

Sevenoaks Town Council
Minutes of the Community Centre User Group Meeting held at the Sevenoaks Community
Centre on Wednesday 17th October 2018 at 7.00pm

Meeting Commenced: 7.00 p.m.

Meeting Concluded: 7.52 p.m.

Present:

Cllr Simon Raikes	Sevenoaks Town Council (Chairman)
Cllr Marilyn Canet	Sevenoaks Town Council
Linda Larter MBE	Sevenoaks Town Council
Liz Hodgson	Sevenoaks Town Council
Kevin Watson	Caretaker Sevenoaks Town Council
Stewart Armstrong	Knole U3A
Richard Baxter	U3A
Adrienne Brewin	Breathe Easy
Janet Davies	Sevenoaks Day Nursery
Jim Garlinge	Otford Bridge Club
Pamela Holmes	The Arts Society-Knole
Bryan Miles	Tea Dance
John Musselbrook	Line Dancing
Barbara Phillips	North West Kent Family History
Kate Puce	Hollybush Montessori
Bryan Richardson	Sevenoaks District Arts Council
Magda Sweetland	Knole U3A Chairman

289. Apologies for Absence

Received from Cllr A. Eyre, Cllr R.L.Piper, Allan de Turberville (Probus), David Williams (Probus)

RESOLVED: Sevenoaks Town Council to nominate a replacement for Cllr Robert Piper

290. Requests for Dispensation

There were no requests for dispensations.

291. Declaration of Interests

There were no Declarations of Interest.

292. Minutes of the Meeting of the Community User Group held on 22nd March 2018

RESOLVED: That the Minutes were a true record of the meeting and to be signed by the Chairman.

293. Bat & Ball Centre Development

Sevenoaks Town Council submitted plans in September for the refurbishment and extension of the Centre and expects to receive a decision from Sevenoaks District Council Planning Department on 8th November.

The Town Council resolved to refurbish and extend current facility using same architect and similar design.

In May 2018 the Town Council was advised in writing from SDC Planning Officer that the refurbished building would not require BREEAM.

A pre-application advice request was submitted and paid for in May and a meeting held in June 2018 where again verbally it was confirmed that BREEAM was not required.

In September 2018 the written pre-application advice had not been received, and despite several requests there was no information available as to when it would arrive. To avoid delays in the project and due to very positive feedback the Town Council took the decision to submit the Planning Application which was validated on 13th September 2018 and a decision date for 8th November 2018.

On the 28th September 2018 pre-application advice was received, four months after the pre-application meeting and included the statement that the community centre would be expected to achieve BREEAM "Very Good" and "this should be accounted for in the design stage..."

The Town Council is trying to establish how it could feasibly meet this request at this stage in the project. As SDC states this needs to be included in the design stage, which would have been several months ago. It is virtually impossible to apply retrospectively and would mean reviewing all design work. The time delays and additional costs would be considerable.

The Town Council has submitted a document to accompany its planning application to state that it is not possible to address this for reasons identified in the Planning Core Strategy.

The Town Council is in the process of completing an application to SDC CIL Board for funding towards the project.

It is hoped that regular hirers will relocate to other Sevenoaks Town Council sites if they wish. No new regular bookings are being taken to allow existing hirers a choice of rooms to relocate to. These include the Stag Theatre, Plaza Suite and Limelight Room (previously known as the bar room), the Bat & Ball Booking Hall and Luggage Room and the Town Council Chamber.

Concern was expressed by a hirer that members of groups relocating to the Stag Theatre or Plaza Suite because they required a venue that could hold large numbers

would experience parking problems in the town centre, as well as having to pay car park charges. Cllr. Raikes said that although hirers had benefitted from hiring the Community Centre which could hold large numbers with plentiful free car parking it could not provide these benefits whilst the works were being carried out. In the long term the benefits of having a new centre with up to date facilities would far outweigh the inconvenience of the closure of the existing outdated centre.

The question of the timescale of the closure and duration of the works was also raised. Cllr. Raikes responded that the Town Council could not answer this until the decision from the Planning Department had been received. It was hoped to have more information at the next meeting, hopefully to be arranged for mid/late November.

Open days would be arranged for existing hirers to visit the Bat & Ball Station building in January so that they could assess the suitability of the rooms for possible hire during the period of closure.

294. Bat & Ball Station Building

The estimated completion date of the Station Building is 14th December. Extra funding has been given to restore old clay bricks and tidy up the exterior together with additional Heritage Lottery money to update lighting. These additional works would continue after the main contract was completed. An invitation only preview event for the Station has been arranged for 27th November and further information about the Station, news and events can be found on <http://www.batandballstation.com/>

The Town Council is currently looking to recruit volunteers to help deliver a variety of activities at Bat & Ball Station and they are also asking for donations of unwanted old fashioned luggage and station memorabilia for display purposes.

Sevenoaks Town Council hopes to eventually establish a Community Rail Partnership with other stations along the line with a view to promoting the local visitor tourism economy by offering sightseeing trips to local places of interest and enjoyment of the natural beauty of the surrounding countryside.

RESOLVED: To send invitations to the representatives of hiring groups for the Station Preview on 27th November.

RESOLVED: To note Cllr Raikes's appreciation of Linda Larter MBE Town Clerk for her dedicated work on this project.

295. Feedback from Hirers

Many of the regular hirers commented on the helpfulness of both Martin Dix (weekday) and Kevin Watson (weekend) caretakers in setting up the layout of rooms

for their events and meetings particularly when some groups with more senior members would struggle to move tables and chairs themselves.

Several hirers also expressed their gratitude to the Town Council for looking into finding alternative rooms to hire during the period of closure of the existing Community Centre.

The Montessori playgroup based at the Community Centre is in communications with the Town Council and Sevenoaks Day Nursery about the possibility of using some of the Day Nursery's space during the period of closure as it meets Ofsted requirements. It was asked if the car park could be smartened up a bit and Linda Larter responded that work had already started on weed clearance and general tidying up of the area.

296. Press Releases

There were no press releases.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting.

Signed
Chairman

Dated