

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **GENERAL PURPOSES GROUP**

#### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 8 JULY 2010**

**Present:** Councillor Mrs Joy (Chairman), and  
Councillors Mrs Blackmore, English, Field, Mrs Gooch,  
Mrs Hinder, B Mortimer, Parvin and Yates

14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Horne.

15. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following substitution was noted:-

Councillor Parvin for Councillor Horne

16. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

17. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

With regard to the query raised at the last meeting of the Group concerning the declaration of personal or prejudicial interest for Nominations to Outside Bodies, the Head of Democratic Services informed Members that, following liaison with the Head of Legal Services, Members should declare a personal interest if they were one of the nominees. However, Members should declare a prejudicial interest if there was a financial aspect to the nomination.

Councillors Mrs Joy and Parvin declared a personal interest in Item 10 – Nominations to Outside Bodies as they were nominees for the Maidstone Street Pastors Management Committee and Vinters Valley Park Trust respectively.

18. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of Lobbying.

19. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the Items on the Agenda be taken in public as proposed.

20. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 May 2010 be approved as a correct record and signed.

21. WHOLE COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The Group considered the report of the Head of Democratic Services regarding the text which is to be published as part of the consultation on whole council elections.

RESOLVED: That the following amendments to the text be agreed:-

- i) An apostrophe to be added to the word "electorates" on the 4<sup>th</sup> line of the first paragraph.
- ii) **What are the current arrangements** – the words "and one councillor per ward retires each year" be removed from the third line.
- iii) The paragraph "Benefits of the current system" to read as follows:-  
**Benefits of the current system include:**
  - With only one-third of seats contested each year it ensures experienced councillors remain
  - One councillor is elected for each ward at a time, allowing the electorate to focus on the aptitude of particular candidates
  - It is easier for independent and smaller party candidates to stand and to be represented when fewer seats are contested
  - Changes in the political direction of the Council are more likely to happen over a period of time, contributing to continuity, as opposed to there being sudden dramatic shifts
- iv) The paragraph "Benefits of a move to a four-year cycle" to read as follows:-  
**Benefits of a move to a four-year cycle include:**
  - Political stability, enabling the delivery of long-term commitments
  - Possible reduction of cost to the taxpayer
  - Less potential for voter confusion/fatigue as electors in Maidstone would be voting for all councillors at the same time
  - With all electors voting every elector has an opportunity to vote and to change the political leadership of the Council and therefore its direction
- v) The paragraph entitled "**We need to know what you think**" to be changed to "**What do you think?**"

22. BECOMING A COUNCILLOR EVENT AND MEMBERS TRAINING

The Group considered the report of the Head of Democratic Services regarding the options to expand and develop the Becoming A Councillor event.

RESOLVED:

1. That a further Becoming A Councillor event be held on 30 September 2010.

2. That the event be held in the Gateway from 4pm to 7pm, with a stand in the Mall Chequers all day to market the event.
3. That the Kent Association for Local Councils be approached to give all parishes the option to participate in this event.

23. NOMINATIONS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Group considered the report of the Head of Democratic Services regarding nominations to Outside Bodies.

RESOLVED:

1. That the following nominations to Outside Bodies be agreed:-
  - a) Action with Communities in Rural Kent - Councillor Nelson-Gracie for a term of 1 year from 1 September 2010.
  - b) Citizens Advice Bureau – Councillors Mrs Gibson and Mrs Ring for a term of 4 years from 1 September 2010.
  - c) Maidstone Street Pastors Management Committee – Councillor Mrs Joy for a term of 3 years from 15 May 2010.
  - d) Maidstone YMCA – Councillor D Mortimer for a term of 1 year from 21 May 2010
  - e) South East Employers – Councillor Mrs Ring (Committee Member) for a term of 1 year from 22 July 2010.
  - f) Vinters Valley Park Trust – Councillor Parvin until 6 September 2011.
2. That nominations continue to be sought for Action with Communities in Rural Kent, Relate West and Mid Kent and a Substitute Member for South East Employers.
3. That there has been no Council representation on Relate West and Mid Kent since September 2009 be noted.

24. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 pm to 8.22 pm