

**PADDOCKWOOD TOWN COUNCIL**  
**The Podmore Building, St Andrews Field, St Andrews Road**  
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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF PADDOCK WOOD TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON Monday 16<sup>th</sup>**  
**October 2023 at 7.45 pm in The Day Centre, Commercial Road, Paddock Wood**

**PRESENT:** Cllr H Atkins, in the Chair  
 Cllrs D. Dray, S. Hamilton (KCC), N. Maari, A. Mackie, T. Mobbs,  
 R. Moon (TWBC) M. Munday, (TWBC) D. Sargison,  
 J. Thompson, C. Williams.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs N Reay, Town Clerk

**APOLOGIES:** Cllrs R. Atkins, (TWBC) D. Kent,

**BOROUGH & COUNTY COUNCILLORS UPDATE (10 minutes)**

BC Munday reported that the hall lights in Putlands Sports and Leisure Centre had been changed for LEDs.

BC Moon advised that the Borough Council has obtained the lease for the Royal Victoria Centre in Tunbridge Wells.

BC Atkins sent a written report as follows:

1. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has agreed to acquire the Long Leasehold ownership of Royal Victoria Place from British Land. If there are any questions, there is a FAQs on the Borough website, or you can email [rvp@tunbridgewells.gov.uk](mailto:rvp@tunbridgewells.gov.uk)

2. The East Car park, as can be seen, is having its brick planter repaired. (These brick planters are beside the toilets and Lambert and Foster Estate Agents), this is at my request. The borough has also removed the hedge and will be putting "suitable plants" back in both planters. The hedge was removed to prevent anti-social behaviour.

3. Councillors were presented with results of the recent borough wide survey, and these will be present at the Ameila Scott on 1st November. You can still give your name to attend. There were 38 questions asked and too many to go in detail here - But the highlights are: To balance the budget: 37% believe in the user pays (for services), 14% increase council tax, 12% cut council tax or cut services, 15% did not know and 21% suggested other ways (main ones were reduce waste/cut staffing/salaries). When the 12% (who wanted to cut council tax or services) were asked what services they would cut - Ameila Scot and Assembly Halls came top.

When the survey asked, what people would like to see more of: (multiple answers allowed)  
 top 3 answers:

53% of respondents said free parking.

51% said events for youth.

42% said farmer's market.

Signed Council Chairman:

Date:

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53% who wanted free car park seems to go against the 37% who believes it should be the "user that pays [for the service]"

As regard to safety in the Borough. Borough Wide 57% felt safe or very safe. However very disappointingly, and I expressed my disappointment, Paddock Wood East, and West, came out bottom and 2nd bottom at 40% and 48% respectively of all wards in the borough. This compares to 3rd and 6th from bottom in 2015, the last survey.

4) Today, 16th October, Car parking charges are introduced at Dunorlan Park. This will go to help support the Park.

5) As chair of Licensing at Tunbridge Wells Borough Council I would like to make councillors and residents aware of the consultation on our new Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2023 - 2028. One of the proposed changes is to mandatory contactless/card payments. This has received a lot of press coverage. There are also other proposed changes. I encourage all to respond to the consultation.

CC Hamilton advised that she had nothing to report at present.

## **C72 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Williams declared that she had a non-pecuniary interest in PWCCO Ltd.

## **C73 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.**

- a) The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023 were APPROVED.
- b) The minutes of the Planning Environment Committee meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023 & 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023 were APPROVED.
- c) The minutes of the meeting of the Estates Committee meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2023 were NOTED.

## **C74 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE**

There were no other matters arising.

## **C75 FINANCE**

- a) Cllr Williams proposed, Cllr Munday seconded:  
*That the payment vouchers: nos 367 – 424 should be APPROVED.*  
CARRIED Unanimously
- b) The receipt vouchers: nos 170 – 184 were NOTED.
- c) The second half of the Annual Precept has been received from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.
- d) Grant Application  
The following grant application has been received:  
Paddock Wood Lights up - £500.  
There is currently £2500 remaining in the grant budget.  
Cllr Hamilton proposed, Cllr Williams seconded:  
*That the grant of £500 should be APPROVED*  
CARRIED unanimously.

Signed Council Chairman:

Date:

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- e) The External Auditor, Mazers LLP, has returned the Town Council's Annual Return with no issues raised. Members asked for their thanks to be passed onto the RFO Teresa Maxwell.
- f) An additional £1000 is required for a replacement fence in the St Andrews Play area. The RFO will analysis existing budgets to see if can be paid for without using reserves. Cllr Hamilton proposed, Cllr Thompson seconded:  
*That the funds should be taken from reserves if required*  
 CARRIED unanimously.

#### **C76 PADDOCK WOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE**

- a) The Licence to Occupy has been extended by a further 6 months (Min C68).
- b) The Directors will be meeting with the project manager plus the RFO & Clerk on the 18<sup>th</sup> October 2023. A report will be made at the November meeting.
- c) Member received the Manager's monthly report.

#### **C77 4 YEAR PLAN GROUP**

The group met on the 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023. Members noted the first draft of the plan. The Council would need to look at its Estate and consider what would need to be done going forward. Particularly considering energy efficiency as many of the building were quite old.

This could be considered by the Climate Change group.

#### **C78 PUBLIC TOILETS**

Members considered the attached report and discussed whether the Town Council should take over the management and funding of the public toilets. The Clerk updated members on the costs which will be in the region of £20,000 per year if a contingency of £5,000 if allowed for. The Town Council currently contributes £7000 a year to the borough council towards the £17,000 costs.

Members considered the following points:

- Costs of running the toilets
- The Town Council does not employ any out of hours maintenance staff to carry out emergency call outs.
- The Borough Council have just found the funds to purchase the lease for the Royal Victoria Centre.
- If the toilets are closed, then that would be the Borough Council's responsibility.
- The toilets are already paid for by the residents in their Council Tax
- The Chairman advised that in all other instances where Parish and Town Councils have taken over the toilets, they have been given the free hold. TWBC is refusing to give the Town Council the freehold.
- The toilets are an essential service.
- There has been no consultation.

Cllr Hamilton proposed, Cllr Mobbs seconded:

*That the Chairman and Clerk should ask for a meeting with the Cabinet member and relevant officer at TWBC to reflect the views of the Town Council. Following that meeting TWBC should be invited to attend a Council meeting to allow for further discussion.*

CARRIED unanimously.

Signed Council Chairman:

Date:

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**C79 GARDEN THERAPY**

Cllr Munday reported that he been in contact with the organisers of the Tonbridge Garden Therapy group, and they were keen to expand into Paddock Wood. He had identified three sites and would discuss these further with the organisers. The Clerk asked for the details of the sites to be forwarded to the Estates Manager so he could give feedback.

**C80 COUNCILLORS SURGERY DATES**

The follows dates and times were agreed.

28<sup>th</sup> October 2023 10 – 12 outside the library (Cllrs Munday, Thompson, Mobbs & H Atkins)  
18 the November 2023 10 -12 outside the Podmore Building (Cllrs Maari, Mobbs, Munday & Dray)

The dates & times would be agreed at a later meeting.

January 2024

February 2024

March 2024

April 2024

**C81 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES**

To receive updates from representatives

- (a) Chairman's meeting – the closure of the public toilets was discussed.
- (b) Paddock Wood Business Association – the TWBC Economic Development Team had attended the recent breakfast meeting. There were grants available to businesses to help them become more ecofriendly.
- (c) Bereko Committee – the group would be flying to Bereko on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2023. Representatives from the Primary and secondary school will be accompanying members of the church.
- (d) KALC
- (e) Medway Valley Line & Hop Pickers Line – The MVL had offered to help with the way marking of the HPL between the station and the board at the John Brunt. Permission had been received from KCC to install the board and photos had been sourced from the Heritage Group.  
It was hoped to install silhouettes along the pathway – the Clerk would pass on details of how to obtain permission from KCC to fix structures to the lighting columns.
- (f) Youth Council - The group were working on plans for the Young Person of the Year Award.
- (h) Putlands Leisure Centre – no meeting
- (i) Highway Improvement Plan – no report
- (k) Reports from meetings which members have attended on behalf of the Town Council.

Cllr H Atkins proposed, Cllr Williams seconded:

*Under section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (admission to meetings) Act 1960 the following item should be exempt from the press and public.*

CARRIED 10 in favour 1 abstention.

Signed Council Chairman:

Date:

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**C82 PW COMMUNITY CENTRE**

Community Centre Directors.

- a) Members noted the report from the Directors.
- b) Members considered the application for a new director of the Community Centre.  
Cllr Moon proposed, Cllr Mackie seconded:  
*That the applicant should be appointed*

(Cllr Moon left the Meeting)

The vote was not taken, and Cllr H Atkins proposed, Cllr Dray seconded.  
*That the applicant should be appointed subject to a 3-month probationary period.*  
CARRIED 6 in favour, 4 abstained.

**C83 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will take place on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 7.45 in the Day Centre.

DRAFT

Signed Council Chairman:

Date:

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