

You are hereby summoned to attend an extraordinary meeting of the

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL



Date: Monday 10 November 2014

Time: 6.30 p.m.

Venue: Town Hall, High Street,
Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Richard Thick (The Mayor), Ash, Black, Mrs Blackmore, Burton, Butler, Chittenden, Collins, Cox, Cuming, Daley, Edwards-Daem, Ells, English, Fissenden, Garland, Mrs Gooch, Greer, Mrs Grigg, Harper, Harwood, Mrs Hinder, Hogg, Mrs Joy, Long, McKay, McLoughlin, Moriarty, B Mortimer, D Mortimer, Munford, Naghi, Newton, Paine, Parvin, Mrs Parvin, Paterson, Perry, Pickett, Powell, Mrs Ring, Mrs Robertson, Ross, Round, Sams, Sargeant, Springett, Mrs Stockell, Vizzard, B Watson, P Watson, de Wiggondene, Willis, J.A. Wilson and Mrs Wilson

Continued Over/:

Issued on 31 October 2014

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be made available in **alternative formats**. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, **please contact DEBBIE SNOOK on 01622 602030**. To find out more about the work of the Council, please visit www.maidstone.gov.uk

Alison Broom

**Alison Broom, Chief Executive, Maidstone Borough Council,
Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6JQ**

AGENDA

Page No.

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Dispensations (if any)
3. Disclosures by Members and Officers
4. Disclosures of Lobbying
5. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.
6. Minutes of the meeting of the Borough Council held on 17 September 2014 1 - 15
7. Mayor's Announcements
8. Petitions
9. Question and Answer Session for Members of the Public
10. Questions from Members of the Council to the
 - (a) Leader of the Council
 - (b) Cabinet Members
 - (c) Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Committees
 - (d) Chairmen of other Committees
11. Report of the General Purposes Group held on 24 October 2014 16 - 33
 - Broomfield and Kingswood and Sutton Valence Parish Councils
 - Increase in Number of Councillors
12. Report of the General Purposes Group held on 24 October 2014 34 - 48
 - Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations
13. Notice of the following Motion has been given by Councillor Harper:
Labour Concerned at Potential Loss of Jobs - Waterside Park - 14/501895 (J8) Decision

The local economy has been underperforming since 2008 compared to large parts of Kent and the South East. More and more residents have to look for work outside of the Borough. Now it looks like the Borough of Maidstone is shut for business. The shocking and damaging statement sent out to the business community by Members of this Council who refused permission for the Waterside Park J8 site (planning ref: 14/501895) put forward by ADL and Scarab two major local businesses.

These firms have out grown their current sites and need to relocate, either within the Borough or to authorities only too happy to take jobs from Maidstone.

The fact is that Maidstone is in deep need of a range of sites for business and employment, including non-centre locations with

good access to the rail, motorway and main road network for business zones. The entire town is ringed with green land, but it needs to go somewhere and this application was ascetically pleasing. To ensure our town and Borough have a future the Council must take responsibility for proactively identifying non-centre locations for business zones.

This Council resolves to:

1. Urgently identify alternative sites within the Borough of Maidstone.
2. Work closely with ADL and Scarab to help them relocate within Maidstone or improve infrastructure to their current sites if that is an alternative.
3. Ensure that the Local Plan is pro jobs and that the maximum number of sites in the Borough are identified for employment.
4. Adopt in the Local Plan policies to oppose the loss of employment land unless compensating space is locally available.
5. Speed up the development of the proposed Enterprise Hub.
6. Where the Council can help, financially support any person(s) and their dependents who have lost their job and are unable to find alternative employment as a result of the refusal of this application (14/501895).
7. Support any appeal of the updated application ref: 14/501895.
8. Report back to the next full Council meeting on all the points above.

14. Notice of the following Motion has been given by Councillor Harper:

Mansfield Walk, Maidstone

Mansfield Walk is situated off Lower Fant Road, Maidstone (Fant Ward). It consists of a row of houses off Lower Fant Road and a separate row accessed by a footpath lower down the hill towards Roseholme.

The path is very steep and does not have steps and therefore in bad weather it is a potential hazard for less mobile people. Also the land to the east of Mansfield Walk is an abandoned and very overgrown plot.

Over the years efforts have been made with both Maidstone Borough Council and Kent County Council to have the path improved to improve access to the houses. Also efforts have been made with both Maidstone Borough Council and Kent County Council to identify the ownership of the vacant land.

The Council resolves to:

1. Undertake a full review of the access to the houses in Mansfield Walk and to report back to the Council on potential options to improve access to the lower block of houses off

the current footpath.

2. Establish the ownership of the vacant land to the east of Mansfield Walk and to consider schemes to lay out the area as an amenity or community space.
3. Report back to the next Council meeting.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, MAIDSTONE ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2014

Present: Councillor Thick (The Mayor) and Councillors Ash, Black, Mrs Blackmore, Burton, Chittenden, Collins, Cox, Cuming, Daley, Edwards-Daem, Ells, English, Fissenden, Garland, Mrs Gooch, Greer, Mrs Grigg, Harper, Harwood, Hogg, Mrs Joy, Long, McKay, McLoughlin, Moriarty, B Mortimer, D Mortimer, Munford, Naghi, Newton, Paine, Parvin, Mrs Parvin, Perry, Pickett, Powell, Mrs Ring, Mrs Robertson, Ross, Sargeant, Mrs Stockell, Vizzard, B Watson, P Watson, de Wiggondene, Willis, J.A. Wilson and Mrs Wilson

41. PRAYERS

Prayers were said by the Reverend Canon Andrew Sewell.

42. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Butler, Mrs Hinder, Paterson, Round, Sams and Springett.

43. DISPENSATIONS

There were no applications for dispensations.

44. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

It was noted that John Scarborough, Head of Legal Partnership, would leave the room whilst the report of the Chief Executive relating to the appointment of Monitoring Officer was being discussed.

45. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

The Mayor stated that he had been lobbied on the petition to be presented relating to future housing development in Headcorn.

46. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the items on the agenda be taken in public as proposed.

47. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD ON 23 JULY 2014

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Borough Council held on 23 July 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed.

48. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor updated Members on recent/forthcoming engagements.

49. PETITIONS

1. ALLOCATION OF HOUSING SITES – LENHAM

Mr Brian Llong presented a petition in the following terms:

We, the undersigned, being either residents or persons working in or having an association with Lenham, call upon Maidstone Borough Council to stop its decision to consider Lenham as being a suitable Parish to accommodate 1500 homes.

We believe that what to all intents and purposes is creating another village size development within the Parish would have a devastating effect on the local community.

We call upon Maidstone Borough Council to have a fair and even dispersal policy for housing throughout the Borough.

In presenting the petition, Mr Llong said that local residents were concerned about the impact of so many new homes on the character of the village and on schools, roads and other infrastructure.

During the discussion on the petition, Members made a number of points, including:

The strong sentiments being expressed by local residents should form an important part of the Council's consideration of the various components of the new Local Plan going forward.

Lenham had not been singled out to receive the largest numbers of new homes. The Council needed to produce a sound new Local Plan very soon to avoid the risk of planning decisions being increasingly taken out of its control. In the meantime, the Council was about to embark on an intensive series of consultations to discuss concerns and share information.

The organisation of the petition demonstrated that local residents wanted to engage with the Council on this important issue. The new Local Plan was still in draft form and there would be further discussion on housing site allocations, but it could not be guaranteed that there would be no housing growth in Lenham.

The projected level of housing development was unprecedented in this Borough. Effectively, the Borough was experiencing unplanned growth because the figures could not be evidenced, and this was having an unsustainable impact on infrastructure, amenity and quality of life. It was accepted that growth was required, but it should be managed growth.

The updated "objectively assessed need" for new housing was for 18,600 dwellings during the period 2011-31 (a reduction in the total requirement by some 1,000 dwellings compared with the main Strategic Housing Market Assessment report).

Housing allocations would not be delivered immediately, but over the Plan period. The housing market in the UK was unsustainable with demand exceeding supply. A new Local Plan was needed to enable the Council to determine in a strategic way where growth should most appropriately go to meet current and future requirements.

RESOLVED: That the petition and the points raised during the debate be referred to the Cabinet for consideration.

2. PETITION – FUTURE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT - HEADCORN

Councillor Edwards-Daem presented a petition in the following terms:

This petition is organised by residents of Headcorn

No to irresponsible building and urbanisation in Headcorn; ignoring local voters and contradicting the neighbourhood plan, ignoring the inadequate road infrastructure and road capacity, ignoring the adverse impact of traffic on village life and residents' safety, ignoring inadequate sewer capacity, ignoring serious flood risk, ignoring that the school is oversubscribed and promoting the destruction of village life.

In presenting the petition, Councillor Edwards-Daem said that local residents were concerned about the impact of new housing development on village life and infrastructure.

During the discussion on the petition, Members made a number of points, including:

Consideration should be given to the special circumstances associated with development in the Weald.

There was a need to build more homes and these should be affordable and accessible. However, until the new Local Plan was in place, the Borough was susceptible to developer-led housing provision particularly in village locations.

If the current trajectory of growth continued beyond 2031, there was a risk that the character of the Borough would be destroyed with

overcrowding and pollution etc. Consideration should be given to the impact of development beyond the life of the Plan.

Infrastructure providers were looking at ways to mitigate the impact of development. There were problems with sewage in Headcorn, but unless Southern Water objected to an application it was difficult for the Council to refuse permission on these grounds.

The administration was trying to control development, not to impose it. The Government was pressing local authorities to produce new Local Plans. The consequences were not popular, and a proper debate was required.

Further consideration should be given to projected population growth, the demand for new housing and the impact on local infrastructure.

Consideration should be given to reducing the housing figures having regard to their sustainability.

RESOLVED: That the petition and the points raised during the debate be referred to the Cabinet for consideration.

Note: The Mayor vacated the Chair during the presentation of this petition and the ensuing discussion as it related to his Ward. The Deputy Mayor took the Chair.

50. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Questions to the Leader of the Council

Mr Mike Cockett asked the following question of the Leader of the Council:

I am very concerned with the amount of building applications that are cropping up all over Lenham, could you tell me if there is a statutory legal ruling on what special weight is given to planning applications to Maidstone Borough Council for new housing within an existing Conservation Area?

The Leader of the Council responded to the question.

Councillor Harwood, on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Munford, on behalf of the Leader of the Independent Group, Councillor Powell, the Leader of the UKIP Group, and Councillor McKay, the Leader of the Labour Group, then responded to the question.

Mr Cockett asked the following supplementary question of the Leader of the Council:

How is it that building on one section in the Conservation Area has already been refused by a Planning Inspector and yet the Planning Authority gets into a consultation process with the developer of a second site also in the Conservation Area for which it takes money from the developer?

The Leader of the Council responded to the question.

Councillor Harwood, on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Newton, on behalf of the Leader of the Independent Group, Councillor Powell, the Leader of the UKIP Group, and Councillor McKay, the Leader of the Labour Group, then responded to the question.

Mr Elliot Dean asked the following question of the Leader of the Council:

Many residents across Maidstone have been affected by the introduction of the bedroom tax. Have over crowded households, temporary accommodations users or waiting lists been significantly reduced in Maidstone since the roll out of the Welfare Reform Act 2012?

The Leader of the Council responded to the question.

Councillor Mrs Wilson, the Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Mrs Gooch, the Leader of the Independent Group, Councillor Powell, the Leader of the UKIP Group, and Councillor Harper, on behalf of the Leader of the Labour Group, then responded to the question.

Mr Dean asked the following supplementary question of the Leader of the Council:

What are the groups on this Council going to do to oppose the Bedroom Tax both locally and nationally?

The Leader of the Council responded to the question.

Councillor Mrs Wilson, the Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Mrs Gooch, the Leader of the Independent Group, Councillor Powell, the Leader of the UKIP Group, and Councillor Harper, on behalf of the Leader of the Labour Group, then responded to the question.

Mr Bryn Annis asked the following (precised) question of the Leader of the Council:

Why is it that nobody from the Parking Services Department is able to tell me why the parking restrictions have not been amended following the Public Realm Project coming into force?

The Leader of the Council responded to the question.

Councillor Mrs Wilson, the Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Mrs Gooch, the Leader of the Independent Group, Councillor Powell, the Leader of the UKIP Group, and Councillor McKay, the Leader of the Labour Group, then responded to the question.

Mr Annis asked the following supplementary question of the Leader of the Council:

Could someone find out what is going on?

The Leader of the Council responded to the question.

Councillor Mrs Wilson, the Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Mrs Gooch, the Leader of the Independent Group, Councillor Powell, the Leader of the UKIP Group, and Councillor McKay, the Leader of the Labour Group, then responded to the question.

To listen to the responses to these questions, please follow this link:

<http://live.webcasts.unique-media.tv/mbc184/interface>

51. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The meeting was adjourned from 8.10 p.m. to 8.20 p.m.

52. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Questions to the Leader of the Council

Councillor Hogg asked the following question of the Leader of the Council:

Back in February 2014, Councillors from all parties were invited to attend the draft Local Plan meeting to discuss what sites Officers were putting forward to develop on, of which the Opposition Group failed to attend and represent their residents in their wards. Six sites were recommended to be taken out of the Local Plan by Councillors, and at the Cabinet meeting these six sites were removed. Can the Leader advise Council why Officers are choosing to ignore Cabinet and Councillors after the Cripple Street site, which is a green field site, was removed from the draft Local Plan but now the developer has put a planning application in to build 36 homes and furthermore Officers are willing to accept this application? What do you intend to do about this application and Officers, for I can see the Conservative Group which is running the Council getting the blame for allowing this site to be built on when it is clear that development sites for homes are being driven by Officers?

The Leader of the Council responded to the question.

Councillor Hogg asked the following question of the Leader of the Council:

Maidstone Borough Council over many years values comments and complaints made by our residents so that we can deliver a better customer service to them, but of late our present Monitoring Officer is not willing to allow a resident's complaint to be processed against three Councillors, of which two are Borough Councillors, for breaching the Code of Conduct. For the present Monitoring Officer's reply was that the resident was three days outside the three month deadline which was agreed at Council back in 2012. Does the Leader consider that due to this time limit not being placed on the MBC website by an Officer since 2012 for residents to be aware of, and that the resident who made the complaint found this out and informed Officers at MBC that there was no date highlighted, this complaint should be allowed to be processed and

upheld, for this could send the wrong message that Councillors can break the rules and get away with it?

The Leader of the Council responded to the question.

Councillor Hogg asked the following question of the Leader of the Council:

After the recent feast festival which took place at Mote Park, what action will be taken against the event organisers who have failed to take down their posters and have littered the whole of Maidstone, making the county town a mess, and what will be put in place so that this does not happen again?

The Leader of the Council responded to the question.

Question to the Chairman of the Planning Committee

Councillor Black asked the following question of the Chairman of the Planning Committee:

The Members' Overview and Scrutiny Handbook, Page 7, Paragraph 1.4, precludes a Scrutiny Committee from examining decisions made by the Planning Committee. In Paragraph 7.2 on Page 30 of the same publication it precludes Councillors calling for action in regards to Planning Issues also.

This question does not wish to breach these guidelines, but recently in the local press there were adverse comments about decisions made.

The priorities set by Maidstone for the 2014 and 2015 years pose two very strong requirements on all Councillors.

One of the first priorities under this rubric of to have a growing economy is:

Outcomes by 2015

**a growing economy with rising employment. Catering for a range of skills set to meet the demands of the local economy.*

The second of the priorities for Maidstone to be a decent place to live requires one of the outcomes to be:

**decent and affordable housing in the right places across a range of tenures.*

In view of the article mentioned in the Kent Messenger Business paper of 4 August 2014, can the Chairman of the Planning Committee comment on how the Committee will meet these objectives in view of the article?

The Chairman of the Planning Committee responded to the question.

To listen to the responses to these questions, please follow this link:

<http://live.webcasts.unique-media.tv/mbc184/interface>

53. CURRENT ISSUES - REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL,
RESPONSE OF THE GROUP LEADERS AND QUESTIONS FROM COUNCIL
MEMBERS

The Leader of the Council submitted her report on current issues.

After the Leader of the Council had submitted her report, Councillor Mrs Wilson, the Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Mrs Gooch, the Leader of the Independent Group, Councillor Powell, the Leader of the UKIP Group, and Councillor McKay, the Leader of the Labour Group, responded to the issues raised.

A number of Members then asked questions of the Leader of the Council on the issues raised in her speech.

54. JOINT REPORT OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE AND THE LICENSING ACT
2003 COMMITTEE HELD ON 4 AUGUST 2014 - PROPOSED
AMALGAMATION OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE AND LICENSING ACT
2003 COMMITTEE

It was moved by Councillor Mrs Joy, seconded by Councillor Powell, that the recommendations of the Licensing Committee and the Licensing Act 2003 Committee relating to the proposed amalgamation of the two Committees be approved.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Licensing Committee and the Licensing Act 2003 Committee be combined into one functioning Committee called the Licensing Committee.
2. That the size of the new Committee be set at 12 Members to allow for cross party representation if possible.
3. That all permitted licensing functions be delegated by the Council to the new Licensing Committee.
4. That the Constitution be amended accordingly.

55. ORAL REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY, ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 SEPTEMBER 2014

It was noted that there was no report from the Community, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on this occasion.

56. ORAL REPORT OF THE CABINET HELD ON 10 SEPTEMBER 2014

It was noted that there was no report from the Cabinet on this occasion.

57. ORAL REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 15 SEPTEMBER 2014

It was noted that there was no report from the Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on this occasion.

58. ORAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD ON 15 SEPTEMBER 2014

It was noted that there was no report from the Audit Committee on this occasion.

59. ORAL REPORT OF THE PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2014

It was noted that there was no report from the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee on this occasion.

60. NOTICE OF MOTION - OVER-DEVELOPMENT OF INNER MAIDSTONE

Councillor Harper had given notice of his intention to move the following motion:

Pressures for development exist all over the town and Borough of Maidstone. There are considerable concerns by residents of Fant Ward about the conversion of houses to multiple occupancy properties. The concerns relate to issues such as over density, overcrowding, lack of amenity space, problems of parking where small terraced houses are sub divided and general environmental impact.

At the July 2014 Council meeting Mr Elliot Dean asked a question on the over-development of Inner Maidstone and all the Council Groups agreed that this was a matter of concern.

