

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF LYDD TOWN COUNCIL

Monday 3rd March 2025 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber at the Guild Hall

Present: Town Mayor, R.S. Jones, Councillors, Maria Beach, Darren Chapman, Mrs Sadie Crump, Mrs Ann Duncan, Clive Goddard, Mrs Pippa Harston, Mrs Jean Jones, Della Lewis, Alan Martin, Anthony May, Mrs Debbie McKenna, Mrs Kim Rye, Paul Rye and Martin Sweeney

Angela Alexander – Town Clerk
Mrs Diane Cavey - Assistant Town Clerk

7 members of the public

APOLOGIES -Fr. Jack Greenhalf
ABSENT -Cllr Thomas Dawes

MINUTES

- a) **RESOLVED:** *The Mayor made an amendment in the Minutes to the report by Cllr Clive Goddard to include Cllr Beach. Following the amendment the minutes of the Council meeting held on 13th January 2025 were approved and signed as a true record*
Proposed by Cllr. May and seconded by Cllr Mrs Jones
For: 13
Abstentions: 2 (Cllrs Chapman and Mrs Duncan)
- b) **RESOLVED:** *To receive the already approved minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 2nd December and 13th January 2025*
- c) **RESOLVED:** *To receive and note the Planning Committee minutes from the meeting held on 29th July 2024 (previously deferred).*
- d) **RESOLVED:** *To receive the already approved minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 28th October 2024*

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Goddard and Cllr Martin declared an interest in matters relating to Folkestone and Hythe District Council.

Cllr Paul Rye declared an interest in the agenda item relating to the Scouts

Cllrs Beach, Mrs Crump, Mrs Duncan, Della Lewis declared an interest in the agenda item relating to Lydd Club Day.

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The meeting was adjourned

Questions from Martin Hooper

I am resubmitting questions from the meeting on Monday 13th January 2025 as the reply I received from Cllr Bob Jones on 16th January 2025 failed to answer them. I have advised Cllr Jones of this in an email I sent to him on 26th February 2025.

- a) Can I have an update to the meeting on the Rype held on 9th December regarding the sub- standard play surface?
When will the children's swings be replaced in both areas? (now about 6 months they have been missing)
- b) Why have the gates to the entrance of the under 5's play area not been repaired as advised 2 council meetings ago that the handyman would be dealing with this?
- c) One of my previous questions was why had the town clerk gone to Hastings to pay in some cash, can you please tell me the amount of cash paid in on that transaction?
- d) Is it possible for The Residents Group to have a report included in the Lydd Town and Parish Assembly booklet that LTC produce an annual report for?

The Town Mayor advised Martin Hooper that he had already responded to these questions by email to which Martin Hooper said there was not enough detail in the Mayor's reply and he wanted more information.

In relation to the Resident's Group request to have a report included in the Lydd Town Meeting brochure the Mayor declined as the Residents Group has stated in the Constitution they provided to the Town Council that Lydd Councillors who are residents are not able to join the Residents Group and this demonstrates that they do not wish to work in partnership with the Town Council.

The meeting was reconvened

FINANCES (appendix

- a) ***RESOLVED: To ratify and approve payments and receipts
Proposed by Cllr Paul Rye and seconded by Cllr Mrs Jones
Unanimous***
- b) ***RESOLVED: To receive and note the bank reconciliation.***
- c) ***RESOLVED: To receive and note the budget monitor***

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTING (appendix)

Councillors were advised that due to the increase in payments and receipts over the last 3 consecutive years to exceed £200,00 that Audit regulations require a move to Income and Expenditure accounting in place of payments and receipts with effect from 1st April 2025. The Independent Internal Auditor recommends that due to the number of transactions we also move from using Excel to an accountancy package Scribe. Councillors considered the following information circulated to them.

Background

ACCOUNTING & AUDIT REGULATIONS 2015

PART 4

Published Accounts and Audit – Category 2 Authorities

(1) A Category 2 authority must ensure that the statement of accounts required by section 3(3) of the Act is prepared in accordance with these Regulations.

