

You are hereby summoned to attend an extraordinary meeting of the

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Date: Wednesday 29 November 2023
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Bartlett, Mrs Blackmore, Bryant, Burton, Cannon, Clark, Cleator, Coates, Conyard, Cooke, Cooper, Cox, Eagle, English, Forecast, Fort, Garten, Mrs Gooch, Mrs Grigg, Harper, Harwood, Hastie, Hinder, Holmes, Jeffery, Jones, Joy, Khadka, Kimmance, Knatchbull, McKenna, Mortimer, Munford, Naghi, Newton (Mayor), Parfitt-Reid, Perry, Reid, Riordan, Mrs Robertson, Rose, Round, Russell, J Sams, T Sams, Spooner, Springett, M Thompson, S Thompson, Trzebinski, Webb, Wilby, D Wilkinson, J Wilkinson and T Wilkinson

<u>AGENDA</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
1. Prayers	
2. Apologies for Absence	
3. Dispensations (if any)	
4. Disclosures by Members and Officers	
5. Disclosures of Lobbying	
6. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information	
7. Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Borough Council held on 27 September 2023	1 - 2
8. Minutes of the meeting of the Borough Council held on 27 September 2023	3 - 9
9. Mayor's Announcements	
10. Petitions	

Issued on Tuesday 21 November 2023

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

11. Question and Answer Session for Local Residents
12. Questions from Members of the Council to the
 - (a) Leader of the Council
 - (b) Cabinet Members
 - (c) Chairmen of Decision-Making Committees
13. Current Issues - Report of the Leader of the Council, Response of the Group Leaders and Questions from Council Members
14. Report of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee held on 25 September 2023 - Audit, Governance and Standards Committee Annual Report 2022/23 10 - 23
15. Report of the Cabinet held on 25 October 2023 - Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2024/25 24 - 26
16. Report of the Democracy and General Purposes Committee held on 20 November 2023 - Polling Districts and Polling Places Review 2023 27 - 56
17. Report of the Democracy and General Purposes Committee held on 20 November 2023 - Parish Election Cycle 57 - 59
18. Notice of Motion - KCC's Draft Minerals and Waste Plan - Inclusion of Oaken Wood (Barming Woods) as a Further Extension to Hermitage Quarry.

Notice of the following motion has been given by Councillor Jeffery, seconded by Councillor English:

The full Council has not had the opportunity to express its opinion on KCC's draft Minerals and Waste plan, specifically the inclusion of Oaken Wood (Barming Woods) as a further extension to Hermitage Quarry.

This area of ancient woodland covers 50 hectares, the loss of which would be the largest loss of ancient woodland this century, larger than HS2 and Lower Thames Crossing combined. The NPPF describes ancient woodland as irreplaceable and Natural England guidance states that "Planting new trees and creating new native woodland is not a direct replacement for lost or damaged trees or woodland." According to the Woodland Trust there is no real evidence that translocation of soil is an effective mitigation.

The quarry produces around 1 million tonnes each year and 98% of it is used as crushed aggregate. Just 1% is for heritage restoration. At its current rate of production, the current quarry has 7 years left and the extension would increase this by a further 20 years. This is therefore a finite resource that will be exhausted by 2050 at the current rate.

While KCC's Reg 18 consultation has now closed, MBC still holds a position of significant influence over this plan and needs to be clear on its majority position particularly as this is a decision

with national implications. We therefore need to be sure that the right message is given to KCC.

I therefore move the following motion:

This Council states that Hermitage Quarry should not be further extended into Oaken Wood in Barming, an irreplaceable ancient woodland, and asks that the Cabinet reconsider its support for KCC's plans.

19. Notice of Motion - Maidstone Leisure Centre

Notice of the following motion has been given by Councillor Harper, seconded by Councillor Coates:

At the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee held on 5th March 2019 (minute 146) a report was presented on the Future of Sports and Leisure Provision. This was the start of an active process to look at future options for the Maidstone Leisure Centre in Mote Park. This work was conducted with support from the National Sports Council. Over 2019 into early 2021, it became clear that the options were a major refurbishment or a new build for the leisure centre to have a long-term future. During 2021 site visits were undertaken to other new leisure centres and a consensus was developing towards the need for a new building. Since the move to a Cabinet structure in May 2022 the process has slowed or stopped. There is no clarity now on the way forward and the current management contract is coming to an end with no proposals for the future of the Leisure Centre.

In the 2022/23 budget an additional provision of £1m a year was put into the budget to reflect the aging building and its increasing costs with a view that by 2029/30 there would either have been a major refurbishment of the building, parts of which date to the 1970's or a full rebuild. Despite this issue and a request for an update, there are no proposals for the continuation of a leisure centre into the middle of the century.

In February 2023 the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Policy Advisory Committee received a report on the impact to the Council of the long-term revenue costs of the Leisure Centre, including doing nothing, refurbishment and new build. In revenue terms if there is no refurbishment to the Centre and it remains largely as now the yearly costs to the Council by 2039/40 will be around £2.3/2.4m and increasing yearly, whilst a new build would only cost £0.5m (and reducing yearly), saving £1.8/1.9m every year.

At that meeting it was stated that to do anything would be too costly to the Council, and that there was no provision in the capital programme. All that was agreed was for a minor scheme to improve circulation space and energy efficiency to be implemented next year.

That was 9 months ago, the problem will not go away by simply

ignoring it. What we are asking for is that this issue be taken forward by the Council and a full progress report to agree a timetable on the process to when a final decision and either a full refurbishment or new build is proceeded with is submitted to the Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee.

It is therefore proposed that:

The Cabinet Member for Communities, Leisure and Arts provide a full progress report on the options to the Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee, no later than its meeting in February 2024, including agreeing a timetable on the process and a key decision-making timeline as to when a final decision is required to ensure that either a full refurbishment or new build is completed 2031.

20. Report of the Leader of the Council - Urgent Decisions Taken by the Cabinet 60

INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

In order to ask a question at this meeting, please call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Monday 27 November 2023). You will need to provide the full text in writing.

If your question is accepted, you will be provided with instructions as to how you can access the meeting.

In order to make a statement in relation to an item on the agenda, please call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 4 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 4 p.m. on Monday 27 November 2023). You will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to speak on.

If you require this information in an alternative format please contact us, call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk.

To find out more about the work of the Council, please visit the [Council's Website](#).