The Council notes these concerns and requests that this issue be addressed in the Local Plan. For these purposes "Inner Maidstone" can be defined as Fant, High Street, Bridge and North Wards. Policies should be prepared to prevent or discourage conversion of housing to multiple occupancies in areas of already high population density. The Council requests that the Officers report back progress to the next meeting.

In moving the motion, Councillor Harper added East Ward and Heath Ward to the definition of "Inner Maidstone" in paragraph three.

The motion, as amended, was seconded by Councillor Naghi.

RESOLVED: That the motion, as amended, having been moved and seconded, be referred to the Cabinet, as the decision making body, for consideration.

61. NOTICE OF MOTION - CYCLING SAFETY AND THE GYRATORY SYSTEM

The following motion was moved by Councillor Harper, seconded by Councillor Mrs Gooch:

The Council notes the proposal by Kent County Council to redevelop the gyratory system around the two Medway bridges; it also notes that it is proposed to remove the current cycle track over St Peters Bridge. The gyratory system in its current format is a major deterrent to the development of cycling in Maidstone. This Council requests Kent County Council to ensure that any redevelopment of the gyratory system incorporates measures to improve the safety of cycling in the town centre. A report on progress should be made to the next Council Meeting.

RESOLVED: That the motion, having been moved and seconded, be referred to the Cabinet, as the decision making body, for consideration.

62. NOTICE OF MOTION - BEDROOM TAX

The following motion was moved by Councillor Harper, seconded by Councillor English:

The impact of Welfare Reforms around social housing tenants with the so called additional living space over a quota (the Bedroom Tax) is socially and morally divisive and unfair. It seeks to punish the poor and families with members with disabilities through withdrawing housing benefit. The impact is being felt throughout the UK and in Maidstone. Increasing numbers of families are as a result of these changes either being forced to move to smaller accommodation, often outside the community they live in, and where their social networks and support are, or are threatened with facing eviction.

In Maidstone at the same time there are tenants who independently want to downsize their social housing needs who are effectively being blocked by the requirement to go into a competitive bidding process for available accommodation.

This Council resolves to:

1. Review the Housing Allocation Policy to give social housing tenants who voluntarily want to downsize accommodation, priority to move to smaller accommodation, thus freeing up larger properties for families.
2. Do all it can within the Council's legal powers to minimise the impact of the Bedroom Tax on families where there may be short term absences and also people with disabilities where additional bedrooms may be required due to a person's disabilities.
3. Actively campaign to seek a change in national legislation to repeal the Bedroom Tax.

4. Report back to the next Council meeting on the implementation of measures 1 – 3 above.

The Council was advised that whilst the subject of the motion came within the province of the Cabinet, it could make a recommendation to the Cabinet regarding its adoption. Each part of the motion was considered separately.

With the agreement of the mover and the seconder, paragraph 3 of the motion was amended as follows and put to the vote:

Campaign for change to the legislation via the Local Government Association.

AMENDMENT CARRIED

The substantive motion was then put to the vote.

SUBSTANTIVE MOTION CARRIED

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the CABINET (as the decision making body): That the motion relating to the Bedroom Tax be agreed subject to the amendment of paragraph 3 as follows:

Campaign for change to the legislation via the Local Government Association.

63. NOTICE OF MOTION - WHOLE COUNCIL ELECTIONS

It was moved by Councillor Hogg, second by Councillor Paine, that the following motion be approved:

This Council believes that we should always give our residents value for their money. Residents should also have confidence that their vote counts for something by giving it maximum impact at election time.

This Council also believes that turnout at Borough Council elections is currently low, and part of that apathy is due to having elections every single year.

The Council notes that when the public were asked back in 2011, approximately 22,900 people (71% of the overall vote) requested that we move away from electing Councillors in thirds, and move to one election every 4 years.

Therefore, Maidstone Borough Council should honour the wishes of our residents and move to 4 yearly Borough elections. This will encourage the people of the Borough to get involved and will reduce the amount of taxpayers' money spent running elections every year, potentially saving the residents of this Borough up to £200,000 which in return could be spent on maintaining services for our residents or helping to carry out a project in the Borough so to improve our County Town for them.

With the agreement of the mover and the seconder, and the remainder of the Council, the following paragraph was added to the motion:

To progress this proposal to move to whole Council elections for the Borough of Maidstone, the Council agrees to take reasonable steps to consult the public, and authorises the General Purposes Group to determine how the consultation should be designed and conducted.

When put to the vote, the motion, as amended, was lost.

RESOLVED: That no action be taken on the motion, as amended, relating to whole Council elections.

64. LONG MEETING

Prior to 10.30 p.m., following consideration of the motion relating to whole Council elections, the Council considered whether to adjourn at 10.30 p.m. or to continue until 11.00 p.m. if necessary.

RESOLVED: That the meeting should continue until 11.00 p.m. if necessary.

65. NOTICE OF MOTION - CHANGE TO GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

It was moved by Councillor Mrs Wilson, seconded by Councillor Harwood, and:

RESOLVED: That in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, this Council believes that a modernised committee system would be an appropriate system of governance for Maidstone and hereby resolves to introduce this system from the next Annual Meeting of the Council.

In order to bring forward a full and detailed scheme of committee governance, the Council authorises all Group Leaders (as defined in the updated Widdecombe report 2005) or their nominated representative to meet and discuss proposals to implement the Council's decision and report back to full Council for final decision at the scheduled meeting on 10 December 2014.

Councillors Black, Mrs Blackmore, Burton, Collins, Cuming, Garland, Mrs Gooch, Greer, Hogg, McKay, Paine, Perry, Mrs Ring, de Wiggondene and J. A. Wilson requested that their dissent be recorded.

Note: The meeting was adjourned for five minutes during consideration of this motion (10.35 p.m. to 10.40 p.m.).

66. SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10 - LONG MEETING

Prior to 11.00 p.m., during consideration of the motion relating to proposed changes to the Council's governance arrangements, the Council considered whether to continue beyond 11.00 p.m. if necessary.

RESOLVED: That Council Procedure Rule 10 be suspended for this meeting only to enable the meeting to continue until 11.15 p.m. if necessary, at which time the meeting will stand adjourned.

67. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS - REVIEW OF ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES

It was moved by Councillor Mrs Blackmore, seconded by Councillor Mrs Wilson, that the allocation of seats on Committees be as set out in Appendix C to the report of the Head of Policy and Communications with the following adjustments:

Audit Committee	1 seat from Independent to Labour
Economic and Commercial Development O&S Committee	1 seat from Independent to Labour
Member and Employment and Development Panel	1 seat from Independent to Lib Dem 1 seat from UKIP to Lib Dem

RESOLVED: That the allocation of seats on Committees be as set out in Appendix C to the report of the Head of Policy and Communications with the following adjustments:

Audit Committee	1 seat from Independent to Labour
Economic and Commercial Development O&S Committee	1 seat from Independent to Labour
Member and Employment and Development Panel	1 seat from Independent to Lib Dem 1 seat from UKIP to Lib Dem

A copy of the amended allocation of seats on Committees is attached as Appendix A to these Minutes.

68. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

It was moved by Councillor Mrs Blackmore, seconded by Councillor Mrs Wilson, that the wishes of the Group Leaders with regard to the membership of Committees and Substitute membership, as set out in the lists circulated (Scenario 2), be accepted.

RESOLVED: That the wishes of the Group Leaders with regard to the membership of Committees and Substitute membership, as set out in the lists circulated (Scenario 2), be accepted.

69. REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE - APPOINTMENT OF MONITORING OFFICER

In presenting her report, the Chief Executive wished to place on record her appreciation of the advice and helpful guidance provided by Paul Fisher, the current Monitoring Officer, in his role not only as Monitoring Officer but also as the Council's Head of Legal Services, a position he had held for nearly 30 years.

It was moved by Councillor Mrs Blackmore, seconded by Councillor McLoughlin, that the recommendations contained in the report of the Chief Executive relating to the appointment of Monitoring Officer be approved.

RESOLVED:

1. That John Scarborough, Head of Legal Partnership, be appointed as the Monitoring Officer for the Council with effect from 1 November 2014.
2. That the delegated functions and responsibilities in the Council's Constitution which refer to the Head of Legal Services be transferred to the Head of Legal Partnership with effect from 1 November 2014.

Note: John Scarborough, Head of Legal Partnership, left the room whilst this report was discussed.

70. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 11.10 p.m.

APPENDIX A

ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES

	Overview & Scrutiny Committees												
	Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services	Economic and Commercial Development	Planning, Transport and Development	Community, Environment and Housing	Planning Committee	Licensing Committee	Member and Employment and Development Panel	Joint Transportation Board	General Purposes Group	Standards Committee	Planning Referrals Committee	Audit Committee	Overall entitlement
Con	4	4	4	4	6	5	5	4	3	4	1	2	46
Lib Dem	3	3	3	3	5	4	6	3	2	3	1	2	38
Ind	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	9
UKIP	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	8
Lab	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	4
	9	9	9	9	13	12	12	9	6	9	3	5	105

Agenda Item 11

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

10 NOVEMBER 2014

REPORT OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES GROUP HELD ON 24 OCTOBER 2014

BROOMFIELD AND KINGSWOOD AND SUTTON VALENCE PARISH COUNCILS INCREASE IN NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS

Issue for Decision

Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (LGPIH Act 2007) S94, the Council has received requests to consider an increase in the number of parish councillors on Broomfield and Kingswood Parish Council and on Sutton Valence Parish Council.

Recommendation Made

That, in accordance with the adopted scale, the requests of both Broomfield and Kingswood Parish Council and Sutton Valence Parish Council for increases in the number of parish councillors from nine councillors to eleven councillors be refused.

Reasons for Recommendation

The LGPIH Act 2007 provides the Council with the power to take decisions in relation to the electoral arrangements of parishes. Since February 2008 the Council has had responsibility for undertaking community governance reviews and considering the electoral arrangements of an existing or proposed parish. Consideration of the electoral arrangements includes:

- a) The ordinary year of election;
- b) The number of councillors to be elected; and
- c) The need to divide a parish into wards.

Two parish councils, Broomfield and Kingswood Parish Council and Sutton Valence Parish Council, have requested that the Council consider increasing the number of councillors on their respective councils from nine to eleven.

In submitting their requests the parish councils have provided the following commentaries for the Council to consider:

Broomfield and Kingswood Parish Council

Parish councillors feel that the workload (listed below) is ever increasing and as volunteers, most of whom are in full time occupations, it would be beneficial to spread the load and to ensure that quorums are achievable.

- Preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan for the past 2.5 years creating copious correspondence and meetings with both the residents, the consultants and Maidstone Borough Council. Still ongoing;
- Correspondence and meetings with KCC re road signs;
- Correspondence and meetings with MBC re local cleaning issues;
- Correspondence and meetings with KCC re salt bins;
- Correspondence and meetings with both Orbit and MBC re the mismanagement of affordable housing;
- Correspondence liaising with Village Hall and meetings with both Orbit and Police re anti-social issues;
- Dealing with planning applications;
- Meetings with residents re illegal occupations;
- Running the Parish Website;
- Attending Finance and General Purpose meetings;
- Attending various joint parish group meetings re general issues affecting all parishes;
- Dealing with issues relating to sports field and safety; and
- Looking after issues arising during staff holidays.

Sutton Valence Parish Council

The work load of a parish council has increased significantly in the past few years. Sutton Valence Parish Council in particular is an active Council with two allotment sites, two play areas, football pitches, toilet and areas of open space which it is responsible for. More councillors would spread the load.

Considerations

The Local Government Boundaries Commission for England (LGBCE), the National Association of Local Councils and the Government all suggest that consideration should be given to the fact that the conduct of parish council business does not usually require a large body of councillors and local councils can find it difficult to attract appropriate numbers and appropriate quality candidates. They also suggest that consideration should be given to any unique local factors.

Appendix A to this report details the three most recent election results in each parish showing a high level of uncontested election. It also provides a map of the parish boundaries evidencing the size and character of the areas covered by the parish councils concerned.

The LGBCE has suggested the number of parish councillors should be commensurate with electorate size. The Council has previously considered the issue of size of a parish council (the number of parish councillors to be elected) and has adopted a scale for determining the ratio between electors and the number of parish councillors. The scale is set out below:

Up to 250 electors	5 Councillors
251-700 electors	7 Councillors
701-1350 electors	9 Councillors
1351-2200 electors	11 Councillors
2201-3250 electors	13 Councillors
3251-4500 electors	15 Councillors
Over 4500 electors	At the discretion of the Council

The range of sizes identified across the country by the LGBCE would suggest that the Council's scale is within suitable limits.

Broomfield and Kingswood Parish Council has 1,250 electors and Sutton Valence has 1,083 electors. Comparison of both parishes with the adopted scale suggests that both parish councils currently have the appropriate number of councillors, which is nine each.

Should the Council still wish to consider the requests favourably this would lead to the need for a community governance review and consultation under S82 of the LGPIH Act 2007. The terms of reference of such a review are set out in draft for each parish council in Appendix B and Appendix C. If changes arise from the reviews it would be necessary to incorporate the changes before the election in May 2015 and for that reason it would be essential that any such review commenced in December 2014.

In relation to the commentary from the parish councils it is clear that the parishes firmly believe that the workload of the individual councillors is a significant burden. However, the duties are standard duties expected of parish councils and the scale has been set by Council after consideration of those duties.

The General Purposes Group recommends to Council that the requests be declined on the basis that they are outside of the adopted scale.

Alternatives Considered and Why Not Recommended

The Group could have chosen to recommend the Council to complete the necessary community governance review that would be required to increase the number of parish councillors in each parish. However this is contrary to the adopted scale and would require a formal justification.

Appendices

Appendix A Last three years election history and Parish Boundary Maps

Appendix B Terms of Reference – Broomfield & Kingswood Parish Council

Appendix C Terms of Reference – Sutton Valence Parish Council

Background Papers

None

**ELECTION OF PARISH COUNCILLOR
PARISH OF SUTTON VALENCE
MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Date of Election: THURSDAY 5 MAY 2011

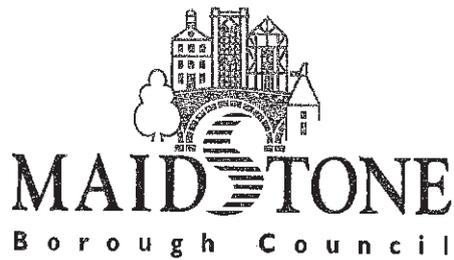
RESULT OF UNCONTESTED ELECTION

I declare the following to be elected as PARISH COUNCILLOR without a contest -

NAME OF PERSON(S) ELECTED	HOME ADDRESS
Barry John ARMSTRONG	Cheyne House, Broad Street, Sutton Valence, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 3AJ
Peter GREEN	Acorn House, 12 The Platt, Sutton Valence, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 3BQ
Roger Howard PEVERETT	The Old Bakery, Broad Street, Sutton Valence, Kent, ME17 3AJ
Eileen Margaret RIDEN	Oakdene Cottage, Maidstone Road, Sutton Valence, Kent, ME17 3LS
Ian Michael ROBINSON	Braemar Oak, Headcorn Road, Sutton Valence, Kent, ME17 3EH
Maurice Andrew STANCOMBE	The Firs, Chartway Street, Sutton Valence, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 3JA
Phil TAYLOR	9 The Platt, Sutton Valence, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 3BQ

Dated Friday 8 April 2011

Alison Broom
RETURNING OFFICER



**ELECTION OF PARISH COUNCILLORS
SUTTON VALENCE PARISH**

Date of Election: THURSDAY, 1 MAY 2003

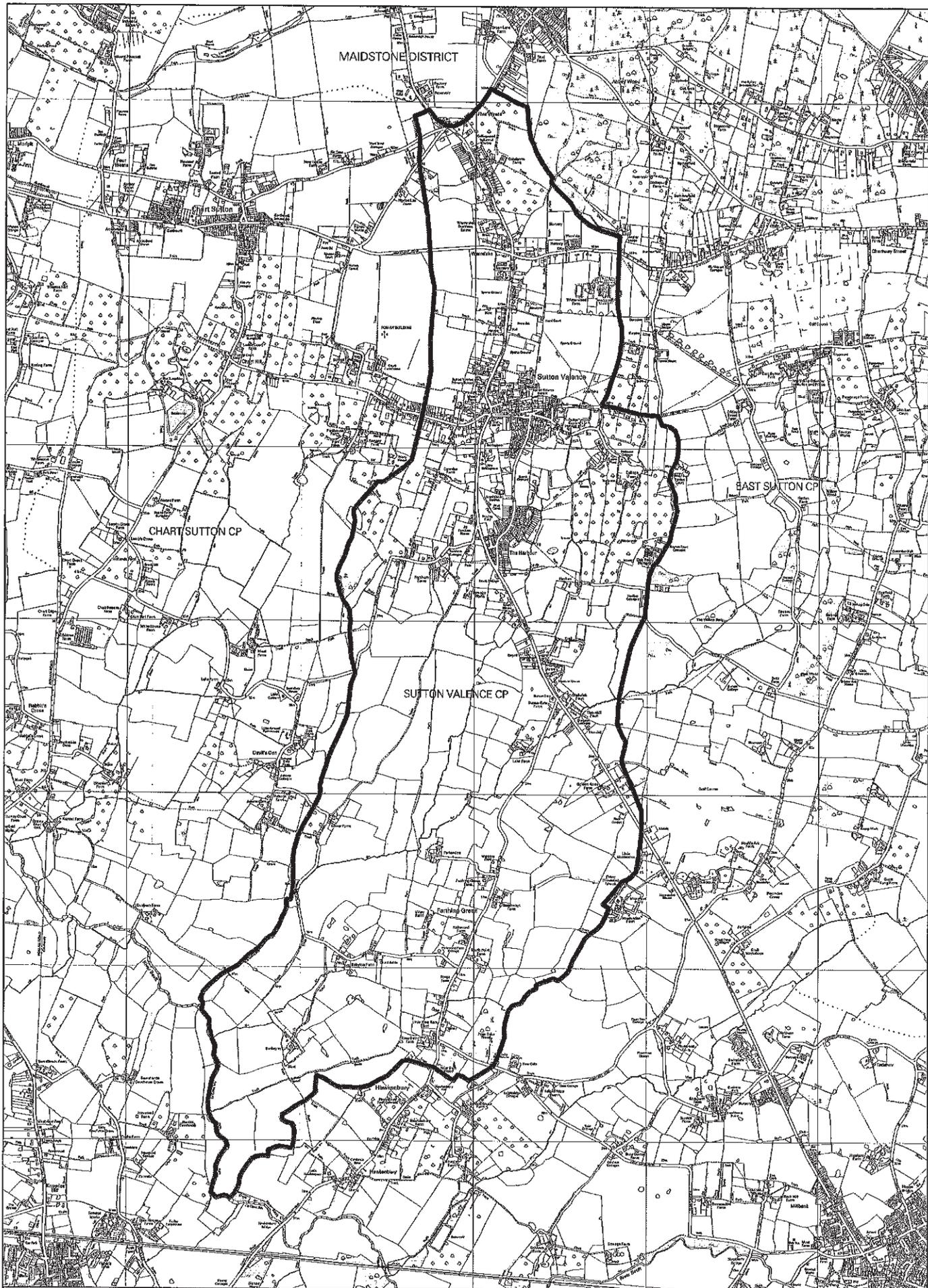
RESULT OF UNCONTESTED ELECTION

I declare the following to be elected as PARISH COUNCILLORS without a contest -

NAME OF PERSON(S) ELECTED		HOME ADDRESS
Ashby	Richard Martyn Rathbone	Manor Farm Sutton Valence Maidstone Kent ME17 3AW
Davies	Lyndon Andrew	Old Butchers Shop Broad Street Sutton Valence Maidstone, Kent ME17 3AJ
Green	Peter Ross	12 The Platt Sutton Valence Maidstone Kent ME17 3BQ
Parkinson	Christopher Francis Graves	Wells Cottage School Lane Sutton Valence Maidstone, Kent ME17 3HH
Peperett	Roger Howard	The Old Bakery Sutton Valence Kent ME17 3AJ
Riden	Eileen Margaret	Oakdene Cottage Maidstone Road Sutton Valence Kent ME17 3LS
Stancombe	Maurice Andrew	The Firs Chartway St Sutton Valence Kent ME17 3JA

Dated: Thursday 8 May 2003

RETURNING OFFICER
RICHARD SNAITH



SUTTON VALENCE PARISH



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**ELECTION OF PARISH COUNCILLOR
PARISH OF BROOMFIELD AND KINGSWOOD
MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Date of Election: THURSDAY 5 MAY 2011

RESULT OF UNCONTESTED ELECTION

I declare the following to be elected as PARISH COUNCILLOR without a contest -

NAME OF PERSON(S) ELECTED	HOME ADDRESS
Paul Ian BEANEY	12 Holly Tree Close, Kingswood, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 3QJ
Peter David COLEMAN	Gravelly Bottom, Gravelly Bottom Road, Kingswood, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 3NS
Vince COOPER	8 The Waldens, Kingswood, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 3QG
Gareth DAVIES	1 Greensand Ridge, Kingswood, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 1JY
Mike EVANS	Roses Manor Farm, Upper Street, Broomfield, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 1PS
Peter George FORSTER	White Oaks, Lenham Road, Kingswood, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 1LZ
Derek William HOBSON	14 Holly Tree Close, Kingswood, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 3QJ
Thomas Charles HOY	Pink Cottage, Lower Street, Broomfield, Kent, ME17 1PT

Dated Friday 8 April 2011

Alison Broom
RETURNING OFFICER

**ELECTION OF PARISH COUNCILLOR
BROOMFIELD AND KINGSWOOD PARISH**

Date of Election: THURSDAY 3 MAY 2007

RESULT OF UNCONTESTED ELECTION

I declare the following to be elected as PARISH COUNCILLOR without a contest -

NAME OF PERSON(S) ELECTED		HOME ADDRESS
BOWKER	Nelson Ernest Edwin Thomas	Oak Tree Farm, Gravelly Bottom Road, Kingswood, Sutton Valence, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 3NS
COLEMAN	Peter David	Gravelly Bottom, Gravelly Bottom Road, Kingswood, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 3NS
EVANS	Haydn Michael	Roses Manor Farm, Broomfield, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 1PS
FITZPATRICK	Maurice Melvyn	28 Ashford Drive, Kingswood, Sutton Valence, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 3PA
HENDY	Beth	54 Cayser Drive, Kingswood, Kent, ME17 3QD

Dated: Tuesday 10 April 2007

David Petford
RETURNING OFFICER

ELECTION OF PARISH COUNCILLORS

RESULT OF POLL

DAY OF ELECTION: 1st May 2003

BROOMFIELD AND KINGSWOOD

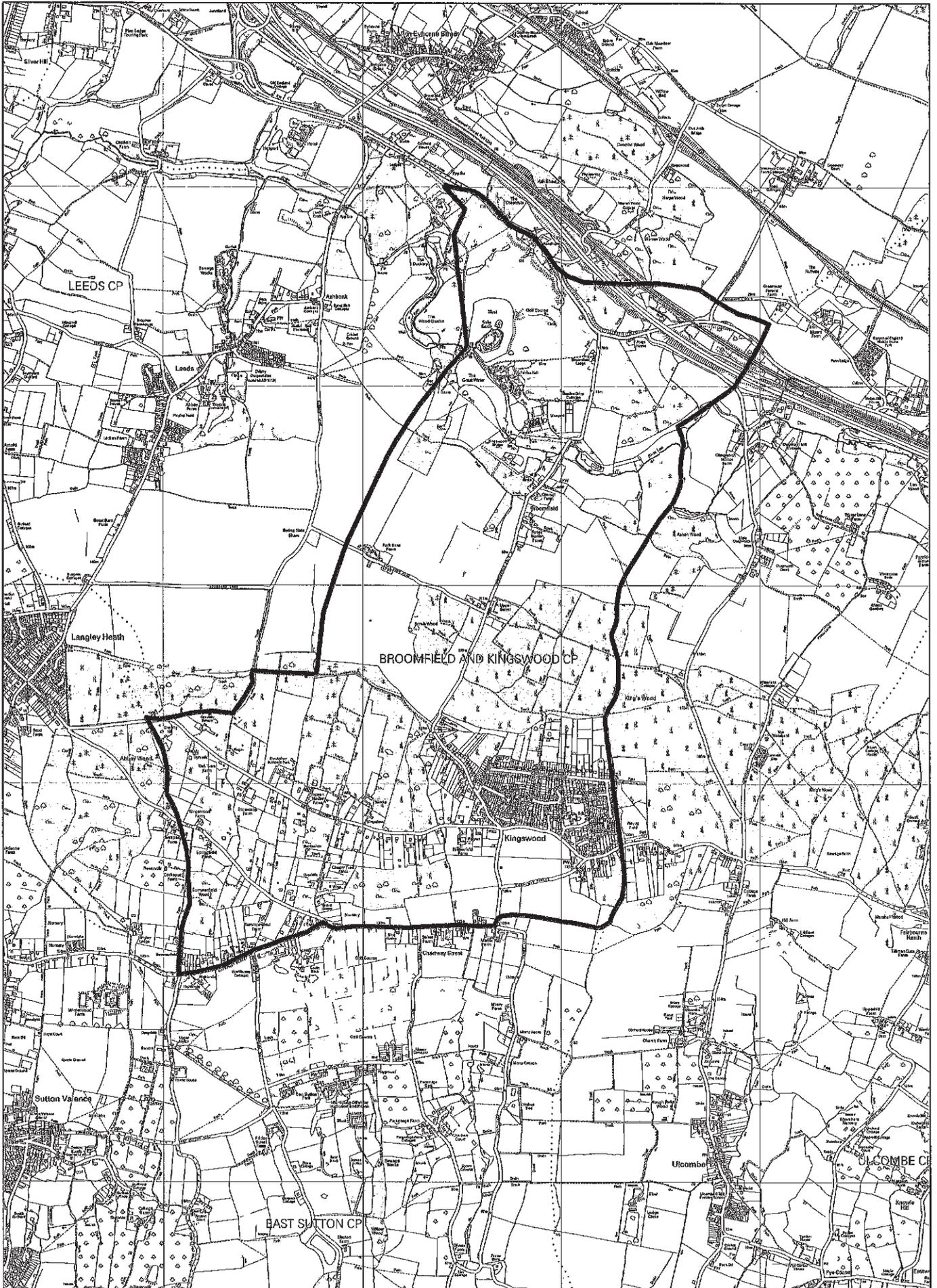
I, the UNDERSIGNED *Deputy/Returning Officer, hereby declare that those indicated below, this day, been elected Parish Councillors for the above Parish and that the total number of Votes given for each Candidate is as follows:-

NAMES OF CANDIDATES	ELECTED	NUMBER OF VOTES RECORDED
Nelson Ernest Edwin Thomas Bowker	1	265
Susan Elizabeth Clarke	6	183
Peter David Coleman	5	192
Doreen Joan Dean		124
HAYDN MICHAEL Evans	2	257
JODY CLARE Evans	7	180
Roy Gunson		123
Neil Stanley Harrison	3	251
Beth Hendy	7	180
Derek William Hobson		107
Thomas Charles Hoy		143
David William Law	9	161
Brittannia Lee		126
Patricia Mary Lyne	4	193
John Robert O'Rawe		120
Robert Schroeder		97
	TOTAL	2702

REJECTED BALLOT PAPERS	NUMBER
REASON	
(i) Want of official mark	
(ii) Voting for more candidates than entitled to	2
(iii) Writing or mark by which voter can be identified	
(iv) Unmarked or void for uncertainty	13
(v) Rejected in part	
	TOTAL
	15

Dated 1/5/2003
* Delete as appropriate

S.E. Riley
* Deputy/Returning Officer



**BROOMFIELD AND
KINGSWOOD PARISH**



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REVIEWS OF PARISHES AND RELATED MATTERS

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007

TERMS OF REFERENCE BROOMFIELD & KINGSWOOD PARISH COUNCIL – INCREASE IN PARISH COUNCILLORS

INTRODUCTION

What is a Community Governance Review?

It is a review of the whole or part of the district / parish area to consider one or more of the following:

- Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes;
- The naming of parishes and the style of new parishes;
- The grouping of parishes under a common parish council.
- The electoral arrangements for parishes (the ordinary year of election; council size; the number of councillors to be elected to the council, and parish warding), and

In undertaking any Review, the Council will be guided by the following legislation:

- Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007;
- Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008 (SI2008/625);
- Local Government Finance (New Parishes) Regulations 2008 (SI2008/626)
- Relevant parts of the Local Government Act 1972

The Council is required to have regard to the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (published in April 2008), together with the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission (CLCBE) for England in March 2010. The Terms of Reference of any Review will be published on the Council's website (www.maidstone.gov.uk) and will also be available to view at our reception area at the Council's main offices in The Gateway, King Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6JZ.

Parish governance in the Borough of Maidstone

The Council believes that parish councils play an important role in terms of community empowerment at a local level, and wants to ensure that parish governance in our Borough continues to be enabled to meet the challenges that lie before it. Furthermore, it wants to ensure that there is clarity and transparency to the areas that parish councils represent and that the electoral arrangements of parishes (the warding arrangements and the allocations of councillors) are appropriate, equitable and readily understood by their electorate.

Ultimately, the recommendations made in any community governance review should aim to bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and result in a more effective and convenient delivery of local services.

Why is the Council undertaking this Review?

Reviews are normally undertaken because of one or more of the following reasons:

- Changes in population
- Shifts in “natural settlements” caused by new development
- In reaction to specific or local issues which have now been raised
- In receipt of a valid petition
- In advance of a full review of the district or parish electoral arrangements
- At a request from the parish council or other interested party

In this particular review, Maidstone Borough Council has resolved to undertake a Community Governance Review of Broomfield & Kingswood Parish Council with a view to increasing the number of parish councillors from 9 to 11 as a result of a formal request from the Parish Council.

Who undertakes the Review?

The organisation of the consultations and all subsequent correspondence is undertaken by the Electoral Services team at the Borough Council. The General Purposes Committee is delegated to deal with all electoral matters and will make recommendation to full council for the final decision after the consultations have been concluded.

Consultation

The Council is now publishing this Terms of Reference document. It sets out the aims of the review, the legislation which guides it and some of the policies which the Council considers important in the review. The Council will need to take into consideration the views of the local people, together with the views of any other interested party. Local people and any other stake-holders should be aware of the outcome of decisions made and the reasons behind them. The district councils will also ask for the views of the County Council and any neighbouring parish councils.

Electoral statistics and arrangements

The parish council comprises one parish boundary and is coterminous with the borough ward boundaries and no change is requested to these.

The Council has used the Register of Electors as at 1 Sept 2014 to provide the electoral statistics. These are as follows;

Polling District	Area	Electorate as at 1 September 2014	Current no. of parish councillors
P	Broomfield and Kingswood	1250	9

Timetable

The review must be completed within twelve months of the publication of this document.

Stage	What happens	Date/Timescales
Commencement of review	Publication of terms of reference	11 December 2014
Stage 1	Consultation period. Submissions are invited.	6 weeks
Stage 2	Consideration of submissions. Draft recommendations prepared and published.	2 weeks
Stage 3	Principal Council agrees and publishes final recommendations	20 February 2015
Stage 4	Council resolves to make an Order to increase the number of parish councillors	
Order effective	Number of parish councillors increases effective from next termly parish elections	7 May 2015

REVIEWS OF PARISHES AND RELATED MATTERS

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007

TERMS OF REFERENCE SUTTON VALENCE PARISH COUNCIL – INCREASE IN PARISH COUNCILLORS

INTRODUCTION

What is a Community Governance Review?

It is a review of the whole or part of the district / parish area to consider one or more of the following:

- Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes;
- The naming of parishes and the style of new parishes;
- The grouping of parishes under a common parish council.
- The electoral arrangements for parishes (the ordinary year of election; council size; the number of councillors to be elected to the council, and parish warding), and

In undertaking any Review, the Council will be guided by the following legislation:

- Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007;
- Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008 (SI2008/625);
- Local Government Finance (New Parishes) Regulations 2008 (SI2008/626)
- Relevant parts of the Local Government Act 1972

The Council is required to have regard to the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (published in April 2008), together with the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission (CLCBE) for England in March 2010. The Terms of Reference of any Review will be published on the Council's website (www.maidstone.gov.uk) and will also be available to view at our reception area at the Council's main offices in The Gateway, King Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6JZ.

Parish governance in the Borough of Maidstone

The Council believes that parish councils play an important role in terms of community empowerment at a local level, and wants to ensure that parish governance in our Borough continues to be enabled to meet the challenges that lie before it. Furthermore, it wants to ensure that there is clarity and transparency to the areas that parish councils represent and that the electoral arrangements of parishes (the warding arrangements and the allocations of councillors) are appropriate, equitable and readily understood by their electorate.

Ultimately, the recommendations made in any community governance review should aim to bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and result in a more effective and convenient delivery of local services.

Why is the Council undertaking this Review?

Reviews are normally undertaken because of one or more of the following reasons:

- Changes in population
- Shifts in “natural settlements” caused by new development
- In reaction to specific or local issues which have now been raised
- In receipt of a valid petition
- In advance of a full review of the district or parish electoral arrangements
- At a request from the parish council or other interested party

In this particular review, Maidstone Borough Council has resolved to undertake a Community Governance Review of Sutton Valence Parish Council with a view to increasing the number of parish councillors from 9 to 11 as a result of a formal request from the Parish Council.

Who undertakes the Review?

The organisation of the consultations and all subsequent correspondence is undertaken by the Electoral Services team at the Borough Council. The General Purposes Committee of the Council is delegated to deal with all electoral matters and will make recommendation to full council for the final decision after the consultations have been concluded.

Consultation

The Council is now publishing this Terms of Reference document. It sets out the aims of the review, the legislation which guides it and some of the policies which the Council considers important in the review. The Council will need to take into consideration the views of the local people, together with the views of any other interested party. Local people and any other stake-holders should be aware of the outcome of decisions made and the reasons behind them. The district councils will also ask for the views of the County Council and any neighbouring parish councils.

Electoral statistics and arrangements

The parish council comprises one parish boundary and is coterminous with the borough ward boundaries and no change is requested to these.

The Council has used the Register of Electors as at 1 Sept 2014 to provide the electoral statistics. These are as follows;

Polling District	Area	Electorate as at 1 September 2014	Current no. of parish councillors
ZA, ZB	Sutton Valence	1083	9

Timetable

The review must be completed within twelve months of the publication of this document.

Stage	What happens	Date/Timescales
Commencement of review	Publication of terms of reference	11 December 2014
Stage 1	Consultation period. Submissions are invited.	6 weeks
Stage 2	Consideration of submissions. Draft recommendations prepared and published.	2 weeks
Stage 3	Principal Council agrees and publishes final recommendations	20 February 2015
Stage 4	Council resolves to make an Order to increase the number of parish councillors	
Order effective	Number of parish councillors increases effective from next termly parish elections	7 May 2015

Agenda Item 12

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

10 NOVEMBER 2014

REPORT OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES GROUP HELD ON 24 OCTOBER 2014

REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS

Issue for Decision

Every local authority with responsibility for electoral administration must carry out a review of its polling district and polling places at least once every five years. The reviews are governed by the following legislation:

- Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013;
- Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006;
- Electoral Administration Act 2006;
- Representation of the People Act 1983 (Schedule A1)

This report makes recommendations to Council having regard to the results of the review recently completed, and includes proposed alterations to the polling places for electors in some areas.

Recommendation Made

That the following changes to polling places be approved:

1. Bridge Ward - That the use of St Simon Stock R C Comprehensive School be discontinued. Electors in Polling District FA who currently vote at this polling station will vote at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. This polling place to become a double station.
2. Heath Ward - That St Andrews Church Hall is re-instated as a polling station to accommodate electors outside of the former Oakwood hospital site. Electors in Polling District N will be split between Beechwood Community Hall and St Andrews Church Hall. All electors to the East of Queens Road and to the South of St Andrews Road will vote at St Andrews Church Hall.
3. Marden and Yalding Ward, Collier Street Parish – That the polling place be moved from St Margaret’s Church to St Margaret’s School for electors in polling district RR.
4. Harrietsham and Lenham Ward, Lenham South Parish - That St Edmunds Centre, Platts Heath becomes a polling station for use by electors in Polling District LC.

5. Headcorn Ward, Headcorn Parish – That the position of the station within the polling place will change from the games room to the small restaurant at the Hawkenbury Public House for electors in Polling District MB.
6. Sutton Valence and Langley Ward, Sutton Valence Parish – That the position of the station within the polling place will change from the games room to the small restaurant at the Hawkenbury Public House for electors in Polling District ZB.

Reasons for Recommendation

The Council commenced a review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations on 1st October 2013. The initial stage of the review required a physical inspection of all stations and an assessment of each district and its polling stations to ensure that they remained fit for purpose.

The initial findings of that review were published on 3rd February 2014 and on that day the Council commenced a public consultation on the draft proposals in order to obtain the views of the general public, Parish Councils, County Councillors, Borough Councillors, Political Parties, MP's, MEP's and Disability Focus Group.

The responses to the consultation were reviewed following closure of the consultation on 7th April 2014. Commentary and any amendments were made to the draft proposals and second stage consultation with all stakeholders listed above commenced on 1st September 2014.

Second stage consultation ended on 21st October 2014 and it is now necessary to recommend the proposed changes to Council. The General Purposes Group was requested to consider the proposed changes and recommend the changes to Council. Once the recommendations have been considered by Council, agreed recommendations can be incorporated into the electoral register before its formal publication on 1st December 2014.

Within the Borough there are parts of two parliamentary constituencies. These are Maidstone and the Weald constituency and Faversham and Mid-Kent constituency. All polling districts, stations and places within each were considered by the review. In the majority of cases the review has recommended no change to the current situation but has identified recommendations for change in six polling districts.

Attached at Appendices A and B are details of the reviews that resulted in no recommended change.

Attached at Appendices C and D are details of the reviews that resulted in the recommendations to change.

During the public consultation on the review, carried out on two occasions, two of the proposals received comments, although they were limited in number.

- i. In relation to the proposal in Bridge Ward Councillor Pickett, a Member for Bridge ward, raised concerns about access to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and recommended a number of alternatives. All alternative proposals were considered but none were suitable and the views of the Returning Officer were passed back to Councillor Pickett. In addition a questionnaire was handed to voters at St. Simon Stock School, of 415 electors only 12 comments were received, 6 disagreed with the proposal and 5 agreed. The remaining comment was a question asking for further detail.
- ii. In relation to the proposal to use St Edmunds Centre, Platts Heath for Harrietsham and Lenham Ward the then Councillor, Mr Tom Sams, raised concerns that electors in Platts Heath may not see the proposals. He agreed to forward a copy of the notice to the hall committee and display the notice at other places within the district and in the residents' magazine. To date there has been no communication from electors within the ward.

Alternatives Considered and Why Not Recommended

The Council could decide not to make the changes recommended by the Group. However, a full review had been completed as required and this has identified issues in relation to the locations where change is recommended. The Council would need to be satisfied that to make no change or to agree an alternative change was a suitable solution to the issues identified. Members should appreciate that a significantly different approach may require additional consultation and members should note the following:

- i. In general the recommendations are made in order to improve the situation for electors or staff managing the polling stations and it would not be appropriate to choose not to act upon the identified issues.
- ii. In relation to the recommended transfer of polling district FA from St Simon Stock School to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the proposal is intended to improve transport and disabled access. Where the possibility exists that electors may not be able to reach the new location or are not prepared to vote at the new location they will be able to apply for a postal or proxy vote so will not be disenfranchised.
- iii. The proposal to use St Edmunds Centre in Platts Heath is of benefit to the community who have previously raised concerns about the distance they travel to the current polling station at Lenham Community Centre. This proposal increases the number of polling stations and does not close the polling station at Lenham Community Centre for other polling districts.

Appendices

Appendix A - Maidstone & the Weald Constituency details of reviews leading to no change.

Appendix B - Faversham and Mid Kent Constituency details of reviews leading to no change

Appendix C - Maidstone & the Weald Constituency details of reviews leading to proposals for change.

Appendix D -Faversham and Mid Kent Constituency details of reviews leading to proposals for change.

Background Papers

None

NO CHANGES

**Review of Polling Districts and Polling Station
(Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006**

Maidstone and The Weald Constituency (Part)

Existing Polling Stations and Electorate as at October 2013

POLLING DISTRICT Letters	Borough Ward & Parish (Parish Ward)	Polling Station	Elect-orate	Comments e.g.:access/location
A	Ward: Allington	Allington Community Association, Castle Road, Allington	2305	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
AA	Ward: Allington	St Nicholas Church Hall, Poplar Grove, Allington	3382	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
B	Ward: Barming Parish: Barming	Barming Village Hall, Heath Road	1375	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended However, various other polling places within Barming ward have been investigated but considered not suitable. For example, the School and Scout Hut were in a cul-de-sac and therefore no suitable parking provision. Barming Parish Hall is considered to be too far out of the village for the majority of electors.
BA	Ward: Barming Parish: Teston	Teston Village Hall, Church Street	588	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
G	Ward: Coxheath and Hunton Parish: Coxheath	Coxheath Village Hall, Stockett Lane	3340	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
GA	Ward: Coxheath and Hunton Parish: East Farleigh	Old School Hall, Lower Road, East Farleigh	1219	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
GB	Ward: Coxheath and Hunton Parish: Hunton	Hunton Village Hall, West Street	545	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
GC	Ward: Coxheath and Hunton Parish: Linton	Linton Village Hall, Linton Hill	431	(Acting) Returning Officer's comment: No change recommended

NO CHANGES

POLLING DISTRICT Letters	Borough Ward & Parish (Parish Ward)	Polling Station	Elect-orate	Comments e.g.:access/location
GD	Ward: Coxheath and Hunton Parish: West Farleigh	All Saints Church, Church Lane, West Farleigh	376	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
J	Ward: East	St Lukes Church Hall, Foley Street	3842	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
JA	Ward: East	Vinters Community Centre, Aldon Close, Vinters Park	2551	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
JBX	Ward: East Parish: Boxley Woodlands	Vinters Community Centre, Aldon Close, Vinters Park	352	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
K	Ward: Fant	St Michael's CE Junior School, Douglas Road	3994	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended. Have looked in the Hart Street locality and have not found an alternative polling place for those electors.
KA	Ward: Fant	Fant Hall, Fant Lane	3036	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
NA	Ward: Heath	Barming Village Hall, Heath Road	1465	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended.
OO	Ward: High Street	St Philips Church Hall, Waterloo Street	2170	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
OA	Ward: High Street	The Maidstone Baptist Church, Knightrider Street	1505	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
OB	Ward: High Street	The Friends Meeting House, Union Street	1215	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
OC	Ward: High Street	Bob Prowse Health Club, Armstrong Hall, Armstrong Road	2214	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended. To avoid confusion for voters, a street list will be displayed outside of the polling station.
QQ	Ward: Loose Parish: Loose	Loose Parish Pavilion, King George V Playing Fields, Walnut Tree Lane, Loose	2116	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended

NO CHANGES

POLLING DISTRICT Letters	Borough Ward & Parish (Parish Ward)	Polling Station	Elect-orate	Comments e.g.:access/location
RA	Ward: Marden and Yalding Parish: Yalding	Laddingford Church Hall, Claygate Road	537	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
RB	Ward: Marden and Yalding Parish: Marden	Marden Memorial Hall, Goudhurst Road	2931	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended.
RC	Ward: Marden and Yalding Parish: Nettlestead	Nettlestead Village Hall, Maidstone Road	721	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
RD	Ward: Marden and Yalding Parish: Yalding	Yalding Village Hall, Lyngs Close	1346	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
SS	Ward: North	St Paul's Church Hall, Boxley Road	4658	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
SA	Ward: North	St Faith's Church Hall, Moncktons Lane	1768	(Acting) Returning Officer's comment: No change recommended. However, the Church Hall is to undergo complete refurbishment, funds allowing from Autumn 2015. Architects think 6 months will be sufficient for completion of the works. However, this may not go to plan and therefore alternative accommodation may have to be sought. Likely alternatives could be Maidstone Football Stadium and the Kent History Centre.
40 XX	Ward: South	The Vine, Boughton Lane	1316	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended. (This polling station was previously known as Loose Baptist Church.
XA	Ward: South	YMCA, Melrose Close, Cripple Street	2026	(Acting) Returning Officer's Comments: No change recommended
XB	Ward: South Parish: Tovil	St Stephens Day Centre, St Stephens Square, Tovil	2109	(Acting) Returning Officer's Comments: No change recommended
XC	Ward: South Parish: Tovil	Maidstone Hockey Club, Armstrong Road	687	(Acting) Returning Officer's Comments: No change recommended
XD	Ward: South	Maidstone Hockey Club, Armstrong Road	577	(Acting) Returning Officer's Comments: No change recommended. To avoid confusion for voters, a street list will be displayed outside of the polling station.
YA	Ward: Staplehurst Parish: Staplehurst	Staplehurst Village Centre, High Street	4725	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended

NO CHANGES

APPENDIX B

Review of Polling Districts and Polling Stations (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006

Faversham and Mid Kent Constituency (Part)

Existing Polling Stations and Electorate as at October 2013

POLLING DISTRICT Letters	Borough Ward & Parish (Parish Ward)	Polling Station	Elect-orate	Comments e.g.:access/location
C	Ward: Bearsted Parish: Bearsted	King George V Memorial Hall, Manor Rise	1807	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
CA	Ward: Bearsted Parish: Bearsted	Madginford Hall, Egremont Road	3735	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
41 CC	Ward: Bearsted Parish: Bearsted	Women's Institute, The Street, Bearsted	1283	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
D	Ward: Boughton Monchelsea and Chart Sutton Parish: Boughton Monchelsea South	Boughton Monchelsea Village Hall, Church Street	1354	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
DA	Ward: Boughton Monchelsea and Chart Sutton Parish: Chart Sutton	Chart Sutton Village Hall, Chart Hill Road, Chart Sutton	714	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
E	Ward: Boxley Parish: Boxley South	Boxley Church, The Street	168	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
EA	Ward: Boxley Parish: Boxley South	Tyland Barn, Sandling	680	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
EB	Ward: Boxley Parish: Boxley South	Grove Green Community Hall, Penshurst Close	2572	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
EBX	Ward: Boxley	Grove Green Community Hall, Penshurst Close	32	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended

NO CHANGES

POLLING DISTRICT Letters	Borough Ward & Parish (Parish Ward)	Polling Station	Elect-orate	Comments e.g.:access/location
EC	Ward: Boxley Parish: Boxley North	Beechen Hall, Walderslade	3064	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
ED	Ward: Boxley Parish: Bredhurst	Bredhurst Village Hall, Bredhurst	334	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
H/HA	Ward: Detling and Thurnham Parish: Detling	Detling Village Hall, Pilgrims Way	627 80	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
HB	Ward: Detling and Thurnham Parish: Boxley South East	Weaving Village Hall, Weaving Street	789	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
HBX	Ward: Detling and Thurnham Ward	Weaving Village Hall, Weaving Street	99	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
HC	Ward: Detling and Thurnham Parish: Thurnham	Women's Institute, The Street, Bearsted	855	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
42 I	Ward: Downswood and Otham Parish: Downswood	Downswood Community Centre, Chiltern Close, Off Derringwood Drive	1733	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
IA	Ward: Downswood and Otham Parish: Otham	Otham Village Hall, Otham Street	339	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
IB	Ward: Downswood and Otham Parish: Otham	Reculver Walk Day Centre, Reculver Walk	83	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
L	Ward: Harrietsham and Lenham Parish: Harrietsham	Harrietsham Village Hall, Church Road	1759	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
LA	Ward: Harrietsham and Lenham Parish: Lenham North	Lenham Community Centre, Groom Way	1993	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended

NO CHANGES

POLLING DISTRICT Letters	Borough Ward & Parish (Parish Ward)	Polling Station	Elect-orate	Comments e.g.:access/location
LB	Ward: Harrietsham and Lenham Parish: Lenham North	The Harrow Inn, Warren Street	95	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
M	Ward: Headcorn Parish: Boughton Malherbe	Grafty Green Village Hall, Church Road	345	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
MA	Ward: Headcorn Parish: East Sutton	Filmer Hall, East Sutton	201	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
MC	Ward: Headcorn Parish: Headcorn	Headcorn Village Hall, Church Walk	2691	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
MD	Ward: Headcorn Parish: Ulcombe	Ulcombe Village Hall, Headcorn Road	678	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
43 P	Ward: Leeds Parish: Broomfield and Kingswood	Broomfield and Kingswood Village Hall, Gravelly Bottom Road	1367	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
PA	Ward: Leeds Parish: Leeds	The Church Tower, St Nicholas Church, Leeds	630	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
T	Ward: North Downs Parish: Bicknor	Cardwell Pavilion, Hollingbourne	68	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
TA	Ward: North Downs Parish: Frinsted	Wormshill Village Hall, Wormshill	114	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
TB	Ward: North Downs Parish: Hollingbourne	The Cardwell Pavilion, Hollingbourne	789	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
TC	Ward: North Downs Parish: Hucking	The Cardwell Pavilion, Hollingbourne	48	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended

NO CHANGES

POLLING DISTRICT Letters	Borough Ward & Parish (Parish Ward)	Polling Station	Elect-orate	Comments e.g.:access/location
TD	Ward: North Downs Parish: Otterden	The Harrow Inn, Warren Street	146	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
TE	Ward: North Downs Parish: Stockbury	Stockbury Memorial Hall, Stockbury	591	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
TF	Ward: North Downs Parish: Wychling	The Harrow Inn, Warren Street	106	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended. However, it has been noted that although the residents of Wychling would prefer to go to Doddington, this is out of the area of Maidstone Borough Council. Due to health and safety reasons it was considered that Wychling Church was unsuitable as a polling station.
TG	Ward: North Downs Parish: Wormshill	Wormshill Village Hall, Wormshill	175	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
UA	Ward: Parkwood	Christchurch Hall, Wallis Avenue	2315	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
UB	Ward: Parkwood	Heather House, Bicknor Road	1312	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended. However, to overcome lack of heating in very large hall, screens will be erected to reduce size of polling station and retain heat.
UX	Ward: Parkwood Parish: Boughton Monchelsea North	Christchurch Hall, Wallis Avenue	523	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended. Site visits to area, particularly the new development near Morrisons have not identified any suitable alternative sites.
V	Ward: Shepway North	The Red Cross Centre. School Lane	1244	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
VA	Ward: Shepway North	Shepway Youth & Community Centre, Cumberland Avenue	2094	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended

NO CHANGES

POLLING DISTRICT Letters	Borough Ward & Parish (Parish Ward)	Polling Station	Elect-orate	Comments e.g.:access/location
VB	Ward: Shepway North	Parkway CP School, Park way	2320	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
VC	Ward: Shepway North	Grace Community Church, Grove Road, Mangravet	1118	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
W	Ward: Shepway South	Reculver Walk Day Centre, Reculver Walk	1977	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
WA	Ward: Shepway South	St Martins Church Hall, Northumberland Road	2638	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
Z 45	Ward: Sutton Valence and Langley Parish: Langley	Langley Village Hall, Horseshoes Lane	1004	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended
ZA	Ward: Sutton Valence and Langley Parish: Sutton Valence	Sutton Valence Village Hall, Memorial Playing Fields, Maidstone Road	1137	(Acting) Returning Officer's comments: No change recommended

PROPOSED CHANGES**Review of Polling Districts and Polling Station
(Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006****Maidstone and The Weald Constituency (Part)**Existing Polling Stations and Electorate as at 1st October 2013

POLLING DISTRICT Letters	Borough Ward & Parish (Parish Ward)	Polling Station	Elect-orate	Proposals
F	Ward: Bridge	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints	2708	(Acting) Returning Officer's proposals: To incorporate the electorate from FA (currently voting at St Simon Stock RC Comprehensive School). The Church Hall is adequate in size to be utilised as a double polling station and is on a main bus route.
FA	Ward: Bridge	St Simon Stock R C Comprehensive School	1994	(Acting) Returning Officer's proposals: To move the electorate to vote at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Car parking at the School is non-existent during school hours which was felt to be an issue with voters. There is ample car parking at the Church and the current polling station is not within Bridge Ward.
49 N	Ward: Heath	Beechwood Community Hall, Marigold Way, Barming	2987	(Acting) Returning Officer's proposals: The electorate within the old hospital site will continue to vote at Beechwood Community Hall. However, complaints have been made to the Presiding Officer that the polling station is difficult to find, to park and is not on a direct bus route. It is our intention to reinstate St Andrews Church Hall as an additional polling place to accommodate electors outside of the former Oakwood hospital site. 1514 of those electors to remain at Beechwood Community Hall.
RR	Ward: Marden and Yalding Parish: Collier Street	St Margarets Church, Collier Street	632	(Acting) Returning Officer's proposals: This current polling place is extremely cold and cooking facilities very limited. It would be possible to pay extra for overhead heating at the Church which would provide some comfort for the polling staff. However, a room at St Margaret's School, Collier Street has now become available which meets the requirements of a polling station and it is our intention to trial the facility for the forthcoming Elections in May 2014. Car Parking at both locations would be the same, i.e. a general car park located adjacent to the Church but it is noted that most voters would park on the main road outside the Church (and opposite the school).

PROPOSED CHANGES

**Review of Polling Districts and Polling Stations
(Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006**

Faversham and Mid Kent Constituency (Part)

Existing Polling Stations and Electorate as at 1st October 2013

POLLING DISTRICT Letters	Borough Ward & Parish (Parish Ward)	Polling Station	Elect-orate	Proposals
LC	Ward: Harrietsham and Lenham Parish: Lenham South	Lenham Community Centre	741	(Acting) Returning Officer’s proposals: To use St Edmunds Centre, Platts Heath as electorates from this polling district have complained that the distance to the centre of Lenham is a fair distance from the village of Platts Heath.
48 MB	Ward: Headcorn Parish: Headcorn	Hawkenbury Public House	126	(Acting) Returning Officer’s proposals: The position of the station within the polling place will change from the Games Room to the small Restaurant as the facilities are more accessible and away from the bar area and therefore lessens the opportunity for users of the public house to interfere with the democratic process. It is also feasible that electors from the Hawkenbury area could vote at either Headcorn Village Hall or Sutton Valence Village Hall dependent on the polling area.
ZB	Ward: Sutton Valence and Langley Parish: Sutton Valence	Hawkenbury Public House	64	(Acting) Returning Officer’s proposals: The position of the station within the polling place will change from the Games Room to the small Restaurant as the facilities are more accessible and away from the bar area and therefore lessens the opportunity for users of the public house to interfere with the democratic process. It is also feasible that electors from the Hawkenbury area could vote at either Headcorn Village Hall or Sutton Valence Village Hall dependent on the polling area.