(2) Subject to paragraph (3), a statement of accounts prepared by a Category 2 authority under section 3(3) of the Act must take the form of—

(a) an income and expenditure account; and

(b) a statement of balances,

prepared in accordance with, and in the form specified in any annual return required by, proper practices in relation to accounts.

(3) Where, in relation to a Category 2 authority and a financial year, the gross income or expenditure (whichever is the higher) is not more than £200,000 for that financial year or for either of the two immediately preceding financial years, the statement of accounts may, instead of complying with paragraph (2), take the form of a record of receipts and payments of the authority in relation to that financial year.

Business Case

Executive Summary

Currently, the Council manages its financial operations using Excel spreadsheets and is transitioning to an income and expenditure accounting framework. While Excel offers basic functionality, it may not fully support the complexities and compliance requirements associated with this transition. Implementing Scribe Accounts can streamline financial management, enhance accuracy, and ensure compliance with statutory obligations, thereby allowing the Council to focus more on community engagement and development.

Current Situation in the opinion of Scribe

Lydd Town Council, with a precept of £178,900 for the 2024/25 financial year, has been diligent in its financial oversight, as reflected in its publicly available financial statements and audit reports. The Council is in the process of adopting an income and expenditure accounting system to better reflect its financial activities. Currently, financial data is managed using Excel spreadsheets, which, while familiar, present challenges in scalability, error management, and compliance as financial operations become more complex.

Benefits

Scribe Accounts offers a comprehensive solution tailored for parish and town councils.

- **Automated Bank Reconciliations:** Streamlines the reconciliation process, reducing manual effort and errors.
- **Reserves Management:** Facilitates effective tracking and management of reserves, ensuring financial stability.
- **VAT Compliance:** Supports Making Tax Digital (MTD) submissions and VAT Form 126, simplifying VAT return processes.
- **Comprehensive Reporting:** Generates essential reports such as Budgeting, Monthly, Forecasting, and Year-End reports, aiding in informed decision-making.
- **User-Friendly Interface:** Designed for ease of use, reducing the learning curve and enhancing productivity.
- **Enhanced Security:** Features two-factor authentication and full data encryption, safeguarding sensitive financial information.

Cost

Proposal for Lydd Town Council		
Greyed out services are not included in totals		
Product	Initial Payment	Monthly Payment
Accounts	£719	£74
Bookings		
Cemetery		
Allotments	£0* discounted if purchased with accounts	£29
Civic.ly		
Professional Services	Initial Payment	Monthly Payment
See following slide for details		
Transactions Import		-
Set-Up Structure (optional)	£249	-
Allotments Import	£199	-
Cemetery Import		-
Mapping (Allotments)		-
Mapping (Cemetery)	On Request	-
Bookings - Fee Structure	On Request	-
Total (Excl VAT)	£1,167	£103

The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council must now prepare the accounts as income and expenditure and that this is not something that the Councillors are required to debate and they do not have a decision to reach on this matter as this is set out in the Practitioners Guide.

Councillors should however consider the way in which the accounting records are kept – at the present time these are done on Excel which does not have a cost to the Council but the advice of the Internal Auditor is that we use an accountancy package due to the number of entries being made which makes Excel unwieldy. The Clerk advised that both Quick Books and Scribe have been looked at and that Scribe is more compatible with the AGAR form which we complete for External Audit purposes, there is also the option of using the package for our Allotments records which are also currently on an Excel Spreadsheet but could be imported into Scribe. The Town Clerk said that during March the work would be done to set up the new package so that we are ready for 1st April the start of the financial year and asked Councillors to consider the potential change from Excel to an accountancy package and the associated costs. The Town Clerk further advised that she and the Finance Officer were booked onto a training course offered by KALC for the transition from Receipts and Payments to Income and Expenditure when reaching the £200K threshold.

RESOLVED: Councillors agreed the change to an accountancy package and to engage Scribe at the prices as set out above and with delegated powers to the Town Clerk for the transition of the Town Council cash book and Allotment records to Scribe.

