



GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

The Town Hall, School Road, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 4QR

FULL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on **Monday 22 January 2024** at The Town Hall, Gillingham, commencing at 7.30pm.

Present:

Cllr Barry von Clemens, Mayor
Cllr Roger Weeks, Deputy Mayor
Cllr Graham Bashford
Cllr Fiona Cullen
Cllr Rupert Evill
Cllr Alan Frith
Cllr Paul Harris
Cllr Mick Hill

Cllr John Kilcourse
Cllr Val Potheary
Cllr Graham Poulter
Cllr Sarah Snook
Cllr Donna Toye
Cllr David Walsh
Cllr Mark Walden

In attendance:

Julie Hawkins, Town Clerk
Jill Ezzard, Assistant Town Clerk
5 members of the public

Via MS Teams:

Michael Streeter, Gillingham and Shaftesbury News

1226. Public Participation.

There was no public participation.

1227. To receive apologies for absence

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to accept the apologies for absence from Cllr Sharon Cullingford and Cllr Alison von Clemens who were unable to join the meeting for personal reasons.

1228. Declarations of Interest: Members are required to comply with the requirements of Section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 disclosable pecuniary interests.

There were no declarations of interest.

1229. To receive questions pertaining to the previous minutes.

There were no questions.

1230. To approve the Minutes as a true and accurate record of the Full Council meeting held on Monday 15th January 2024.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 15th January 2024 as a true and accurate record. The Chairman signed the minutes.

1231. To approve payments of £10,000 and over.

A list of payments had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix A](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to approve the payments of £10,000 and over, as presented.

1232. To receive and consider a report from the Property Management Subcommittee regarding tenders for the replacement of the roof and installation of PV panels at Roman Court Workshops.

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix B](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that Company 3 is contracted to carry out the work at Roman Court Workshop at a cost not to exceed £133,700 to be funded from the £90,000 loan and Budget No. 7211.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the Responsible Financial Officer is authorised to draw down the £90,000 loan at the appropriate time.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk is authorised to instruct a Building Control Officer to carry out all the necessary works in line with the Building Regulations at a cost not to exceed £600 to be funded from Budget No. 7211

The Chairman informed members that emergency work to the Town Hall Car Park and the installation of new heaters at Chantry Office are operational and will be dealt with in accordance with Financial Regulations Para. 4.1.6. A report will be made to the General Purposes Committee once work has been completed.

1233. To receive and consider the internal auditor's no. 2 of 3 2023/24 report dated December 2023.

The internal audit report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix C](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the council sets a charge for emptying litter bins at a cost of £5.44 per bin and this charge is added to the schedule of charges, which are reviewed each year in September.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the Cemetery charges for FY2023/24 are not recalculated, and the fees agreed by Full Council on 26/09/22 (Min. 862) remain until 31/03/24, and the fees for FY2024/25 are charged as agreed by the Finance & Policy Committee on 15/09/23 (Min. 591).

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the Internal Audit Report 2023/24, Visit 1 of 3, and the draft Management responses, as presented, are approved and adopted.

1234. To receive and consider a Health and Safety Report.

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The report was noted.

1235. To receive and consider reports from sub-committees and task and finish groups, as follows:

a) Five Year Action Plan Sub-committee

Cllr Harris reported that there has been no meeting, however work continues.

b) Sports and Leisure Panel

There has been no meeting.

c) D-Day 80th Anniversary Task and Finish Group

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix D](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that a virement of £172 is made from Budget No. 5421 GP Projects – King Charles III Coronation May 2023 to Budget No. 5422 D-Day 80th Anniversary.

1236. To receive and consider reports from outside bodies, if available:

a) Town Meadow Group (Cllr Toye)

Cllr Toye reported that the Town Meadow Group will shortly be arranging a meeting to consider the way forward for the group. Cllr Toye will report back as soon as any further information is available.

In accordance with the council's policy, an application from Gillingham Live had been submitted for an event on the Town Meadow. The information had been circulated prior to the meeting.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the application is deferred until further information is obtained from the applicant.

b) Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Cllr B von Clemens)

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix E](#)

The report was noted.

c) Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils (DAPTC) Larger Town meetings (Cllr B von Clemens).

