



SANDGATE PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of a PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
Held on 25th November 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: Susan Claris, Michael Fitch, Gary Fuller, Peter Hickman, Simon Horton, Rosa Morris & Guy Valentine-Neale**

**Clerks: G Thomas**  
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1. **Apologies for absences: Cllrs Hazel Barrett & Nicola South**
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 28th October to be confirmed as a correct record and signed.**
Proposed by Simon Horton
Seconded by Rosa Morris
Agreed by all.
4. **Chair's opening remarks & correspondence**
It was noted with sadness that Judy Murray, a library volunteer and valued friend had passed away. The Parish Clerk would be attending the celebration of Judy's life on behalf of the parish council.
It was noted that Tim Prater would be undertaking a second fund raising sleeping out activity to benefit the Rainbow Centre accompanied by the Leader of the District Council, Chair, and the Cabinet Member for Transport.
5. **Planning Committee report**
The minutes of the previous Planning Committee meeting had been circulated. It was noted that Riviera Cars on the High Street had been sold and that all and any development of this site in the centre of the Conservation Area would be subject to the council's usual scrutiny.
6. **Environment Committee report**
The minutes of the previous Environment Committee meeting had been circulated. During the recent meeting on 11th November, it was noted that the four key priorities were discussed:
 - 20's Plenty Initiative – *to be discussed agenda item 9*
 - Sea Water QualityIt was agreed that strong advocacy with DEFRA and the Environment Agency would be necessary to relocate the testing site to the more appropriate area of Sandgate Beach outside the Rowing Club. A sea

water testing protocol has been established for future testing activities, and water quality signage has been installed along the seafront.

- Solar panels on the Boat House

It was noted that planning permission has been granted for the installation of solar panels on the Boat House

- Sandgate Sprucing and greening.

It was noted that a tidying of the planters was conducted on 16th October by councillors and SEA members. Another sprucing exercise was proposed for 5th December, with plans to reach out to Kent Coast Volunteering to invite their participation.

7. **Finance Committee report.**

It was noted that the most recent Finance Committee meeting was held on 18th November, and the minutes had been duly circulated. During the meeting, the six-monthly financial report was reviewed. The Chair of the Finance Committee expressed concern regarding the "Ground Maintenance - Other" category, particularly in light of anticipated substantial quotations for tree works.

The overall financial position was acknowledged to be within the expected range. It was further noted that the draft budget remains under development and will be presented for discussion at the Finance Committee meeting scheduled for 9th December.

8. **Library Committee report**

It was noted that the Library Committee had not met recently and that a meeting would be scheduled for the New Year. It was acknowledged that there had been a prior council agreement to provide residents of the new homes at Shorncliffe with information about Sandgate Library. It was suggested that this initiative could potentially be incorporated into a future newsletter.

9. **20 mph zone –**

It was noted that the extents plan was under review by the Kent Highways Design Team, and it was hoped would be shortly available to the council. Upon finalization and approval of the plan, a local consultation was planned to engage the community on the matter. Project funding had been secured through Kent Highways and a Ward Members Grant from District Councillors Tim Prater and Gary Fuller, with any additional costs intended to be covered by a ‘contingency’ allocation in the budget proposal.

It was proposed to confirm the Parish’s strong support for a 20mph zone in Sandgate High Street and include in budget a financial contribution towards the costs.

Proposed by Tim Prater

Seconded by Susan Claris

Agreed by all.

10. **Speedwatch –**

It was noted that the Speed Watch initiative had been highly successful, utilising equipment originally purchased in partnership with Folkestone Town Council in 2011. A proposal was made to modernise the equipment by acquiring a handheld speed camera. Additionally, it was suggested to enhance data collection and increase public reporting, with the possibility of quarterly presentations to the council by a Speed Watch representative.

It was noted that there were suggestions of a Speed Watch site at the top of Military Road, and this would need to be researched to ensure that it conformed to the criteria required by the police regarding sight lines and straight areas of road with safe spaces for the Speed Watch volunteers.

It was proposed to purchase of new Speedwatch camera for inclusion in 2025/6 budget.

Proposed by Tim Prater

Seconded by Susan Claris

Agreed by all.

