earmarked reserves (EMR), plus any additional movement as recommended by the RFO/Deputy Clerk and Town Clerk at end of year to ensure projects budgeted 2024-25 completed.

6.3 To confirm a pay scale increment increase for the Planning & Admin Officer

Resolved: to recognise the additional responsibilities of the Planning and Administration Officer and allow an additional scale increase to point 16 from 1 April, with an additional budget spend of £539.46.

7 To review the delegated arrangements to committees, sub-committees, staff (as detailed in the Terms of Reference) and appointment of any new committees

The Terms of Reference (TOR) confirms committee membership and delegated responsibilities. This was a working document and from time to time, amended to reflect operational changes and procedures. Usually, reviewed by the Governance Committee with recommendations to Council. Below are the current committees, sub-committee and working groups to confirm 7.1 to 7.12. Members unanimously,

Resolved: to confirm the existing Committees as per items 7.1-7.5, to confirm the existing sub-committees and steering group as per items 7.6-7.8, and to confirm the delegated arrangements and procurement procedures for items 7.9-7.11.

7.1 Finance and Governance Committee (10)

Confirmed.

7.2 Planning and Transportation Committee (12)

Confirmed.

7.3 Open Spaces Committee (10)

Confirmed.

7.4 Emergency Planning Committee (8)

Confirmed.

7.5 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Board (15)

Confirmed.

7.6 Personnel Committee (7)

Confirmed.

7.7 Charities and Grants (15)

Confirmed.

7.8 Forward Planning Steering Group (15)

Confirmed.

7.9 Working Groups

Members unanimously,

Resolved: to combine the two Local Plan groups, and to remove the High Street and MYCP group until a time needed in the future.

Resolved: to continue with the following working groups: Internal Audit; Lease/SLA Negotiating; Local Pan; Parking Group; Skate Park/Open Spaces play and activities; Aviation consultations.

7.10 Delegated powers to the Town Clerk and Officers

Confirmed.

7.11 Delegation for procurement procedures

Confirmed.

7.12 To consider any additional committees/sub-committees

No additional committees or sub-committees were proposed.

8 To confirm the Terms of Reference (last updated May and October 2024)

Resolved: to continue with and adopt the Terms of Reference.

9 To appoint/confirm members for each committee

It was noted members were appointed to Committees at the beginning of each new Council term (2023). Whilst these can change, membership tends to continue. All councillors may attend any committee/sub-committee meeting, but if they are not a named member they are not expected to necessarily attend and do not have any voting rights (though they can speak and make

representation). The Chairperson for each committee is appointed at its next meeting. Members were asked to confirm membership to each Committee.

9.1 Finance and Governance Committee (10)

Resolved: membership to continue with Cllrs Baker, Compton, Gemmell Smith, Jacques, Layland, McGregor, Read, Stockdale and Sumner; and the new appointment of Cllr Todd.

9.2 Planning and Transportation Committee (12)

Resolved: membership to continue with Cllrs Aldridge (SW), Baker (NE), Cummings (SW), Gemmell Smith (SW), Layland (NE), McArthur (SW), McGregor (NE), Parker (NE), Read (NE), Stockdale (SW), Streets (SW), Todd (NE).

9.3 Open Spaces Committee (10)

Resolved: membership to continue with Cllrs Aldridge, Baker, Compton, Gemmell Smith, Jacques, Layland, McGregor, Streets, and Sumner. Cllr Cummings was replaced with Cllr Stockdale.

9.4 Personnel Committee (7)

Resolved: to make recommendation to Finance and Governance Committee to continue with Personnel Committee membership Cllrs Baker, Gemmell Smith, Layland, McArthur, McGregor, Stockdale, Todd.

9.5 Emergency Planning Committee (8)

Resolved: membership to continue with Cllrs Aldridge, Baker, Compton, Gemmell Smith, Jacques, McArthur, McGregor, and Streets.

9.6 If there are any new committees to appoint members (item 7.12)

No new committees were proposed (item 7.12).

10 To appoint/confirm the members of the working groups

10.1 Internal Audit / Council Risk Group (4)

Resolved: to continue membership with Cllrs Gemmell Smith, Layland, Sumner, and Todd.

10.2 Lease / SLA negotiation Group (4)

Resolved: to continue membership with Cllrs Layland, Sumner, Todd, and with Cllr Stockdale appointed on to the group.

10.3 Open Spaces play and activities projects (including Task & Finish Skate Park Group)

Resolved: continuation of current members Cllrs Aldridge, Baker, Gemmell Smith, Layland, McArthur and Sumner.

10.4 Open Spaces - Market Yard car park / Parking Group (6)

Noting this was now the Parking Group, Members.

Resolved: to continue membership Cllrs Aldridge, Baker, Compton, Layland, McGregor, and Read.

