
EASTERN AREA COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held in The Alexander Centre, 15-17 Preston Street, Faversham ME13 8NZ on Tuesday, 24 February 2026 from 7.00 pm - 8.42 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Alex Eyre, Charles Gibson (Vice-Chair), Ben J Martin (Chair), Hannah Perkin and Terry Thompson.

NOMINATED PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES: Parish/Town Councillors Trevor Martin and Robert Newman (Faversham Town Council (TC)) and Beverley Ferrell (Oare Parish Council (PC)).

NOMINATED PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES (Virtually): Anne Adams (Eastling PC) and Don Cockrill (Newnham PC).

OFFICERS PRESENT: Martyn Cassell, Janet Dart and Philip Sutcliffe.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Inspector Julia Bassindale and Sergeant Chris Hill, Kent Police.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Lloyd Bowen, Kieran Golding, Alastair Gould, Carole Jackson, Rich Lehmann, Claire Martin and Julien Speed.

741 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair read out the emergency evacuation procedure.

742 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 September 2025 (Minute Nos. 260 – 273) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

743 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

744 POLICE UPDATE

Inspector Julia Bassindale and Sergeant Chris Hill from Kent Police gave an update on policing in the Eastern area, below is a summary of their update:

- A new beat officer was working in the Watling area;
- each ward had three agreed top priorities;
- focus had been on violence against women and children (VAWC) road safety and speed checks, nuisance bikes and vehicles, and anti-social behaviour;
- walk and talk events were ongoing and everyone was welcome to go along to talk to beat officers. Upcoming events would be publicised online;
- the Police were working with retailers in Faversham Town Centre on a new initiative to tackle issues such as VAWC; and

- working with Swale Borough Council (SBC) to install new closed-circuit television cameras (CCTV).

The following comments were raised:

- There were ongoing incidents of door kicking and egg throwing;
- were the Police aware of incidents of hunting with dogs?; and
- motorcyclists were causing concern in some areas.

Sergeant Hill took the details of the incidents and said he would follow up on them. He said that incidents should always be reported to the Police via 101, also the My Community Voice app was a two-way engagement tool with the Police and he recommended people should sign up to it.

745 PUBLIC FORUM

Faversham Town Councillor Trevor Martin asked who was invited to attend the Swale Local Bus Forum meetings, the Chair confirmed that bus operators were invited to attend. Faversham Town Councillor Martin asked what the criteria of a bus operator was as Faversham TC operated a bus service in the area. The Head of Environment & Leisure said he would find out and report back to Faversham TC.

A Faversham Bus Users Forum was being set up and the date of their first meeting would be advertised shortly.

746 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Members noted the update report.

Community tensions – Inspector Bassindale said that investigations were ongoing and the Police had a good relationship with Acacia Court, Faversham and they had weekly meetings so would be aware of any issues as soon as they arose. The Police were aware of pockets of tension and requested that any concerns be reported and incidents would be dealt with robustly. The town was in a better position currently than it was a couple months ago.

Taxi-rank, Faversham Railway Station – the Head of Environment & Leisure said that over the last year where vehicles had parked in the taxi-rank, 24 penalty charge notices had been issued. Daily enforcement checks continued to be made to that site.

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

Members noted the update report.

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

Members noted the update report.

749 NATIONAL LANDSCAPES (FORMERLY AONB) BOUNDARY EXTENSIONS

Councillor Terry Thompson explained the background to the National Landscapes boundary extensions proposal to reconnect the ancient woodland from Kings Wood, Challock and Perry Wood, Faversham north-eastward to the Blean Woodland Nature Reserve and east Blean at Hoath, to connect essential wildlife habitats and re-create a landscape-scale forest in east Kent. This project included a “green” land bridge across the A2, creating “steppingstones” to connect habitats and develop marginal habitats to support the biodiversity of the forest.

Councillor Thompson requested that the Eastern Area Committee agree to support progressing the proposal and to see if funding could be found to produce a definitive map to support the proposal to bring Blean into the National landscapes. The first step would be to find out from National Landscapes who they would accept producing a map and then to seek a quotation for that piece of work.

Councillor Thompson proposed that the Eastern Area Committee referred this matter to the Chair of the Environmental Services and Climate Change Committee to consider providing written and funding support for the Reconnecting our Ancient Woodlands proposal. Councillor Charles Gibson seconded the proposal and on being put to the vote it was agreed.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Eastern Area Committee ask the Chair of the Environmental Services and Climate Change Committee to consider providing written and funding support for the Reconnecting our Ancient Woodlands proposal.***

750 ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Following a request by residents, the Head of Environment & Leisure gave a presentation updating on environmental services in the Eastern area.

He provided area based statistics on fly-tipping and enforcement, broken down by Ward, which showed that Teynham and Lynsted had the highest number of reports of fly-tipping over 2024-2025. SBC ran a fly-tip hotspot list and the Environmental Response Team went out to investigate any reports of fly-tips before the cleansing contractor removed the items. It was difficult to get a formal outcome for enforcement as SBC needed to be able to identify the dumper.

SBC were working with the contractor to improve the street cleansing service and in particular were working on improving reporting methods. The Head of Environment & Leisure urged anyone who noticed areas of littering to report it via the SBC call centre or website. Deep cleans regularly took place and if any problems could be reported to SBC they would be added to the deep-clean programme.

Some roads were not safe for operatives to work on without traffic management which took place in the evenings and overnight to minimise disruption.

The following comments were raised:

- Were the three road sweepers operating in Swale allocated one each to Faversham, Sittingbourne and Sheppey?;
- was it the case that one of the road sweepers was not adequate?;
- some litter bins in rural areas were still not being emptied;
- how closely did SBC work with Network Rail regarding fly-tipping or heavy littering on their land?
- how did SBC work with other local authorities to address fly-tipping on borough boundaries? and
- an incident of fly-tipping on Preston Lane, Faversham, was reported on 17 December 2025 and had still not been cleared;

The Head of Environment & Leisure responded that road sweepers were not assigned to a geographical location but by job type as there was a large, medium and small mechanical sweeper in the fleet. They operated in areas suited to their size, for example the large sweeper worked on roads such as the A2 and the small sweeper was able to operate on pavements. Regarding rural litter bins, there was a list of all litter bins in the borough, but he acknowledged some older bins might be missing and there was an ongoing litter bin project taking place to identify all bins and to replace the old stock. The aim was to put a QR (Quick Response) code on each bin to make reporting issues quicker. Once all bins had been identified, SUEZ would be able to put in place an efficient route to empty them. SBC always tried to contact landowners, such as Network Rail, to rectify littering or fly-tipping issues. SBC worked with other local authorities to tackle fly-tipping issues on boundaries including joint enforcement operations, all authorities should be working to the Government Code of Conduct for Litter. There was a technical 'blip' with reports of fly-tipping not going through to the team, this had now been rectified and the Head of Environment & Leisure would follow up on the incident referred to if the person sent him the details.

751 LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

Members noted the update report.

752 GP PROVISION IN TEYNHAM

The Chair gave an update on GP provision in Teynham and said that NHS Kent and Medway advised: *"It remained the intention of the Medic Care Surgery to relocate back to the Teynham area. The Practice, working with their advisor, had explored a number of potential options but at this time a suitable option had not been identified. NHS Kent and Medway would continue to engage with the practice."*

753 FLOODING IN THE EASTERN AREA

Councillor Gibson referred to the Flooding Tracker Report in the agenda pack and asked for any updates to be emailed to him.

754 SWALE BUS PARTNERSHIP FORUM UPDATE

The Chair advised that the last Swale Bus Partnership Forum meeting took place on 19 January 2026 and the minutes would be circulated as soon as they were available.

It was requested that the Eastern Area Committee representative on the Swale Bus Partnership Forum raise the following issues at the Forum's next meeting:

- Faversham Town Council had written to the Integrated Care Board about residents accessing primary care. In particular mobile units had been moved from Faversham to Canterbury and there was no bus service to Ashford Hospital. Was there anything the Forum could do to address the lack of bus services to these areas?
- Now that Stagecoach had reduced to an hourly bus service, when they cancelled a service in the day there was a two hour wait for people to return home after shopping in Faversham Town.

755 REPORTS/UPDATES FROM PARISH/TOWN COUNCILS

No issues were raised.

756 LOCAL ISSUES TO BE RAISED

Councillor Thompson said that due to a lack of fully accessible rural social housing, there was a long waiting list for residents. He asked if there was anything that could be done to address this issue. It was agreed to refer this matter to the Chair of the Housing, Health & Communities Committee.

Resolved:

- 1) That the issue of a long waiting list for residents seeking fully accessible rural social housing be referred to the Chair of the Housing, Health & Communities Committee for consideration.***

Councillor Hannah Perkin said that the benches at Faversham Recreation Ground were broken and asked if repairs could be made. The Head of Environment & Leisure said he would ask the relevant team to follow up on this matter.

757 MATTERS REFERRED TO SERVICE COMMITTEE CHAIRS FOR CONSIDERATION

It was agreed to refer the items as minuted above to the relevant Service Committee Chairs for consideration.

Chair

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