Swanley Town Council

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ESTATES AND FACILITIES

MINUTES
Wednesday 18th October 2023

Present:

Members	Present	Apologies	Absent
Chair: Cllr C Barnes	✓		
Deputy Chair: Cllr S Durden	✓		
Cllr P Darrington	✓		
Cllr L Dyball	✓		
Cllr J Knight		✓	Personal Circumstances
Cllr C Prestedge	✓		
Cllr N Scott	✓		
Cllr R Wood	✓		

Officers: Chief Executive Officer (CEO) – Ryan Hayman
Executive Assistant – Tracey Bayliss
Parks & Open Spaces Manager – George Brooker
Venue Manager – Kerina Keir
Gateway Manager – Claire Cormack

Also Present: Cllr P Brown, Cllr G Darrington, Cllr K Mitchell, Cllr C Morgan, Cllr E Uttley

Public: **None present.**

MEETING COMMENCED: 19:30

12077 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
NONE

12078 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
NONE
Cllr L Dyball declared that in her role as a Sevenoaks District Councillor, the West Kent Rural Fund is within her portfolio, although she is not on the panel.

12079 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING
to approve as correct the minutes of the meeting held on 19th July 2023.
APPROVED AND SIGNED

12080 REINFORCED AUTOCLAVED AERATED CONCRETE (RAAC) INSPECTION
To note the inspection results.
NOTED
CEO gave a brief update to note that there are no concerns regarding RAAC in any of Swanley Town Council's buildings. The cost of the inspection and associated reports is

approximately £16,000 which was not budgeted for but required. The cost will be split between all the sites.

12081 GATEWAY MANAGER REPORT

To receive and comment on the report.

NOTED

In addition to the report, it was mentioned that the Rural and Community Housing Enabling Service Swanley Housing Needs Survey has been opened and responses will be collected and sent back mid November. There are also Get Help Digital sessions taking place the third Tuesday of every month. There is an initiative being run by the Financial Hardship Campaign through Kent County Council and the local water companies who are giving help on digital skills and help with cost of living and water social tariffs. They will be taking place on Tuesday 24th October between 10am and 2pm.

It was asked what a water social tariff was. It was believed to be a policy set up for people on certain benefits where the payment is capped and set at £13 per month.

It was asked how the new queueing system was working for the division between the Post Office and the Bank. It was said that customers were learning where the queues are now and people that use it regularly are generally going straight to the Bank queue. Swanley Link is still waiting for better signage and advertising for the Bank.

It was asked if you were able to pay in cheques at the Bank from Nationwide Building Society. It was confirmed you could for High Street banks but currently not for banks like Metro. It was mentioned that a Nationwide Building Society cheque had been refused at the Post Office. The Gateway Manager said that this should have been accepted and will check to see what the issue was.

It was asked how often the library refreshed its library books and what provision there is for older children in year five and six. It was confirmed that there is provision in the library for year five and six children and it is labelled up for people to locate. Library customers can speak to the staff and request particular books to be brought in if they are unable to find the book they require. It was said that the Sevenoaks Library Service look after the library content and are kept up to date constantly with new releases. It was asked if it could be confirmed how often it is updated. The Gateway Manager said that she would speak to the Community Librarian and confirm.

CEO gave an update regarding the Banking Hub. He said that clarification has been received regarding the criteria for the Banking Hub. Swanley is in the green category for the following areas: financial vulnerability, district vulnerability. We are amber for age, bank proximity, relevant retailers within a 1km of retail centre and population of 9,405 within a 1km area. The CEO has requested more information as to how Swanley meets the green rating for financial viability and district vulnerability as it appears to not capture all of the Swanley area issues. To secure a Bank Hub it has been confirmed that there needs to be two red areas and to be over 30 minutes from the closest bank branch which currently Swanley is 18 minutes by bus from the closest bank branch, Santander in Sidcup.

The Gateway Manager was thanked for her report.

12082 VENUES MANAGER REPORT

To receive and comment on the report.

NOTED

In addition to the report the Venues Manager confirmed that the outside lighting has now been completed at The Olympic, the dishwasher has been fixed in the Alexandra Suite, the new EPOS (electronic point of sale) system has now been installed in the bars and

the credit card machines will be linked to the system to make the payment process more refined and easier for the staff to manage. A new oven has been installed in the kitchen which has only cost the venue £200 for the electrician to move the electric points. It was asked how much a new oven would normally cost. It was confirmed that a brand-new oven would cost approximately £10,000.

It was also mentioned that the Venues team completed their 5k Alzheimer's memory walk and raised over £1,800. Congratulations was given to the team on their achievement.

It was asked what the reason was for the staffing issues and what can be done to rectify it. It was mentioned that it appears to be an issue across the country with hospitality staffing. It was reported that the local Beefeater restaurant was closed on various occasions due to staffing issues. Venue vacancies have been advertised and some staff have started and then decided that hospitality is not for them. A lot of people do not want to work over 16 hours due to it affecting benefits. There are discussions going on regarding removing the zero hours contract and placing all staff on contracts and a staff referral system with a form of reward after a period of time.

The Venues Manager was thanked for her report.

12083 PARKS AND OPEN SPACES MANAGER REPORT

To receive and comment on the report.

NOTED

It was asked how big the new dog exercise area was going to be, how it was being managed and advertised. It was confirmed that it was just under one acre. It is currently being advertised at the park and there has been a lot of interest from the public. It is being managed by the company who are running the area. All bookings would be online and people booking the facility will receive a code at booking to enter and exit the area during their allocated session. Each session is chargeable at £10 per hour for up to 9 dogs per booking. It was confirmed that STC would be cutting the grass inside the enclosure and that there would be dog bins and bags available inside the enclosure. It was asked how high the fence will be around the enclosure. The fence will be six to eight feet high which will be the same kind of fencing that is currently used around The Great Outdoors. It was asked why people could not just walk their dogs around the park. It was said that it may be useful for people who have dogs that are not good off the lead and would like a larger enclosed area for their dogs to run free, or it could be used for training or introducing their dogs to other dogs in a controlled area or for people that are not as confident walking their dog. It was also noted that dogs currently must be on leads around the lake due to the Park's by-laws.

Congratulations was given to Megan Campbell and George Brooker for securing the grant from the West Kent Rural Fund for the cess pit works and also for the Green Flag Awards for Swanley Park, Swanley Recreation Ground and Elephant Park. It was also mentioned that Swanley Park had won Gold award in the South and South East in Bloom awards.

The Parks and Open Spaces Manager was thanked for his report.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Wednesday 17th January 2024

MEETING CLOSED AT: 20:02

SIGNED: **18/10/2023**

Cllr C Barnes
Chair of Estates and Facilities