10.5 Aviation Consultation Group (4)

Resolved: continuation of the group and membership Cllrs Aldridge, Baker, Jacques, and McArthur.

10.6 High Street/Market Project Group - funding through the SDC/UKSPF

Agenda item 7.9 resolved to not to continue with this group, as the project had been approved and commissioned.

10.7 Local Plan Group

Resolved: to continue membership with Cllrs Aldridge, Baker, Gemmell Smith, Layland, McGregor, Parker, Read, Streets, Stockdale and Todd.

10.8 Local Plan - Town Strategy Group

Agenda item 7.9 resolved to merge both Local Plan groups (membership confirmed item 10.7).

10.9 Annual Events Group

Resolved: to continue with membership Cllrs Baker, Gemmell Smith, Layland, Streets and Todd.

11 To confirm and adopt the following:

11.1 Standing Orders (adopted March 2020, amendment 28.10.24)

Resolved: to confirm and and re-adopt the Standing Orders, last amended 28 October 2024.

11.2 Financial Regulations (adopted October 2024, amendment May 2025)

Members noted item 6.2.1 received recommendations from the Finance and Governance Committee to approve amendments to section 5, procurement. The Financial Regulations had been reviewed against the new NALC model regulations and adopted in October 2024. Members,

Resolved: to confirm and readopt the Financial Regulations (adopted 28 October 2024).

12 To review the arrangements with other local authorities, not-for-profit and businesses

12.1 Arrangements carried out by Edenbridge Town Council on behalf of:

Resolved: Confirm the chargeable arrangements and services carried out by Edenbridge Town Council on behalf of organisations in 12.1.1 to 12.1.5.

12.1.1 Citizens Advice Bureau: Payroll (£403 to cover software costs)

Confirmed.

12.1.2 Freshwater Properties Group: some maintenance and waste clearance for Leather Market (£3,780)

Confirmed.

12.1.3 Great Stone Bridge Trust: Grass cutting and Water Meadow management services (various works includes cutting, vegetation clearance etc)

Confirmed.

12.1.4 Sevenoaks District Council: Ground maintenance services, Town Field, playground inspection, weed spraying on residential estate (£1,934)

Confirmed.

12.1.5 War Graves Commission: Maintenance of War Graves (£300)

Confirmed.

12.2 Professional services engaged

Resolved: Confirm the continuation with the current professional service providers engaged by the Council 12.2.1 to 12.2.18.

12.2.1 Business Stream - water (£1428*)

Confirmed.

12.2.2 Canon UK (photocopier £424, plus copying costs est. £320)

Confirmed.

12.2.3 EDGE IT software packages: Finance (£897), Assets register (£278), Epitaph (£317), Rickards Hall hire (£257), additional costs £16.90

Confirmed.

12.2.4 Fusion4/Besure/Continental (facilities security management, key holding and fire alarms - £2,900*; with approx. £1,000 recharged to EVM; plus call out costs)

Confirmed.

12.2.5 Health Assured (employee assistance/wellbeing mental health programmes £672)

Confirmed.

12.2.6 Insurance - current provider Gallaghers with Hiscox policy (Council insurance item 16)

Confirmed.

12.2.7 Mazars (external auditor) (£2,100*)

Confirmed.

12.2.8 PS Technology -AdyenNV (IT support and Licences) (*£15,156 variable)

Confirmed.

12.2.9 NFU Mutual Insurance (vehicles) (£3,411.66)

Confirmed.

12.2.10 Keith Robertson (internal auditor) (£600 est)

Confirmed.

12.2.11 NPower – Street Lighting Energy (£18,412*)

Confirmed.

12.2.12 SAGE payroll & P11 software services (£857; NB some costs recharged to CAB)

Confirmed.

12.2.13 Streetlights (Maintenance contract) (£8524.70)

Confirmed.

12.2.14 Summer Fun Days – Play Place (£2,128)

Confirmed.

