

PADDOCKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL
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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF PADDOCK WOOD TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON Monday 21st
October 2019, at the Day Centre, Commercial Road, at 7.45 p.m.**

- PRESENT:** Cllr M Flashman, in the Chair
Cllrs R. Atkins (TWBC), S. Barrett, D. Boyle, S. Hamilton, (TWBC, KCC) B. Hills, D. Kent, R. Moon, D. Sargison, E. Thomas, (TWBC) R. Turk, C. Williams
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs N Reay (Clerk)
Cllr Alan McDermott, (Leader of TWBC) & Cllr Carol Mackonochie (Portfolio Holder for Communities and Wellbeing) Mr W Benson (Chief Executive TWBC)
Borough Cllr M Bailey,
5 members of the public
- NON-ATTENDANCE:** Cllr M Ridger

The Chairman welcomed the visitors to the meeting.

Mr Benson gave an overview on the 4 challenges facing the Borough Council in the coming years. Finance – loss of central government subsidy is the biggest challenge. Gave a breakdown of how council tax is spent. Increases are due to Kent Police & KCC social care precept. TWBC have one of the lowest precepts in the County.

Centralisation -

Growth & Infrastructure – 350 homes/year currently being built; new local plan will require 650 houses.

Changing Highstreet – not necessarily dying but changing. Government is incentivising growth, by allowing greater share of business rates to be retained.

Borough Council has a list of key projects it wished to deliver –

Amelia Scott – cultural centre

Community centres in Southborough, Cranbrook & Paddock Wood

Dowding House – housing for homeless families

Cllr Carol Mackonochie then gave an overview on the issue of homelessness in the area.

Nationally there are 1.2 m homeless. In TWBC 1089 approached the council for help in 18/19. Able to prevent 119 households becoming homeless. There are 82 households in emergency accommodation. Dowding House is for homeless families.

Last winter there were 7 rough sleepers, and previously there had been 21 rough sleepers.

Cllr Alan McDermott, (Leader of TWBC) took questions from members.

Given concerns about the changing high street, why have evening parking charges been introduced on Thursdays?

This was to fund the reduction of parking costs on Sundays which shopkeepers indicated was a preferred shopping day.

Will there be a public enquiry into the £11m expenditure on the Calverley park project which was spent without audit?

Mr Benson advised that the expenditure had been approved & audited by the Councillors at every stage on the process. The council members had changed their mind over the project.

The Borough Housing Officers were congratulated on the success of Dowding House. What help was there in the rural areas for the long term homeless?

The majority of the Borough's homeless come to Tunbridge Wells.

How can the public & councillors signpost services for people in urgent need?

They should be sent straight to housing department in TWBC. Alternatively, there is CAB & CAC. Sometimes people in crisis are unable to do that, could there be information available in public places in the town?

TWBC will look see if they can leave information publicly available.

How are numbers of houses arrived as it will double size of the town? It has also been alleged that other boroughs are planning on moving residents to Paddock Wood.

So many houses are being built as that is where land was offered. Houses are being built by developers for residents.

Mr Benson advised that there had been some issues where London Boroughs have bought land in Kent to built homes for their residents, but TW has been unaffected to date.

The Borough must build 13800 houses according to the government.

Local plan does not make any reference to the 1100 currently being built in Paddock Wood, the infrastructure requirements are not being addressed. Will it be in place before the houses are built?

Not until the houses are built. Developers need to sell houses to fund improvements.

Some brownfield sites are not registered.

The Colts Hill bypass will be built when the new houses are built.

Sites on offer are on flood zone 3.

If local plan is approved will there be a 5-year housing supply? It is almost there.

The following addiotnal comments were made:

The shopkeepers in Monson Road Tunbridge Wells had to take a petition to TWBC for action.

Borough has problems with many of its projects.

The chairman thanked Cllrs McDermott, Cllr Carol Mackonochie & Mr Benson for attending the meeting.

Cllr Thomas also left the meeting.

QUESTIONS FROM RESIDENTS (3 minutes per speaker, maximum 15 minutes)

It was requested by those residents present that the 15 minutes was respected and not interrupted by councillors.

The following points were made: the proposed community centre had been rejected by the Parish Poll, was not fit for purpose, would result in the loss of green space and too small for the future of the town.

Considering this will the Council ask residents if they wish to spend the money on a Community Centre as the costs are increasing?

The chairman replied that the town council had not fought the parish poll, which was brought by the Friends of Memorial Field and she did not therefore feel it was representative of the view of Paddock Wood.

The council will be consulting with residents in the next stage of the process.

Who decided that the land for the community centre was surplus requirement as referred to in the Local Plan?

The Town Council does not write the plan – but TWBC has done a sports & open space study, and that is what they based their plan on this study.

As Councillor Boyle is runs the Facebook page Community Centre for Memorial Field would the chairman please speak to the Monitoring Officer and see if he should be allowed to vote on the subject?

The chairman advised that if anyone had a complaint about a councillor's conduct, they should contact the Monitoring officer themselves.

QUESTIONS FOR THE BOROUGH AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS (10 minutes)

Cllr Bailey was asked if he was aware that those who were elected onto the town council at the last election were those in favour of the community centre. Those who were not elected were not in favour of it. Cllr Bailey advised he was not aware.

Borough Cllr Atkins reminded members that questions should be submitted to Borough or County Councillor in advance of the meeting, unless urgent.

CC Hamilton advised that she had been in communication with the officers at KCC regarding the removal of the two trees on Old Kent Road. They were diseased which is why they were removed, and there was a replacement programme which would be implemented before March next year. She would be contributing from her members fund towards the replacement.

Cllr Hamilton was also asked about the markings on the trees in Green Lane which was causing some residents concern. The clerk advised that these were for identification purposes only.

The chairman confirmed that KCC did not have a policy to replace trees unless there was a TPO placed on them.

C77 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Hamilton advised that she had spoken to the monitoring officer to clarify the position of those who were twin hatted members with regards to them participating in item C80. She had been advised that providing they kept an open mind they were able to participate in the debate.

C78 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- (a) The minutes of the meeting held on 16th September 2019 were APPROVED.
- (b) The minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee meetings held on 16th September & 7th October 2019 were NOTED.
- (c) The minutes of the Estates meeting held on 14th October 2019 were NOTED.

C79 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES not covered elsewhere on the agenda

- a) Borough Cllr Bailey has advised the following on the new waste contract. The new mix of materials will not reduce the efficiency of the process to sort the various materials. KCC are responsible for arranging the contract with the sorting plant (or MRF – material recovery facility) They have contracted with a new MRF specifically to handle TWBC & T&MBC's recycling.

It is expected that the recycling rate for dry recycling materials to increase as more are captured as a result of the new service.

With regards to glass and colour separation compared to mixed colours, when you take account of the collection costs, processing costs at the recycling plant and reduce disposal costs due to there being much less glass (hopefully no glass) in the rubbish bin then the kerbside collection of mixed glass is more efficient than increasing the number of recycling banks for colour separated glass and encouraging everyone to use them.

Cllr Bailey was asked what happened to the glass, and its final destination. He would forward a response when he had received one.

- b) The Estates Committee has considered the request from Paddock Wood Cricket and a copy of the minutes are attached. The Committee Chairman advised that he had forwarded some questions regarding future plans. These would be reported back to the committee once the responses have been received.
- c) The measurements for the Community Centre had been provided by the architect and had been forwarded by email to members.
- d) The questions regarding Putlands and Borough Council staff should be directed to TWBC and the Friends of Memorial Field have been advised accordingly.
- e) The last Strategic Sites Meeting at TWBC was postponed.

C80 DRAFT LOCAL PLAN

Members had received a copy of the planning consultant's proposed draft responses. The chairman handed over to Cllr Williams for this item.

Cllr Williams advised that the Planning & Environment Committee had recommended objecting to the local plan for the following reasons:

1. Not sound evidence underpinning
2. Not sustainable
3. Infrastructure delivery plan is not clear
4. Insufficient detail on the master planning process.

Three underlying concerns – existing infrastructure problems not addressed, flooding and the vitality of the town centre. These are all existing problems which will not be resolved and will get worse with the proposed housing. The flood risk assessments are lacking. The master planning process is unclear.

Some key additional points came out of the public consultation and there is concern that the social housing will not be for local needs but other councils. There were also concerns about green belt. Also, that the town will become an urban sprawl.

The committee decided against reserving judgement and wanted to object. Further issues can be raised later. There are elements of the local plan which the committee supported.

The committee was thanked for all the work which had been done.

A meeting will be held with the planning consultant on the 11th November to finalise the council's response.

Members were asked if they had any further questions or comments they wished to make before the final draft was submitted.

Peter Trent has analysed the Flood Risk Assessment and his summary will be submitted with the council representation. The council recorded its thanks to Mr Trent for all his work.

The new local plan allocates the Memorial Field for the community centre – concern was expressed as to why?

C81 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The draft policies which have been drawn up by the Neighbourhood Plan Group are attached for members consideration.

The NP consultant has recommended that these should be put before members and passed as "fit for further consultation". Members discussed the draft plans. It was suggested that Adult Education should be included

Cllr Boyle proposed, Cllr Williams seconded:

That the council was happy, in principle, that the plans were fit for further consultation.

CARRIED unanimously

C82 COMMUNITY CENTRE UPDATE

The architect has advised that the RiBA 3 document should be ready by 4th November 2019. Members are asked to agree a date for an extraordinary meeting to consider the report. At the last meeting it was agreed that members should have 4 weeks to read the report.

The working group focussed on communication at its last meeting and will be discussing the design of a leaflet at the next meeting due to be held on the 31st October 2019.

The Terms of Refence were also discussed. The Governance Document is due for review by the Town Council in January 2020. Any proposed changes will be put to members at that meeting.

Correspondence from the Friends of Memorial Field was attached. The working party would look at the correspondence at its next meeting.

Interest rates for the PWLB had recently increased. The Clerk reported that the impact was as follows:

Date of calculation	Interest Rate	Annual repayment
March 2018	2.87%	£56,686.22
October 2019	3.04%	£58,553.68

This equates to an annual repayment increase of £1,867 per year on a loan of £1.5 m.

Cllr Hamilton asked if it was possible to mark the outline of the building on the field again. The clerk would make enquiries.

C83 FINANCE

(a) Cllr Boyle proposed, Cllr Sargison seconded:

That the payments list: 329 to 470 should be APPROVED.

CARRIED unanimously

(b) The receipts list: 143 to 205 was NOTED.

(c) PKF Littlejohn have returned the Annual Statement & Accountability Return with no comments or concerns. The Report and Statement have been published on the Council's website as required by the Audit Regulations. The Conclusion of Audit notices are on the noticeboards as well.

d) The town council needs to update its bank mandate. There are currently 6 signatories to the account. Those signatories who are still councillors are:
Cllrs Flashman, Hamilton, Moon, Thomas & Williams.

All transactions need authorisation by two councillors, and most payments are made online with Unity Trust Bank.

Cllr Flashman proposed, Cllr Kent seconded:

That Cllrs Flashman, Hamilton, Moon, Williams, Turk & Boyle should be signatories to the bank account.

CARRIED unanimously

Cllr Boyle proposed, Cllr Williams seconded:

Cllr Thomas & John Flashman should be removed from the bank mandate.

CARRIED unanimously

- e) Grant application from Paddock Wood Lights Up.
Cllr Boyle proposed, Cllr Williams seconded:
That the grant for £334 should be APPROVED.
CARRIED unanimously

C84 FIVE YEAR PLAN

Members received a copy of the 5-year plan and the chairman advised that there were still appendices to add.

Cllr Boyle proposed, Cllr Moon seconded:

That the 5-year plan should be accepted.

Carried 11 in favour, 1 abstention

C85 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES

To receive a report from the council's representatives when available:

- (a) Chairman's meeting – there had been an additional meeting on the 17th September to discuss the local plan
- (b) Paddock Wood Business Association – the AGM had been held the previous week and a new committee had been elected. Richard Barsley was chairman.
- (c) Bereko Committee - a quiz was planned for 2020. Additional funding was likely to be required for the website which the council had previously funded.
- (d) KALC – AGM will take place on the 30th November 2019.
- (e) Medway Valley Line – a survey of all stations on the route had taken place and there were 14 recommendations for Paddock Wood. Several Christmas events were planned. It was hoped to extend the line to the Hoo peninsula.
- (Cllr Boyle left the meeting)
- (f) Hop Pickers – the AGM was due in November. The group has attended the Horsemonden Nostalgia event and the High Weald Walking Festival.
- (g) Youth Council – the Young Person of the Year Award for 2019 had been advertised.
- (h) Councillor's Surgery – 19th October 2019 – there had been around 20 visitors, who came to express their opinion of the Local Plan. Their comments would be collated and given to the Planning consultant.
- (i) Newsletter – had been published and was available on the website and would be placed around town.
- (j) Training events – Cllr Barrett had attended the recent Dynamic Councillors Course in Hythe. The Clerk had attended the KALC Clerk's Conference in Faversham.
- k) Putlands Leisure Centre Liaison meeting – there was a new manager in place.
- l) Persimmon Liaison Meeting – it was anticipated that 110 houses would be occupied within the next 12 months. The site entrance was being moved to Mascalls Courts Road which was causing some concerns.
- m) Litter pick – Friday 18th October 2019 – despite the poor weather a number of residents turned out to help and ½ a skip of rubbish was collected.

C86 ANY OTHER INFORMATION

Cllr Moon had attended the Community Advice Centre AGM and it was reported that they were running at a deficit.

C87 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Monday 18th November 2019.

The meeting closed at 10.20 pm

Chairman