



SANDGATE PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of a PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
Held on 22nd April 2024 at 6.30pm

At Sandgate Parish Council/Library Offices
James Morris Court, Sandgate High Street, Sandgate.

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**Present**

**Chair: Cllr Tim Prater**

**Councillors: Hazel Barrett, Susan Claris, Michael Fitch, Peter Hickman, Kirsty Hogben (after item 5), Simon Horton, Rosa Morris, Nicola South & Guy Valentine-Neale**

**Clerk: G Thomas**  
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These Minutes will only be deemed to be a correct record of the meeting when approved and signed at the next meeting.

1. Apologies for absences: Gary Fuller

2. Declarations of Interest Members are invited to declare disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests in items on the agenda as required by the Council’s Code of Conduct and by the Localism Act 2011.- there were none.

3. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 25th March 2024 to be confirmed as a correct record and signed.

Proposed by Guy Valentine-Neale

Seconded by Simon Horton

Agreed by all.

4. Chair’s opening remarks & correspondence

It was noted that defibrillator training sessions were available for all councillors and that a June training session would be organised on a Monday evening.

It was noted that Chani Sanger had now assumed the role of Responsible Finance Officer after the successful completion of training and appraisals.

It was noted that a meeting to discuss the limited 20mph proposal for Sandgate High Street had taken place between Tim Prater, Kieran Doble, Highway Community Engagement Officer, Rory Love and Graham Wickenden. Kieran had taken the details of the scheme back to be reviewed by the engineers and speed surveys would be undertaken. If the scheme were considered viable then financing routes for circa £20k would need to be investigated.

It was noted that the formal TRO consultation regarding yellow lines on Sunnyside Road and Encombe was underway and advertised on the KCC website, the local paper, and lampposts.

5. Co-option of new councillor

It was noted that a vacancy had arisen on the resignation of Tracy Stephens. The opportunity for ten local electors to request a by election, past without any such request, and so the parish council had the decision whether to co-opt or not a new councillor. The opportunity to stand for the co opted position was advertised, and Kirsty Hogben applied. Prior to the formal meeting of the Full Council, Kirsty met informally with the councillors.

It was proposed to co-opt Kirsty Hogben as a councillor for the remainder of the term until May 2027.

Proposed Tim Prator

Seconded Peter Hickman

Agreed by all.

6. Planning Committee report

It was noted the minutes to the previous Planning Committee had been circulated. Thanks were given to all councillors who responded to a request for comments regarding 70 Enbrook Valley.

7. Environment Committee report

It was noted that the Environment Committee had not met since the last Full Council meeting but that since the last meeting the Carbon Plan had been put online, the Sea Water testing letter had been widely disseminated and the virement of the Cycle racks, Hedgehog pathways and deep cleaning of the toilets had been requested.

It was noted that the sea water testing had been discussed at a meeting in New Romney with Southern Water and the Environment Agency. The Environment Agency were receptive to the movement of the testing point from near Barrack Hill to the appropriate location at Sandgate bathing beach, and would further discuss this with FHDC. Southern Water were noted to be less receptive regarding extending the length of their outflow pipe.

It was noted that SPC had received a response from Keep Britain Tidy, the organisers of the Seaside Award, regarding the Sea Water testing letter. KBT noted that all sea water test readings were within acceptable levels and would have not negatively impacted an application for the Seaside Award. It was agreed that this would be published on our website.

It was noted that signage for the railings regarding water quality would be discussed by members in due course.

A councillor from New Romney had contacted the parish regarding undertaking their own sea testing. It was noted that it was important to emphasis to the public that the water quality in Sandgate was in fact, generally exceptionally good, and that it was only after periods of heavy rain that the quality may be negatively affected. It was noted that the newsletter and website were both useful media for disseminating this message.

8. Finance Committee report.

It was noted the Finance Committee was moving into the busiest period of the year. An annual summary had been circulated showing the current position. It was important to acknowledge that the reserves should have three months of the annual budgetary spend and that finance this year would be extremely tight going forward with the budget stripped down to the essentials.

Carry forward of prior year budgets for discussion and approval.

It was noted that in line with the financial regulations any requests for the carry forward of prior year budgets requires approval from main council:

Council is requested to approve the following budget carry forwards from the last fiscal year which have been discussed and are supported by Finance Committee and circulated to all councillors:

From/To Environmental Budget – Scribe Item Code 35

For the following specific items:

£125 Hedgehog Project (Sandgate Action Group have provided £125 contribution towards the overall cost)

£475 Toilet Block Deep Clean (now arranged for this month)

£466 Village Green Cycle Rack.