- 12.2.15 Total Gas (utilities energy all buildings - current contract up to 2027 - £4,898*)**
Confirmed.
- 12.2.16 Vatrix – Lone Working Alarms (3-year agreement, up for review - *£523)**
Confirmed.
- 12.2.17 Wilkin Chapman Solicitors (legal advice of FOIs, contracts and agreements and other matters) (varies on use)**
Confirmed.
- 12.2.18 Worknest (HR and H&S support, HR insurance *£2901; plus £657 E-Learning portal)**
Confirmed.
- 13 To appoint representatives on to/work with external bodies and arrangements for report back**
Members noted appointments made at the new Council meeting in May 2023 and updated 2024. Members,
Resolved: to confirm the Councillor representatives to local organisations as published; with one change, Cllr Todd to replace Cllr Read on the WI Hall. In addition, now that contact had been re-established with Edenbridge Primary School, Cllrs Compton and Layland were appointed representatives.
Addendum 1.
- 14 To review the inventory of land and other fixed assets including buildings and office equipment - Fixed Assets Register**
Members noted the assets registers as of 31 March 2025 was published on the Council's website, and,
Resolved: to confirm the Council's Assets, and the closing balance for year-end 2024/25 of £4,307,107.
- 15 To review and confirm Council arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks and the annual expenditure of £18,834**
Members noted Council ended a three-year agreement with Gallaghers and insurance through Hiscox this year; the renewal date 20 July. Three comparable quotes for a new agreement term would be presented to Council at its July meeting. It is estimated that the insurance would be in the region of £18,834 based on previous increases at 12.5%. Details of Council insurance policy were published on the website. Members,
Resolved: to confirm the current levels of insurance and therefore a premium estimated for 2025-26 in the region of £18,834.
- 16 To review and confirm the Council's and/or staff subscriptions to other bodies**
Resolved: to confirm the annual subscriptions as listed 16.1-16.13.
- 16.1 Campaign to Protect Rural England £36***
Confirmed.
- 16.2 Edenbridge Allotment Gardens – Affiliation fees from Swan Lane Members £108**
Confirmed.
- 16.3 Edenbridge Magazine (6 editions - £1,147.50)**
Confirmed.

- 16.4 Grounds Management Association £157.50***
Confirmed.
- 16.5 Information Commissioner Office £55**
Confirmed.
- 16.6 Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management £105 (25/26)**
Confirmed.
- 16.7 Kent Association of Local Council (KALC) £1,870 (25/26)**
Confirmed.
- 16.8 Kent County Playing Fields Association £20***
Confirmed.
- 16.9 National Association for British Markets Authorities (NABMA) £500**
Confirmed.
- 16.10 Open Spaces Society £45***
Confirmed.
- 16.11 Rural Market Town Group Membership £123.90 (25/26)**
Confirmed.
- 16.12 Sevenoaks District Council – Premises Licence (TN8) £1,070***
Confirmed.
- 16.13 Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) Town Clerk’s membership £420 (25/26)**
Confirmed.
- 17 To confirm the direct debits and standing orders arrangements**
Resolved: to confirm continuation of the direct debits; and noted there were currently no standing orders.
- 18 To confirm the Council's bank signatories**
Resolved: to confirm the Council's bank account signatories.
- 19 To review the Council's complaints procedures (reviewed and amended December 2021)**
Resolved: to confirm and re-adopt the Complaints Procedure.
- 20 To review the Council's policies, procedures and practices in respect of its obligations under Freedom of Information and Data Protection Legislation (reviewed November 2019): Retention and Disposal Policy, the FOI publication Scheme, Information and Data Policy, and the Privacy Policy**
Resolved: to confirm the policies, procedures and practices in respect of Council's obligations under Freedom of Information and Data Protection Legislation (reviewed November 2019): Retention and Disposal Policy, the FOI Publication Scheme, Information and Data Policy, and the Privacy Policy.

21 Communications and Engagement Strategy and Digital Communications and Social Media Policy

Resolved: to confirm continuation of policies which were adopted March 2025:

- Communications and Community Engagement Strategy
- Digital Communications and Social Media Policy
- Digital Communications and Social Media Strategy
- Digital IT and Cyber Security Policy
- Digital IT and Cyber Security Strategy

22 General Power of Competence: to note the Town Council continues to meet the conditions as resolved at its meeting 15 May 2023

Resolved: that the Town Council continues to meet the General Power of Competence conditions as resolved at its meeting 15 May 2023.

23 To receive the calendar of Council and Committee meetings for 2025

Members received the calendar of Council and committee meetings for 2025; they had no questions or changes.

24 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 31 March 2025

24.1 To receive the internal auditor's report

Members noted the Internal Auditor carried out an extensive review of the end of year accounts as well as testing some of the procedures on 29 April. There were no issues; he was pleased with the reporting improvements including with earmarked reserves. Copy of the report was published on the website, and Members received the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) audit page completed by the auditor, (page3). There were no questions.

19:28 Cllr Mayall arrived.

24.2 To receive the end-of-year financial statements

A copy of the end-of-year EDGE finance reports were received: Bank Reconciliation, budget comparisons and summary of the earmarked and general reserves summary.

- The Consolidated balance confirmed the **total net assets** (match box 7 on AGAR): £1,032,745.24
- The I&E Account confirmed total actual Income £985,992.11 (boxes 2&3 on AGAR), Expenditure £907,192.99 (boxes 4&6 on AGAR)
- Budget Comparisons confirmed the budgeted I&E including creditors and debtors, and CIL I&E (the AGAR takes the figures from the I&E and Balance sheet).
- Budget Comparisons Report includes all CIL I&E, and creditors and debtors.
- Bank Reconciliation confirmed the cash investments (box 8) £1,032,003.14.
- Excel spreadsheet showed the total movements throughout the year including funds released back to General Reserves (GR) and budgeted movement to ensure projects continue in to EMR.
- Summary note: 2024-25 budget had forecasted £5,000 movement to GR. Actual movement to GR was £9,044 increasing to £329,101.93

Members unanimously,

Resolved: to confirm the end-of-year financial position: Total net assets £1,032,745.24. This was made up of General Reserve £329,101.93; Earmarked Reserves £532,438.57; CIL funds (allocated and unallocated) £171,204.74.

