

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 15 OCTOBER
2019**

Present: Councillors M Burton, Joy, Khadka, Mortimer
(Chairman), Powell, Purle, D Rose, M Rose and Young

Also Present: Councillors Mrs Gooch, Newton and McKay

13. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence. However, it was noted that Councillors D Rose and Purle would be late.

14. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

15. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

16. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

It was noted that the following Councillors were present as Visiting Members:

- Councillor Mrs Gooch indicated that she wished to speak on Item 12 – Presentation on Dementia
- Councillor McKay indicated that he wished to speak on Item 13 – Initial Scoping on Maidstone Approach Improvement Project
- Councillor Newton indicated that he wished to ask a question of the Chairman in regard to the protection of swans and their cygnets at Downswood Pond.

17. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

18. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

19. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public as proposed.

Councillor D Rose arrived during consideration of this item.

20. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2019

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed.

Councillor Purle arrived during consideration of this item.

21. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

22. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Councillor Newton asked the following question of the Chairman:-

Do Members of this Committee consider that the consistent annual loss of Mute Swans and their Cygnets on the small Mallards Pond at Downswood is acceptable in Environment terms and that it is now time to give the Swans and waterfowl on this pond some protection through a PSPO that may help stop them from being attacked by unleashed dogs around the pond area and furthermore introduce control measures to prevent Anglers fishing during the Swan breeding season. Out of the 7 Cygnets that were hatched only one has survived to date. The male Swan that was witnessed to have been attacked by a dog has spent almost 3 months at the Swan Sanctuary at Shepperton.

The Chairman responded to the question and undertook to request that the relevant Officers arrange a meeting with Councillor Newton to discuss the options as detailed in the response. The full response to the question was made available on the Maidstone Borough Council webcast channel.

23. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Work Programme. The Chairman advised that he had been in discussions with Officers to move, where possible, some agenda items scheduled for November, as the agenda was substantial.

The Chairman confirmed that the following agenda items had been rescheduled to December:-

- Charges for Pre-Application and Professional Advice for Noise, Air Quality and Contaminated Land
- Bedgebury Food Outlet

- Charging for Food Hygiene Advice
- Review of Charges for Contaminated Lane

In response to a question from a Member, the Head of Environment and Public Realm advised that Officers had received a significant amount of feedback from the Biodiversity and Climate Change Working Group which would be incorporated into the Biodiversity Strategy report due to be considered by the Committee in November.

Members expressed their concern that items for agendas were not being distributed evenly throughout the year. At times a lot of items were proposed for a specific month, which resulted in a heavy agenda. This meant that Members could not give the items the time and full consideration they deserved.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

24. PRESENTATION ON DEMENTIA - BUILDING A DEMENTIA FRIENDLY MAIDSTONE

Mr Ken Scott from the Building a Dementia Friendly Maidstone organisation gave a presentation to the Committee outlining the following:-

- How the organisation supports people living with dementia
- The initiatives being put forward for dementia cafes and singing groups
- Training programmes to enable carers and families to be supported to enable them to effectively support people living with dementia
- How the programmes and initiatives were to be funded

The Chairman thanked Mr Scott for his interesting presentation and undertook to circulate a copy to all Members of the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the Presentation be noted.

25. INITIAL SCOPING ON MAIDSTONE APPROACH IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

The Head of Environment and Public Realm presented the initiative to provide improvements to the street scene and landscaping on the A20 Ashford Road (between Willington Street and King Street). Funding of £74,000 had been realised from the Business Rates Retention Pilot.

The Committee noted the key actions which were:-

- A deep cleaning programme to remove detritus from along the Mote Park wall

- A new bus shelter to be installed at the A20 junction with New Cut Road
- New bollards would be installed
- An improved appearance for railings
- Planting of bulbs and shaping wild flower areas to enhance colour and biodiversity and enable habitat development
- Planting of new trees
- New signage which included a heritage board and 'Welcome to Maidstone' sign
- New street name plates
- Creation of heritage features with interpretation boards
- Repainted street lights

In response to questions from Members, the Head of Environment and Public Realm advised that:

- KCC had fully engaged with MBC Officers and had pledged funding for white lining of the road at the conclusion of the project and would be providing permits to allow operatives to work on the roads
- The wooden bus shelters were more attractive and require less maintenance
- The grass verge and bollards at the junction of Willington Street would be reinstated.

RESOLVED: That the Committee approves the proposed scope of the Maidstone Approach Improvement Project.

26. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 8 p.m.