Proposed by Cllr Mrs Jean Jones and seconded by Cllr Chapman

For: 14

Abstentions: 2 Cllrs Mrs Duncan and Beach

RENEWAL OF ELECTRICITY CONTRACT

The Town Clerk advised that the electricity contract is due for renewal and the Town Council is currently with Corona Energy for the supply of electricity to the Guild Hall, Manor Road Pavilion and the garage. The three quotes obtained in time for the agenda paperwork for consideration had been circulated to Councillors as set out in the table below.

ELECTRICITY - SUMMARY OF ESTIMATED ANNUAL CHARGES		
CORONA	CURRENT RATES	3,542.54
CORONA	RENEWAL RATES - 3 YR	3,386.65
EDF	QUOTE - 3 YR	2,920.50
OCTOPUS	QUOTE - 2 YR	2,838.25

The breakdown is set out below

ELECTRICITY		£ / MTH	Pence / kWh	ESTIMATED ANNUAL CHARGE		
GARAGES - ESTIMATED USAGE 0.3 kWh			STANDING VARI	STANDING	VARIABLE	TOTAL
CORONA	CURRENT RATES	11.8200	36.8685	141.84	0.11	141.95
CORONA	RENEWAL RATES - 3 YR	17.5200	27.0397	210.24	0.08	210.32
EDF	QUOTE - 3 YR	15.2100	24.1000	182.52	0.07	182.59
OCTOPUS	QUOTE - 2 YR	14.5000	23.5700	174.00	0.07	174.07
HIGH STREET 2 - ESTIMATED USAGE 4006.6kWh			STANDING VARI			
CORONA	CURRENT RATES	13.1400	32.6179	157.68	1,306.97	1,464.65
	RENEWAL RATES - 3 YR	24.8600	27.0397	298.32	1,083.45	1,381.77
EDF	QUOTE - 3 YR	15.2100	24.1000	182.52	965.66	1,148.18
OCTOPUS	QUOTE - 2 YR	14.5000	23.5700	174.00	944.43	1,118.43
HIGH STREET 2 - ESTIMATED USAGE 4332.5 kWh			STANDING VARI			
CORONA	CURRENT RATES	13.1400	32.6179	157.68	1,413.17	1,570.85
	RENEWAL RATES - 3 YR	17.5200	27.0397	210.24	1,171.50	1,381.74
EDF	QUOTE - 3 YR	15.2100	24.1000	182.52	1,044.13	1,226.65
OCTOPUS	QUOTE - 2 YR	14.5000	23.5700	174.00	1,021.17	1,195.17
PAVILLION - ESTIMATED USAGE 749.2 kWh			STANDING VAR			
CORONA	CURRENT RATES	10.0600	32.6179	120.72	244.37	365.09
	RENEWAL RATES - 3 YR	17.5200	27.0397	210.24	202.58	412.82
EDF	QUOTE - 3 YR	15.2100	24.1000	182.52	180.56	363.08
OCTOPUS	QUOTE - 2 YR	14.5000	23.5700	174.00	176.59	350.59

The Town Clerk advised that the most up to date 'live market price' which had been requested so that we could advise Councillors at the meeting and received today were as follows:

Supplier	Term	Annual charge
Corona	3 year	3282.24
EDF	3 year	2884.15
Octopus	2 year	2791.90

The Town Clerk said that this agenda item is for Councillors to consider the costs and agree on the preferred electricity supplier.

RESOLVED: To appoint Octopus for the supply of electricity to the Guild Hall, Manor Road Pavilion and the garage.