11. Memorial bench –

It was noted that the cost of purchasing a new memorial bench on the seafront, approximately £2,000, was often beyond the financial reach of many members of the public, despite a strong desire to create lasting memorials for loved ones. As a potential solution, it was suggested to install a shared Memorial Bench within the parish, designed to accommodate multiple commemorative plaques at an affordable cost.

An initial location on the Village Green was identified for this purpose. It was proposed to purchase a brightly coloured recycled plastic bench, similar to the existing one but slightly larger in size. The first plaque would honour Robert Bliss, with space available for up to 12 additional plaques that could be purchased by the public.

It was proposed to purchase a brightly coloured recycled plastic bench.

Proposed by Tim Prater

Seconded by Simon Horton

Agreed by all.

12. Sandgate Esplanade Wildflower and Bee Corridor-

It was noted that a wildflower strip along Battery Point wall could be seeded and planted with the green verge remaining in front and that over time this would become a self-seeding and attractive addition to the area.

It was proposed to confirm council support and agreement to budget for a wildflower corridor along the SPC maintained grass verge alongside the Battery Point.

Proposed by Tim Prater

Seconded by Susan Claris

Agreed by all.

13. Sandgate Park: Graffiti Wall –

It was noted that the wall adjacent to the courts at Sandgate Park had been covered with graffiti for several years. Recently, graffiti artists had taken steps to remove unsightly tagging and enhance the visual appeal of the area with more artistic renderings.

It was suggested that an agreement could be established to designate this specific area for artistic graffiti while emphasizing that this permission would apply strictly to this location and not extend to other areas or items within the parish.

It was proposed to confirm the Council's acceptance that the walls adjacent to the tennis, basketball, and 5-a-side courts at Sandgate Park be formally designated as “Graffiti Walls” and to reaffirm that these are the only locations where graffiti will be considered permissible.

Proposed by Tim Prater

Seconded by Guy Valentine-Neale

Agreed by all.

14. Enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings –

To discuss council’s response to the Government consultation at

<https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-standards-and-conduct/remote-attendance-and-proxy-voting>

It was noted that during the COVID-19 pandemic, online meetings had become the norm and were widely regarded as successful. While it was acknowledged that some individuals might prefer the traditional in-person meeting format, it was agreed that councils should have the authority to determine the format of their meetings based on their specific needs and preferences.

It was therefore proposed to assert that individual councils be granted the autonomy to decide whether their meetings are held in-person, online, or as a hybrid, ensuring flexibility to choose the most suitable option.

Proposed by Tim Prater

Seconded by Rosa Morris

Agreed by all.

15. Christmas events.

It was noted that on 6th December, the library would host a "Meet Santa" event from 5:15 PM to 6:00 PM. Additionally, Chichester Hall would hold a Christmas Fayre from 5:30 PM to 8:00 PM, with the potential inclusion of a choir from Folkestone School for Girls. Throughout the High Street, numerous businesses would remain open, contributing to a lively and celebratory atmosphere for the evening.

Preparations for the season were well underway, with the Christmas tree set to be erected on the Village Green this week and the festive lights adorning the lampposts to be installed shortly. Furthermore, a High Street Christmas Tree initiative had resulted in many shops displaying illuminated mini-Christmas trees outside their premises, adding a charming and seasonal touch to the area.

16. Information

It was noted that initial information had been received regarding the potential abolition of some councils as part of a proposed local government reorganisation being considered by the government. While there was no immediate threat to parish or town councils, the proposal suggested the possible amalgamation of Kent County Council and District Councils to form a Unitary Authority. It was noted that this was a 'live issue,' and further details were expected in the New Year, although it was noted that the Kent County Council elections were still to take place.

It was also noted that solar panels had been successfully installed on the Rowing Club building, and despite the extreme windy conditions over the weekend, they remained securely in place.

Regarding local infrastructure, it was noted that some private gardening work on front paths at Enbrook was underway. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact Folkestone & Hythe District Council's Planning Department to obtain clarification about the need for retrospective planning permission for certain terracing and planting works, as had previously been witnessed in some applications. This would ensure that residents are informed of planning requirements before undertaking similar projects.

17. Date of the next meeting 16th December 2024 at 6.30pm

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