



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 26 February 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 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
3 members of the public

Via MS Teams:

Michael Streeter, Gillingham and Shaftesbury News
Sara Danish-Pour, Customer Services Officer & Mayor's Secretary

Prior to the start of the meeting, there was a presentation by James Passmore, Chief Executive of the Pickwick Academy Trust.

1250. Public Participation.

There was no public participation.

1251. To receive apologies for absence

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

1252. Declarations of Interest: Members are required to comply with the requirements of Section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 disclosable pecuniary interests.

Cllr B von Clemens declared a personal interest in agenda item 12a and agenda item 19 as a non-active member of the Gillingham, Mere and Shaftesbury Lions Club.

1253. To receive questions pertaining to the previous minutes.

There were no questions.

1254. To approve the Minutes as a true and accurate record of the Full Council meeting held on Monday 22nd January 2024 and the Extraordinary Full Council meeting held on Monday 12th February 2024.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 22nd January 2024 and the Extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 12th February 2024 as a true and accurate record. The Chairman signed the minutes.

1255. To receive, consider and adopt the following standing committee reports:

a) General Purposes Committee meeting held on Monday 5 February 2024.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the General Purposes meeting held on Monday 5 February 2024 are approved and adopted.

b) Planning Committee meetings held on Monday 22 January 2024 and Monday 12 February 2024.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on Monday 22 January 2024 and Monday 12 February 2024 are approved and adopted.

c) Human Resources Committee meeting held on Monday 5 February 2024.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on Monday 5 February 2024 are approved and adopted.

d) Finance and Policy Committee meeting held on Monday 19 February 2024.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee meeting held on Monday 19 February 2024 are approved and adopted.

1256. To approve payments of £10,000 and over.

There were no payments of £10,000 and over.

1257. To receive requests for virements of budgets.

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

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that a virement of £2,162 is made from Budget No. 7304 Vehicle Insurance to Budget No. 7310 Horticultural Vehicles and Machinery – Service and Repairs

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that a virement of £700 is made from Budget No. 7611 Health and Safety to Budget No. 5001 Cemetery - Maintenance

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that a virement of £500 is made from Budget No. 7611 Health and Safety to Budget No. 5061 Estate Management – General Maintenance and Repairs

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that a virement of £500 is made from Budget No. 7611 Health and Safety to Budget No. 5458 General Purposes costs - Waste Disposal

1258. To consider and agree the appointment of an internal auditor.

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

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that Contractor B is awarded the tender to supply internal audit provision for FY2024/25, FY2025/26, FY2026/27, FY2027/28 and FY2028/29.

1259. To receive and consider a report regarding investment opportunities.

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

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the £171,000 currently held in the NS&I account is moved to the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund Account, subject to an annual review.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the RFO carries out further investigations with regards to other investment opportunities and reports back to the council at the earliest opportunity.

1260. To receive and consider a Health and Safety Report.

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. The report was noted.

1261. To receive and consider reports from sub-committees and task and finish groups, as follows:

a) Estate Management Sub-committee

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

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that subject to the approval by the Environment Agency a post and rail fence is erected at Rolls Bridge at a cost not to exceed £950.00 to be funded from budget no. 7611 Health and Safety.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that play equipment is purchased from Company A at a cost of £3,767.64 + VAT and funded from Budget No. 5321 King John Road Play Equipment.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that a virement of £467.64 is made from Budget No. 5301 Play Area General Maintenance to Budget No. 5320 King John Road Play Equipment.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that play equipment is purchased from Company A at a cost of £9,109.83 + VAT and funded from Budget No. 5323 Weatherbury Road Play Area.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that a virement of £2,288.83 is made from Budget No. 5301 Play Area General Maintenance to Budget No. 5323 Weatherbury Road Play Area.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the fence around the attenuation pond at Ham Farm is repaired and new panels and posts are purchased as required at a cost not to exceed £2450 + VAT to be funded from budget no. 7611 Health and Safety.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the Oak tree donated by the Gillingham, Mere and Shaftesbury Lions Club and Gillingham Rotary Club will be planted in accordance with the Tree Donation Policy at Gyllas Green in Gillingham.

Cllr von Clemens abstained.

b) Property Management Sub-committee

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

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that company A is contracted to hard surface the Wedding Garden at the Town Hall at a cost of £4,570.00 plus VAT funded from Budget no. 7058.

Cllr Toye abstained.

c) Council Agreements and Contracts Sub-committee

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

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to defer the items relating to Withywood and Millenium Wood back to the Agreements and Contracts sub-committee for further investigation.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the tender document for the cleaning of council buildings, as presented, is approved for circulation.

d) Five Year Action Plan Sub-committee

The scheduled meeting could not be held as it was not quorate.

e) Sports and Leisure Sub-committee

There has been no meeting.

f) D-Day Task and Finish Group

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

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that Allan Bishop is co-opted as a member of the Task and Finish Group to represent the Gillingham Branch of the Royal British Legion.

1262. To receive and consider reports from outside bodies, if available:

a) Town Meadow Group (Cllr Toye)

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

The report was noted.

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

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

The report was noted.

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

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

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that Gillingham Town Council contributes £120.00 to DAPTC towards the cost of the 2024 election videos, to be funded from budget 7607, Subscriptions.

Cllr Harris voted against.

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)

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

The report was noted.

f) Blackmore Vale Community Rail Partnership (Cllr Walden)

Cllr Walden did not attend the last meeting.

1263. To review and adopt the Council's Risk Management Strategy and Assessment

A draft Risk Management Assessment and Risk Management Strategy had been circulated prior to the meeting.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the Council's Risk Management Strategy, is approved and adopted.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the Council's Risk Management Assessment, as presented, is approved and adopted.

1264. To receive and consider requests for free room hire.

A request had been circulated prior to the meeting.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that free room hire is granted to Walkers are Welcome not to exceed on session per week in the Town Bridge Office, for the period 1st April 2024 until 31st March 2025.

1265. To receive and consider requests for the use of Gillingham Town Meadow in accordance with the Town Council's Hire of Council Land Policy.

A request had been circulated prior to the meeting.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to grant Charles Coles Family Funfairs the use of the Town Meadow from 22nd April 2024 to 29th April 2024 inclusive, at a total cost of £322.46, including the relevant music licence.

1266. To review and consider the following draft policy:

a) Hire of Council Land Policy

A draft policy had been circulated prior to the meeting.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the Hire of Council Land Policy is approved and adopted.

1267. To consider and approve the purchase of artificial Christmas trees.

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

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that artificial 4ft Christmas trees are purchased from Budget no. 5407 at a cost not to exceed £1,700.

Cllr Pothecary voted against and Cllr Hill abstained from voting.

1268. To receive and consider a request from Gillingham Rotary Club and Gillingham, Mere and Shaftesbury Lions Club to suspend the town council's Bench and Tree Donation Policy in order to place a plaque against a donated tree.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that permission to place a plaque next to the Tree donated by Gillingham Rotary Club and Gillingham, Mere and Shaftesbury Lions Club at Gyllas Green is refused.

Cllr Pothecary and Cllr von Clemens abstained from voting.

1269. To receive and note a timetable for the forthcoming elections.

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

The timetable was noted.

1270. 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 N](#)

The report was noted.

1271. To receive and note reports from Dorset Councillors, if available.

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

The report was noted.

Cllr Pothecary reminded members of the Local Transport Plan survey, drop-in event at Chantry Community Office in Gillingham on Thursday 29th February, 10.00am to 4.00pm.

1272. To receive and consider a report regarding the purchase of an electric utility vehicle.

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

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that a virement of £19,472 is made from Budget No. 8003 (Accruals) - New Horticultural Vehicles and Cutting Decks to Budget No. 7360 - New Horticultural Vehicles and Cutting Decks.

Cllr Hill and Cllr Toye voted against.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that a virement of £2,893 is made from Budget No. 6044 - Discretionary Powers – CCTV Cameras, to Budget No. 7360 - New Horticultural Vehicles and Cutting Decks.