Proposed by Cllr Chapman and seconded by Cllr Mrs Duncan.
Unanimous

RENEWAL OF GAS CONTRACT FOR THE GUILD HALL

The Town Clerk advised that the contract with British Gas for the Guild Hall is due for renewal and the following three quotes had been circulated to Councillors for consideration. A summary of the estimated annual charges for each provided in the table below:

GAS - SUMMARY OF ESTIMATED ANNUAL CHARGES		
BRITISH GAS	CURRENT RATES	1,442.03
BRITISH GAS	RENEWAL RATES - 3 YR	1,217.88
EDF	QUOTE - 3 YR	1,275.66
OCTOPUS	QUOTE - 2 YR	1,249.90

The breakdown is as follows:

GAS						
HIGH STREET - ESTIMATED USAGE 17,926 kWh STANDING VARIABLE						
BRITISH GAS	CURRENT RATES	15.4517	7.0100	185.42	1,256.61	1,442.03
BRITISH GAS	RENEWAL RATES - 3 YR *	14.3993	5.8300	172.79	1,045.09	1,217.88
EDF	QUOTE - 3 YR	13.6875	6.2000	164.25	1,111.41	1,275.66
OCTOPUS	QUOTE - 2 YR	4.5199	6.6700	54.24	1,195.66	1,249.90

Councillors were asked to note that once the boilers have had suitable repairs and are in use then the gas usage will increase significantly.

The Town Clerk advised that the latest live market prices quoted today for this evening's meeting were as follows:

Supplier	Term	Annual Charges
British Gas	3 year	1,189.56
EDF	3 year	1,186.03
OCTOPUS	2 year	1,272.44

The Town Clerk said that this agenda item is for Councillors to consider the costs and agree on the preferred gas supplier for the Guild Hall.

***RESOLVED: To appoint Octopus for the supply of gas to the Guild Hall
Proposed by Cllr Chapman and seconded by Cllr Mrs Duncan.
Unanimous***

VE DAY 80 (appendix)

The Mayor said that Lydd Town Council will host the VE Day 80 celebrations at the Banks from 7.30pm on the evening of 8th May 2025 and that the bar at the Banks Sports and Social Club would be open for people to buy drinks, the Town Council would provide fish and chips and that he would be lighting the beacon at 9.30pm.

Cllr Mrs Duncan said that she had received complaints last year at the D Day celebrations as fish and chips were served and there wasn't a buffet.

The Town Clerk said that we receive the guidance on how to take part from Bruno Peek CVO OBE OPR who is the Pageantmaster who provides details on the arrangements for these events and how local councils can take part in these shared moments of celebration. The guidance is for all Councils and was provided for the D Day celebrations as well at VE Day 80 and this tells us all at what time to light the beacon across the UK. The Town Clerk read from the guidance provided as to why fish and chips would be served as follows:

Due to the fact that Fish and Chips – Britain's favourite dish was not rationed by Prime Minister Churchill during the whole of WWII, we also wanted to use this occasion to continue paying tribute to the brave fishermen who fished the seas and the farmers and land girls who toiled in the fields, by encouraging the eating of fish and chips as part of these VE Day celebrations on May 8th 2025.

The Town Clerk said that this would be a token gesture of a small portion of chips and fish served in a burger size box and that the cost we have been quoted this year is £3 per portion and it was for the Councillors to decide how many portions the Town Council should order this year as last year the event was very well attended and the 120 portions ordered and handed out to the people outside awaiting the lighting of beacon by staff members and Cllrs. Goddard and Sweeney did not go round everyone present.

Cllr Goddard asked where the funding to pay for the event would be coming from.

The Town Clerk replied that it had been discussed at the Small Grants panel meeting that there was an underspend from the previous round of applications of £1,060.50 and how this should be

used and the outcome of the discussion had been detailed in the briefing note to Councillors to be considered to be used for the VE80 celebrations which includes the small fish and chip portions and a donation to the Seaside Singers who will sing WWII songs at the event and any other associated costs.

RESOLVED: That 200 portions of Fish and Chips to be ordered from The Varne at a cost of £3 per portion.

Proposed by Cllr May and seconded by Cllr Chapman

Unanimous

SMALL GRANTS/LYDD MUNICIPAL CHARITIES

- a) The Mayor reported that the Holm Oak tree which was agreed by the Town Council at the January meeting which Councillors agreed was to be funded from the donation made to Lydd Town Council from the Municipal Charities 2024 in memory of the people who originally donated the Charities money was duly purchased and planted on 3rd February 2025 adjacent to Paine Avenue. The total cost of the tree, planting and 3-year maintenance cost was a total of £588.33. The money for the tree has been taken from the Municipal Charities donation and therefore reduced the amount available for the small grant fund.

