

## Snodland Town Council – Full Council Minutes

5 December 2023

Councillors in attendance:	Cllrs Ms D King (C), Mrs S Bell (VC), Mrs K Mordecai-Woolf (DVC), Mrs V Barker, A Bennison, Mrs D Crook, P Hickmott, Miss V Lawrence, D Lettington, W Mallard, G Miners and D Morgan
Other Council Members in Attendance:	Mrs K Sowten (CEO)
Others in Attendance	County Cllr Mrs S Hohler
Councillors Absent with apologies:	Mrs N Misy
Councillors Absent without apologies:	Mrs J Ayers
Other Apologies:	

1.	<u>Apologies for absence</u> See above.
2.	<u>Declaration of interests</u> None
3.	<p><u>County Councillor's Report</u></p> <p>County Councillor Sarah Hohler reported on the following –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children/unaccompanied minor asylum seekers – a judicial review with the Government has led to them agreeing that they are not being transferred or dealt with quickly enough and not helping KCC find accommodation for them.</li> <li>• The Government has allocated additional road repair funding to KCC.</li> <li>• KCC has a new scheme offering Kent residents and businesses the opportunity to recycling their unwanted IT devices to make sure that they do not go to landfill.</li> <li>• An extensive consultation was carried out regarding Community Services which has resulted in a number of Hubs being closed, however the Samays Centre will remain open.</li> <li>• The heavy rain did not affect the flooding issue in Recreation Avenue. The new Highways Manager arranged for sandbags to be delivered to the residents, however thankfully these were not needed. KCC are researching to see if they can ascertain what the problem is in that area, the results of that enquiry will not be available for another month or two.</li> <li>• Snodland Chess Club have been successful in gaining support for a members grant from KCC.</li> <li>• The speed humps in St Benedicts Road continues to cause issues and repairs are on-going.</li> <li>• KCC have responded to Cllr Hickmott's letter regarding Roberts Road resurfacing and they have advised that the surface is of an acceptable standard to current industry standards. If Cllr Hickmott is not happy with the response, he would need to take this up with the Local Government Ombudsman.</li> </ul>

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	<p>Cllr Lettington thanked Cllr Hohler for allowing the chess club to apply for the Members Grant.</p> <p>Cllr Hickmott advised that he is still very unhappy about the response and will be continuing to pursue the issue.</p> <p>Cllr Hickmott asked if there was any update of the Community Warden consultation, which Cllr Hohler responded to advise that she had no further update at present.</p>
4.	<p><u>Councillor Co-option</u></p> <p>The Chairman welcomed the Candidates and apologised for the error relating to the last Co-option process. Due to an error in the voting process, noticed after the meeting, the Co-option was declared Null and Void and the process would be carried out again at this meeting.</p> <p>Councillors had received a copy of all the candidate's application forms prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Hickmott raised a point of order and asked the chairman to explain how when there was thirteen members of the council present at the last meeting that a tied vote had been recorded.</p> <p>The Chairman advised that no one at the previous meeting had realised that there had been a duplicate vote by one member.</p> <p>Cllr Mrs Barker advised that it had never been clarified that members were only allowed one vote and a genuine mistake had been made.</p> <p>Cllr Miners thanked one of the candidates, Mr Wakefield for assisting with the Christmas Light switch on.</p> <p>Cllr Miners suggested that two of the Councillors who were not Snodland Residents should abstain from the co-option vote.</p> <p>Cllr Lettington responded to previous comments and confirmed that the CEO had accurately counted the hands that had been raised for each of the candidates and the vote was a tie. No-one at the meeting noticed, that includes all the councillors present that someone had voted twice by accident, and when the votes are tied the Chairman gets the casting vote. There was a mistake, and it was recognised after the meeting and the CEO under advisement from KALC declared the vote null and void, which is why the co-option is taking place again this evening. Secondly, whatever the councils feelings are relating to how a member became a councillor, at the time that the members were elected, they were residents of Snodland and therefore eligible to become a councillor and remain a councillor for the term acting in the best interests of the residents within the Community, irrespective of what led to their change in circumstances. And as a councillor all votes are counted equally.</p> <p>Cllr Morgan commented that it was going to be a very close vote and the council were one member down at this meeting and that absent members should be allowed a proxy vote.</p>

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1142	<p>The chairman advised that the Council were two members down at the meeting this evening.</p> <p>Cllr Lettington again responded by advising that under the Local Government Act only members present at the meeting are entitled to vote.</p> <p>The CEO reiterated that she was made aware of the mistake in the voting after the meeting had ended and under advisement from KALC declared the vote null and void, which is why the co-option is taking place again this evening.</p> <p>A vote ensued, the result of which was as follows: Mark Wakefield 6 Shaun Loader 6</p> <p>The CEO confirmed that there were 12 Members present and had each had one vote and as a tied vote the Chairman had the casting vote.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> to co-opt Shaun Loader as Councillor for Snodland Town Council Snodland West and Holborough Lakes and to sign Declaration of acceptance of Office.</p> <p>A motion was proposed, and the CEO advised that this needed to be moved on notice.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked the other candidate for applying, he then left the meeting.</p>
5.	<p><u>Report from the Neighbourhood Police Team</u></p> <p>The Council members had received an E-Watch report prior to the meeting</p> <p>The PC introduced herself as the new local PC for Snodland and Holborough Lakes and advised that she also covers Aylesford, Wouldham and Burham but hopefully as the team gets bigger she will cover less areas.</p> <p>The PC reported on the issues that had taken place in Snodland and the outcome of some of the crimes. The task force is still in the area.</p> <p>Councillors asked several questions, which the PC was able to answer.</p>
6.	<p><u>Questions from the Public</u> – No questions from the public</p> <p><b>Pursuant to Standing Order 3 e &amp; g Members of the public may make representation, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda. A member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes.</b></p>

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7.	<u>To resolve the Minutes of the Full Council held on 31 October 2023 (pp70-75) are a correct record.</u>	
1143	<b>RESOLVED</b> to accept that the minutes are a true record of the Full Council held on 31 October 2023. Signed .....	
8.	<u>To receive reports and recommendations of Council Committees</u>	
8.1	Planning and Environment	13 November 2023 (pp76)
8.2	Policy and Finance	23 November 2023 (pp77-79)
	recommendations were put forward relating to the following –	
1144	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the EMR figure for Election reserves could be reduced to £1000 per year due to the high levels of Election reserves.	
1145	<b>RESOLVED</b> that an Agenda item is brought to the next Amenities and Recreation Committee. This would give members an opportunity to make suggestions on how future council events are run.	
8.3	Amenities and Recreation	30 November 2023 – Cancelled
	Cllr Mrs Crook reminded Councillors that if they had items what they wished to be discussed at the meeting these needed to be sent to the CEO two weeks before the meeting. Cllr Morgan commented that he thought that there should have been a report regarding the Play equipment. The CEO advised that the report had not been received when the agenda was ready for distribution and therefore nothing was on the agenda for discussion which is why the meeting was cancelled. Cllr Hickmott asked for clarification on the number of days when items are required for the Agenda. The CEO advised that reports and items for the agenda need to be available at least 6 days before the meeting to allow for the 3 clear working days for the agenda to be issued, 3 clear days do not include the day the agenda is displayed, the day of the meeting or weekends.	
9.	<u>Reports from Borough Councillors</u>  Cllr Bennison – Nothing to Report Cllr Hickmott – Attending a meeting relating to the local plan. Cllr Mallard – Nothing to Report Cllr Bell – attended Parish Partnership meeting, Laid the Wreath at Snodland Remembrance Parade on behalf of the Mayor.	
10.	<u>Town Councillors reports on meetings, events and activities attended on behalf of the Council - Councillors are reminded to only report on council related items</u>  Cllr Mrs Bell – Holborough Lakes remembrance Service, Tarmac Meeting, Christmas in Snodland, Remembrance Parade. Cllr Ms D King – Remembrance Parade, Fireworks, Litter Pick, Christmas in Snodland. Cllr Mrs K Mordecai-Woolf – Fireworks, spoke to the Owner of 11-13 High Street	

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	<p>regarding the location of the mural, attended Christmas in Snodland in her capacity with the Scouts.</p> <p>Cllr A Bennison – Fireworks, Assisted with the turning on of the Christmas Lights, Litter pick.</p> <p>Cllr Mrs D Crook – Fireworks, Prepared and attended the tea that followed the Remembrance parade, Cllr Mrs Crook commented that she was disappointed with the lack of Councillor assistance clearing up after the tea. Cllr Crook also commented on the lack of Councillor presence assisting at Christmas in Snodland. Councillor Mrs Crook and three other Councillors together with the staff worked tirelessly for 9 hours without a break or refreshments which is totally unacceptable. Clearing away at the end was also left to 2 members of staff and one Councillor, again totally unacceptable and she felt that Councillors should be more involved in the events that have been organized by the council for the community.</p> <p>A discussion followed with Councillors putting forward their different view points. It was noted that the future of how council events are run will be discussed at the next Amenities and Recreation meeting.</p> <p>Cllr P Hickmott – Assisted with the turning on of the Christmas Lights, Fireworks, Remembrance Day, Litter Pick.</p> <p>Cllr Miss V Lawrence – Fireworks, working with the CEO on the draft Budget</p> <p>Cllr W Mallard – Nothing to report</p> <p>Cllr G Miners – Did not want to report on what he had done but wanted to credit and congratulate the staff on all their hard work at Christmas in Snodland. Thank you also to Ham Hill Club volunteers who assisted with the countdown of the Christmas Light switch on.</p> <p>Cllr D Morgan – Remembrance Day, Fireworks, Assisted with the turning on of the Christmas Lights, meeting with the Site Manager of the Cemetery Road building site.</p> <p>Cllr Mrs V Barker – Fireworks, teaming up with Snodland Food Assist to provide a Christmas dinner for vulnerable residents in Snodland, working with Mens Mind, Litter Pick.</p> <p>Cllr D Lettington – Nothing to Report</p>
11.	<p><u>To Approved the amended Financial Regulations</u></p> <p>The Council received a copy of the amended Financial Regulations prior to the meeting (copy on file), which had amendments to the following sections -</p> <p>4.1 Updating the regulated authority to spend amounts.</p> <p>4.5 - Updating authority to spend amount and slight adjustment to take out notification when there is budget in place.</p> <p>10.4 - Added to allow for the supplier list.</p> <p><b>1146 RESOLVED</b> to accept the amendments to the Financial Regulations Sections 4.1,4.5 and 10.4.</p>
12.	<p><u>To receive the Internal Audit Report for 2023/24 Visit 1</u></p> <p>The Council received a copy of the Internal Audit Report (copy on file). The Chairman was pleased to advise the audit did not identify any issues.</p>