Cllr Hill and Cllr Toye voted against. Cllr Potheary abstained from voting.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the Hisun Sector is purchased from Dealer No. 3, at a cost of £22,365.00 + VAT funded from Budget No. 7360 - New Horticultural Vehicles and Cutting Decks.

Cllr Hill and Cllr Toye voted against, and Cllr Potheary abstained from voting.

1273. To receive and consider a report from the Allotments and Burials Subcommittee.

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

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that, following an assessment of available plots in Gillingham Cemetery, with immediate effect, no new burial plots are provided at Gillingham Cemetery unless the plots have already been purchased and the owners hold a grant of exclusive right of burial.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the amendments to the Cemetery Regulations 6.3, 6.4 and 7.7 are approved and adopted.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the Cemetery Fees and Charges 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025 document is approved and adopted

1274. To receive matters pertinent to this meeting.

The Town Clerk referred to the grant application submitted to Dorset Council (UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund) for funding towards improvements to the Town Meadow, and explained that she has been advised to re-submit the application in the next round of funding.

The meeting closed at 8.27pm.

Full Council – 26 February 2024

Minute no. 1257

**Gillingham Town Council
Virement Requests
Author: Tina Wright RFO**

1. Overspend on Budget code 7310 Horticultural vehicles & Machinery – Service & Repairs

Budget Line 7310 covers the cost of repairs and parts for the Council's Horticultural Equipment & Vehicles.

The budget for this financial year is £12,500 and, since 1st January to time of writing, we have incurred further net costs in excess of £4,195 which has resulted in an overspend of £695.00 (at end of Q3 23-24 expenditure was £9,000).

Recent purchases have included new tyres, service parts, replacement fuel hose and pump, flails, parts and repairs for the mowers. The costs incurred have been necessary to maintain the equipment so these can remain operational.

As insufficient funds are currently unavailable in the Horticultural Vehicles - service and repairs budget line, the following virement is requested:

- **Virement request of £2,162 to cover the overspend on Horticultural vehicles and Machinery – service & repairs and to ensure we can order necessary parts as/when required prior to the year end**

The following funds are currently available in the following budgets:

- Budget No. 7304 Vehicle Insurance – current balance - £2,162

There are available funds on the Vehicle Insurance budget line as, prior to setting the budget for this year, the council were advised by the broker that there may be a large increase in the insurance premiums for FY 2023/24. When the fleet insurance was renewed in July 2023 the premium was significantly less than budgeted (£4,393) and therefore the current budget balance is £2,162.

2. Virement request re: budget code 5001 Cemetery – Maintenance, vandalism & spoil heap removal

Earlier this month necessary unforeseen drainage works at the Cemetery was carried out.

Currently there is £377 available on this budget line which will leave a shortfall by the end of the financial year, as we have further spoil removal works to complete at the Cemetery at a cost not to exceed £1,000 (see General Purposes Meeting 8th Jan 24 Min. 427)

As insufficient funds are currently unavailable in Cemetery - Maintenance budget line, the following virement is requested:

- **Virement request of £700 to cover the future spoil removal works – to ensure necessary works can be completed prior to the year end**

The following funds are currently available in the following budgets:

- Budget No. 7611 Health & Safety – current balance £6,722

3. Virement request re: budget code 5061 Estate Management – General Maintenance and Repairs

Currently there is £344 available on this budget line which is likely to leave a shortfall by the end of the financial year. This fiscal year on average approx. £600 per month has been spent on general maintenance. Therefore, the following virement is requested:

- **Virement request of £500 to ensure sufficient funds to cover likely expenditure up to year end**

The following funds are currently available in the following budgets:

- Budget No. 7611 Health and Safety – current balance £6,722

4. Virement request re: budget code 5458 General Purposes costs - Waste disposal

Further to a previous virement approved in the Finance & Policy meeting on 19th February 2024, further costs have been incurred on the Waste Disposal budget line.

Taking into account the aforementioned virement, the budget balance remaining is £150. This will still leave a shortfall by the end of the financial year as the use of a skip is required at a cost of approx. £300 + VAT. Therefore the following virement is requested:

- **Virement request of £500 to ensure sufficient funds to cover use of skip prior to year end**

The following funds are currently available in the following budgets:

- Budget No. 7611 Health & Safety – current balance £6,722

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **That a virement of £2,162 is made from Budget No 7304 Vehicle Insurance to Budget No. 7310 Horticultural vehicles & Machinery – Service & Repairs.**
- **That a virement of £700 is made from Budget No 7611 Health & Safety to Budget No. 5001 Cemetery -Maintenance**
- **That a virement of £500 is made from Budget No 7611 Health & Safety to Budget No. 5061 Estate Management – General Maintenance & Repairs**
- **That a virement of £500 is made from Budget No 7611 Health & Safety to Budget No. 5458 General Purposes costs - Waste disposal**

Full Council – 26 February 2024

Minute no. 1258

Gillingham Town Council
Provision of Internal Audit Services
Author: Julie Hawkins, Town Clerk

As per the Town Council's Financial Regulation, Section 2 Accounting and Audit, there is a requirement for regular internal and external audit. The Town Council's Financial Regulations are available to view on the Council's website [here](#).

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 set out the arrangements for external audit which is currently undertaken by BDO LLP. The town council does not decide the external auditor; however, it is responsible for the internal audit controls.

A detailed and comprehensive specification for the provision of internal audit for the next three years with an option of a further two years was agreed by Full Council on 11 December 2023. Full Council also agreed that Cllr B von Clemens, Cllr Kilcourse and Cllr Weeks should form a tender board to consider the tenders - please refer to Minute no. 1201 [here](#).

The following timetable was agreed by Full Council on 11 December 2023:

Activity	Date
Issue of Invitation to Tender	14 December 2023
Receipt of any queries from prospective tenderers	1 February 2024
Submissions of tenders	14 February 2024 (No later than 12 noon)
Completion of tender evaluation	16 February 2024
Decision on award of contract by Full Council	26 February 2024
Commencement of contract	1 April 2024

Tenders were invited for the provision of internal audit services that:

- meet the requirements for internal audit in 'Governance and Accountability for Local Councils;
- provide internal audit to allow completion of the Annual internal audit report within the Annual Return; and
- carry out an internal audit programme for Local Councils, as appropriate, including (but not limited to):
 - Proper bookkeeping;
 - Payment controls;
 - Risk management arrangement;
 - Budget controls;
 - Income controls;
 - Petty cash controls;
 - Payroll controls;
 - Assets Controls;
 - Bank Reconciliation;
 - Year-end procedures

Two contractors submitted tender documentation which was scrutinised by the Tender Board, Town Clerk and the Responsible Financial Officer.

Both contractors met the requirements as laid out in the tender specification.

CONTRACTOR A

Option One

Contractor A offers the option of a fully remote service which would include two audits, zoom meetings with council staff and two audit reports at a cost of **£1,000**.

Option Two

Contractor A offers the option of one remote interim audit, one in-person audit and two audit reports at a cost of £1,050 plus £70 travelling expenses = **£1,120**.

Option Three

Contractor A offers two in-person audits and two audit reports at a cost of £1,200 plus £140 travelling expenses = **£1,340**.

Additional work would be charged at £65 per hour.

Prices would increase annually in line with the CPI.

Contractor A is a CIPFA¹ qualified accountant with more than 30 years' experience in the public sector, mainly in local government audit, having moved into the Parish and Town Council Sector in the last 5 years. Contractor A is based in Farnham, Surrey and is completely independent of Gillingham Town Council.

CONTRACTOR B

Contractor B would apply a 2.5% discount on their standard hourly rates as the contract is for 3 years or more.

Contractor B offers twenty-two audit hours per year, over three in-person visits plus some remote working at a cost of £954.53 plus £144.18 mileage = **£1,098.71** (including the discount).

The standard rate for additional work is currently £44.50 per hour.

Standard hourly rates would increase by £1.50 per hour in FY 2025/26, 2026/27, 2027/28 and by £2.00 per hour in FY 2028/29.

Mileage rates would increase by 3p per mile in FY 2025/26, 2026/27, 2027/28 and by 4p per hour in FY 2028/29.

¹ Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy

Contractor B is a member firm of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales and holds a practising certificate under the ICAEW² Practice Assurance Scheme. Contractor B is based in Dorchester and is completely independent of Gillingham Town Council.

Conclusion

Following scrutiny of the tender documents, the Tender Board were satisfied that Both Contractors met the requirements detailed in the tender document, as follows:

- Knowledge, understanding and compliance.
- Ability to carry out the tasks.
- Relevant training and qualifications to carry out the tasks.
- Adequate professional indemnity insurance.
- All the necessary documentation was provided.
- Able to carry out the work specified within the required timescale and within budget.

However, the Tender Board recommend that Contractor B is awarded the tender to supply internal audit provision for FY2024/25, FY2025/26, FY2026/27, FY2027/28 and FY2028/29 as they:

- Offer three in-person visits per year.
- Are known to the council and have previously carried out work to a high standard.

RECOMMENDATION:

- **That Contractor B is awarded the tender to supply internal audit provision for FY2024/25, FY2025/26, FY2026/27, FY2027/28 and FY2028/29.**

² The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales

Full Council – 26 February 2024

Minute no. 1259

Gillingham Town Council

Town Council Investment Opportunities

Authors: Tina Wright RFO and Julie Hawkins Town Clerk

Following an internal Audit carried out on 7th June 2023, it was recommended that the Council considers, approves and implements an investment strategy in order to reduce the risk of loss in the event of a bank failure.

An Investment Strategy was approved by the Finance and Policy Committee on 17th July 2023 (Minute 560d).

The Investment Policy states that the Council's investment priorities are:

- the security of its reserves
- adequate liquidity of its investments, and
- the return on investment – the Council will aim to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity.

The Investment Policy states that, for the prudent management of its treasury balances, maintaining sufficient levels of security and liquidity, Gillingham Town Council will use:

- deposits with banks, building societies, local authorities or other public authorities, and
- other approved public sector investment funds.

Currently the Council holds £171,000 in an NS&I Investment Account which has an Interest rate of 1% gross. The Council also has £800,742 in a Lloyds Business Instant Access Account which has an interest rate of 1.30% gross/AER (Annual equivalent rate).

At the Finance and Policy Committee meeting held on 21st August 2023 the following resolutions were agreed at Minute No. 574:

- *It was agreed and RESOLVED that the Council moves £169k from the NS&I Investment Account (Postal) to an NS&I Direct Saver Account.*

- *It was agreed and RESOLVED that the Council moves £245,000 (commuted sum from Aster Homes) from the Lloyds Bank account to a CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund.*

The Council successfully moved £245,000 from the Lloyds Bank Account to a CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund in order to increase the return on investment.

An application was submitted to NS&I for the movement of funds but the application was declined as NS&I are currently not accepting applications from councils.

Several options have been considered; however, investigations have confirmed that some banks and building societies do not comply with the town council's investment policy as ethical banks tend to be unrated.

The interest rate for the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund is currently 5.27%. We recommend that the £171,000 currently held in the NS&I account is moved to the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund subject to an annual review, for the following reasons:

- The interest rate is much higher (there is an annual management charge currently 0.08% per annum).
- CCLA is an organisation who specifically provide fund management options for churches, charities and local authorities by providing specialist investment opportunities for these organisations to use their combined funds to obtain higher returns than those which are currently available on the High Street.
- CCLA has 35,000+ clients and manage £14bn+ of cash and investments. Investors include +900 Local Authorities including approximately 500 Town & Parish Councils.
- The Public Sector Deposit Fund (PSDF) is a short-term cash management solution designed for local authorities. Suitable for short term investments where you are seeking a high level of capital security and a competitive rate of interest.
- CCLA's security has Highest credit rating using Fitch Ratings methodology (AAA MMMF).
- The CCLA's top priority is the security of the funds invested, something which is especially important as they are not covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) should something go wrong, nor is it a guaranteed investment. Should one of the organisations fail, any funds invested with that organisation would be lost, however the risk monitoring profile is such that the CCLA would remove funds from an at risk organisation before that happened.
- Funds can be withdrawn the same day if notification is made before 11.30am.

- This option will provide diversification of the Council's savings in accordance with the Council's investment strategy.

Detailed information about the fund can be viewed at: [The Public Sector Deposit Fund CCLA](#)

The RFO is currently talking to the council's bank regarding the availability of higher Interest rates which range between 2% and 4.37%, depending on the term. Further Investigations will be undertaken with regards to investment opportunities and a further report will be submitted to the council as soon as possible.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **That the £171,000 currently held in the NS&I account is moved to the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund Account, subject to an annual review.**
- **That the RFO carries out further investigations with regards to other investment opportunities and reports back to the council at the earliest opportunity.**

Full Council – 26 February 2024

Minute no. 1261a

Gillingham Town Council

Estate Management Sub-committee

Author: Jill Ezzard, Assistant Town Clerk

Notes taken at a meeting of the Estate Management Sub-committee held on **Thursday 15th February 2024** at 10am at Gillingham Town Hall.

Present:

Cllr Barry von Clemens - Lead Member
Cllr Roger Weeks
Cllr Fiona Cullen
Bob Messer, GANG
Julie Hawkins - Town Clerk

Jill Ezzard - Assistant Town Clerk
Simon Dobie - Works Manager
Martin Down – Deputy Works Manager

1. Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr John Kilcourse and Cllr Graham Poulter.

2. Any matters arising from the last meeting.

There were no matters arising.

3. To discuss fencing along the riverbank at Rolls Bridge Public Open Space.

The Works Manager informed members that a section of the riverbank at Rolls Bridge public open space has been fenced off with temporary fencing as the bank is collapsing at this point.

It was agreed that a recommendation is made to Full Council that subject to approval by the Environment Agency, a post and rail fence is erected at Rolls Bridge Public Open Space at a cost not to exceed £950.00 to be funded from Budget no. 7611 Health and Safety.

4. To discuss new play equipment at King John Road and Weatherbury Road Play Areas.

A report was circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to **Appendix 1**.

It was agreed that a recommendation is made to Full Council that play equipment is purchased from Company A at a cost of £3,767.64 + VAT and funded from Budget No. 5320 King John Road Play Equipment.

It was agreed that a recommendation is made to Full Council that a virement of £467.64 is made from Budget No. 5301 Play Area General Maintenance to Budget No. 5320 King John Road Play Equipment.

It was agreed that a recommendation is made to Full Council that play equipment is purchased from Company A at a cost of £9,109.83 + VAT and funded from Budget No. 5323 Weatherbury Road Play Area.

It was agreed that a recommendation is made that a virement of £2,288.83 is made from Budget No. 5301 Play Area General Maintenance to Budget No. 5323 Weatherbury Road Play Area.

5. To discuss the fencing around the attenuation pond at Ham Farm

Following Cllr Week’s risk assessment of the attenuation pond at Ham Farm, it was agreed that some of the fence panels and fence posts require repair or replacement.

It was agreed that a recommendation is made to Full Council, that the fence around the attenuation pond at Ham Farm is repaired and new panels and posts are purchased as required, at a cost not to exceed £2,450 + VAT to be funded from budget no. 7611 Health and Safety.

6. To consider and agree a charge to empty litter bins

It was agreed that a recommendation is made to Full Council that a charge of £5.44 per bin will be made by the town council to empty litter bins under hire agreements or contracts. This charge will be added to the Schedule of Charges and reviewed annually in September.

7. To receive and consider a report regarding Withey Woods

A report was circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to **Appendix 2**.

Mr Messer referred to Gillingham Action for Nature Group’s (GANG) proposal for a Nature Reserve at Withy Woods. He informed the meeting that Merck has given approval for the Nature Reserve on their land but he is still waiting for approval from Network Rail. He has identified a triangular area of land located west of Tinknell Fuels which was still registered to the Gillingham Pottery Brick and Tile Company (GPBTC).

Mr Messer informed the members that the GPBTC are willing to gift Gillingham Town Council the triangular area of land, as shown on Map no. 2 (Appendix 2), providing that the council pays the fees to transfer the land at a cost of £450 + VAT. GANG will continue to manage the land as part of the nature reserve.

It was agreed that the matter is referred to the Agreements and Contracts Sub-committee with a recommendation to accept the gift of land.

The Works Manager advised members that a contract should be draw up between the Town Council and GANG regarding the land management at this site.

8. To discuss and agree themes for the town centre flower beds for 2024.

Following a brief discussion, it was recommended that due to budget cuts, the flower beds will not be themed in 2024.

9. To receive the Works Managers report

A report was circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to **Appendix 3**.

The report was noted.

10.To receive the Deputy Works Managers report

A report was circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to **Appendix 4**.

It was recommended that the Oak tree donated by the Gillingham, Mere and Shaftesbury Lions Club and Gillingham Rotary Club will be planted in accordance with the Tree Donation Policy at Gyllas Green.

The report was noted.

11.To receive an update from Gillingham Action for Nature Group (GANG)

Mr Messer referred to the land owned by Merck, alongside the area identified in the Southern Extension for employment use. He informed members that Merck have given GANG permission to transform the area into additional woodland. This would involve volunteers planting 3,200 bare rooted English native trees – this will be subject to approval from the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission.

The project is expected to cost £5,500. Mr Messer is seeking partial funding from the Dorset Community Tree Fund as well as other sources.

12. Any other business

- An email had been received from a resident expressing an interest in providing bee hives on the town council's public open spaces.

It was agreed that the public open spaces are not a suitable location for bees. Concerns were raised for public safety as well as the safety of the bees and their hives. It was suggested that the resident should contact the North Dorset Bee Association to find more suitable locations.

The Town Clerk left the meeting at 11.30am.

- The Assistant Town Clerk informed members that Barrett David Wilson Homes will shortly be submitting a planning application to create some low level landscape bunds in the field north of the development land off of Common Mead Lane. This work will not affect the walking routes around the field.

13. Date for the next meeting

Thursday 21st March at 10am in the Council Chamber.

Recommendations:

- That subject to the approval by the Environment Agency a post and rail fence is erected at Rolls Bridge at a cost not to exceed £950.00 to be funded from budget no. 7611 Health and Safety.
- That play equipment is purchased from Company A at a cost of £3,767.64 + VAT and funded from Budget No. 5321 King John Road Play Equipment.
- That a virement of £467.64 is made from Budget No. 5301 Play Area General Maintenance to Budget No. 5320 King John Road Play Equipment.
- That play equipment is purchased from Company A at a cost of £9,109.83 + VAT and funded from Budget No. 5323 Weatherbury Road Play Area.
- That a virement of £2,288.83 is made from Budget No. 5301 Play Area General Maintenance to Budget No. 5323 Weatherbury Road Play Area.
- That the fence around the attenuation pond at Ham Farm is repaired and new panels and posts are purchased as required at a cost not to exceed £2450 + VAT to be funded from budget no. 7611 Health and Safety.
- That the Oak tree donated by the Gillingham, Mere and Shaftesbury Lions Club and Gillingham Rotary Club will be planted in accordance with the Tree Donation Policy at Gyllas Green in Gillingham.

Gillingham Town Council**Property Management Sub-committee Report****Wedding Garden at the Town Hall****Author: Jill Ezzard, Assistant Town Clerk**

At the Property Management Sub-committee meeting held on 17th January 2024 the Assistant Town Clerk outlined problems with the grassed area in the Wedding Garden and explained that the surface is uneven, and the grass is not growing, partially due to the shade. The area is very dry and large cracks appear in the grassed area during the summer months which have raised health and safety concerns. Proposals for hard surfacing of the area which will provide additional space for users of the Town Hall was outlined.

At the meeting members noted that adequate funding is available in the Town Hall budget to replace the grass with a porous hard surface and agreed in principal that the Wedding Garden should be hard surfaced up to a value not to exceed £4,500 plus VAT. The Assistant Town Clerk was tasked with obtaining further quotations.

Four local companies were contacted, three visited the site; however, only one company submitted a quote for the total sum of £4,570.00 plus VAT.

Members were unable to meet in person but the matter was considered in full via email on 16th February 2024. Members agreed that as three companies had declined to quote, the contract should be awarded to the company at a sum of £4,570.00 plus VAT for the following reasons:

- The company has the ability to carry out the required work.
- The company has adequate insurance.
- The company has provided all the necessary documentation.
- The company is able to carry out the work specified within the required timescale.
- Are known to the council and have previously carried out work to a high standard.

Recommendation:

That company A is contracted to hard surface the Wedding Garden at the Town Hall at a cost of £4,570.00 plus VAT funded from Budget no. 7058.

Gillingham Town Council**Agreements and Contracts Sub-Committee Report****Author: Julie Hawkins, Town Clerk**

Notes taken at a meeting of the Agreements and Contracts Sub-Committee held on Friday 16th February 2024 at 14.00 at Gillingham Town Hall

Present:

Cllr Barry von Clemens (Lead)
Cllr Paul Harris
Cllr John Kilcourse
Cllr Roger Weeks
Julie Hawkins, Town Clerk

Jill Ezzard, Assistant Town Clerk
Simon Dobie, Works Manager
Bob Messer, Gillingham Action for Nature Group.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Graham Poulter and Tina Wright RFO.

2. To consider a gift of land from the Gillingham Pottery Brick and Tile Company

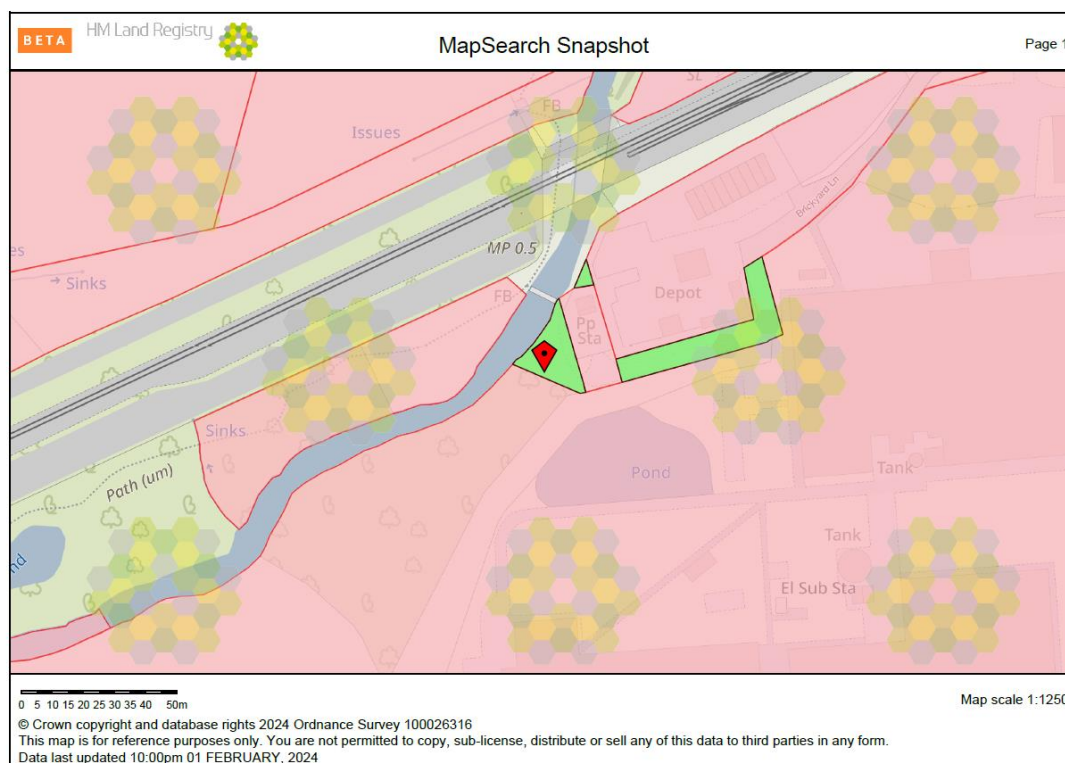
Mr Bob Messer, Chairman of Gillingham Action for Nature Group (GANG) outlined proposals for a nature reserve which would include Withywoods and Millenium Wood in Gillingham. Mr Messer explained that he had researched land ownership in the area and had discovered a triangular piece of land between Withywoods and Millenium Wood that is in the ownership of the Gillingham Brick and Tile Company.

Mr Messer informed members that the Gillingham Pottery Brick and Tile Company has offered to gift the area to the town council so that the Gillingham Action for Nature Group can continue to manage the area. The gift of land would be conditional on the council paying for the legal fees at a cost of £450 + VAT. Mr Messer explained that the area of land was important as it links the two areas currently managed by Gillingham Action for Nature and would help with the application to register the area as a nature reserve.

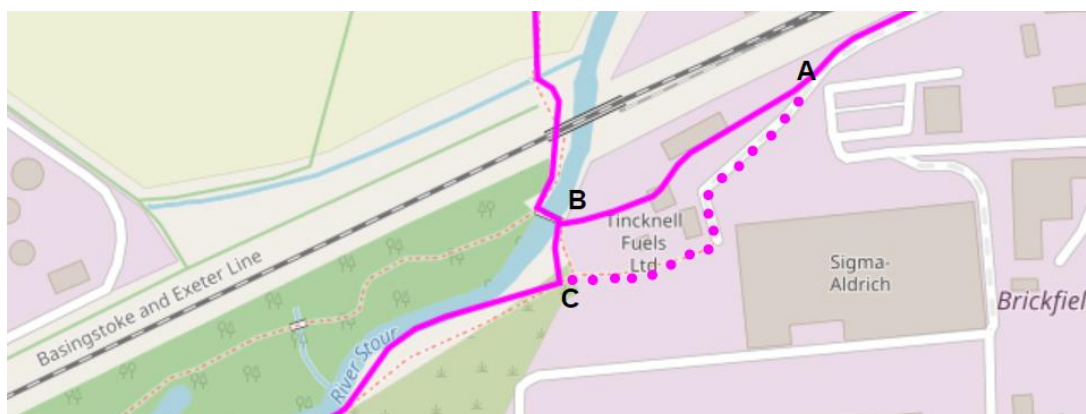
The Town Clerk informed the meeting that members of the Estate Management Sub-committee had considered the gift of land at a sub-committee meeting held on 15 February 2024 and had agreed that the matter should be referred to the Agreements and Contracts Sub-committee with a recommendation to accept the gift of land.

Cllr von Clemens informed the meeting that he had visited the site earlier in the day with the Works Manager and Deputy Works Manager and could see no reasons not to accept the gift of land.

It was noted that three areas of land are currently owned by the Gillingham Pottery, Brick and Tile Company – please refer to the green areas on the plan below.



Members discussed access to the site and Mr Messer explained that at the present time, the legal definitive route of Footpath no. N64/47 passes through Tincknell Fuel Depot (Route A to B on the plan) and the actual walked route is around the perimeter of the site (Route A to C on the plan). It was agreed that a map modification order (MMO) would be beneficial, and the Town Clerk was tasked with contacting the Dorset Council Rights of Way Officer for advice.



Mr Messer confirmed that the access track is not on offer, however, if a map modification order is confirmed future pedestrian public right of way to the area would be guaranteed.

Members agreed that a recommendation should be made to Full Council that Gillingham Town Council accepts the deed of gift for the triangular piece of land between Withywood and Millenium Wood.

Members agreed that a recommendation should be made to Full Council that the Town Clerk should make further enquiries to ascertain whether the Gillingham Pottery, Brick and Tile Company is willing to gift the access track to the town council as part of the transfer of land, and if they are, Gillingham Town Council should accept both areas of land.

Members agreed that a recommendation should be made to Full Council that the Town Clerk is authorised to deal with the transfer of land at a cost not to exceed £1,500 to cover legal expenses and disbursements, to be funded from Budget no. 7600 Legal Fees.

3. To consider a tender document for the cleaning of council buildings.

A draft tender document had been circulated prior to the meeting – please refer to Appendix 1.

Members agreed that the tender document for the cleaning of council buildings, as presented, is approved for circulation.

4. Dorset Council Verge Cutting Agreement

The Town Clerk explained the VAT implications of the Dorset Council Verge Cutting Agreement which appears to be an agency agreement, with the town council acting on behalf of Dorset Council, not a supply of services to Dorset Council. The Town Clerk informed the meeting that she would be discussing the matter with Dorset Council and would report back to the sub-committee with further information as soon as it becomes available.

5. Dorset Wildlife Trust Agreement

It was agreed that this item should be deferred until the new council takes office.

6. Any other matters that require urgent attention

There were no matters that required urgent attention.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **That Gillingham Town Council accepts the deed of gift for the triangular piece of land between Withywood and Millenium Wood.**
- **That the Town Clerk should make further enquiries to ascertain whether the Gillingham Pottery, Brick and Tile Company is willing to gift the access track to the town council as part of the transfer of land, and if they are, Gillingham Town Council should accept both areas of land.**
- **That the Town Clerk is authorised to deal with the transfer of land at a cost not to exceed £1,500 to cover legal expenses and disbursements, to be funded from Budget no. 7600 Legal Fees.**
- **That the tender document for the cleaning of council buildings, as presented, is approved for circulation.**

Full Council – 26 February 2024

Minute no. 1261f

Gillingham Town Council

D-Day 80th Anniversary Task & Finish Group Report

Author: Cllr Donna Toye

Meetings took place on 5 and 19 February 2024

Present: Cllr Donna Toye (Lead member) (*apologies received for 5 February*), Cllr Mick Hill, Cllr John Kilcourse, Cllr Roger Weeks, Serena Burgess (Projects & HR Admin Officer), Allan Bishop (Royal British Legion)

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.

Confirmed Gillingham Events

- 8.00 am - the D-Day 80 Proclamation will be read by the Mayor by the Oak tree in the High Street
- 9.15 pm – Beacon lighting, alongside the International Tribute – Hardings Park

Prior to the beacon lighting, commemorative events will be held at Hardings Park to include:

- Music by the Wessex Military Band and the Gillingham Imperial Silver Band
- A drumhead service officiated by the Revd Canon Tim Heaton
- A parade of Standards
- Army Cadet parade and review
- Popular 1940s songs sung by Gillingham school children

Printing

Allan Bishop kindly offered to sponsor the printing of up to 500 leaflets to include the event schedule and song words.

RECOMMENDATION

- **That Allan Bishop is co-opted as a member of the Task and Finish Group to represent the Gillingham Branch of the Royal British Legion**

Full Council – 26 February 2024

Minute no. 1262a

**Gillingham Town Council
Town Meadow Report
Author: Julie Hawkins, Town Clerk**

The Gillingham Town Meadow Group has notified the town council that due to unforeseen circumstances they are unable to continue dealing with bookings for Gillingham Town Meadow and with immediate effect are handing the responsibility to Gillingham Town Council.

As a result, the Hire of Council Land Policy will need to be amended and this will be dealt with under Agenda Item no. 17a.

The following bookings have been passed to the town council:

Date	Event
Saturday 30 March 2024	Catleys Chilled Foods Ltd
Monday 22 April – Monday 29 April 2024	<i>Provisional booking pending approval by Full Council</i> Charles Cole Family Fun Fair
Saturday 25 May 2024	Charity Plant Sale
Saturday 01 June 2024	Crafts on the Meadow
Saturday 08 June 2024	Gillingham in Gear
Thursday 20 June – Monday 24 June 2024	Gillingham Live Music Event
Saturday 13 July 2024	<i>Provisional booking – awaiting confirmation from Town Meadow Group</i> Town Fete
Saturday 24 August 2024	Crafts on the Meadow
Sunday 29 September – Sunday 6 October 2024	Coles Funfair
Sunday 13/10/2024	<i>Provisional booking – awaiting confirmation from Town Meadow Group</i> Wave of Light
Saturday 7 December 2024	GCCI Christmas Event

Full Council – 26 February 2024

Minute no. 1262b

Gillingham Chamber of Commerce and Industry Report

Date of meeting: Wednesday 14 February 2024

Author: Cllr Barry von Clemens

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 programme for the Christmas event was decided and the Chamber will proceed with the relevant bookings.
- The committee agreed that in 2024/2025 the chamber will increase its community engagement at events over the year with the intention of promoting local businesses and to continue its work with other chambers in North Dorset.
- The committee reviewed the current membership status and discussed ways to attract new members and retain existing ones.

Full Council – 26 February 2024

Minute no. 1262c

**DAPTC Larger Towns and Parishes Committee Report
February 2024 meeting via MTeams
Author Cllr Barry von Clemens.**

Update from DAPTC Chief Executive

Councillor Networking Event – 7 March 2024.

The Chief Executive drew attention to the councillor networking event due to take place on 7 March 2024. This would provide an opportunity for councillors to network and also to receive updates from some of Dorset Council's Cabinet Members and representatives of NHS Dorset, as well as the Dorset National Park campaign and the Dorset Nature Recovery Plan. There would also be an opportunity to talk to some of Dorset Council's place-based teams who would have stands at the event and it was proposed to recognise longstanding councillors who were standing down in May. The event would run alongside the annual meeting of the Dorset branch of the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC).

The Chairman reiterated the value of taking the opportunity to network with councillors from other councils and to learn from others.

Some concern was expressed about the inclusion of the Dorset National Park campaign on the agenda given that it was a controversial issue. The Chief Executive provided reassurance that, by including this item, the DAPTC was not endorsing the campaign but raising awareness levels.

Elections 2024

The Chief Executive reported that the DAPTC had published an elections toolkit and a dedicated webpage was live on the website. Briefings for clerks about the election process were being offered with input from Dorset Council's elections team, as there were many who had not yet gone through an election and required support in navigating the requirements and timeframes.

However it was clarified that it was not the role of clerks to advise candidates on eligibility to stand or to be responsible for delivery of nomination papers. It was acknowledged that there were increasing challenges for parish and town councils to fill all of their seats at elections.

The DAPTC had now released a series of social media clips to promote the role of local councillors for use by member councils. The links would be included in the e-news and the Chief Executive asked that these be shared as widely as possible. Given the current record number of clerk vacancies, one of these clips had also been reframed to focus on the role of the clerk and employees of local councils to encourage people into the sector.

The production company had also been asked for versions of the clips that could be used beyond May in relation to co-option to fill casual vacancies. Whilst the cost of these was not budgeted for, it had been considered a critical project but contributions from member councils were invited.

The Committee were also informed that a training package for councillors use after the elections was also being finalised. There had been some very testing and challenging situations in some member councils in recent months, so this package will include training for staffing committee members.

NALC Model Contract of Employment

The Chief Executive reported that a new model contract of employment endorsed by both NALC and SLCC was published in January. There were two versions; one aligned to the Green Book terms and conditions and the other not aligned to these but compliant with current employment legislation.

He clarified that employees’ existing contracts need not be changed but consideration of the new model contract should be given when recruiting in the future.

DAPTC Extraordinary Meeting

The Committee were reminded that at the DAPTC AGM in November the proposal to move to a company limited by guarantee was discussed and it was agreed to consult the membership on this change to the organisation’s legal status. It was now proposed that an Extraordinary General Meeting be held on 17 or 20 April but an online vote for member councils would also be enabled in addition to the meeting itself.

Detailed information would be sent to member councils very soon. There would then be a larger piece of work to consider options for area committees or other mechanisms for member engagement for consideration at the AGM in November 2024.

Request from the DAPTC to contribute towards the cost of the election videos which have been made available to all members.

In the Summer of 2023, the DAPTC conceived of an idea to use councillors and clerks across Dorset to help promote the elections in 2024 with two aims:

- 1. Shining a spotlight on the great work you all do
- 2. Helping to encourage more potential councillors to come forward.

As we get to the business end of candidates coming forward and existing councillors deciding if they are stepping down, we wanted to make the videos available for you to add them to your social media feeds and websites either by using the URL link or embed code.

The videos are themed and have the same intro and outro to help get a consistent message over about contacting their parish or town council or asking us to put them in touch with you. We filmed a lot of hours of video and naturally that gets distilled down to just a few minutes.

Costs:

Our Executive Committee kindly recognised the value of this project and agreed to underwrite the entire cost, but did ask that I try to crowd fund as much as possible. We are making the videos available to all 150+ members and hope you will agree that they are a useful resource for councils this year and beyond. We have versions that are not tied to May 2024 to help with co-option after May to make the investment stretch further.

We would, therefore, like each member using the videos to consider in their council meetings a contribution and have suggested the following bands:

- Small parish councils - £30
- Medium sized parish councils - £60
- Larger parishes and towns - £120

The videos are available to view via the link below:

[Parish and Town Councils in Dorset on Vimeo](#)

RECOMMENDATION

That Gillingham Town Council contributes £120.00 to DAPTC towards the cost of the 2024 election videos, to be funded from budget 7607, Subscriptions.

Gillingham Transport Forum Report January 2024**Author: Cllr Barry von Clemens****Attendees**

The Gillingham Transport Forum was attended by Cllr Belinda Ridout, Cllr Barry von Clemens, and representatives from Dorset Community Transport.

Purpose

The primary topic of discussion was the possibility of introducing a one-day-a-week bus route around Gillingham. This new route would specifically aim to service the Wyke areas, which are currently not covered by the existing bus service.

Decisions

After thorough discussion, it was collectively decided that implementing such a bus route could indeed be feasible. The potential benefits of this service to the local community were recognized, and the decision was met with optimism.

Next Steps

Cllrs Belinda Ridout and Cllr Barry von Clemens have taken on the responsibility of investigating various funding options for this proposed bus route. Concurrently, Dorset Community Transport will explore potential time and day options for the service and will report back with their findings.

This initiative represents a significant step towards improving public transport accessibility in Gillingham, particularly for residents of the Wyke areas. The forum eagerly awaits the findings from Cllrs Ridout and Cllr von Clemens, as well as Dorset Community Transport, to move forward with this project.

Full Council – 26 February 2024

Minute no. 1267

Gillingham Town Council

Festive Lighting

Author: Jill Ezzard, Assistant Town Clerk

At the Full Council Meeting on 22nd January 2024, the Assistant Town Clerk was tasked to purchase a maximum of 3 artificial 4ft trial Christmas trees. These trees were to be presented at the next Full Council meeting for consideration.

Only one suitable Christmas tree was available at a cost of £45.83 plus delivery plus VAT.

The tree will be available to view in the Town Hall garden at the Full Council Meeting

Recommendation:

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

Full Council – 26 February 2024

Minute no. 1269

Gillingham Town Council
TIMETABLE - MAY 2024 ELECTIONS

Date	Event
Monday 11 March	Publication of Notice of Election
Friday 5 April at 4.00 pm	Deadline for receipt of nomination papers (including consent to nomination) and withdrawal of nomination
Monday 8 April at 4.00 pm	Publication of statement of Persons Nominated
Wednesday 24 April	Publication of Notice of Poll
Thursday 2 May 7.00 am to 10.00 pm	Polling Day
Friday 3 May	Count for Dorset Council election
Saturday 4 May	Count for Parish and Town Council elections
Sunday 5 May	Count for Police and Crime Commissioner election
Monday 13 May	Gillingham Town Council Annual Council Meeting (election of Mayor & Deputy Mayor)

Full Council – 26 February 2024

Minute no. 1270

Gillingham Town Council Mayor's Report**15 January to 19 February 2024**

Date	Event	Comments
26 Jan 24	Hall and Woodhouse Community Chest presentations	A fabulous evening meeting those who have been awarded grants from Hall and Woodhouse, including our own Dementia Friendly Gillingham who I am very proud to be chairman.
17 Feb 24	David Milsted's Memorial Service	I was very honoured to have been invited along with fellow councillors past and present from the town, county and the old North Dorset District Council along with the Lord Lieutenant and many others from all walks of life. It was a massive show of respect for a gentleman who had worked tirelessly for our town and given its community so much.

Dorset Councillor Ward Report Cllr Belinda Ridout – February 2024

Local Transport Plan Survey – Dorset Council, working with Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council, is gathering views on transport and travel across the whole of Dorset. Residents, businesses and visitors are being invited to share their views on transport issues across Dorset. The survey is on the Dorset Council website or you can obtain a paper copy from Gillingham library. **The consultation ends on 3rd March.**

There is a drop-in event at the Chantry Office (in the car park adjacent to the library) on Thursday 29th February, 10.00am to 4.00pm. Myself and Cllr Potheary will be there to discuss and help residents complete the survey. This is IMPORTANT for transport in our area. There is the opportunity to add any points/ideas you may have which have not been covered in the survey.

Household Support Fund (HSF) re-opened for applications on Tuesday 6th February 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.

Free Reusable nappies - this is great news - Dorset Council is offering parents a free reusable nappy starter pack or £30 off reusable nappies (minimum spend £45). Apply before 31st March 2024 and parents could also win one of two reusable nappy sets worth £80 each in a prize draw. So, if you know anyone in the Dorset Council area who would be eligible to apply, please share this information. You can apply online: '**Cost of Living Help**' webpage: '**Reusable nappies application**'. Applications will be accepted on a first come first served basis.

There are about 7million used disposable nappies entering the Dorset household waste stream every year. It currently costs the council around £600,000 per year to send all used disposable nappies in Dorset for Mechanical Biological Treatment, along with household rubbish. Using reusable nappies is cheaper. One pack of disposable nappies per week for up to 2.5 years can cost over £1,000 per child. Alternatively, using washable nappies can make a saving of over £600 and can be reused for subsequent children.

Parents may also be interested in buying pre-loved nappies through the **Dorset Cloth Nappy Library** found on Facebook. These pre-loved nappies are cheaper than buying new and are sometimes offered for free. The group also offers a free trial of reusable nappies for 2-4 weeks, so you can try out different types before you commit.

Get Active Outdoors 2024 - a new Get Active Outdoors brochure is out now, supporting local people to get and stay active. Nordic Walking, Get into Golf and Fresh Air Fitness for beginners are just some of the activities. Full information about monthly activities in the

North Dorset area can be found on the Dorset Council website at 'Health and Activity'. For up-to-date information, sign up to the Health and Activity e-newsletter or by following Health and Activity – Dorset Council on Facebook.

Health Walks - from Gillingham Library every Monday, 2.30pm for 1 hour. No dogs except assistance dogs. Contact: Penny 01747 823774. From the Town Meadow, 2.30pm, Contact Debbie 01747 853006.

Get free support for a healthier you – LiveWell Dorset will support you all year to make healthy lifestyle changes, from managing weight, quitting smoking, becoming more active or drinking less alcohol. LiveWell's coaching, advice and support is completely free for every adult living in Dorset.

Sign up and then an advisor will help you choose the right options to create a personal action plan to get you started. Register at livewelldorset.co.uk or call free on 0800 840 1628.

Register your old and new appliances – Dorset Trading Standards are getting behind a national campaign for people to register their domestic appliances. The safety campaign is being run by the Association of Manufacturers of Domestic Appliances. It encourages people to register their home appliances, whether old or new, to make sure manufacturers can get in touch in case a safety repair or recall is needed. Go to registermyappliance.org.uk - the website includes links to more than 70 brands where appliance owners can fill out details to register their appliance.

Grants for community tree planting projects – a new grant scheme aimed at supporting local communities to plant trees is now open for applications. Through the Dorset Community Tree Fund, town and parish councils, schools and constituted community groups can apply for grants to plan, design and carry out tree planting projects. There is no maximum grant, but any applications above £1,000 need to show exceptional impact and value for money. Applicants must show at least 25% 'match funding' from other sources, which can include volunteer time and donations in kind.

Guidance notes and application form can be found on the Dorset Council website: Dorset Community Tree Fund. If you would like to informally discuss first, contact Jill Hearing, Project Officer, jill.hearing@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk. 01305 228273. Applications are online: Dorset Community Tree Fund.

Interested in helping with the local elections on 2nd May? Dorset Council employs hundreds of staff at election time to ensure the process is run smoothly, in an open and transparent way. There are still a number of roles available. If you are interested and aged over 18 years old, download an application form from the Dorset Council website (Elections and voting) or email: elections@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, for more information.

Belinda Ridout, Councillor for the Gillingham Ward
Cllrbelinda.ridout@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk 07496413114

For those residents not online 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.

All minutes of meetings can be found on the Dorset Council website: www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

**Gillingham Town Council
Purchase of Electric Utility Vehicle
Author: Simon Dobie, Works Manager**

1. Background

It was hoped that an additional Utility Vehicle could have been purchased last year at the same time as the council replaced one of the older tractors. This was not possible due to the variety of equipment that was available for demonstration and the release of some new products to the market that have replaced older models and improved technology.

As a forward-thinking council, the need to reduce our carbon footprint was recognised and the purchase of an electric utility vehicle was included in the five-year action plan. Funding was made available.

As well as the charging benefits from the solar PV and battery storage due to be installed at Roman Court, a saving in running costs should be achieved over the vehicle's life with very little maintenance and service requirements required.

2. Financial Implications

Funds have been allocated in the accruals for this purpose – Budget no. 8003 (Accrual) New Horticultural Vehicles & Cutting Decks – balance £19,472. It is recommended that this is transferred to Budget no. 7360 New Horticultural Vehicles & Cutting Decks.

There are funds available in Budget no. 6044 Discretionary Powers – CCTV cameras. It is recommended that £2,893 is transferred to Budget no. 7360 New Horticultural Vehicles & Cutting Decks.

3. Replacement Options

The Works Manager, Deputy Works Manager and all the grounds team have looked at several options and received demonstrations. Below are various options with pros and cons that have enabled us to reach a view on the best machine to suit requirements:

i. Club Car Urban SWB L7e £19,795.00 + VAT (ex-demonstrator only)

This is for an ex-demo machine as new vehicles are not available now; we were also advised that new vehicle prices will increase between £1,200 - £1,600 per unit. This was a small compact machine but based on a golf buggy chassis with road wheels and tyres. Very nice to drive but may not stand up to the demands of the work required. Powered by Lithium batteries.

ii. Club Car Urban LWB N1 £25,950.00 + VAT (ex-demonstrator only)

This is for an ex-demo machine as new vehicles are not available now; we were also advised that new vehicle prices will increase between £1,200 - £1,600 per unit. This was as the L7e above but with a larger load area that didn't tip. Based on a golf buggy chassis with road wheels and tyres. Very nice to drive but may not stand up to the demands of the work required. Powered by lithium batteries.

iii. John Deere Gator TE £22,850.00 + VAT (new vehicle price)

This is a machine very similar to our existing diesel gators to look at. The downside was it was still powered by Lead acid batteries so intermittent charging was not possible. The run time on the machine was also less than all the others we tried. John Deere is upgrading the machine this year to Lithium batteries but the dealer was unsure if they would be made road legal as the main marketplace for these is the golf industry. Has a large rear load capacity.

iv. Hisun Sector £22,365.00 + VAT (new vehicle price)

This machine was the most robust machine we have seen. Lithium powered, a tow bar and front winch as standard. It has a true four-wheel drive system and robust tyres so can be used off road. Has a mid to large rear load capacity and this is the only thing I could fault on the machine - a slightly bigger one would be better but this is the largest currently in the range.

Club Car Urban SWB or LWB



John Deere Gator TE



Hisun Sector



4. Quotations

Dealer 1 declined to quote.

Option 1 – Dealer 2 -Club Car Urban SWB L7e (ex-demonstrator only)

Retail Price: £19,795.00 + VAT

Total to Pay: **£19,795.00 + VAT**

Option 2 – Dealer 2 - Club Car Urban LWB N1 (ex-demonstrator only)

Retail Price: £25,950.00 + VAT

Total to pay: **£25,950.00 + VAT**

Option 3 – Dealer 3 - John Deere Gator TE (new vehicle price)

Retail Price: £22,850.00 + VAT

Total to pay: **£22,850.00 + VAT**

Option 4 – Dealer 3 - Hisun Sector £22,365.00 + VAT (new vehicle price)

Retail Price: £22,365.00 + VAT

Total to pay: **£22,365.00 +VAT**

Following careful consideration and looking at the requirements of the Grounds Department now and in the coming years, Option 4 is recommended and funded from budget number 8003 (Accrual) New Horticultural Vehicles & Cutting Decks and budget number 6044 Discretionary Powers – CCTV cameras.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- That a virement of £19,472 is made from Budget No. 8003 (Accruals) - New Horticultural Vehicles and Cutting Decks to Budget No. 7360 - New Horticultural Vehicles and Cutting Decks.
- That a virement of £2,893 is made from Budget No. 6044 - Discretionary Powers – CCTV Cameras, to Budget No. 7360 - New Horticultural Vehicles and Cutting Decks.
- That the Hisun Sector is purchased from Dealer No. 3, at a cost of £22,365.00 + VAT funded from Budget No. 7360 - New Horticultural Vehicles and Cutting Decks.

Full Council – 26 February 2024

Minute no. 1273

Gillingham Town Council
Notes taken at an Allotments and Burials Sub-committee Meeting
held on 15th February 2024

Author: Jill Ezzard, Assistant Town Clerk

Present: Cllr Alan Frith, Lead Member, Cllr Rupert Evill, Cllr Sarah Snook, Cllr Donna Toye, Cllr Barry von Clemens, Cllr Roger Weeks, Julie Hawkins, Town Clerk, Jill Ezzard, Assistant Town Clerk.

Via MS Teams: Cllr Mark Walden

1. To receive a report regarding an incident at Gillingham Cemetery 8th - 15th February 2024.

A confidential report was received and noted.

2. To receive a report regarding the future of Gillingham Cemetery.

A report was circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to **Appendix 1**.

Following an assessment of available plots in Gillingham Cemetery, it was agreed to recommend that, with immediate effect, no new burial plots are provided at Gillingham Cemetery unless the plots have already been purchased and the owners hold a grant of exclusive right of burial.

3. To receive an update on future burial land in Gillingham

The Town Clerk informed members that a local landowner has granted permission for the town council to excavate test pits in order to establish if the land is suitable for burials. There should be no standing water at the bottom of a grave when it is dug to a depth of 1.8m below ground level and therefore test pits will be dug by the town council within the next two months.

If the findings are favourable, more detailed Tier 2 Groundwater Risk Assessments will need to be carried out by a professional company.

4. To consider amending the Cemetery Regulations.

The cemetery regulations were circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to Appendix 2.

The Assistant Town Clerk informed members that the dimensions of a memorial on an ashes plot needed to be clearer within the cemetery regulations to assist memorial masons. It was agreed to recommend amending Para. 7.7 of the cemetery regulations to include the overall dimensions as follows:

- Memorials must not exceed Width 490mm x Depth 490mm x Height 305mm on a cremated remains plot. Headstones and kerbstones are not permitted.

It was also agreed to remove Para. 6.4 and amend Para. 6.3 of the regulations to:

- 6.3 No new grave spaces are available to purchase at Gillingham Cemetery except for the interment of ashes. A grave space for ashes interments cannot be purchased prior to the date of death. On payment of the appropriate fee and completion of the relevant form, including the signature of the proposed owner, the right is granted for a period of ninety-nine years and the Town Council shall provide the purchaser with an exclusive right of burial deed as proof of ownership.

5. Any other Business

There was no other business.

Recommendations

- **That, following an assessment of available plots in Gillingham Cemetery, with immediate effect, no new burial plots are provided at Gillingham Cemetery unless the plots have already been purchased and the owners hold a grant of exclusive right of burial.**
- **That the amendments to the Cemetery Regulations 6.3, 6.4 and 7.7 are approved and adopted.**

**Gillingham Town Council
Allotments and Burials Subcommittee Report
Gillingham Cemetery Update 2024
Author: Julie Hawkins, Town Clerk**

Gillingham Cemetery was opened in 1890 and is the resting place for over 4,000 people.

In August 2015 the town council established that the number of available full size burial plots at Gillingham Cemetery was at a critical level. At the time, the average number of burials per year was 16 and the average number of interments of ashes was 9.

Prior to 2015 the council had actively been looking for new burial land but due to various legislative constraints it had been difficult to find suitable land. When suitable land had been found, the council went to auction but was out-bid. In view of the difficulties experienced in obtaining land, the council agreed to remove some of the paths to create areas for future burials.

These areas are shown on the plan at Appendix 1, and since 2016 they have been successfully used. The area shown on the plan as Area No. 1 was in use until 2020 but access was difficult for contractors and mourners and following a risk assessment it was agreed that no further full-size burials could be dug in this area of the cemetery.

In 2020, as the number of available full burial plots started to decrease, a decision was made to stop selling pre-purchased grave spaces.

By January 2023 the area shown on the plan as area No. 2 had been fully utilised. Various plots were available on the east side of the cemetery and during 2023 the council was able to continue to provide full burial plots.

In the past twelve months there have been 16 burials and 13 ashes interred in the cemetery.

In February 2024 officers assessed the availability of plots and concluded that the council has now reached a position where there are no further burial plots to offer.

There are many pre-purchased burial plots in Gillingham Cemetery. Those with pre-purchased burial plots who have been issued with a Grant of Exclusive Right of Burial will not be affected and will still be able to be buried at Gillingham Cemetery.

The council will still be able to offer the interment of cremated remains but, with immediate effect, the council is unable to provide any new burial plots unless they have previously been purchased and owners hold the grant of exclusive right of burial.

RECOMMENDATION:

- **That, following an assessment of available plots, with immediate effect no new burial plots are provided at Gillingham Cemetery unless the plots have already been purchased and the owners hold a grant of exclusive right of burial.**

Plan of Gillingham Cemetery



Aerial photograph of Gillingham Cemetery in 2023



Gillingham Cemetery Fees and Charges April 1st 2024 - 31st March 2025

As of 26th February 2024, no new grave spaces are available to purchase at Gillingham Cemetery except for the interment of ashes. A grave space for ashes interments cannot be purchased prior to the date of death.

	Resident of Gillingham Dorset *	Non-Resident of Gillingham Dorset
INTERMENTS		
Children up to and including 17 years	No Charge	No Charge
Adult Burial Interment	£114.00	£228.00
Cremated Remains	£52.00	£104.00
PURCHASE OF EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS OF BURIAL GRAVE SPACE (99 Years)		
Children under 1 year	No Charge	No Charge
Children 1 year up to and including 17 years - Ashes	£46.00	£92.00
Cremated Remains (Maximum 2 interments per grave space)	£109.00	£218.00
MEMORIALS		
Headstone (with first inscription) including flush stone base Maximum 3ft 6" High	£114.00	£228.00
Second inscription on existing headstone	£34.00	£68.00
Memorial Book	£91.00	£182.00
Flat stone, wedge, or memorial tablet for a burial plot not to exceed 2ft x 2ft	£80.00	£160.00
Flat stone, wedge, or memorial tablet for cremated remains plot not to exceed W490mm x D490mm x H305mm	£57.00	£114.00
Fixed vase, (per item)	£29.00	£58.00
Kerbing	£170.00	£340.00
Kerbing with Sealing Stone	£227.00	£454.00
MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS		
Excavating and preparation of an ashes grave	£68.00	
Search of burial records	£23.00	
Transfer of Exclusive Right of Burial (no new documentation sent)	No Charge	
Transfer of Exclusive Right of Burial (new documents issued)	£18.00	

* Must have been a resident of Gillingham within the last 5 years.