24.3 To approve the annual governance statement for 2024/25

19:33 Cllr Compton left the meeting.

The Chairman read out each statement under the Annual Governance Statement in turn, of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). Members unanimously voted and agreed each statement as read individually, and,

Resolved: to approve the Annual Governance Statement 1-9 for 2024-25 AGAR.

19:35 Cllr Compton re-joined the meeting.

24.4 To resolve the accounting statement for 2024/25

Members received the end-of-year accounting figures for 2023-24 AGAR. The balances carried forward (box 7) concurred with item 24.2, £1,032,45; and the cash and investments balances of £1,032,003 matching the bank reconciliation. The Chairman read out each figure on the Annual Accounting Statement in turn. Members unanimously,

Resolved: to approve the end-of-year figures as recorded on the Accounting Statement in the AGAR boxes 1-10 and boxes 11a&b for 2024-25.

25 Public Questions and Statements

19:36 The Chair closed the meeting.

None.

19:36 The Chair reopened the meeting.

26 To receive County and District Councillors Reports

26.1 County Councillor

Cllr Robert Mayall, newly elected Kent County Councillor (Reform party), introduced himself to Members and said that the past week had been spent at Maidstone with induction training and meeting officers.

The Chair welcomed and thanked Cllr Mayall for attending. She introduced herself and fellow councillors.

26.2 District Councillors

Cllrs Baker, Layland and McArthur had nothing to report.

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

27.1 Clerk's Report

Members received the Town Clerk's report. Of note,

Land outside the old Police Station: The Council's solicitor had completed their report, and the Transfer of part of the registered title was ready to sign. However, there was one issue regarding the access road which required a Deed of Covenant. Once the query was resolved satisfactorily, the Transfer and Deed would be presented for signing.

Lease meeting with sports clubs: Meetings with both the Rugby and Cricket Clubs in April were positive meetings. **Rugby Club** - it was noted Lease misunderstandings between both parties and agreed to establish new systems for communications and monitoring. The Club also expressed ongoing concerns with the heating and hot water systems and appreciated the Council's support with this matter. **Cricket Club** - they were still investigating water irrigation systems harvesting rain water and sprinkler system. Parking remained an issue; they were working with a designer for expansion at the grass area which was currently grasscrete. A proposal would be presented to Council and SDC (it was noted conservation area constraints) in due course. The lack of a road crossing also remained a concern. Nomads - meeting was yet to be confirmed.

Rickards Hall redec and repairs work: Following March Council confirming the contractor to carryout the work, the appointment had been made with works booked to take place from 04 August, expected to take two weeks. The contractor was aware of a couple of bookings to be accommodated.

War Memorial: The sale of the Old Memorial Hospital site had not completed as expected. We maintain contact with NHS Properties and they will maintain the security for the site, and access can be arranged to the WM as needed.

27.1.1 To ratify the appointment of Ian McPherson, grounds person

Having completed the recruitment process, interviewing three strong candidates, an offer was made for the new grounds person who started Monday 12 May. Members unanimously,

Ratified: the appointment of Ian McPherson as grounds person.

28 Draft Local Plan - update

Members noted the new Local Plan timetable had been agreed by SDC Cabinet in February 2025. Key Milestones:

- Reg. 18 consultation – autumn 2025.
- Reg. 19 publication – summer 2026.
- Submission for examination – by the end of 2026.

SDC Planning Policy team were developing its revised development strategy and additional sites, to try and meet the increased housing development need, as well as collating further evidence. A new “call for sites” consultation closed 30 April. Changes to the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published December 2024 has resulted in:

- 63% uplift in Sevenoaks housing target (from 704 to 1149 units pa).
- Significant challenge for such a constrained district.
- New concept of ‘grey belt’ (previously developed and less important Green Belt land).
- But only in sustainable locations, outside of national landscape (AONB).
- And sites must meet Golden Rules (50% affordable housing, open space and infrastructure).
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) just published (February/March).

SDC needed to undertake a new Green Belt Assessment. Other policy reviews include: Settlement Hierarchy; Transport modelling; Strategic Flood Risk Assessment; Sports/Leisure; Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment; Infrastructure.

The Town Council's Planning Committee had established a working group to look at the Settlement Hierarchy. This had been quite a lot of work, with final updates being submitted mid May.

Council had met recently with its planning consultant just to discuss the current position of the emerging plan and NPPF. He remained on-hand to help with formal representations to the Regulation 18 later this year.

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

29.1 Leases: to receive updates on the progress of:-

29.1.1 Forge Musical Theatre Group new lease

The Council's solicitor had returned the draft lease following the Town Clerk's edits. Unfortunately, due to other commitments the Clerk had not yet fed back to the Lease Negotiating Group. Once they had confirmed, a copy was forwarded, a meeting with the Group would be arranged. There were no questions.

29.1.2 Eden Valley Museum Lease renewal

Following March Council and confirmation to questions raised by the solicitor, a draft copy of the

Lease was submitted to the Eden Valley Museum (EVM) CIO trustees. Members received a summary report of the conversations noting, the length and detail in the Lease and questions raised by EVM including:

1. Request for a Peppercorn Rent.
2. Objection to 25-Year Lease Term.
3. Concerns over Lease Complexity and Commercial Language.

Members agreed a meeting to be arranged to discuss the draft lease and concerns face-to-face between the EVM representatives and Council's Lease Negotiating Group. The Clerk was instructed to organise.

29.1.2.1 To approve the expenditure for new plans of Church House to be drawn-up suitable for the Lease, expenditure £585

The drawings in the original lease were not accurate and did not clearly show the leased area. Having approached the architect who assisted with the Market Archway planning application drawings, they quoted to redraw the plans, allowing for up to nine hours, £585 plus VAT. Members unanimously,

Resolved: to confirm the expenditure of up to £585 plus VAT for accurate floor plan drawings of Church House.

29.2 Pavilion: To receive an update on the heaters and boilers

The Town Council's CIL Board had approved an award of £100k towards the new heating and replacement heating. An application had also been submitted to the SDC CIL Board,; they meet on 2 July.

The Annual Lease meeting had also taken place with the Rugby Club where the heating and hot water systems were discussed. They recognised their responsibilities under the lease and agreed to work with the Buildings Manager and Open Spaces Officer to confirm an ongoing maintenance schedule.

29.2.1 To receive a summary of the Independent engineer and Gas Safe report

Members had already received the engineer's full report at its March meeting. The next stages were: to confirm the tender process; confirm funding; go out to public tender; tender appointment.

29.2.2 To consider and confirm the appointment of the Independent Engineer to prepare a specification suitable for public tender of the new heating and hot water system for the Pavilion; to manage the public tender process; oversee the project works and final inspection. Total expenditure in region of £11,000

Following a recent meeting with Intrinsic (the independent engineer) to discuss its full report on the Pavilion heating and hot water system, it was clear that this was a complex project requiring a detailed specification before being able to go out to public tender, and someone to oversee the delivery of the project.

Members received a formal fee proposal for the specification, procurement, and project management which included a breakdown of the different scope of service and their associated fees.

1. To undertake detailed survey of the building and existing plant and environs: Intrinsic had already attended to undertake a condition survey of the heating and hot water systems, however, the next phase was to attend the Pavilion with a focus of obtaining information in relation to the design and installation of the new proposed system. This is quite extensive as it forms the basis of the content of the bespoke specification so ensure that all aspects of the project are included and tendered against.
2. Prepare performance design specification and schedules for the internal and external plant and all associated equipment and services: Based on the information obtained during the

survey this would enable the design engineer to then liaise with manufacturers so that they can select the equipment to the required design parameters, then scheduled into the specification. This included but not limited to, the selection of boiler(s), pressurisation units, valves, hot water calorifiers and circulation pumps all of which needed to be sized correctly for the system to operate correctly and to industry standards to ensure all warranties are upheld. The specification would also detail standard working practices and regulations that must be adhered to.

3. Prepare performance specification and agree with Edenbridge Town Council: Self Explanatory, however, this would take the form of approximately 142-page document.
4. Provide list of prospective contractors and agree shortlist with Edenbridge Town Council: Intrinsic can on request, provide selected service providers to be invited to tender. The project will be placed on the the government's Contract Finder, as well as locally.

The Town Council would make the appointment of the successful contractor) following its procurement procedures.

5. Oversee and review the extent of project, agree scope of works and outline programme with Client. As well as monitor works for compliance with technical design specification and quality of workmanship for the duration of the project. Carry out final inspection on completion of defects liability period and issue completion certificate.

The estimated works value on which the fee basis had been determined was £110,000; professional fees were based on 10% of the project value. The fee for undertaking the above scope of work, was £11,000.00 plus VAT. The fee options below:

Option One – Specification Only £5,500.00.

Option Two – Specification & Tender & Report Only £8,500.00.

Option Three – Specification & Project Management Only £8,000.00.

Option Four - Specification, Tender & Report, and Project Management £11,000 (subject to value of project).

Funding could come from the Council's earmarked reserves as this was unbudgeted expenditure for building maintenance.

