
SHEPPEY AREA COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held in The Criterion, 69 High Street, Blue Town, Sheerness ME12 1RW on Tuesday, 3 February 2026 from 7.00 pm - 9.03 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Hayden Brawn, Elliott Jayes (Chair), Peter MacDonald, Peter Marchington, Lee-Anne Moore, Tom Nundy, Ashley Shiel, Mike Whiting and Dolley Wooster (Vice-Chair).

NOMINATED PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES: Parish/Town Councillors Ben Pointing and John Nurden (Minster-on-Sea Parish Council (PC)), Gaye Munday and Paula Telford (Queenborough Town Council (TC)), Chris Reed (Sheerness TC) and James Morrison (Warden PC).

NOMINATED PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES (Virtually): Lauren Crockford (Minster-on-Sea PC).

OFFICERS PRESENT: Janet Dart, Rebecca Dart, Zoe Hentschel, Charlotte Hudson and Inger Lorraine.

OFFICER PRESENT (Virtually): Stephanie Curtis.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Angela Harrison and Mark Tucker. Inspector Julia Bassindale, Kent Police.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Andy Booth, Pete Neal and Tara Noe.

686 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair read out the emergency evacuation procedure.

687 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 December 2025 (Minute Nos 522 – 535) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

688 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

689 POLICE UPDATE

Inspector Julia Bassindale, Kent Police, gave an update on policing in the Isle of Sheppey area. The main issues covered are summarised below:

- A new Beat Police Constable Sophie Marshall started last week, she would be covering half of the Minster Cliffs Ward;
- additional Police Community Police Officers (PCSOs) had been diverted to Sheerness in 2025;

- targeted enforcement focussed on nuisance bikes, motorbikes, road related anti-social behaviour (ASB) with both warnings issued and education provided;
- some Police action days were planned for multi-agency policing operations targeting criminality and educating people on issues such as speeding and drink-driving;
- a large volume of community engagement work had taken place including fraud and scam awareness sessions as well as safeguarding support for vulnerable residents;
- engagement had taken place with young people via Sheppey Matters;
- a lot of work had been done around VAWG (Violence against women and girls);
- moving forward the focus would continue to be ASB, road safety and shop lifting;
- there had been some high-profile incidents in recent months which sadly had resulted in fatalities, the Police were aware of the community impact; and
- Inspector Bassindale encouraged people to sign up to My Community Voice which was a great way to link in with the local beat officer.

The following comments were raised:

- Tractors were often on the roads with no number plates;
- could engagement with young people and the elderly take place on the eastern side of the Isle of Sheppey?
- was funding available to provide cameras to deal with catapult crime?
- could the work in schools on catapult crime continue?
- what was being done to tackle the anti-social driving at Neats Court, Queenborough; and
- the Police Constable covering Queenborough and Halfway had been doing excellent work.

Inspector Bassindale responded that the Police were aware of the road issues that had been raised and were making them a priority. The new Beat Police Officer and PCSOs would be engaging with the elderly and young people on the eastern side of the Isle of Sheppey. Inspector Bassindale asked for details of the catapult issues to be passed to her after the meeting to see what could be done. Bids had been put in for funding for diversionary activities across the Isle of Sheppey. The positive comments about the Police Constable covering Queenborough and Halfway would be passed on.

The Chair thanked Inspector Bassindale for taking time to attend the meeting.

690 SHEERNESS REVIVAL PROJECT UPDATE

The Capital Programme Manager and Capital Programme Officer gave an update on the Sheerness Revival Project.

Beachfields – landscaping works continued with new pathways created. Work was progressing inside and the unforeseen structural challenges that resulted in delay had been resolved. Work on the new adventure play area was progressing. The Sheerness Shipwreck Adventure Golf continued to be well used. Completion was expected to take place Summer 2026.

Sheppey College – the external works were nearly finished with practical completion expected mid-February 2026. The ground floor was fully fitted and operable with students welcomed into the space in January 2026 allowing for practical studies to take place. External works continued to progress well. A milestone event was planned for March 2026.

Masters House – all three garages and welfare unit were completed at the end of December 2025. The building was handed over to Launch It as part of the official opening event on 23 January 2026.

Communications and Engagement – the newsletter engagement remained high and engagement levels on Facebook were increasing. An on-site meeting had taken place for the Health Suite users.

The following comments were raised:

- Could a ping-pong table be included in the outdoor provision?;
- when would the paddling pool re-open?;
- when would suitable bins and benches be in place at Beachfields; and
- when would the multi-activity court be ready?

The Capital Programme Officer responded that she would feed the request for a ping-pong table back to the contractor and wider delivery team to see if it would be possible. The paddling pool should hopefully re-open for the summer. Discussions were taking place with McDonalds regarding the benches at Beachfields and the Swale Borough Council (SBC) Cleansing Team were looking at ensuring suitable bins would be in place.

691 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW UPDATE (POTENTIAL CHANGES TO ARRANGEMENTS FOR TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS)

The Policy & Communities Manager gave an updated on the Community Governance Review (CGR).

She explained CGR was an opportunity for residents or the principal authority, to kick start a process around governance of the borough and to make governance better reflect local identities and facilitate a more effective local government. This review would consider naming of parish councils, boundary changes, establishing a town or parish council for unparished areas, as well as other governance matters such as councillor numbers.

A cross-party member steering group had been set up to lead the review. Two stages of consultation would be completed with SBC making final decisions on review outcomes.

First stage consultation was open until 9 February 2026 with draft recommendations going to Full Council early Spring. The second stage consultation would take place from mid-April until May 2026. The final recommendations would then go to Full Council before submission to Government in July 2026.

The following comments were raised:

- Where did the proposal for a single Isle of Sheppey Parish Council come from?;
- did people know about the potential Council Tax increases for establishing new town and parish councils?;
- additional methods of engagement and communication were discussed;
- people needed to feel confident their responses to the consultations would be considered; and
- not everyone at the eastern end of the Isle of Sheppey had access to social media.

The Policy & Communities Manager responded that the suggestion for a single parish council for the Isle of Sheppey originated from residents who made the proposal on social media. There had been a lot of information in different formats on potential costs for establishing new parish and town councils. The Policy & Communities Manager said she would take away the suggestions for additional methods of engagement and communication.

692 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION UPDATE (GOVERNMENT WANTS US TO DELIVER YOUR SERVICES DIFFERENTLY)

The update report was noted.

The Policy & Communities Manager advised that the Local Government Reorganisation public consultation would be launched on 5 February 2026 and would close on 26 March 2026.

693 PUBLIC FORUM

Events - Jenny Hurkett from the Island Forum said she was the lead on tourism and that they were planning a month-long event in June 2026 where about 30 events would be taking place across the Isle of Sheppey. They were working with several organisations including Visit Kent, Network Rail, two universities, museums and others to hold a broad spectrum of events. Jenny asked Councillors to let her know if they had any ideas of events in their areas that could be included. She said that all events were self-funded but contributions from SBC Member Grants would be appreciated to purchase things like banners. They had already received an SBC grant to produce a magazine for the event. John Nurden, the Co-Chair of the Island Forum said he was helping and said he was arranging communications for the event. A search was taking place for an Isle of Sheppey Town Cryer, anyone was welcome to apply and auditions would take place on 14 February 2026 at the Criterion, Blue Town. The event would be launched on 1 March 2026.

Parking charges consultation - Simon Fowle asked following the outcome of the recent car parking charges consultation, was democracy dead in Swale? If not, how could trust be rebuilt? A discussion took place and the following comments were raised:

- An SBC Member said democracy was not dead but some Members felt their voices had not been heard;

- Isle of Sheppey Members felt out-numbered by mainland Members where charges were applied to car parks;
- an SBC Member said conditions in the Queenborough Charter stated that parking should be free in the Queenborough area but officers advised that this came to an end once SBC took over the car parks;
- an SBC Member said it was a good idea to give parish and town councils assets but it was not in SBC's best interests to give assets away;
- most Isle of Sheppey councillors objected to introducing car parking charges;
- SBC needed to consult properly and listen to responses; and
- a potential outcome from the introduction of parking charges could be an increase in on-street parking, especially in places like on double yellow lines and pavement parking

Councillor Dolley Wooster responded that as Chair of the Environmental Services and Climate Change Committee she could confirm that the process had been carried out correctly and suggested that people view the recordings of the meetings on the SBC website. The proposals had also been discussed at the Economy & Property Committee. A Parish Council spoke at the Environmental Services and Climate Change Committee meeting. All business was conducted appropriately and no-one was disregarded.

Vehicles parked long-term - vehicles were parked on some residential roads with no tax or MOT and some had been there for four years. Residents were not able to park on their roads. What could SBC do to stop it? The Chair asked for details to be emailed to him and he would speak to relevant officers to see what could be done.

Overnight parking – vehicles were parking on the beachfront where there were overnight parking restrictions and people were removing the signs. It was suggested that the signs should be welded to the posts so they could not be removed. The Chair said he would feed this suggestion back to the Parking Team.

694 SWALE BUS PARTNERSHIP FORUM

Councillor Wooster, the Sheppey Area Committee representative on the Swale Bus Partnership Forum gave an update on the last meeting where improvements and locating of bus shelters was discussed.

It was suggested that the Forum should lobby Kent County Council (KCC) to improve bus services and developer Section 106 funding should be used. Currently the Government decide how Section 106 funding should be spent. It was also suggested that the local Member of Parliament lobby Parliament to request that Section 106 funding be spent on bus services.

695 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Members noted the update report.

Area Committees Review – a verbal update was given on the outcome of the review where 14 recommendations were agreed by Council, including a change of name from Area Committees to Councillors and Residents Forum.

Pride of Place – Ward Members at the eastern end of the Isle of Sheppey said they had not been consulted or kept up-to-date on the process to date. The Head of Housing & Community Services said that discussions so far were around putting governance in place as SBC were the accountable body. She said she would take the Ward Members comments back to the lead officer.

Memorial Benches – Councillor Tom Nundy said he was not happy with the response to his request for memorial benches to be installed on Minster Leas due to limited space. It was agreed to refer this matter to the Chair of the Environmental Services and Climate Change Committee for consideration.

696 **LOCAL ISSUES TO BE RAISED**

Councillor Peter MacDonald said that sea defences in the cliff areas at Sheerness and Leysdown were being affected by long-shore drift and the Environment Agency had not done anything. Councillor MacDonald asked for this to be discussed at the next meeting.

Councillor MacDonald said that a commuter train was needed to run direct from the Isle of Sheppey to London, however, a business case needed to be put together. Car parks were needed at Swale and Kemsley Stations to encourage use.

Councillor Peter Marchington explained an idea he had been researching to improve Eastchurch Aerodrome as part of the Pride in Place project. He said vintage planes could be stored there and there could be exhibits. People who visited the Aerodrome would be encouraged to also visit Leysdown.

Sheerness Town Councillor Chris Reed said she hoped that Neptune Terrace was made a priority in the Swale Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan.

Councillor Reed said she was still keen for all parish councils on the Isle of Sheppey to club together and employ a tourism officer.

Councillor Lee-Anne Moore said that there were still 10 children on the Isle of Sheppey without school places and that number would increase next year. She wanted to keep the issue at the forefront of people's minds.

Warden Parish Councillor James Morrison said that people were being fined for driving over Sheppey Bridge due to Jacksons overrunning works at Grovehurst Roundabout. The Chair suggested Councillor Morrison take the matter up with the KCC Councillors for the Isle of Sheppey

697 **MATTERS REFERRED TO SERVICE COMMITTEE CHAIRS FOR CONSIDERATION**

It was agreed to refer the following matters to the relevant Service Committee Chairs for consideration:

- The installation of memorial benches on Minster Leas; and

- SBC Ward Councillors should be consulted and updated on the Pride in Place project.

Chair

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All Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel