

KENT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Tonbridge and Malling Area Committee

Chairman & L & D Officer: Cllr Sarah Barker

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MINUTES

Present: Sarah Barker (Chair) Chrys Short CS (Vice Chair), Sarah Huseyin (Secretary – Ightham and Shipbourne)

Tom Shelley - Aylesford, **Sue Butterfill**, **Mike Taylor** and **Tim Shaw** – Borough Green, **Jacque Westwood** – Birling, **David Carey** and **Siobahn O’Shea**– Hadlow **David Haugh** – Hildenborough, **Charles Unter** – Offham, **Dan Benyon** – Plaxtol, **Jenny Bate** and **Sandy Oram**– Shipbourne, **Yvonne Tisson** – Stansted, **David Gaunt** – Trottiscliffe **Gwyneth Barkham** and **Trudy Dean**– West Malling, , **Nicky Gibb** - West Peckham **Harry Rayner** – Wrotham, **Robin Betts** - TMBC, **Mark Stubberfield** MS - T&M CSU

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1. **Apologies for Absence** - Nigel Newman – Ditton, David Thornewell - East Malling & Larkfield, David Emmett – Ightham, Wendy Palmer – Platt, Marius Carboni – Plaxtol, Mary McKinlay – Ryarsh.
 2. **Introductions and Announcements** - Sarah Barker introduced Robin Betts, TMBC, Inspector Mark Stubberfield at Tonbridge and Malling Community Safety Unit (CSU) and Jenny Bate, Shipbourne Parish Council.
 3. **Minutes** of the Meeting held on 13 October 2022 were approved as a true record.
 4. **Matters arising** None.
 5. **Questions for PPP:** (i) Update on Planning Enforcement requested by Aylesford Parish. (ii) Update on climate change (iii) Request for Officers to attend the KALC T&M. The deadline for PPP questions is the 6th January.
 6. **Report from T & M Community Safety Unit** - Insp Stubberfield has been at T&M CSU since July 2022. He gave information about his Policing background and summarised the current trends in crime in Tonbridge & Malling which included anti-social behaviour (ASB) and more recently, issues with car meets at New Hythe Lane. The CSU has weekly meetings with Alison Finch at TMBC where they discuss crime trends.

There is an active drink driving campaign over the holiday period and extra Officers have been provided to focus on this.

KENT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Tonbridge and Malling Area Committee

In T&M, statistics show that over the year, ASB has gone down by 17%, overall crime has risen by seven 7.2% and burglaries have declined by 23.7%. TMBC is considered a safe place to live with the lowest statistics for serious violence in Kent.

Inspector Stubberfield addressed a question about the future of PCSO's. There is currently a Neighbourhood Policing Review to ensure that the model for policing is fit for purpose. There is a recruitment drive which will enable new Teams and capabilities. The proposed model will re-introduce **Ward-based Beat Officers** to replace PCSO's and the allocation will depend on the size of the area and the level of crime. There will also be a **Rural Task Team** for the West Division who will look at clusters and trends in crime and a **Neighbourhood Task Force** that will tackle peak crime, made up of Police Officers and PCSO's. This will be ideal for tackling anti-social behaviour as Officers can go to specific locations. There will also be **Child Centred Officers** dealing with ASB and youth engagement and schools. The new model is likely to go live in June 2023. There will be a decline in the number of PCSO's however Inspector Stubberfield was confident that the new model would be an improvement.

Concern was raised about loss of expertise from existing PCSO's and how Parishes would be informed about the new model.

Sarah Barker agreed to ask KALC whether Parishes could get involved in the consultation which ends in January 2023 and suggested that we should ask for an update on the new Policing model at PPP on 18th May 2023.

Trudy Dean raised a question about New Hythe Lane and said that it would be helpful for residents to have some feedback about what was being done. Inspector Stubberfield said that they were working with the local MP and Highways to try and come up with solutions but video footage and CCTV to provide evidence would be most helpful.

7. **Climate Change** - Jenny Bate from Shipbourne Parish Council gave a presentation on the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan that had been adopted by Shipbourne Parish Council in October 2023. A copy of the presentation will be sent to members.

Sarah Barker said that the Climate Change Working Group had started collecting information from the questionnaires and will resend it to Parishes that haven't responded. Mike Taylor suggested that we had a dedicated climate change meeting. This was agreed.

- **Updates on TMBC Climate Change Programme** - Robin Betts, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change said that everyone from individuals to a National Government should be working together to address climate change. There are 4 elements:
 - To be more efficient and reduce our overall consumption.
 - To aim for energy to come from clean sources.

KENT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Tonbridge and Malling Area Committee

- To travel more sustainably.
- Planting trees and hedges. The Woodlands Trust and Queen's Green Canopy have helped with this in Tonbridge and Malling.

Robin said that he would like to achieve a Template Action Plan for individuals and businesses and is currently working on this.

How is TMBC measuring progress? TMBC recruited their first Climate Change Officer, Henry Saunders who carried out a detailed analysis of TMBC carbon footprint and overall emissions and set them out in a pie chart. The biggest user is the Leisure Trust which contributed 61% of carbon, Waste Services contributed 18% with TMBC buildings, offices and staff contributing smaller amounts. An action plan is being worked out to deal with emissions and a full briefing is going to the Scrutiny Committee in February 2023. The end goal is to be carbon neutral by 2030. A new Officer has just joined to replace Henry Saunders who has now left TMBC.