The proposal was to continue with the Intrinsic (the independent engineers who prepared the original report) thus saving on any additional (repeat) reports; it was also noted the heating and hot water systems was specialist area and project. Members were asked to consider option four, and they unanimously,

Resolved: to confirm to appoint Intrinsic to oversee the Specification, Tender and Report, and Project Management for the Pavilion new heating and hot water systems, and the expenditure in the region of £11,000 plus VAT.

Resolved: to fund the professional fees from the Buildings EMR.

29.3 To receive an update on the project for new Market Archway at Market Yard car park access road

Noted: Both planning applications for the new archway project had been granted (24/03000/FUL for new market archway and new removable bollards; 24/03001/ADV - wording 'Edenbridge Market'). Instruction had been given to the blacksmith and we await the new archway. The removable bollards were yet to be ordered and the Market gazebos were currently being investigated. The funding from UK Shared Prosperity Fund (via SDC); and County Councillor McArthur Members Fund.

29.4 Rickards Hall floor repairs: To approve the expenditure of up to £5,200

Council's March meeting members received information re repairs to the Hall floor following signs of sagging and rot. Three contractors had been approached. Members had resolved for further

investigation. February CIL Board awarded £5,000 for the floor repairs.

Following investigation (contractor B):

- Exposed the two sections in question.
- From past experiences to be a very serious case of dry rot. This would have to be inspected by an expert. As far could see with phone cameras under the floor voids, the last supporting joist had entirely disintegrated, which is why there was a very noticeable sag in this area.
- The second inspection hole (where the floor dips), the floor joists had rotted along the bottom, which had led to them being crushed and a drop in the floor joist height.
- The brick sleeper walls seemed in OK condition.
- Advised a repair would simply mask the issues below and be a very short-term solution.
- Recommend all joists and flooring were replaced, estimated cost £30,000 plus a full detailed inspection.

Two other contractors had since be invited to inspect the floor (D and E). Both contractors agreed signs of dry rot along the section that runs on the southwest wall due to a blocked air vent which can be rectified. The other section where the floor dips was because a section of wood had just deteriorated. They also felt that the floor was in good condition and recommended to repair as needed. The Town Clerk, Buildings Manger and Open Spaces Officer all supported that the floor was showing only two areas of repair, and having looked under the floorboards, (just like contractor B), and given the good condition of the existing floor, would agree with the recommendation to repair as needed.

In the meantime, the Open Spaces Officer and Buildings Manager had investigated the air vents, which had since been cleared with new concrete gulley surrounds. There was one broken vent but unobstructed.

Quotes:

Contractor A - £3,820 (withdrawn as retired).

Contractor B - £30,000 plus a full survey (following £560 investigation).

Contractor C - didn't quote.

Contractor D - £5,000.

Contractor E- estimated £4,500 but is not the sort of work they carry out.

Members unanimously,

Resolved: to appoint contractor D to carryout the floor repairs to Rickards Hall and the expenditure of £5,000 funded by the CIL award.

29.5 Events updates

29.5.1 Annual Town Meeting - 31 March: Feedback

Members noted the Annual Town Meeting went well, with about 100 residents attending. Presentations were provided by councillors on the Town Council's achievements and finances; Cllr Roddy Hogarth, Leader of SDC provided an update on the Local Plan and devolution/reorganisation; the two local police officers PC Maunsell and Donegan spoke on local policing matters; Ian Watts Assistant Director Education (North Kent) Kent County Council (KCC) provided an update on the future secondary school for Edenbridge; as well as presentations from the Food Bank, Edenbridge Christmas Community Association.

29.5.2 VE Day 80 - Thursday 8 May: Feedback

Members noted the positive feedback, cards and emails of thanks, following the Council activities that took place to commemorate and celebrate the 80th anniversary of VE Day. These included:

Flag Raising 9:00am: VE Day Flag raised with Town Band bugler playing the last post. Attended by representatives from the Royal British Legion (RBL), the local primary school, councillors and local residents.

An afternoon tea: Held in Rickards Hall/Courtyard for older members of the community who were either a child, or served in the war, or worked in the war, or their parents had been. One lady

remembered attending the the original VE Day celebrations outside Buckingham Palace when she was nearly eight years old. About 70 residents attended.

Thursday Market: Open until 4:00pm and themed with Union Jack bunting and memorabilia giveaways for children such as stickers, balloons and pencils and flying gliders.

Beacon lighting at Stangrove Park 8:45pm:The weather was warm and many residents came out to listen to the Town Band who played a medley of war time themed songs, and the National Anthem. Thanks to the Bonfire Society for the beacon lighting, and the surprise fireworks added to the beacon.

One compliant had been received, a resident complained that the High Street did not have any bunting; members noted.

29.5.3 Chairman's Reception

Council had previously confirmed to hold a Chairman's Reception this year, Wednesday 16 July. Preparations were underway, and would be discuss with the new appointed Chairperson. An updated would be given at the July meeting.

30 OTHER BUSINESS including items referred from Committees for decision

30.1 Pavilion: legionella survey

30.1.1 To receive summary following recent survey

In December, following the H&S audit, Council approved the expenditure for seven legionella assessments for Council buildings; these were carried out in March. Six of the sites reports are yet to be received. The Pavilion report has identified a number items that need attention. Key findings to note:

- Five cold water tanks with sediment and missing insulation.
- Maintenance issues and records not readily available

The Rugby Club are aware of its responsibilities, they had been carryout some testing but this will form part of the new monitoring processes to be developed working with council officers.

However, it was recommend by the inspector to have the tanks individually tested. Following this, it may be recommended to drain the tanks. Other observations included questions about the five tanks - were they all needed or possibly replacing for larger tanks.

Members had no questions.

30.1.1.1 To approve the expenditure of £313 for legionella testing of the five water tanks

Members unanimously,

Resolved: to approve the expenditure of £311 plus VAT to sample test the five water tanks at the Pavilion.

30.2 Stangrove Playground - partial wet pour resurfacing (43metres): To approve the expenditure of £2,415 plus VAT

It had been highlighted that the wet pour near and around the new seesaw has lifted and there are trip hazards. This was an Open Spaces budget expenditure. Members unanimously,

Resolved: the expenditure of £2,415.68 to allow the surface repairs at Stangrove Playground.

30.3 Church House and Doggetts Barn: Smoke detector replacements and to approve expenditure of £1,850

Following an electrical incident in February in the fuse cupboard at Church House/Rickards Hall which resulted in the fire service attendance, this had raised a question regarding the procedures for alarm alerts to the fire alarm company:

- Pre alarm for when smoke is detected in an isolated area to allow for matters to be

investigated, before evacuation and alerting the emergency service; usually this is sufficient.

- Triggers are sensitive, smoke detectors are designed to respond to a progressive increase in smoke density rather than an immediate spike. This design prevents false alarms caused by brief smoke events, such as cooking smoke or steam from hot showers.
- Main evacuation fire alarms connect to the alarm company (to alert the Fire Service) and will sound when smoke is equivalent to the density of smoke commonly present during the early stages of a fire.
- Smoke detectors are designed to activate when the concentration of smoke particles in the air reaches a certain threshold (this does vary to type and model).

Upon further inspection, in March, the engineer found that the smoke detector in the electrical cupboard was faulty. He noted black smoke marks around the detector which should have set off the main evacuation alarm. This alarm had passed a recent six-monthly test. The detector has since been replaced.

The engineer explained that smoke detectors do have expiry dates, the museum detectors are at least 15-years old. We suspect Doggetts Barn is similar. The manufacturer recommends smoke detectors:

- Are replaced after ten years in service to ensure correct operation and full functionality.
- Its best practice to change.
- However, they may work correctly beyond that age.
- They are tested every year and the engineer will highlight any that fail immediately.

During the six monthly checks we have in our buildings, some detectors have been replaced over the years. However, it was noted that many had not.

Quotes:

Church House: Replace 20 Addressable Smoke Detectors, and one heat detector £1,350.

Doggetts Barn: Replace 8 x conventional smoke detectors; 1 x heat detector, 9 x detector bases £500.

This expenditure was not budgeted for. Building repair costs (2065) had a budget of £2,500. This would likely force an overspend by the time of year-end, or Council could draw down on the buildings EMR reserves (currently £102,523). Members unanimously,

Resolved: to confirm the replace of the detectors for both Church House and Doggetts Barn, total expenditure £1,850 plus VAT, from budget.

31 Devolution and local government reorganisation

31.1 Local Government Reorganisation - update

In March, following February's announcement that Kent had not been selected as part of the government's Devolution plan, the leaders of Maidstone, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling and Tunbridge Wells councils, formally wrote to the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution to express their collective desire to develop a proposal for local government reorganisation. This meant a move to unitary authorities structure with the geographical boundaries to be finalised. The proposal submitted suggested a three unitary model which most closely aligns to the Government's criteria.

Following feedback from the government to the leaders of the district councils, a full proposal was needed to be submitted by 28 November. If the proposal was supported, the necessary legislation would need to be agreed by Parliament. The overall transition if it was supported, anticipated to be 2028.

Sevenoaks District Council voted to support the reorganisation proposals at its extraordinary meeting on 19 March.

31.2 To receive a summary report following presentation from SDC on its Assets

Members received a summary report following a meeting attended by Cllrs Bob Todd (Chairman), Alan Layland (SDC District Councillor) and the Town Clerk, together with other representatives from the district's town councils who met with officers from SDC in March to discuss Local Government Reorganisation and SDC assets and possible consideration for community transfer. Some key points and themes discussed during the meeting and presentation with a focus on how Town and Parish Councils (T&PCs) may engage in the asset transfer process ahead of the 2028 reorganisation:

Asset Transfer vs Disposal

- SDC is developing a Disposal Policy to govern how surplus assets may be managed and transferred.
- Emphasis is placed on transferring assets (rather than disposing of them outright), particularly to T&PCs or community organisations.

Disposal and Valuation Considerations

- Assets must be assessed to determine whether they are surplus to operational or strategic needs.
- Community Asset Transfer (CAT) allows eligible groups to acquire assets, including at below-market value, if social, environmental, or economic benefit is demonstrated.
- Assets valued above £2million require Secretary of State consent for below-market transfer.
- Applications must include a robust business case and evidence of sustainable financial planning.

Timeline and Process

- The Disposal Policy currently proposed two application rounds in 2025:
 - Round 1: Opens 6 May, closes 30 June; Cabinet decision 18 September, Council 19 November.
 - Round 2: Opens 1 September, closes 31 October; Cabinet 15 January 2026, Council 24 February 2026.
- Applications link to the asset list on SDC's website and would go through the Properties Team for triage and engagement.

Strategic Points and Concerns

- SDC categorises its assets as operational, surplus, or strategic. Any may be proposed for transfer.
- Concerns were raised about how future unitary authorities may handle inherited assets, including fears of 'asset dumping' and revaluing parks as development land.
- Asset transfers are seen as a chance to secure community facilities before reorganisation.
- Governance structures for managing transferred assets are still being conceptualised.
- Any proposal from a T&PC will require a proposal, business plan and all legal fees funded by the T&PCs.
- Taking on any assets will likely impact on T&PCs budgets and likely need to increase to their Precept.

Actions and Recommendations

- Review the publicly available SDC asset list (2019).
- Consider council-level discussions on assets of interest.
- Engage with SDC early in the process to discuss suitability for transfer.
- Be prepared with financial models and sustainable business plans to support any application.
- T&PCs need to consider future financial proofing creating funds to fund additional assets

Separately, Members have met with Council's planning consultant the following additional considerations were noted:

- Ensure the towns key assets are included in the emerging Local Plan.
- Council to consider the future of its assets and identify how to secure these.

- The local Infrastructure Works Plan to include the facilities needed for Edenbridge as identified locally.
- Assurances for contributions from future development can provide s106 or CIL funding towards new facilities and/or maintenance improvements.

31.3 To note SDC held Assets in Edenbridge

Members noted the SDC asset list as listed on its website, (noting it may not be complete). Assets locally included: the Leisure Centre; Riverside/Town Field; Romani Way, Hever Road Gypsy and Traveller site; Stangrove Park freehold - which was on 999 lease to the Town Council (1980 to 2979); playgrounds at Stangrove and Spitals estates (ETC provides and maintains Spitals playground already); Supermarket, Cedar Drive, Stangrove estate - land leasehold; Community Centre and supermarket, Farmstead Drive, Spitals estate - land leasehold.

31.4 To consider how does the Town Council want to proceed in terms of potential expressions of interest for SDC Assets

Members received a verbal report following a small working group meeting to consider SDC assets in Edenbridge and what reorganisation may mean for Edenbridge and the Town Council. Members supported the recommendations and unanimously,

Resolved: to create a list of community assets in Edenbridge and to nominate for the Community Assets Register; to consider precepting for a new EMR for costs resulting from Reorganisation and impact to the town and taking on possible new services and assets; to present to Forward Planning Steering Group September (29th) meeting to consider a strategy.

NB: The Localism Act (2011), chapter 3 part 5, established the Right to Bid among other community rights. Assets can be brought into community ownership through several routes, giving local people control to use these assets in ways that meet the priorities and needs of the local community. "An Asset of Community Value is defined as: A building or other land is an asset of community value if its main use has recently been or is presently used to further the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community and could do so in the future. The Localism Act states that 'social interests' include cultural, recreational and sporting interests. Once listed as Assets of Community Value with the local authority, the local community will be informed if they are listed for sale within the five year listing period. The community can then enact the Community Right to Bid, which gives them a moratorium period of six months to determine if they can raise the finance to purchase the asset".

32 Consultations

32.1 Better Together survey - SDC - deadline 13 May

Noted.

32.2 On-street electric vehicle charging - KCC

Noted.

32.3 NHS 10 Year Health Plan Consultation - Help Shape the Future of NHS Services in Your Community - KALC - deadline 6 June

Noted.

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

Cllr Layland reported he had attended a trustee meeting of the EVM, and was please to report its finances were recovering and in a healthier position than two years ago,

34 To consider any press releases

New Chair and Vice-Chairman.

35 Matters for future agendas

None.

36 Date of next meeting - 07 July 2025

Noted.

20:24 The meeting closed.