Received and noted

- b) Lydd Town Council makes small grants available to local charitable and voluntary organisations on an annual basis. The small grants awarded in this financial year will be funded from the donation made to the Town Council by Lydd Municipal and Other Charities and their Chairman and Clerk had met and considered the applications and submitted their comments and recommendations which were then provided to the Small Grant Panel for consideration along with the applications received and their supporting documentation in line with the Small Grants Policy. The sum that we have received at the end of 2024 is £5,000 and the Holm Oak tree has already been paid for reducing the amount available for small grants. The small grant poster, application form and small grant policy was provided to all applicants to follow to ensure their application correctly follows the policy. The condition around Press releases and acknowledging the Council for the donation is not applicable for the previous years' grants as the policy was not in place but will become applicable to grants received from this round of applications. The recommendations had been circulated to all Councillors with their agenda paperwork as follows:

APPLICATION RECEIVED	AMOUNT REQUESTED	TOTAL PROJECT COST	FEEDBACK FROM CHAIR/CLERK MUNICIPAL CHARITIES	AMOUNT AGREED BY SMALL GRANT PANEL
Lydd Club Day Committee	£500.00	£21,000	£500	£500
Lydd Town Events	£500.00	£5,000	£500	£500
Lydd Ex-Servicemens Club	£283.33	£283.33	£0	£150
St Peters Church Greatstone	£420.00	£850	£0	£0
Friends of Lydd (Lydd Museum)	£500.00	£500+	£500	£500
1st Lydd Scout Group	£500.00	£527.32	£0	£500

Lydd Twinning	£500.00	£1,200	£250	£250
Lydd Cricket Club	£494.99	£494.99	£0	£0
Litter Picking Watch	£507.13	£507.13	£500	£500
Who Let the Dogs Out	£200.00	£175	£0	£0
Snowflake Christmas Fayre	£500.00	£520	£0	£0
TOTAL	£4,905.45			£2,900.00
REMAINING BALANCE IF ALL GRANTS ACCEPTED	-£493.78		REMAINING BALANCE	£2,005.45

- c) Following the discussions regarding the Lydd Centenary Bursary at the January Council meeting an underspend from this round of applications was recommended be used to transfer to the Bursary account so that this may continue for the future.

Cllr Sweeney suggested that £500 be transferred from the remaining small grant fund for 2025-26 to the Bursary fund and that the remaining money in the small grant budget head be earmarked specifically for use by the Town Council to fund any future events and occasions such as the VE Day celebrations. The money will not be available for further small grants or funding to community groups.

RESOLVED: That the above grants be awarded and the approved payments will be made to the successful applicants at the beginning of the new financial year 2025-2026. That £500 be transferred from the small grant fund for 2025-26 to the Lydd Centenary Bursary Fund and that the remainder of the money in the small grant budget head be earmarked specifically for the Town Council to fund any future events and occasions for the benefit of the community and that this expenditure is specifically spent by Lydd Town Council and not made available for applications from community groups or organisations

Proposed by Cllr Sweeney and seconded by Cllr May

For: 13

Abstentions: 2 Cllrs Mrs Duncan and Mrs McKenna

POLICIES AND PROTOCOLS (Appendix)

Councillors to note that at the meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 17th February 2025 that the Policy on Councillor/Officer relations and the Unreasonable Behaviour Policy had been reviewed and updated (changes in red as circulated to Councillors for adoption) to address concerns raised.

- a) Protocol on Councillor/Officer relations
- b) Unreasonable Behaviour Policy

RESOLVED: Revisions received and noted

ROSPA REPORT ON THE RYPE SWING FIXINGS FAILURES (Appendix)

The Town Clerk advised that there had been damage to three of the swings on the Rype (2 flat swings and 1 Tango swing) within a few weeks of each other and that the damage was reported to the Police and therefore we have crime numbers. There had been differences of opinion as to how the damage may have occurred and it was therefore difficult to move forward with how to repair or replace the swings to ensure that we did not import unnecessary risk.

The Town Clerk advised that she had therefore contacted the Head of Play Safety for RoSPA for an expert opinion by a qualified person and that he had visited at his earliest opportunity and had

inspected the swings and site and had provided a report for the Council of his findings and expert opinion.

The report stated that he had reviewed their findings of 20 years of inspections of this type of swing fixing (Flat swings) and can find no previous instance in their records where this type of fixing has failed in the way seen with ours at The Rype. The Head of Play Safety had taken up our concerns with the manufacturers Technical Manager who confirmed that he has not seen such a failure in the last 20 years also. The conclusion is that the fittings are fit for purpose proven over a 20 year period and that they failed as a result of deliberate and concerted effort to induce failure.

The Tango swing, in his opinion was also damaged by misuse and there is no obvious undue wear to any of the components and the opinion was that the failure has occurred as a result of overloading by a deliberate and concerted effort to induce failure.

The Town Clerk advised that the Tango swing is designed for a toddler and adult to use at the same time. RoSPA carries out an independent annual inspection and the last was in July 2024 when there was no wear and tear to these swings.

The Town Clerk advised that she has contacted the manufacture and that the cost for an engineer to visit and reinstate the swings was £419 = VAT

The Town Clerk advised that our insurers have been made aware of the situation and at the present time may impose 2 excess charges but that she has asked a colleague to ask them to consider this as one incident of vandalism and we were awaiting a reply.

The Town Clerk asked Councillors to consider the cost of repair and also how the Council wished to proceed with the insurance claim.

RESOLVED:

a) To instruct the manufacture to attend site and carry out repairs and reinstate the swings.

b) Not to pursue the insurance claim

Proposed by Cllr May and seconded by Cllr Chapman

Unanimous

LYDD IN BLOOM

Councillors received printed copies of their allocation of roads for preliminary judging of the Lydd in Bloom competition and the shortlisting forms which are to be returned by Councillors to the Guild Hall by 30th June 2025 in time for the final judging to take place by Cllr Mrs Jean Jones and Roger Hooper, Chairman of the Lydd Allotment Association.

Received and noted

LETTER FROM THE GURKHA WELFARE TRUST (Appendix)

A letter of gratitude from the Gurkha Welfare Trust for the donation of £2,500 following the monies raised less expenses to All Saint Church from the Lydd Town Council Christmas concert 2024 was circulated to Councillors

Received and noted

NOMINATION OF LAND TO THE NORTH EAST OF DUNGENESS AS AN ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE

Councillors were advised that following the letter and supporting documentation sent to Folkestone and Hythe District Council as agreed resulting from the report given to Councillors by Cllr Goddard at the January meeting that the District Council will consider the nomination and evaluate it against a set of statutory and non-discretionary criteria to determine whether the nomination should be accepted. If the nomination is upheld and the site is listed as an ACV, the owner of the property has the right to challenge the decision.

Councillors were advised that if Lydd Town Council wishes to make any further representations before a decision is made on the nomination that this must be submitted before 14 March 2025. Cllr Goddard said that the information submitted to the District Council was comprehensive and that he felt covered the necessary detail.

RESOLVED: No further representations to be added

Proposed by Cllr Goddard and seconded by Cllr Mrs Jean Jones

Unanimous

CONSULTATION FOLKESTONE AND HYTHE DISTRICT COUNCIL HERITAGE STRATEGY

Councillors were advised that Folkestone & Hythe District Council is consulting on a revised draft of the Heritage Strategy. The revised strategy has been updated to take account of changes in legislation and changes within the council. [Folkestone & Hythe Heritage Strategy Consultation | Folkestone & Hythe District Council](#)

Councillors were asked to bring their comments to the Council meeting for consideration and agreement.

There having been no comments presented to the meeting Cllr Goddard said that it is a very important document and asked that Councillors to send their comments forward to the Town Clerk by email so that these can be collated and submitted.

Received and noted

MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR ELECT

Councillors received nomination forms for the position of Mayor and Deputy Mayor which are to be returned to the Town Clerk by 31st March 2025 should any Councillor wish to make a nomination.

Received and noted

COMMITTEE AND OUTSIDE BODY REQUEST FORMS

Councillors received printed copies of the preference forms for appointment to Committees and Outside Bodies which should be returned to the Town Clerk by 31st March 2025

Received and noted

KCC MEMBERS REPORT

The Town Clerk advised that the February report had been circulated with the agenda paperwork and that she had circulated the March report to Councillors that morning, the report is available on the Town Council website for members of the public.

Cllr Sweeney said that he had questions to put to Cllr Hills about the condition of street lights in the parish. The Town Clerk said that Cllr Hills was attending a meeting at Dymchurch this evening and was not available to attend the meeting at Lydd Town Council but that she had already discussed his attendance at the Town Meeting on 28 April and he would be present. Cllr Goddard suggested that Cllr Sweeney email Cllr Hills directly about his concerns.

Received and noted.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENTS (Appendix

The list of the civic engagements at which the Town Council has been represented had been circulated.

Received and noted

PRESS AND PUBLIC EXCLUDED

RESOLVED: that public and press be excluded from the following confidential and sensitive agenda item being of a personal nature and being exempt as defined in Schedule 12 of the Local Gov Act 1972.

Proposed by Cllr Chapman and seconded by Cllr May

Unanimous

REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

CONFIDENTIAL REPORT

Councillor Chapman advised Councillors that he is providing a report from the outcome of the last Personnel Committee meeting and therefore the content is not open for debate.

- a) Cllr Chapman advised that from 3rd March the Caretakers hours are now 6 per week, worked 3 hours on Monday and Wednesday.

- b) Cllr Chapman said that at the Personnel Committee meeting there had been a review of the Officer/Councillor Protocol and the Unreasonable Behaviour Policy which have now come to the Council and that these policies were put in place four years ago as a measure to patch holes as there had been a legacy of problems and to ensure that Councillors and members of the public behave properly and treat staff with respect. Cllr Chapman referred to letters of complaint, Freedom of Information Requests, Requests for review of responses to FOIs and various social media posts. Cllr Chapman said that the Personnel Committee had considered the various communications and that the person had previously been written to about their vexatious behaviour and it was agreed to send another letter reminding him of this which has been signed by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and has now been sent. The Mayor advised that the person concerned had also behaved in a harassing manner towards staff members.

Cllr Chapman said it was also reported to the Personnel Committee that a resident had withdrawn their latest Appeal against the ICO in relation to Lydd Town Council and therefore that Tribunal would not proceed.

Cllr Chapman said that the decision of the Personnel Committee is that the stance has not changed towards these two residents with regard to their vexatious behaviour and that we will not be engaging with them on Council business and Cllr Chapman asked all Councillors to respect that decision.

Cllr Chapman said that the Council has received an update from Satswana who are the Councils Data Protection Officer which details a Harassment Win which Satswana has said is an important decision for all public authority leaders and it should be noted that a High School Head won his case for harassment against vexatious parents, winning £10,000 in costs and damages as well as imposing restrictions on their future behaviour. Satswana advised that they see far too many circumstances where the public fail to respect the authority of staff within a school or Council and then behave in a rude and aggressive manner, often deploying weapons such as a subject access request and negative social media content. Such people are quick to claim their "rights" often in a notably arrogant manner, but failing to recognise that rights also come with responsibilities, which must be to support the discipline required to manage any community. This victory is an important precedent for other staff in a similar position. Satswana will be adding the precedent to their armoury, alongside the Tribunal decision supporting refusal to respond to vexatious behaviour! It should be noted that inappropriate posting of anonymous information on social media materially affected the decision.

Received and noted

The meeting closed at 20.26pm