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1147	<p>The CEO advised that the internal audit report was mainly carried out via email with a short visit by the Auditor.</p> <p>Following a discussion, the Council accepted the audit report and will monitor the second visit with a view to seeking quotes from alternative Internal Auditors.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> to Accept the Internal Audit Report.</p>
13.	<p><u>KALC Community Award Nominations</u></p> <p>Nominations for the KALC Awards Scheme should be sent to the CEO by the End of December ready for the January 2024 Full Council when nominations would be considered. Anyone that the Local Council/public think merits an Award for having made a significant contribution to their local community.</p>
14.	<p><u>To receive details of Payments and transfers from 25 October 2023 to 27 November 2023 from Unity Bank totaling £5607.77 and Nat West Bank totaling £56621.96 which includes BACS Payment lists pages 1668, 1677 – 1679, 1683-1684</u></p> <p>Council members received details of payments and transfers prior to the meeting.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> to accept Payments and transfers from 25 October 2023 to 27 November 2023 from Unity Bank totaling £5607.77 and Nat West Bank totaling £56621.96 which includes BACS Payment lists pages 1668, 1677 – 1679, 1683-1684</p>
15.	<p><u>To consider the second draft budget for 2024/25</u></p> <p>The Council received the second draft budget 2024/25, following changes made by the Policy and Finance Committee, a copy is available on file. Changes reflected in this second draft budget were explained in the cover sheet and budget notes.</p> <p>The CEO advised that she was still awaiting the final tax base figures from TMBC, which are due later in December and these would be brought to a Policy &amp; Finance and Budget Full Council on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024.</p>
16.	<p><u>To receive a report on the play inspection and quotation for repairs on the play equipment</u></p> <p>It was recommended that a small working group was set up to go through the list to ascertain what work could be carried out by the site staff and work through the list. The working party includes Cllrs Mrs Barker, Mrs Mordecai-Woolf, S Loader, G Miners and P Hickmott.</p>
17.	<p><u>Report from the Chief Executive Officer</u></p> <p>The CEO reported on the following –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The mural is now safely located in the Cemetery yard, it is in four pieces. A decision on the repairs needs to be made at a future meeting.</li> <li>• The insurance settlement of £3275.00 for the Table Tennis table had been</li> </ul>

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1149	<p>received and put into Play equipment reserves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council Offices will be closed from Friday 22 December 2023 and reopen on Tuesday 2 January 2024. There will be a skeleton staff carrying out litter duties and checking emails.</li> <li>• Parking charges consultation by TMBC has opened for Aylesford and Larkfield car parks.</li> <li>• Lights for Life contributions have so far raised £270, which is separate from the Charity collections and normally is donated to a local charity.</li> </ul> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> to donate Lights for Life contributions to Cllr Barkers cause to provide a Christmas dinner for vulnerable residents in Snodland.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thanks was given to Cllrs Miners, Mrs Crook, Mrs King and staff for helping out at Christmas in Snodland for the entire 9 hours. The CEO went on to advise that although she and the staff are more than happy to assist with Christmas in Snodland they are no longer prepared to stand outside in the freezing cold for 9 hours, especially without a break. The future management of council events needs to be looked at.</li> </ul> <p>The Chairman thanked the CEO and reiterated that the Councillors are all very grateful for everything that the staff did at Christmas in Snodland, before, during and after the event, without the staff the event would not happen.</p>
18.	<p><u>Correspondence</u></p> <p>None</p>

being no other business, the meeting closed at 21:08