£1,066 Total

This will increase this year's budget from £3,000 to £4,066.

Proposed by Simon Horton

Seconded by Tim Prater

Approved by all.

Council is requested to approve the following budget carry forwards from the last fiscal year which have been discussed and are supported by Finance Committee and circulated to all councillors::

From CCTV Capital Cost Budget – Scribe Item Code 53

£1,495

From CCTV Maintenance Cost Budget – Scribe Item Code 54

£555

To CCTV Capital Cost Budget – Scribe Item Code 53

These monies are required to assist the purchase of replacement equipment at total cost of £4,250. A quote has been circulated. The balance will be met from this year's current budget of £2,200.

Approval will enable these works to be instructed.

This will increase this year's budget to £4,250.

Proposed by Simon Horton

Seconded by Tim Prater

Approved by all.

Council is requested to approve the following reserves virement which has been discussed and is supported by Finance Committee and circulated to all councillors::

£851.33 to be vired from the COVID business grant reserve to the general fund. These monies are then being applied towards the cost of installing blinds in the Childrens and IT areas of the library. The COVID grant reserve can then be closed as it will have a zero balance.

Proposed by Simon Horton

Seconded by Tim Prater

Approved by all.

9. Library Committee report

It was noted that the Kent Cabinet Member for libraries would be visiting in May. It was also noted that Sandgate Library remained the only library in Kent, which was extending its hours, including an additional Wednesday morning and that this had only be possible with the active support and engagement of the library volunteers.

10. AGAR 22/23

It was noted that last year's AGAR had resulted in a series of negative observations from the external auditors.

While this was noted and discussed by the Finance Committee on 16th October, and it was agreed:

'... that some mistakes regarding presentational and reporting issues had been made which were reputationally damaging, and that this would never be allowed to reoccur,'

.. procedurally it is noted that it is necessary to consider and minute in Full Council that members had considered and acknowledged this commentary of the external auditors to minimise the possibility of any future recurrence of these issues.

It was proposed to acknowledge the External Auditors report had been noted and that the parish's finance accounting system had been enhanced to ensure future compliance with all financial aspects of the Audit process.

Proposed by Simon Horton
Seconded by Guy Valentine-Neale
Agreed by all.

11. **KALC Subscription.**

It was noted that the annual subscription KALC required approval for payment to the sum of £1706.31 net

Proposed by Tim Prater
Seconded by Simon Horton
Agreed by all.

12. **Bin Screening at Riviera Court**

It was noted that the bin screen project had been undertaken with a grant to the Sandgate Society and the project was build by FHDC. It had initially been agreed that SPC would formally take ownership of the fence when it was built, but this had not happened. It was now necessary to undertake some investigations into liabilities, insurance, and the actual ownership of the area in which the fence had been erected.

It was noted that a low-pressure spray of the fence would remove the green algae on the lower edges, and this would be undertaken soon.

It was noted that further discussion regarding the fence would be deferred until the clerk had undertaken research on the mentioned issues and this would be reported back to members in a future meeting.

13. **Information**

It was noted that there had been some access concerns regarding Enbrook Park, and the clerk would speak to Enbrook Park's site manager. It was noted that there were a number of fallen trees near the Martello towers off Military Road. The clerk would contact the land agent regarding this.

It was noted that there was still concern about small children with cycles needing to cross the Esplanade from Castle Bay to the beach side as the pavement is too narrow on the Castle Bay side.

It was noted that it was exceptionally important for all members to familiarise themselves with the financial information circulated.

It was noted that Vic Harmer had offered to paint the railings in the toilets for free. Thanks were offered by members for this generous act.

14. **Date of the next meeting 20th May 2024**

15. **Exclusion of the public**

It was proposed to exclude the public on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Proposed Tim Prater
Seconded Simon Horton
Agreed by all.

16. **Staff Pay review.**

The staff pay was reviewed and appropriate rises were proposed and approved.

Proposed by Simon Horton
Seconded by Tim Prater
Agreed by all.

17. **Virement of current year budgets for discussion and approval of additional payment from KCC to the staffing budgets to support the agreed pay rises.**

Proposed by Simon Horton
Seconded by Tim Prater
Agreed by all.

Signed by the Chair.....Date.....