There has been no meeting.

d) Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils (DAPTC) Northern Area meetings (Cllr Cullingford and Cllr Weeks)

The has been no meeting.

e) Gillingham Transport Forum (Cllr B von Clemens)

The has been no meeting.

f) Gillingham Youth Centre Management Committee (Cllr B von Clemens)

Cllr B von Clemens reported that there has been no meeting, however he was pleased to report that applications have been received for the position of Youth Leader.

g) Blackmore Vale Community Rail Partnership (Cllr Walden)

The has been no meeting.

1237. To consider and agree the five free parking days for Gillingham in 2024.

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix F](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the 2024 free car parking days are allocated to 8th June, 22nd June and 5th October.

Cllr von Clemens abstained from voting.

1238. To receive and consider a draft calendar of meetings for Civic Year 2024/25.

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix G](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the draft calendar of meetings for the Civic Year 2024/25, as presented, is approved.

1239. To receive and consider a report on the Christmas opening hours 2024.

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix H](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the Town Council is closed on 27, 30 and 31 December 2024

1240. To review and consider the following draft policy:

a) Room Hire Policy

A draft policy had been circulated prior to the meeting.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the Room Hire Policy is approved and adopted.

1241. To consider expanding the town council's social media presence to include LinkedIn and X.

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix I](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to defer this item until the new council term.

1242. To receive and consider a report on the town's festive lights.

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix J](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that a maximum of 3 artificial 4ft trial Christmas trees are purchased from budget no. 5407 at a cost not to exceed £200 and are presented to council for consideration.

1243. To receive and note a report on the Mayor and Deputy Mayor's civic activities.

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix K](#)

The report was noted.

1244. To receive and note reports from Dorset Councillors, if available.

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix L](#)

The report was noted.

Cllr Pothecary informed the meeting that there is a new grant scheme funded by Dorset Council aimed at supporting local communities to plant and care for trees in their area. More information is available at [Dorset Community Tree Fund](#)

Cllr Potheary informed the meeting that Dorset Council are asking residents to give their views on the Local Transport Plan 4 Survey. The survey will close on 3rd March 2024. Further information is available here [Local Transport Plan 4 \(LTP4\) - Dorset Council](#).

1245. To receive matters pertinent to this meeting.

- a. Cllr Potheary stated that she was pleased to see the 20mph signage for the High Street had recently been improved.
- b. The Chairman reminded members of the forthcoming information events for prospective new councillors.
- c. The Chairman informed members that a celebratory memorial service for the late David Milsted, past Mayor and Freeman of Gillingham, will be held at The British Legion in Gillingham on Saturday 17th February – doors will open at 3.30pm for a 4pm service.

The meeting closed at 8.18pm

Full Council – 22 January 2024

Minute no. 1231

Gillingham Town Council
Bank payments £10,000 and over - November 2023

Supplier	Date	Details	Amount paid (including VAT where applicable)
Transfer of funds to investment account	22/11/2023	CCLA (New PSDF acct)	£ 245,000.00
		Total	£245,000.00

Bank payments £10,000 and over - December 2023

Supplier	Date	Details	Amount paid (including VAT where applicable)
Avon Valley Motor Group	18/12/2023	Purchase of used Peugeot E Expert van (and part ex of old Partner van)	£ 27,650.00
		Total	£ 27,650.00

Gillingham Town Council**Property Management Sub-committee Report One of Two****Author: Julie Hawkins, Town Clerk****Background**

On 11th October 2023 an Extraordinary Full Council meeting was held to consider The replacement of the roofs and installation of PV panels at Roman Court Workshops.

A full report was presented to the Extraordinary meeting which can be viewed [here](#). The report confirmed that the town council currently has £61,797 available towards the project.

The council agreed a tender document and timetable of work and resolved to seek The approval of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to apply for a Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loan of £90,000.

On 20th November 2023 borrowing approval was received, authorising the Council To borrow funds up to £90,000; therefore, a total of £151,797 is available to fund the project.

In accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 the opportunity to tender Was advertised on the Government Contracts Finder Portal and a total of seven Tender submissions were received by the closing date of Friday 5th January 2024.

The Tender Board met on Monday 8th January to open envelopes and start the Evaluation process. Due to the volume of information provided it was necessary to hold an additional meeting on Wednesday 17th January. The following were in attendance at the meetings:

Cllr John Kilcourse (Lead Member), Cllr Graham Bashford, Cllr Paul Harris and Cllr Graham Poulter, the Town Clerk, Works Manager and Assistant Town Clerk (17th January only).

Tenders were evaluated in accordance with the details specified in the tender document. It should be noted that the council does not bind itself to accept the lowest, or indeed any, of the tenders submitted.

Each tender submission was scrutinised, and company information was check with Companies House.

The following quotations were received and evaluated:

Item	Company 1	Company 2	Company 3	Company 4	Company 5	Company 6	Company 7
Scaffolding	£118,236.00	£9,960.00	£22,497.20	£10,076.40	£138,300.00	£84,953.80	£37,453.75
Asbestos Removal	£28,595.00	£16,896.50	£11,585.20	£19,127.99	£69,469.00	£15,479.00	£59,327.50
Re-roofing	£111,455.00	£86,258.24	£48,556.00	£105,252.03	£94,700.00	£94,071.05	£127,255.00
PV Panels	£49,229.00	£24,642.13	£33,610.00	£32,351.46	£92,000.00	£23,747.82	£39,240.50
Additional costs						£7,217.26	
Total Cost	£307,515.00	£137,756.87	£116,248.40	£166,807.88	£394,469.00	£225,468.93	£263,276.75
Over-cost for the provision of battery storage	£68,497.00	----	£8,100.00	----	£20,000.00	£21,929.32	----

Members agreed that a recommendation should be made to Full Council that Company 3 is contracted to carry out the work at Roman Court Workshop as specified in the tender document at a cost not to exceed £133,700 (£116,248.40 plus 15% contingency) for the following reasons:

- Contractor 3 has satisfied the tender board as to the knowledge, understanding and compliance with health and safety regulations as detailed in the tender document.
- Contractor 3 has satisfied the tender board with regards to their ability to carry out the tasks set out in the specification.
- Contractor 3 has the relevant training and qualifications to carry out the tasks.
- Contractor 3 holds MCS (Microgeneration Certificate Scheme) certification and will deal with Distribution Network Operators application on behalf of the council.
- Contractor 3 has adequate public and product liability insurance.
- Contractor 3 has provided all the necessary documentation.
- Contractor 3 has provided suitable and sufficient references which have been followed up with a satisfactory result.
- Contractor 3 has carried out a site visit to Roman Court.
- Contractor 3 is able to carry out the work specified within the required timescale and within budget.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **That Company 3 is contracted to carry out the work at Roman Court Workshop at a cost not to exceed £133,700 to be funded from the £90,000 loan and Budget No. 7211.**
- **That the Responsible Financial Officer is authorised to draw down the £90,000 loan at the appropriate time.**
- **That the Town Clerk is authorised to instruct a Building Control Officer to carry out all the necessary works in line with the Building Regulations at a cost not to exceed £600 to be funded from Budget No. 7211**

Internal Audit Report 2023/24

Author: R Darkin-Miller

Introduction

This report contains a note of the audit recommendations made to Gillingham Town Council following the carrying out of internal audit testing on site on the 13th December 2023 with some remote testing.

The audit work has been carried out in accordance with the 2014 Appendix 9 of the 'Governance and Accountability for Local Councils: A Practitioners' Guide', as amended by the later IA sections of the AGAR.

An internal audit covers the review of the operation of the Council's internal control environment. It is not designed to review and give full assurance over every transaction carried out by the Council. Instead it enables the auditor, following the sample testing of a number of different types of transaction, to give an opinion as to whether or not the control objectives are being achieved across a range of financial and governance systems.

Audit Opinion

As this audit report is an interim one, no audit opinion is offered at this stage.

The report issued after the final visit for 2023/24 (which will be in May or June 2024) will contain the audit opinion for the year.

The following areas were reviewed during this audit visit:

1. Proper Book-keeping
2. Risk Management
3. Income
4. Exemption (confirmed not covered)
5. Transparency
6. Public Rights
7. Publication

Audit Recommendations

Recommendations made during the audit are shown in appendix one to this report.

Recommendations are graded as follows:

Rating	Significance
High	Either a critical business risk is not being adequately addressed or there is substantial non-conformity with regulations and accepted standards.
Medium	Either a key business risk is not being adequately addressed or there is a degree of non-conformity with regulations and accepted standards.
Low	Either minor non-conformity with procedure or opportunity to improve working practices further.

The number of recommendations made at this audit visit, and their priority, are summarised in the following table:

Rating	Number
High	0
Medium	1
Low	3
Information	0
TOTAL	4

I would like to thank Julie Hawkins, Town Clerk; Tina Wright, Responsible Financial Officer; and Jill Ezzard, Assistant Town Clerk for their assistance during this audit.

3.1 – Amendments required to minutes and ensure all minutes are on the website	I reviewed the minutes to confirm that there was no unusual financial activity. I found no such activity but did note that: <u>Council</u> Minutes 24/07/23 and 25/09/23 were not on the website	L	The Minutes have been added to the website	ATC	Completed
	Minute 1018 refers in error to the meeting of 28/03/23 (it should be 27/03/23)		The date has been amended on the website copy. The Minute file copy has been amended and initialled by the Mayor	TC	Completed
	Minute 1103b 24/07/23 refers to the adoption of the Planning Committee minutes of 26/06/22 (it should be 26/06/23).		The date has been amended on the website copy. The Minute file copy has been amended and initialled by the Mayor	TC	Completed
	Minute 1162d 23/10/23 refers in error to the HR meeting of 16/10/23 (it should be 15/10/23)		The HR meeting was held on Monday 16 October 2023 so the Minutes are correct.	TC	N/A
	<u>General Purposes</u> Minutes 07/08/23 were not on the website		The Minutes have been added to the website	ATC	Completed
	Only the front page of the minutes of 05/06/23 were signed		The Chairman of the GP Committee will sign the Minutes dated 05.06.23	TC	26/01/24
	Minute 375 of the meeting of 03/07/23 refers in error to the minutes of 06/06/23 (it should be 05/06/23)		The date has been amended on the website copy. The Minute file copy will be amended and initialled by the Chairman of the GP Committee	TC	26/01/24
	<u>Planning</u> Minutes 11/04/23, 24/04/23, 10/07/23, 14/08/23 were not on the website		The Minutes have been added to the website	ATC	Completed

	<p>There were two copies of the signed minutes of 23/10/23 on file</p> <p>The Assistant Town Clerk clarified that all of the minutes were on the Council's website, but that the set noted as missing in the list above were only added to the Council's calendar and not to the list of agenda papers and minutes. This was corrected during the audit visit.</p> <p>I recommend that the remaining items noted above are reviewed and any necessary corrections made.</p>		One set of Minutes has been removed.	TC	Completed
5.1 – Ensure older debt collected	<p>I checked to see that all income had been collected. I found that one debtor owed £27.20 of debt over 60 days old (£43.52 in total). The RFO noted that the customer is a slow payer and that copy invoices have been supplied and are awaiting approval.</p> <p>I recommend that the monies are collected as soon as possible in order to ensure that all income is collected.</p>	L	The RFO will continue to chase payment.	RFO	31/01/24
5.2 – Ensure correct prices charged as per Council minutes	<p>I checked to see that prices charged agreed with those set by the Council. I found that the 22/23 cemetery prices were not increased as per the Finance and Policy Committee meeting of 20/09/21, and that as a result the 23/24 prices (which were based on the prior year prices increased by 10% and rounded up to the nearest pound) were calculated on the incorrect base. This has resulted in a small undercharge being levied on 22/23 and 23/24 cemetery charges. I also found that the 22/23 price for the Civil Weddings was applied for 6/14 of the wedding hires for the</p>	M	An annual reminder has been set in the online calendar to prompt a review of the fees and charges schedule at the end of March each year in order to ensure that all Council changes are captured and the fees and charges schedule correctly updated and published on the Council's website and distributed to all staff	ATC	Completed

	<p>financial year to date, resulting in an undercharge of £60.</p> <p>The Assistant Town Clerk has put an entry in the online calendar to prompt a review of the fees and charges schedule at the end of March each year in order to ensure that all Council changes are captured and the fees and charges schedule correctly updated and published on the Council's website and distributed to all staff. This should help to ensure that the correct prices are charged in future.</p> <p>I recommend that Council considers whether the 23/24 charges should be recalculated based on the 22/23 as agreed by Council rather than the amount actually charged; and that Council staff update the schedule of fees and charges each year as planned.</p>		<p>Income from the Cemetery is calculated to ensure that expenditure is covered. The calculations for FY2023/24 were calculated on this basis; therefore, subject to agreement by Full Council on 22/01/24, I recommend that the charges for FY2023/24 are not recalculated, and the fees agreed by Full Council on 26/09/22 (Min. 862) remain until 31/03/24 and the fees for FY2024/25 are charged as agreed by the Finance & Policy Committee on 15/09/23 (Min. 591).</p>	TC	22/01/24
5.3 – Approve price agreed for bin collections	<p>I found that, during the year, the Council started to make bin collections for one bin on a piece of land currently owned by a developer but which is due to be transferred to the Council in due course. The price is based on the per bin charge applied by Dorset Council.</p> <p>I recommend that Council approve the price charged in order to ensure that Council has approved all fees and charges levied.</p> <p>CONSIDER DELEGATION</p>	L	<p>That the council resolves to set a charge for emptying litter bins at £5.44 per bin and this charge is added to the schedule of charges which are reviewed each year in September.</p>	TC	22/01/24

Full Council meeting – 22 January 2024

Minute no. 1235c

Gillingham Town Council

D-Day 80th Anniversary Task & Finish Group Report

Author: Cllr Donna Toye

Meetings took place on 18 December 2023, 4 January and 15 January 2024

Present: Cllr Donna Toye (Lead member), Cllr Mick Hill, Cllr John Kilcourse (*not present on 18 December*), Cllr Roger Weeks, Serena Burgess (Projects & HR Admin Officer) (*not present on 4 January*), Julie Hawkins (Town Clerk) (*present on 4 January only*)

Schedule of National Events – 6 June 2024

- 8.00 am - the D-Day 80 Proclamation (*in Gillingham this will be read by the Mayor by the Oak tree in the High Street*)
- 11.00 am - D-Day Heroes Poem - to be undertaken by Schools (*not a public event*)
- 6.30 pm - Ringing Out for Peace
- 9.15 pm – Beacon lighting, alongside the International Tribute (*in Gillingham this will take place at Hardings Park*)

In support of the events, National Fish and Chip Day will take place on this day.

Gillingham Events

Plans are underway to mirror the national events.

In addition, discussions have started with the Town Band and schools with a view to including a 'singalong' of songs popular in the 1940s.

Budget

Budget No. 5422 D-Day 80th Anniversary FY 2024/25 - £250. In addition, the following virement is requested:

- £172 from Budget No. 5421 GP Projects – King Charles III Coronation May 2023

RECOMMENDATION

That a virement of £172 is made from Budget No. 5421 GP Projects – King Charles III Coronation May 2023 to Budget No. 5422 D-Day 80th Anniversary.

Gillingham Chamber of Commerce and Industry Report

Author: Cllr Barry von Clemens

Date of meeting: Wednesday 10 January 2024

The following points were discussed and agreed upon at the meeting:

- The Treasure presented the financial statement and answered questions from the committee members.
- The chairman expressed his appreciation for the efforts and contributions of everyone who participated in the Festive lights evening.
- The committee decided to set the date for the 2024 Christmas event as Saturday 7 Dec and to start planning the activities and logistics.
- The committee agreed to apply for the road closure and to contact the local schools and youth groups to inform them of the event and invite them to join.
- The committee proposed to launch a festive windows competition in 2024 to encourage local businesses on the high street to decorate their windows and create a festive atmosphere.
- The committee reviewed the current membership status and discussed ways to attract new members and retain existing ones.
- The committee brainstormed ideas for future events and explored possible collaborations with other organizations and stakeholders in 2024.
- The meeting closed.

Gillingham Town Council**Report on Dorset Councils Free Parking Policy****Author: Jill Ezzard, Assistant Town Clerk****1. Background - Information received from Dorset Councils**

Dorset Councils will give a total of **6 free parking days** in Dorset Council car parks each year. This is made up of the following:

- At the request of the Town or Parish Council free parking in all Dorset Council car parks for **four** days each year, for events which generate valuable footfall for that town. These four days cannot be used in December.
- At the request of the Town or Parish Council free parking in all Dorset Council Town Centre car parks for that town on **one** weekday in December
- Free parking in all Dorset Council Town Centre car parks on **Small Business Saturday** in December. In 2023 it was the first Saturday in the month. We have not received confirmation from Dorset Council which Saturday in December 2024, this will be.

No other days in December will be considered unless the Town Council or Local BID is willing to meet the cost of the lost income at an amount to be calculated by the Council's parking team based on average weekend costs for that time of year.

2. Proposal

The Council should consider the following town events, for the 2024 allocation of three free car parking days:

1. Saturday 8th June – Gillingham in Gear
2. Saturday 22nd June – Gillingham Live
3. Saturday 5th October – Annual Carnival

One day will remain available to the Town Council, should a suitable large event require free parking between now and 31st November 2024, and one weekday in December is also unallocated.

Recommendations

- **That the 2024 free car parking days are allocated to 8th June, 22nd June and 5th October.**

**GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL
SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS – 1st April 2024 - 31st May 2025**

**Key: ATA = Annual Town Assembly
MM = Mayor Making Ceremony**

**AC = Annual Council
NM = No Meeting**

**BM = Budget Meeting
* Meeting on a Tuesday after Bank Holiday**

Meeting	April 24	May 24	June 24	July 24	Aug 24	Sept 24	Oct 24
General Purposes	2*		3	1	5	2	7
Planning	8		10	8	12	9	14
HR	15	20	17	15	19	16	21
Finance	15	20	17	15	19	16	21
Planning	22	28*	24	22	27*	23	28
Full Council	22	28* 13 AC 22 MM	24	22	27*	23	28

Meeting	Nov 24	Dec 24	Jan 25	Feb 25	Mar 25	April 25	May 25
General Purposes	4	2	13	3	3	7	6*
Planning	11	9	13	10	10	14	12
HR	18	NM	20	17	17	22*	19
Finance	18	NM	NM	17	17	22*	19
Planning	25	NM	27	24	24	28	28*
Full Council	25	9	20 BM 27	24	24	28 16 ATA	27*AC 28MM

Full Council – 22 January 2024

Minute no. 1239

Gillingham Town Council

Christmas Closure 2024

Author: Julie Hawkins, Town Clerk

Background

Over the Christmas period, employees are contractually entitled to two additional statutory days leave to be taken on days determined by the Council.

Contract wording:

Your holiday entitlement is 23 days per annum plus the normal bank/public holidays. In addition, you are entitled to 2 statutory days to be taken during the Christmas period, as determined by the Council. You will be required to use holiday/statutory days when the Council is closed between Christmas and New Year.

Christmas 2024

The following is proposed:

Date	Status
<i>Wednesday 25 December</i>	<i>Non-working day - Public holiday</i>
<i>Thursday 26 December</i>	<i>Non-working day - Public holiday</i>
Friday 27 December	Non-working day - Statutory leave
Monday 30 December	Non-working day - Statutory leave
Tuesday 31 December	Annual leave
<i>Wednesday 1 January 2025</i>	<i>Non-working day - Public holiday</i>

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **That the Town Council is closed on 27, 30 and 31 December 2024**

Gillingham Town Council**Report on the Town Council's Social Media Platforms****Author: Julie Hawkins, Town Clerk**

The town council's social media platforms currently include Facebook, Instagram and You Tube. These platforms provide efficient and effective ways to communicate with members of the public.

The town council's Facebook page is used on a regular basis, has 1,600 followers and in the past week has achieved a reach of 13,300.

The town council's Instagram page has a much lower reach with just 334 followers.

The town council's You Tube page is rarely used and has very few followers, however, a link to videos can be shared on the other social media platforms. The You Tube channel has not been promoted, as staff have needed time to become competent in using the system. Videos on You Tube have generally been viewed less than 40 times each, whereas some videos on Facebook have been viewed hundreds of times. The video of the Royal Proclamation on Facebook has been viewed 1,400 times and in 2020 our thanks to the community volunteers was viewed 4,500 times via Facebook.

Many councils also have a presence on X (formerly known as Twitter). X serves as a powerful platform for transparent communication, enabling councils to engage directly with residents in real-time. Through tweets and updates, the council will be able to provide crucial information, public announcements and emergency alerts. The platform's wide-reaching nature will also help the council to reach a different audience and connect with people who are often more challenging to engage with through other means.

LinkedIn is primarily centred around professional networking. Being a professional platform, it will offer the council the opportunity to connect with key stakeholders, businesses, and professionals within the community. Additionally, LinkedIn will be valuable for sharing job opportunities.

Both platforms are considered to be valuable tools and will be helpful with future consultations including the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan.

Recommendations

- **That X and LinkedIn are added to the council's social media platforms and are administered in accordance with the council's Communications and Media Policy.**

Gillingham Town Council

Festive Lighting

Author: Jill Ezzard, Assistant Town Clerk

Each year the Town Council purchases 100, 4ft Christmas trees for the Town Centre. In 2023 the cost per tree was £12.00 + VAT

It takes 4 members of staff, 4 days to attach the strings of lights to the trees and another 4 days to remove the lights after Christmas. The trees are then taken to the Garden of Remembrance where they are chipped later in the year.

The grounds team would like councillors to consider purchasing artificial Christmas trees. These trees will last many years and will only need to be strung with lights once, saving man hours each year and ultimately reducing the Festive Lights budget once enough trees have been purchased.

The 4ft artificial trees suitable for outdoor use, vary in cost between £20 - £60 + VAT. It is proposed to purchase several sample trees to establish usability and quality. Once a suitable tree has been identified a bulk purchase of trees can be made using Festive Lights Budget no. 5407 not to exceed £1700.

Recommendation

That artificial 4ft Christmas trees are purchased from budget no. 5407 at a cost not to exceed £1,700.

Full Council – 22 January 2024

Minute no. 1243

Gillingham Town Council

Mayor's Report

13 December 2023 to 15 January 2024

Date	Event	Comments
15 Dec	Gillingham Arts Workshop	A lovely evening at the library where the Gillingham Arts Workshop entertained us with some fabulous Christmas carols and a mummers play.
17 Dec	Civic Carol Service	It was great to welcome the Deputy Lieutenant, High Sheriff and fellow Mayors to join our wonderful town for our Christmas carol service.
9 Jan	Mark Hebditch Thank You reception	I was very happy to host a drinks reception to mark one of our Freemans standing down from many of the community organisations that he has chaired, to thank him for all he has done to make our fabulous town a much better place to live.

Full Council – 22 January 2024

Minute no. 1244

Gillingham Dorset Council Report – January, 2024

Author: Cllr Belinda Ridout

Wishing you a Happy New Year!!

Household Support Fund (HSF) re-opened for applications on Wednesday, 3rd January 2024 for low-income households in the Dorset Council area. The support will be in the form of supermarket vouchers. Citizens Advice allocate this fund on behalf of Dorset Council. Please make sure you have not applied for a previous HSF payment since July 2023, as further vouchers cannot be issued. The application form can be found at <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/household-support-fund> or call Customer Services on 01305 221000.

Cost of living help – a reminder that there is free, confidential and impartial support available on money worries, accessing affordable food, housing and employment rights and looking after your mental health. Dorset Council works with Dorset Citizen’s Advice to offer this support. Call Freephone North Dorset Citizens Advice, 0800 144 8848 or visit to book an appointment at 4 Newbury Court, Gillingham, SP8 4QX on Monday’s and Thursday’s, 10am to 12pm, 1pm to 3pm, or Tuesday’s and Wednesday’s, 10am to 12pm.

Dog related Public spaces Protection Order (PSPO) - a new PSPO across the Dorset Council area came into force 1st January, 2024 for three years. This helps to keep specific beaches and open spaces free from dog fouling and safe to use by all. Insisting that dogs are kept on leads in particular areas means that owners have adequate control over their dogs and do not cause issues with other people or dogs. The order is in response to extensive consultation gathering views from everyone, with a total of 4,221 responses, 80% from local residents, 62% of which came from dog owners.

Planning for Climate Change - Dorset Council has recently published three guidance documents:

- Planning for climate change: Interim guidance and position statement.
- Sustainability statement and checklist for planning applications.
- Listed buildings and energy efficiency: what you can do for climate change.

The guidance can be viewed on the Dorset Council website at: Planning for climate change – Dorset Council.

The sustainability statement and checklist will come into effect from 15th January, 2024. This follows a consultation from April to June last year, which contributed to amendments to the guidance documents.

Council Tax – Dorset Council has published its initial proposals to deliver a balanced budget for 2024-25. Proposals will ensure frontline council services continue to be provided to residents and businesses. Dorset Council provides around 450 different services to just under 380,000 residents, including adults and children’s social care, road maintenance, waste collection, housing support and libraries.

Around 60% of the budget will support vulnerable children, families, older people and those with disabilities. The proposals would see an increase in council tax next year by just under 3% and to levy the adult social care precept of 2%.

The increase would be equivalent to £1.82 extra per week for a Band D property. The proposals are to be considered by the two scrutiny committees, (as a member of the People & Health Scrutiny Committee, we are reviewing this on 12th January), and then submitted to Cabinet with any recommendations, going to Full Council in February for final approval.

It would appear that the recently announced £64bn funding boost to local authorities with the Local Government Finance Settlement 2024-25 is not quite so generous as it sounds. In reality and much of what the government refers to as “Core Spending Power” for councils is in fact, the power to increase council tax locally by up to 5% to fund council services. The settlement does not provide specific funding to address significant cost and demand pressures on the council budget, such as for social care and children’s services, like many councils across the country.

Is your gas hob safe? Ward Councillors have been asked to share this alert with as many residents as possible.

Dorset Council Trading Standards is helping the Office of Product Safety and Standards to raise awareness about checking if your gas hob needs work to make it safe. It has been found that 12 UK gas hob manufacturers may have a fault in their gas hob elbow joints, potentially causing a serious risk of poisoning, burns or gas explosion and/or fire.

Please check your gas hobs, the companies involved are Apelson Appliances UK Ltd, Buy It Direct Ltd, Glen Dimplex Home Appliances, Kingfisher International Products Ltd, Lancaster Holdings Ltd, Maurice Lay Distributors Ltd, Midea UK Ltd, Product Care Trading Ltd, Samsung Electronics, Shop Direct Home Shopping Ltd, Stax Trade Centres Ltd and The Wright Buy Ltd.

The companies will visit every home to make affected hobs safe. Information about the brands and models are available via the companies’ websites. Should your model be included or if you are not sure of your gas hob model, please contact the Freephone numbers online for each manufacturer, where an advisor can assist with checking your model and providing further information between 8am and 6pm 7 days a week. Alternatively go to <https://gashobrepair.mktpoint.com> to enter your details.

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For those residents not on line, who have important questions or concerns, call Dorset Council on 01305 221000, 8am to 8pm, 7 days a week or email:
communityresponse@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk.
Dorset Council website: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk>