

Minutes of a Meeting of the Forty Fourth Annual Assembly of the Townspeople of the Town of Sevenoaks held in the Large Hall at the Sevenoaks Community Centre, Sevenoaks on Monday 20th March 2017 at 7:00 pm.

Cllr A Eyre – Mayor of Sevenoaks

Cllr N J L Busvine OBE	Cllr R L Piper
Cllr J M Canet	Cllr S G Raikes
Cllr A S Clayton	Cllr O Schneider
Cllr R M C Hogarth	Cllr E T Waite
Cllr E Parson	Cllr P C Walshe

(11)

Also Present:

Mr Hugo Newall, Urban Initiatives Studio
Chief Executive / Town Clerk, Mrs Linda Larter MBE
Assistant Town Clerk, Mr Hugh D'Alton
Deputy Town Clerk, Mrs Ann White
Committee Clerk, Mrs Michèle MacDonald
Sevenoaks Community Centre Administrator, Mrs Liz Hodgson
162 Members of the Public

Apologies for absence:

Cllr S L Arnold
Cllr R E Parry
Cllr R J Parry
Cllr P E Towell
The Right Hon Sir Michael Fallon MP
Cllr Peter Fleming
Cllr Avril Hunter
Miss Emily Palmer
Mr Clive Andrews

Prior to the commencement of the meeting members of the public had the opportunity to visit an exhibition of stands provided by local voluntary groups who had received grants from Sevenoaks Town Council and to meet local Town Councillors.

The Mayor, Cllr Andrew Eyre, welcomed everyone and thanked all for attending the meeting.

The Mayor informed everyone that Sevenoaks Town Council had been awarded Runner Up out of the 9000 town and parish councils in the UK with "Star Council of the Year 2016". The Mayor congratulated the Town Clerk and her team for their dedication and success.

The Mayor also congratulated Sevenoaks District Council who had been awarded Council of the Year in its sector.

The Mayor advised that for the 2017/ 2018 financial year Sevenoaks Town Council will have a precept of £1,029,625 equating to a Band D rate of £111 per annum. This is approximately £2.13 per week. Where possible projects are carried out net at zero cost to the Council with external funds sought where needed.

The Mayor advised a change of the Agenda's order beginning with the Town Clerk's presentation of the Town Council's Annual Report, followed by the presentation of Town Council Grant cheques

and then the presentation by Mr Hugo Nowell, Director of Urban Initiatives, of the Sevenoaks Masterplan.

1 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Forty Third Annual Parish Meeting of the Townspeople of Sevenoaks held on 21st March 2016 were adopted and it was **RESOLVED** that the Mayor sign the Minutes of that meeting as a true record.

2 PRESENTATION OF THE ANNUAL REPORT SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL 2015/2016

The Mayor presented the Annual Report of the Town Council and invited the Town Clerk to summarise the Town Council's achievements to date for the period 2016/2017.

In addition to the Town Council's report, which had been distributed to all at the meeting, the Chief Executive/Town Clerk, Mrs Linda Larter MBE, provided a presentation of a few of the Town Councils' achievements over the past year.

3 MAYOR'S PRESENTATION OF GRANT CHEQUES TO LOCAL VOLUNTARY GROUPS

The Mayor presented cheques to the following organisations:-

- £500 – Mr Chris Holgate, Treasurer Sevenoaks Volunteer Transport Group to keep charges as low as possible for those on low incomes.
- £250 – Mrs Jill Webster, Sevenoaks Literary Festival to help with the annual free event for local schools to attend.
- £250 – Mr Michael Pembrey on behalf of the Friends of Pontoise to support twinning activities [France] with their coach hire costs to France.
- £600 – Mrs Margaret Holgate, Festival Secretary to finance the hire of a piano and performance space for competitive classes and Prize winners' concert.
- £250 – Mrs Margaret Willis on behalf of Friends of Rheinbach in support of twinning activities [Germany].
- £200 – Mr Lawrence Jenkins, volunteer South East Open Studios to assist with advertising of events with three new road sign banners.
- £200 – Mr Martyn Wallace, volunteer of Sevenoaks Art Club to assist with advertising of events with the purchase of 4 new re-usable outdoor banners
- £5,000 – Mr Simon Harris, Treasurer of Sevenoaks Summer Festival, for funding towards the annual festival fortnight as Sevenoaks Town Council is it's main partner.
- £500 – Mr John Levett on behalf of the Kent Youth Jazz Orchestra to provide a free Youth Jazz Workshop to local young musicians during June 2017.
- £500 – Eleanor Burns on behalf of D'Vine Singers to enable members to partake who cannot afford the weekly sub.
- £500 – Maria Cardoso, volunteer co-ordinator on behalf of Hi Kent, to help those who are housebound a free hearing aid support visit.
- £200 – Victoria Granville, volunteer of the Kent Painters Group to buy re-usable corex road signs to advertise events

4 **PRESENTATION FROM THE CONSULTANTS DEVELOPING THE NORTHERN SEVENOAKS MASTERPLAN, A VISION FOR LONG TERM IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE AREA.**

The Mayor invited Hugo Nowell a Director from Urban Initiatives Studio to provide a presentation of the first public draft of the Masterplan for Northern Sevenoaks.

It was noted that the Masterplan would be included within the Sevenoaks Neighbourhood Development Plan which would be subject to a public referendum prior to being endorsed as a planning document and policy.

It was noted that the community had been working on the Neighbourhood Development Plan for approx. 2 years and workshops had been held relating to the Masterplan since the previous October. All meetings were open to the public, resident associations and stakeholders to attend.

Comments from the meeting would be considered and incorporated into the Masterplan where appropriate. There would then follow a public consultation period of at least three weeks in April / May 2017.

Hugo Nowell outlined the following aspects of the Masterplan:

A. Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve

- Support the reserve remaining as a quiet and relaxing facility with emphasis on protecting wildlife. (Noting no dogs, cycling, jogging etc)
- Support the provision of the building of a new centre, particularly if more accessible for Bat & Ball station.
- Support the provision of a circular walk.
- Support the creation of an additional entrance close as possible to Bat & Ball Station.
- Support the opening up of views of the Wildlife Reserve from Otford Road.
- Extend Wildlife Reserve towards Dunton Green.

B. Bat & Ball Station

- Supporting the Town Council's aspirations for the restoration and community use of the Bat & Ball Station building.
- Making the environ surrounding the station more welcoming, including potential nearby green space.
- Support the Town Council's aspiration for enabling access to both platforms of the station.
- Consider moving (over 30 years) light industrial from surrounding the station to allow redevelopment to residential mixed uses. Noting that in the evenings all of the surrounding light industrial is locked up and this makes the station environment a less welcoming place.

C. Bat & Ball Centre

- Support the Town Council's proposal for new Centre, Nursery and residential on the site adjacent to the station and the landscaping proposed to accompany it, enabling a green walkway from the station to Otford Road and into Northern Sevenoaks.

D. Connectivity

- When new residential created have an overall plan to work to enable the provision of connectivity of walkways and cycle routes throughout Northern Sevenoaks. In particular noting the proposed walkway and cycle routes connecting the three secondary schools to Bat & Ball station.

E. Bat & Ball Junction

- Review different operational methods which provided more priority to pedestrian and cycles.
- Discourage light industrial traffic from using the junction by moving premises to be adjacent to Vestry estate.
- Note that Tarmac lorries would cease within the lifetime of the plan.
- Support new road access to Dunton Green.
- Encourage new roads within residential to move some local traffic off the junction. Subject to residential numbers in the plan additional infrastructure e.g. primary school could be provided in the Northern ward which could avoid the necessity for all to drive into central sevenoaks.
- Subject to further traffic studies.

F. St Johns

- Encourage better connectivity to station.
- Improved public realm including widening pavements where possible.

G. Greatness Recreation Ground & Greatness Lake

- Provide improved facilities for Greatness Recreation Ground including supporting current long term plans for a new pavilion, café, public toilets, 3G pitch and Multi Use Games Area.
- Current plans for Tarmac site are to restore to public open space with a new public rights of way and a couple of years of maintenance. The draft Masterplan links the land to Greatness Recreation Ground to create a larger formal public open space with a lake to enable water sports (approx. 80% size of Chipstead), restored historic buildings, circular accessible walkway for cycling, walking, jogging etc. Lakeside living. Visitor Centre.
- Recommended residential facing into public open space (including approximately 28 properties on Greatness Recreation Ground).

H. Public Open Space Bradbourne Vale Road

- Encourage walking links (bearing in mind A25) between Bradbourne Lakes and the Wildlife Reserve.
- Keep land adjacent to Wildlife Reserve facing A25 as green space with additional allotment land included.

I. Housing Provision

Early density based projections estimate the following possible housing delivery on identified sites (note that no site schemes have been developed which would be a prerequisite before any sites came forward for development):

- | | | |
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| • Around Bat & Ball Station | - | 24 units |
| • To North of Bat & Ball Station | - | 410 units |
| | - | 250m ² Office Space |
| • To East of Wildlife Reserve | - | 45 units |
| • Fronting onto Greatness Recreation Ground | - | 28 units |
| • Greatness Lake | - | 600 units |
| • Darent 'Creek' site to north of nature reserve | - | 850 units |

5 Public Comments

- i. More housing was needed, prior to approval of planning applications policy must ensure that there is a secure commitment for provision of relevant infrastructure. This could be addressed by creating a broad plan for the area, rather than allowing piecemeal speculative development to take place over the next 30 years.
- ii. A query was raised as to how the Masterplan fitted in with SDC's Local Plan. It was noted that the District Council was currently in the process of reviewing its local plan, and that the Town Council was working with the District Council to ensure proposals within the Masterplan would be integrated into strategic policies, with additional local details being addressed in the Sevenoaks Neighbourhood Development Plan produced by Sevenoaks Town Council.
- iii. Crossing Bat & Ball Junction was very difficult and there were concerns about air quality. It was noted that further traffic studies would be needed and as many proposals to be included as possible to alleviate the junction – discourage light industrial traffic, create additional network of roads, cycle ways and walkways, encourage more infrastructure within Northern area to reduce need to travel to town centre. Also to encourage more public transport.
- iv. Member of the public had recently purchased house in Seal Road backing on to Greatness Recreation Ground and was concerned at proposals for residential. It was noted that the proposal was linked to the creation of one large new park including Greatness Lake, and the vision had been developed with a 30yr time horizon.
- v. A member of the public stated that the proposal for all weather pitch on Greatness Recreation Ground was controversial. It was noted that this had been a long term aspiration of the Football Club which the Town Council supported (as part of its Sports Strategy).
- vi. The Secretary of the Greatness Resident Association stated that it was not believed the introduction of residential on the recreation ground would improve the facility. She stated that it was more important to address the following provision – installing a resin bonded path, matching benches, grass crete to car park and new sign posting.

A meeting was also requested between Sevenoaks Town Council, Greatness Residents Association, Sevenoaks Town Football Club and the local Scout Group. The Town Clerk agreed to arrange the meeting to discuss the Northern Masterplan.

- vii. A question was raised about the footfall for Bat & Ball Station and the connectivity of trains. It was noted that the improvements planned could only encourage additional footfall to the station and its future usage, giving a stronger rationale for train companies to improve the service as demand rises.
- viii. A member of the public stated that she believed congestion could be eased if there was a new link to the M26.
- ix. Several compliments were received from members of the public who congratulated Sevenoaks Town Council for initiating a long term constructive vision for the area.
- x. There was a request to improve public transport in the area and linked to other areas, in particular bus provision.

- xi. The proposal to create new walkways, minor roads to avoid using Seal Road were welcomed.
- xii. Residents wanted faster and more direct trains to London. It was noted that by connecting to other stations there were sometimes long waiting times between trains. The current train service allows direct travel to central London stations such as Blackfriars in around 1 hour.
- xiii. River Darent should not be described as a Creek.
- xiv. Good opportunity to review northern bypass to M26 and the creation of a good cycleway via the valley and for the Town Council to review wider cycle routes.
- xv. Need to consider additional car park in the area to alleviate on street car parking for people using the station.
- xvi. A member of the public stated there is a need to start to address all of the big issues and look ahead, not remaining with the status quo.
- xvii. Would provision for small businesses be included in the Masterplan? It was noted that the site allocations included a mixture of residential and small business provision, in particular supporting higher density mixed uses on sites surrounding Bat & Ball Station.
- xviii. The representative from the local scout group stated that they were impressed with the plans for the nature reserve and would like to be involved.
- xix. A member of the public enquired if Sevenoaks Town Council needed to deliver a minimum number of homes within the Masterplan. It was noted that this was not the case, however Sevenoaks District Council did have housing allocations to address as part of the Local Plan review. It was also noted that the provision of housing made the provision of community facilities and infrastructure economically viable, and provided possibilities to secure long term funding for management of public open spaces.

Public Open Forum

- A. Was there any progress on potential slip roads to the motorway? The Mayor stated that although the Town Council was consulted on this matter it was not able to provide any further information at present.
- B. The Town Council was asked if it could address the removal of the litter bins within Environmental Park. The Mayor stated Sevenoaks Town Council maintained the new Buckhurst Lane Play Area and was in negotiation with Knole Trustees to take over the remainder of the Environmental Park to address such issues.

- C. A resident asked about proposals for installation of a youth shelter and public toilets at Greatness Recreation Ground. The Mayor confirmed that both were proposed to be installed during 2017.
- D. A member of the public stated that he thought the plan was fantastic and asked the Town Council to address the community safety issues of cars parking on pavements.
 - a. The Mayor stated that this was beyond the remit of the Town Council but it would continue to support such initiatives.
- E. A resident from Hartslands Road stated that the road needed pavements and or pedestrian walkways however did not meet with KHA criteria. She was liaising with Cllr Crabtree regarding installation of white lines on the pavement. The Mayor encouraged the resident to continue the dialogue with Cllr Crabtree.
- F. A resident asked if it would be possible to link the No. 8 bus to a park and ride.
 - a. The Mayor explained that Park & Ride was difficult to progress particularly for public entering the town at different points. *Note: Provision for Park & Ride where economically viable is included within draft policies of the Neighbourhood Development Plan.*

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:55 pm

MAYOR

