

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2021 at 7.00 pm in Ramsgate Sports Centre.

Present: Councillor Jason Savage (Chair); Councillors Albon, Ara, Ashbee, Austin, Bailey, Bambridge, J Bayford, R Bayford, Boyd, Braidwood, Coleman-Cooke, Crittenden, Currie, Day, Dennis, Dexter, Duckworth, Everitt, Fellows, Garner, Green, Hart, Hopkinson, Huxley, Keen, Kup, Pat Moore, Paul Moore, Parsons, L Piper, Rev. S Piper, Potts, Pugh, Rattigan, Rawf, Rogers, Rusiecki, D Saunders, M Saunders, Scobie, Scott, Shonk, Shrubb, Tomlinson, Towing, Wallin, Whitehead, Wing, Wright and Yates

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor's Farrance, Gregory, Ovenden and Roper.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by the Vice Chairman and agreed, that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 13 May 2021 be approved.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair advised that Councillor Game had recently stepped down from her duties as a District Councillor. On behalf of the Council he offered his thanks to Councillor Game for her efforts while in the role.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. PETITIONS

(a) Thanet Lifts Petition

Mr Stickings presented a petition requesting that the lifts at Viking Bay and Ramsgate beach be reopened. Members noted that the following petition contained 2180 signatures at the time of submission:

"Thanet District Council have announced on 01/04/21 that the lifts at Viking Bay and Ramsgate will be closed this is their statement as detailed below.

'On the Thanet council website a statement says: "Unfortunately our seaside lifts at Viking Bay and Ramsgate remain closed. Even if temporary repairs can be made to get the lifts open, contractors have advised there is no guarantee they will stay working during the season.

"A long-term strategy for both lifts will be formulated to consider their future. In the meantime, the council has measures in place to allow for alternative accessible routes to the beach, which include:

Matting installed at one side of the beach (Harbour Street, Broadstairs) to lengthen the boardwalk and allow for alternative accessible routes to the beach."

This is not good enough and needs to be addressed ASAP, if they were working last year, how can it be that these lifts are now beyond repair. This impacts massively on our disabled community. I have a son who is blind the Lift is helpful for him on some occasions but more so for those who have other issues. This impacts severely on our disabled community and disabled visitors. The solution of matting is NOT good enough.

These lifts are part of Broadstairs and Ramsgate. Visitors flock to our beautiful towns and love the fact that its open to all to use ALL amenities. Sadly TDC have now taken this away. It will have an impact not only on them but our local shops and businesses who some will no longer be able to reach.

Spend the money, repair the lifts, and give our disabled people the same level of inclusion and access as their peers. Everybody needs access. Our disabled community and those who need these lifts including our visitors will lose access because of this action, please help and support this so TDC will reverse this decision."

Following debate by Members, and in accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme, the petition was referred to Cabinet. There would be a report back to Council within three ordinary meetings.

6. QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

(a) Question No. 1 - Regarding the Granville Cinema

Mr Gregory asked Councillor Duckworth the following question:

"Can the council confirm that the Granville Cinema was registered as a building of community value in September 2019 and if this is true, does it mean a community organisation should run it and what have they been doing since to identify an appropriate community organisation as next custodians?"

Councillor Duckworth responded with the following points:

- The cinema was approved as an Asset of Community Value on 1 October 2019. Therefore if the building was to be sold, the sale would be delayed to allow interested community groups to raise funds in order to purchase it.
- The venue was not on the asset disposal list and there were no plans for it to be added to the list.
- If a community organisation wished to run the cinema, the first step would be to complete a community transfer application form.

7. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

(a) Question No.1 - Regarding the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Councillor Everitt asked Councillor R Bayford the following question:

"TDC's constitution states:

"It has been the convention at this council to appoint an opposition councillor to the role of chair of the overview and scrutiny panel."

This has normally meant that the choice of chair had the support of the largest opposition party or the support of opposition members overall.

Does Cllr Bayford think that it would be appropriate for the ruling group to use its votes to install its own choice of opposition councillor in that role regardless of the preference of opposition members as a whole or does he think, like me, that that could look like a manoeuvre to minimise proper scrutiny?"

Councillor R Bayford responded that:

- He was unsure of the purpose of the question; he had been appointed to the position by the Council at the Annual Council meeting when the Council was controlled by a Labour administration.

Councillor Everitt followed up his question by asking if the election of an Independent Councillor to the position in 2012 had set a good precedent.

