

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
7:30PM Via ZOOM
Wednesday 24th March 2021

MINUTES

Present:

Members	Present	Apologies	Absent
Mayor: Cllr L Dyball	✓		
Deputy Mayor: Cllr J Barnes	✓		
Leader: Cllr M Horwood	✓		
Deputy Leader: Cllr L Ball		✓	
Cllr S Andrews	✓		
Cllr C Barnes	✓		
Cllr G Darrington	✓		
Cllr P Darrington	✓		
Cllr J Domigan	✓		
Cllr M Foster	✓		
Cllr J Griffiths	✓		
Cllr C Lee	✓		
Cllr V Letchford	✓		
Cllr T Searles	✓		
Cllr A Skipper	✓		
Cllr J Tuckfield	✓		

Officers: CEO & Town Clerk – Ryan Hayman
 Assistant Town Clerk – Toni Roast
 RFO – Steve Innes
 Sales, Marketing and Democratic Manager – Suzie Barnbrook

Introduction

The CEO gave an update regarding the issuing of fines along Nightingale Way, he outlined the work officers and council staff had undertaken since 19th March in an attempt to find a resolution to the matter.

The CEO acknowledged the recent statement written in the press and welcomed this. He conceded that more details would need to be established and further concessions made to satisfy a conclusion to the matter.

Annual Report – CEO – Ryan Hayman

The CEO gave an update on the annual report, he was pleased to announce that one of the greatest achievements over the past 12 months was our venue becoming a vaccination hub at The Alexandra Suite, we made this available to NHS workers in December and rolled out the first vaccines in January. We continue to keep this facility available going forward, this wouldn't have been possible without our officers Kerina Keir and Kerry Rose who have kept this venue open.

Annual Report – Assistant Town Clerk – Toni Roast

Our events for 2020 and first part of 2021, were hijacked by COVID-19. However, we responded to the pandemic by co-ordinating the requests for help from residents, and allocated volunteers to help. We have since helped in excess of 800 residents. Volunteers have agreed to continue for the foreseeable future.

Great British Spring Clean – This took place in September last year, but was reduced to just a few volunteers across the four days, however there was still a huge amount of rubbish collected by those volunteers and staff who took part.

Swanley In Bloom – In 2020 we entered the South and South East in Bloom competition again, we achieved 3 silver gilt awards and 2 silver awards, we have already entered again this year and hope to achieve the same or better.

VE Day – The Mayor unveiled 3 new benches in Swanley and we hope to add to this in 2021.

Christmas Lights – We added to our lights this year to add some cheer to the Town.

Annual Report – RFO – Steve Innes

Steve Innes shared information relating to our year end and talked through the annual return analysis. He provided an in-depth breakdown of Swanley Town Council's financial position with a comparison from previous years.

Annual Report – Mayor of Swanley – Councillor Lesley Dyball

The Mayor explained she has been Mayor for 3 years and thanked her Deputy Cllr John Barnes and the leader of the Council Cllr Michael Horwood.

Cllr Lesley Dyball said we as a council have gained a new set of skills by conducting online meetings, and adapted accordingly this year to hosting our council meetings through Zoom.

Cllr Lesley Dyball personally thanked all staff at Swanley Town Council who have gone above and beyond in co-ordinating our residents and volunteers and their volunteering efforts to.

Events for the community were not able to go ahead, however, we adapted and still managed to do a lot for the community. For instances, the show of beautiful flowers throughout the town for the In Bloom Competition. This always brightening up everyone's lives and make us all feel much better.

A small litter picking gathering happened last weekend and there will be a bigger event this weekend. Cllr Lesley Dyball thanked Toni Roast for the organisation.

As Chair of Personnel Committee we met on 3 occasions last year and during that time we had a resignation from the CEO and Town Clerk Steve Nash. Our Assistant Town Clerk Toni Roast acted as Interim Town Clerk during the recruitment process for our new CEO. Ryan Hayman, took up post in December. Cllr Lesley Dyball gave her huge thanks to Ryan for a sterling job he is doing, particularly these past two days with the Nightingale Way parking issues.

Annual Report – Chair of Policy & Council Committee – Cllr Michael Horwood

Cllr Michael Horwood wanted to add to the CEO update on Nightingale Way parking issues. Cllr Michael Horwood refers to the cancelled tickets and said the issues still remain outstanding and is not acceptable. Cllr Michael Horwood has been discussing the next steps forward with the local MP Laura Trott and wanted to make the public aware that we do not think this matter has been concluded in any way.

Cllr Michael Horwood highlighted in his report that a resident who lives in Swanley pays £41.60 less Council Tax than a resident in Edenbridge and residents in Swanley pay £16.92 less than those living in Sevenoaks. They do not have all the facilities Swanley has to offer like Swanley Park which is incredibly expensive to keep maintained, as well as all the other services that we offer i.e. subsidised grass cutting from KCC contract and improvements to the Town.

Cllr Michael Horwood wanted to thank all officers for keeping the costs and spending under control.

The funds from the sale of The Woodlands, meant we built a brand new Splash Pool, Soft Play and renovated Swanley Parks toilets.

Annual Report – Chair of Estates & Facilities Committee - Councillor Sarah Andrews

Cllr Sarah Andrews wanted to start by saying that she is pleased with the major achievements in this area being made available to our residents over the past 12 months.

Cllr Sarah Andrews thanked Ryan Hayman our new CEO for doing such a splendid job whilst he was Director at Swanley Park, his diligence and hard work achieved the COVID-19 secure award, which enabled us to enjoy the beautiful park safely and to use the brand new pool between lockdowns.

The park and town have achieved 3 Green Flag awards and 5 In Bloom awards. Soon a brand new Soft Play centre is due to open and this would not of been possible without the fantastic team behind Ryan and would like to congratulate them for their sterling work.

Cllr Sarah Andrews is delighted and congratulated George Brooker has 'filled the boots' of Ryan and become our new Parks and Spaces Manager.

Cllr Sarah Andrews explained our venues have had a tough time this year, although The Alexandra Suite has been put to good use in assisting in the rollout of the vaccination programme. Positive comments have been seen regarding the service meaning that all being involved should be applauded for exceptional work.

Cllr Sarah Andrews said she is always fighting hard to achieve more sporting facilities in Swanley. She was pleased to announce the newly painted courts in Swanley will be hosting not only Netball but a fully established community Tennis programme for us all to enjoy. This will be available shortly with a new booking system. Together with new football pitches by The Olympic, Swanley Town Council are making progress in achieving better facilities than we have recently had. Although, Cllr Sarah Andrews is aware that much more work needs to be done.

Public Questions

The CEO asked if there were any questions from the residents:

A resident asked how much of the carpark is owned by U+I, is it just where they have planning permission for the multi-storey car park and the 11 storeys above or do they in fact still own all the car park?

The CEO clarified U+I own the car park surrounding the Oaks Surgery and the car park next to Aldi bordering the Recreation Ground. The other car parks on the righthand side as you drive through are now in LCP's ownership.

The resident then asked whether the 8 storey block that was being built by Barclays bank is this still going ahead or this something LCP will consider as new owners?

The CEO answered that he is not in the minds of the developers but from initial conversations it did certainly appear that LCP would be looking more towards redeveloping the town for business and retail purposes and not so much for residential.

Cllr Claire Barnes asked if it was possible to update the website and social media pages regarding Nightingale Way with what the rights are for people who have been issued with fines.

CEO clarified we have done a social media post just before this meeting with the latest update with the 30 minute rule stating the fines will be cancelled. Our advice going forward would be to appeal if you are over 30 minutes and believe you have a case, once we get further details we can put them out across all relevant channels. We are certainly going to follow up and request for, an extended grace period, designated bays, additional signage and moving of the cameras.

Cllr Claire Barnes asked is it possible to get clarification from U+I and LCP as to what land they own. CEO confirms U+I own the Oaks Surgery car park and the car park next to Aldi and Recreation side. The other side is in the ownership of LCP. CEO confirms he does have a plan which he is happy to share to anyone who requests to see.

Cllr Jackie Griffiths commended the CEO for taking on this firm, Cllr Jackie Griffiths said she battled with them last year regarding free parking for the NHS workers at the Oaks Surgery.

A resident asked if U+I had planning permission for the 4 storey car park and the 11 storey living accommodation if this now owned by LCP? Do they plan to use that planning approval and go ahead?

The CEO said he was not able to confirm, however, the conversations he has been having with them appeared they wouldn't be going down that route.

Cllr Claire Barnes asked when U+I won their appeal, they have up to 3 years to start building is this correct?

The CEO responded to say yes, however, the site is now under new ownership and the planning application is for the whole site. This therefore complicates matters and is a question for Sevenoaks Planning department.

The CEO closed the meeting thanking everyone who attended tonight especially all the residents of Swanley.

Next Annual Town Meeting Wednesday 23rd March 2022

Meeting Closed at 20.23