

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, MAIDSTONE ON 25 SEPTEMBER 2019

Present: Councillor Mrs Ring (The Mayor) and Councillors Adkinson, Mrs Blackmore, Brindle, D Burton, M Burton, Chappell-Tay, Clark, Cox, Cuming, Daley, English, Fermor, Garland, Garten, Mrs Gooch, Mrs Grigg, Harper, Harvey, Hastie, Mrs Joy, Khadka, Kimmance, McKay, Mortimer, Munford, Naghi, Newton, Parfitt-Reid, Perry, Powell, Purle, D Rose, M Rose, Round, J Sams, T Sams, Spooner, Springett, Vizzard, