

**Council meeting: 16 March 2016**  
**Councillors' questions**

**1 From Councillor Richard Pascoe of Councillor Malcolm Dearden, Cabinet Member for Transport and Commercial**

For some time there have been discussions about investigating the removal of incorrect or unwanted yellow parking lines in the district. Can the Cabinet Member for Highways please inform us of the status of this investigation?"

**ANSWER**

*The removal of redundant yellow lines is an ongoing task carried out principally when new parking schemes are introduced. Since the decision was made to address this issue, several metres of yellow lines were removed/reduced in the Folkestone Town centre area. The introduction of the Guildhall North controlled parking zone also saw the removal of yellow lines in Copthall Gardens and other roads within this zone.*

*Recommendations have been made to the Joint Transportation Board on the 29 February to remove some yellow lines in the Dymchurch area during the next financial year.*

*Parking services will continue to assess sites and if waiting restrictions are considered redundant, recommendations will be made to amend the traffic regulation order and remove/reduce lines as part of a planned programme of works.*

**SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

In your answer you spoke of "several metres" – can you please be more specific?

**ANSWER**

*Last year we removed 63 metres mainly in the Guildhall north area. There was also an experimental order for the north side of the Leas in Folkestone. In addition we have installed an additional 89 metres of yellow lines to enable the free flow of traffic, which is the only reason that we use yellow lines. Whilst yellow lines can be seen as an obstruction they are actually very helpful to enable clear access especially for emergency vehicles such as fire engines and ambulances.*

**2 From Councillor Richard Pascoe of Councillor Stuart Peall, Cabinet Member for the Environment**

The current very bad weather with high winds has seen a multitude of bins being blown around the district and some damaged. What reserves of these

bins are held by SDC and when can residents expect to receive replacements for bins damaged?"

## **ANSWER**

*The Council policy is to replace Council provided bins free of charge if a bin goes missing or is damaged on the day of collection as a consequence of the collection. These bins are commonly the 180L refuse bin, the 240L plastics and glass recycling bin (or boxes) and the green food recycling bin.*

*Residents should contact the council's Customer Services to report a missing bin. The replacement bin is arranged with Veolia who maintain a good stock of all types. Numbers change all the time based on demand so figures can only be accurate for a given moment in time – an example spreadsheet can be provided separately.*

*Veolia endeavour to provide replacements within 10 days but this may take longer at times of high demand or in certain circumstances when the bin goes elsewhere.*

## **SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

The brown top bins were not mentioned in your answer – what is the cost for replacing these bins?

## **ANSWER**

*There is a long list of charges which I will arrange for you to have outside of the meeting.*

### **3 From Councillor Rodica Wheeler of Councillor Stuart Peall, Cabinet Member for the Environment**

2016 is another important year for the nation when people all across the country are planning events to mark and celebrate the Queen's birthday in ways that will be remembered for a long time; keeping Britain clean and tidy is just one such example. Can the Cabinet Member tell me what SDC is doing to support the Clean for the Queen campaign?

## **ANSWER**

*Clean for the Queen is a campaign to clear up Britain in time for Her Majesty the Queen's 90th birthday, which will be officially celebrated in June 2016.*

*When she came to the throne litter was not the problem that it is today. Food packaging, plastic bottles, takeaway meals and cigarette butts have all contributed to a growing menace that affects our wildlife, streets, countryside and sense of pride. The aim is to bring groups together to make a difference under the banner of "Clean for the Queen".*

*Keep Britain Tidy have said that “A quarter of a million litter-pick heroes took to the streets, parks and beaches on the weekend for the biggest anti-litter campaign the UK has ever seen. The result was a massive 300,000 bags of rubbish, containing enough litter to stretch from Land's End to John O'Groats!” – so it's a national issue not a local one.*

*I am delighted to say that as always, we are way ahead of the curve on this as we have been organising or supporting community litter picks across the District for years through the great work of Giles Barnard amongst others.*

*For Clean for the Queen, we have had groups from Dungeness to the Leas, and Cheriton to New Romney with community volunteers out in Hythe, Stowting, Etchinghill and Densole on Saturday before last. We have had the Gurkhas scaling the heights of the Leas near the new arch, and we had Scouts and Cubs out in Sandgate on 12th March. The Cabinet Member for Finance participated in her tiara!*

*So far 227 people have collected 379 bags of rubbish plus dozens of traffic cones, tyres, wheel trims and chairs! The count will continue to rise with a Lyminge stream clean and litter pick on 19 March to which, I am sure, all are welcome. Saga and McDonalds are also mobilising staff whilst Ivychurch and Hawkinge plan to get in on the act too later in the year. I want to thank everybody who has come out and taken pride in their patch.*

*There is still time to organise your own litter pick – we supply the equipment, bags and support you may need.*

*Of course, I would rather that we didn't have to do any of this – I would love that our District was devoid of the scourge of litter but unfortunately, a small number of people seem intent on blighting our lives through carelessness or laziness. I would remind them that their litter is their own. Our enforcement team has grown so that we can take on these people and wherever possible, look to prosecute.*

## **SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

I commend the Council for the work that has been undertaken, but what will happen after the Queen's birthday in June?

## **ANSWER**

*Through Giles Barnard we have been helping communities do this for years. We will continue to support community groups, for example I am meeting a group at Otterpool Lane this coming Friday. Veolia also have contractual requirements.*

- 4 From Councillor Ann Berry of Councillor Jennifer Hollingsbee, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Communities**

Can the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities please update the Council on the progress made under the Armed Forces Covenant (formerly Community Covenant)?

## **ANSWER**

*Thanks for this question as we rarely have questions on the armed forces.*

*The Community Covenant is a voluntary pledge of mutual support between the civilian community and its local armed forces community, and Shepway was the first district council in England to sign the Covenant in 2011. The Covenant is an agreement that sets out principles and aims, to encourage support for members of the armed forces community working and residing in Shepway. The armed forces community includes serving personnel, reserves, veterans and families. The overarching objective of the Covenant is that the armed forces should not be disadvantaged as a result of their service.*

*The Shepway Armed Forces Covenant Steering Group was formed to deliver Covenant objectives and met approximately three times a year until 2015, under the chairmanship of Brian Copping. In 2015 I took over and there are now two armed forces champions – myself and the responsible officer, Alex Samson.*

*Initiatives that have been implemented as a result of the Covenant are*

- SSAFA surgery every Wednesday morning at the Civic Centre to provide help and advice to the armed forces community*
- Amendments to the SDC housing policy to ensure no disadvantage to the armed forces community*
- 10% membership discount at Folkestone Sports centre for serving personnel*
- Gurkha “clean for the Queen” event, as already mentioned, cleared some of the Leas escarpment of litter and helped to engage the wider community on litter issues. I subsequently met with Major Prem and he said he would be happy to repeat the exercise and invited councillors to scale the escarpment!*
- Assistance provided to KCC to conduct the armed forces research project which has resulted in a large amount of data on the local armed forces community being available to inform future projects*
- Shepway Armed Forces Covenant had a stand at the community links event in Folkestone in September 2014 to raise the profile of the Covenant amongst the local population.*

*Having a Covenant in place has allowed Shepway based community groups and organisations to apply for funding from the community covenant grant fund, and over £190,000 was received for local projects between 2012 and 2015. The Covenant has facilitated relationships between SDC and the Second Regiment Gurkha Rifles, army welfare, the Gurkha community development, SSAFA, the Royal British Legion, Kent County Council, Gravesham Borough Council and Thanet and Dover District Councils.*

*There has been positive local media coverage relating to the Covenant grant fund and the Clean for the Queen event.*

*The next steps for the Covenant will reflect significant change, as is applying to all public sector organisations. These changes will increase demands on schools, health facilities and housing as well as providing jobs, shared facilities and significant income to local economies. Shepway is richer for the unique opportunities the armed forces bring to the District. Developing a specific and relevant action plan to support our Community Covenant will bring a very positive way of helping us to work closer together. The proposed action plan will be developed and overseen by the Shepway Civilian Military Partnership Board and will help drive the strategic direction, monitor progress and create a cohort of civilian/military liaison delivering a dynamic outcome focused partnership. The action plan will focus on five key priority work strands:*

- *Health and wellbeing*
- *Education and children and young people*
- *Employment and skills*
- *Housing and infrastructure*
- *Safer and stronger communities*

*Just to finish I will relate a good news story. The Shepway local board has been successful in our bid (in partnership with Gravesham Borough Council, Medway and the RBLi) to the armed forces covenant fund. Gravesham are the lead partner and are preparing the partnership agreement. SDC will receive a £4,000 grant to hold a community engagement event with the local armed forces community followed by an outreach and networking event with service providers, local residents, students, businesses and community groups to support the ex-services community.*

**5 From Councillor Mary Lawes of Councillor Alan Ewart-James Cabinet Member for Housing.**

Following on from 18 February Council meeting where Cllr David Monk stated there were 9 properties acquired/built to rent during 2015/16. Can you please tell me where these properties are?

**ANSWER**

*As at 14 March 2016, the Council has built or acquired 12 council homes for rent across the district during 2015/16*

- *2 homes in Lydd (at Tourney Road)*
- *5 homes in Hawkinge (at Millfield)*
- *1 home in Stelling Minnis (at Minnis Green)*
- *4 homes in Folkestone ( at Rossendale Court, George Gurr Crescent, Harbour Way and Montgommery Way*

**SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Can you confirm that all of these homes are council housing?

**ANSWER**

Yes

**6 From Councillor Mary Lawes of Councillor Alan Ewart-James Cabinet Member for Housing.**

Councillor David Monk answered a previous question stating legislation had changed for social and affordable homes. Can you tell me what legislation has changed and how this affects these types of homes?

**ANSWER**

*Government Policy did change in relation to the rents that councils and housing associations can charge for their general needs homes over the four year period 2016/17 to 2019/20 and they are required to reduce their rents for these properties by 1% per year. Sheltered housing is exempt from this policy. The impact of this change is that across the country, housing associations and councils are likely to have less financial resources to provide new homes.*

**SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

*Following on from what was said at the 18 February Council meeting, why are we not now building the 30 homes per annum that was promised?*

**ANSWER**

*We are. We started with a pilot. We wanted to learn and are now building up to a larger programme. We are using other ways as well including other developers project financing affordable housing. We will be keeping up the numbers.*

**7 From Councillor Mary Lawes of Councillor David Monk, Leader of the Council.**

Can you tell me when surveys for a leisure centre were carried out for Princes Parade and Nickolls Quarry and who carried out these surveys and how did they conclude that the costs for both sites would be the same.

**ANSWER**

*The costs of developing a Recreation Centre have not been compared in the way that the question implies.*

However, the Lee Evans Partnership's Report, "Options Appraisal and Site Analysis, for the provision of a Leisure Centre for Hythe, October 2015" is helpful in summarising the position. It relied in part on the following surveys:

<b>Strategic Leisure</b>	New Swimming Pool Feasibility Study Stage 1 - Strategic Leisure Final Report	August 2010
<b>Lee Evans LLP</b>	Heritage Impact Assessment	August 2014
<b>Savills</b>	Land Value Assessments on the basis of Planning Consent for Redevelopment	August 2015
<b>Lloyd Bore</b>	Lloyd Bore Environmental Report 2015	September 2015
<b>IDOM Merebrooks</b>	Geo-Environmental Assessment	October 2015
<b>IDOM Merebrooks</b>	Estimate of remediation costs	October 2015

The work undertaken included the costs of constructing a Recreation Centre, on the Council owned land, at Princes Parade Hythe. This takes account of the abnormal costs of mitigating contaminated land and also dealing with difficult ground conditions. It is also likely that there will be additional costs of mitigating heritage impacts on the Royal Military Canal. This will be a matter of negotiation. However, the land is also a valuable housing resource and it is considered that the uplift in value from developing housing on the site will make the project viable.

Nickolls Quarry is a different kettle of fish. The full costs of developing a Recreation Centre on the site have not been calculated as the land preparation will be the responsibility of the Developer not the Council. There is a requirement to mitigate against the potential of flooding and also to provide new infrastructure, the costs are clearly very significant but these abnormal costs would be met by the developer. The main problem in pursuing a Nickolls Quarry option however, is the question of timing. The Developer has indicated that the very earliest that the land will be available is 2020 and it could well be later. We currently assess that this is likely to be nearer 2022. This timescale significantly increases the risk that the current pool would have to close before the new centre could be opened. The Princes Parade option significantly improves the chance of keeping a swimming pool available to the people of Hythe.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

At the 18 February Council meeting you stated that there was no difference – can I see the paperwork explaining the position?

**ANSWER**

*I see no reason unless I am advised otherwise.*