What has been done so far? The EV electric charging network is almost complete with 32 EV points in the Borough. An additional 3-4 rapid chargers will be installed by the end of January and around 100 EV chargers will be installed in car parks in Phase 2. This has been done in partnership with KCC and the aim is to encourage people to buy electric cars.

At Leybourne Lakes, the "eco café" is the most innovative building in the Borough, using water from the lake to heat the building and run the cafe.

In terms of planting for carbon capture, there are wildflower meadows in Leybourne and other rewilding projects including Miyawake Forests (urban forests) which are the most efficient at absorbing CO2.

How are we tackling energy use? Larkfield Leisure Centre has an energy efficient roof with 198 PV panels, producing 100,000kw energy. TMBC has a renewable energy tariff. 1000 plants have been planted this year and a further 1000 plants will be planted during the next planting season. Tonbridge and Malling are the best recycling improver in the UK and Tonbridge and Malling is the best Borough in Kent for recycling.

Looking forward, TMBC needs to concentrate on addressing energy consumption at Tonbridge Pool which has just had a decarbonisation report. Gas usage is the biggest problem. Air source heat pump would be more efficient however they are very expensive.

Update on the idling campaign - equipment has recently been purchased and installed in schools to measure data.

Mike Taylor suggested that climate mitigation needs to be written into all aspects of planning. Robin said that he has asked the new Planning Officer to identify policies for best practise so that we can start tackling it now rather than wait for new Local Plan. Trudy Dean asked whether KCC could offer any support and Cllr Betts said that it would be most useful to alert TMBC when grants become available.

KENT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Tonbridge and Malling Area Committee

The new anaerobic digester at Blaise Farm is a brilliant facility; all food waste is used to provide biogas which is upgraded to produce biomethane which is exported to the National Grid. At full capacity it *could* provide enough power for Kings Hill. The by-product is used for farm feed

The recycling plant at Allington is a state-of-the-art site run on solar panels and anything that can't be recycled is incinerated to provide electricity, nothing gets wasted.

David Gaunt asked how Parishes could be considered for EV charging points? Robin said that he would find out when the next phase is as several Parishes would like EV charging points.

Gwyneth Barkham asked whether water heat pumps affected the local ecology? Robin explained that pipes are laid at the bottom of the lake to absorb the heat then the energy is compressed with no impact to wildlife.

8. **Civility and Respect** - Chrys Short asked which Parishes had signed up to the Civility and Respect Protocol, very few Parishes have. Chris will email all Clerks with a few questions to find out which Parishes are talking about it and encouraging them to put it on their earliest next agenda.
9. **TMBC Local Plan** - Sarah Barker reported that there had been a Local Plan update at the Housing and Planning Security Committee on 6th December. The following documents were circulated to members:

Reg 18 Consultation

IGN3 AND SPG4 Updates and Way Forward with Local Plan

David Thornewell raised a concern that more sites came forward in the Call for Sites and asked when Parishes would get the opportunity to feedback on these sites? Sarah Barker said that she would liaise with Mike Taylor to ask when TMBC were going to update us however it doesn't seem that we will get any answers until the next update in March.

A question was raised about how the Governments recent statement to abolish top-down housing targets would affect the Borough? Comments were also raised about the complexity of the questionnaire and collation of email and written responses. Trudy Dean suggested that TMBC should issue an interim document prior to Reg 19 clarifying its position on some of the sites put forward where there were no plans to develop. This would help residents and local businesses. Mike Taylor said that there was a huge problem with communication of Regulation 18 of the Local Plan as TMBC had relied on social media. Of 3,000 responses 2,000 were written and 1,000 were online responses. The majority of respondents supported protection of Green belt and Greenfield sites.

Harry Rayner reported that KCC had recently confirmed that minerals land would not be sacrificed for development.

KENT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Tonbridge and Malling Area Committee

Harry Rayner reported there has been no fresh guidance to the Planning Inspectors since the letter from Michael Gove on the 5th of December.

Sarah Barker proposed that KALC T&M should write to TMBC Officers for an update. This was agreed.

10. **Items to be raised at PPP on Thursday 9th February 2023**

- Aylesford Parish Council requested information about the proposed changes to Planning Enforcement. Mike Taylor said there would be major changes and Enforcement would become a separate arm of planning with a dedicated leader. Sarah Barker said that she would ask for details of the new system.

Harry Rayner said we needed to consider that there may be a change in administration after the election.

- Future dates PPP - 18th May 2023

11. **KALC Training and Development** - deferred to the next meeting.

12. **Next Committee Meeting**

- It was agreed that the next meeting would be the 23rd of March and would be remote.
- Sarah Barker requested items to bring forward to the next meeting. It was suggested that we should talk about Civility and Respect.

13. **Points for Information**

- **Rural Prosperity Fund** Sarah Barker to remind Jeremy Whittaker to inform parishes about this. (Government [Website](#) setting out programme and TMBC Cabinet [Report](#))
- **Local Plan** Meeting Papers and You tube recording available here [Meetings Papers](#)
- **Buses** – New Community Transport Grant and collaboration between Parishes www.kent.gov.uk/communitytransportgrant - Deadline 15 January. Harry Rayner reported that there was some grant money that could be used to provide community transport however the deadline was the 15th of January. It was suggested that people asked Norman Kemp for some advice. Jackie Westwood said there was concern in her Parish about the lack of accessibility to the hospital following the loss of no.58 bus. Mike Taylor said that some Parishes have been speaking to Tony Francis and the Parish Alliance have been looking at the possibilities for community transport. He offered to set up a meeting and would circulate details.

The meeting closed at 22.00

Signed.....Date.....