Councillor R Bayford responded that in that instance he did not think a good precedent had been set.

(b) **Question No.2 - Regarding the Use of PFAS/PROS Chemicals**

Councillor Wing asked Councillor Albon the following question:

“Given it is highly likely that PFAS/PFOS, the harmful 'forever chemical', was used on the old Manston Airport site and for many years, please could you tell me what testing for PFAS/PFOS has been undertaken and what any results concluded?”

Councillor Albon responded that:

- This type of testing was not one of Thanet Council's responsibilities, drinking water was regularly tested by Southern Water to protect public health.
- Any concern regarding the contamination of abstracted groundwater should be raised with the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) or Ofwat, who were the relevant regulators for drinking water quality.
- Southern Water and the Environment Agency were both consultees on the Manston Airport DCO application.

Councillor Wing followed up her question by noting that there were no sites of official contamination in Thanet, she asked what was required for a site to fall into this category?

Councillor Albon responded that he would find out and let Cllr Wing know.

(c) **Question No.3 - Regarding training and Employment.**

Councillor Austin asked Councillor Duckworth the following question:

“Thanet's prosperity depends on decent, high-quality, sustainable jobs and local people with the skills to do them.

We know the pandemic has triggered redundancies in some sectors, with workers now needing to retrain.

Could you please outline how TDC is working with businesses and with Further Education, skills & adult learning providers to expand learning and skills development opportunities for Thanet's school leavers and adults?”

Councillor Duckworth responded that:

- Education providers were engaged in all of the regeneration programmes that the Council was involved in.
- Through these programmes, the Council looked at opportunities to provide jobs and education for young people, those furthest from the labor market, and those looking to retrain.
- A senior council officer sits on the Broadstairs Campus Local Board of the EKC Group. They provided Council input and gained an understanding of the needs of the college.

Councillor Austin followed up her question by asking what the Council did to set an example to businesses to offer these kinds of opportunities?

Councillor Duckworth responded that this would come under the banner of community wealth building, which encouraged employers to offer youth apprenticeships.

(d) **Question No.4 - Regarding the Installation of Broadband Masts**

Councillor Paul Moore asked Councillor Everitt the following question:

“In light of the recent installation and subsequent removal of a fibre broadband mast/pole in a conservation area.

Would the cabinet member of the council please confirm that any future installation involving areas of sensitivity, such as conservation areas or in close proximity to scheduled monuments / listed buildings will be reviewed and monitored by the officers and to ensure all is in accordance with Government legislative guidelines?”

Councillor Everitt responded that:

- Telecommunications operators were able to install new ground-based infrastructure, such as telegraph poles, under national planning permitted development rights, which did not require planning applications, but were subject to various size limits.
- These rights were subject to a prior approval process under which the Council could consider the proposed siting and appearance of the infrastructure. This would include the impact on conservation areas and listed buildings. However this was not required when the telegraph pole was in connection with fixed-line broadband.
- The Council would continue to investigate any complaints regarding the installation of telegraph poles that had exceeded the limitations of permitted development rights and required either prior approval, or planning permission.

Councillor Paul Moore followed up his question by asking what control measures should be put in place to ensure that the Council was consulted about the installation of masts.

Councillor Everitt responded that the planning department may wish to consider their involvement and respond directly to Councillor Moore.

8. NOTICE OF MOTION

No motions on notice had been received in accordance with council procedure rule 3.

9. LEADERS REPORT

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

10. REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Councillor Bayford, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel, introduced his report.

Members noted the report.

11. BROADSTAIRS AND ST PETERS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN ADOPTION

It was proposed by Councillor Everitt, seconded by Councillor J Bayford and Members agreed that the recommendations as detailed in the report be approved, namely:

“That Council resolve to make the Broadstairs and St Peters Neighbourhood Plan.”

12. ELECTION OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

It was noted that there was a typographical error within the report at paragraph 1.2. The former Leader Cllr Everitt resigned as Leader on the 22 April.

Councillor Pugh proposed and Councillor D Saunders seconded that Councillor Ashbee be Leader.

Councillor Whitehead proposed and Councillor Albon seconded that Councillor Everitt be Leader.

Councillor Austin proposed and Councillor Wing seconded that Councillor Garner be Leader.

After the voting process had been conducted, Councillor Ashbee was declared Leader of Thanet District Council for the remainder of the term of office.

Meeting concluded: 7.45pm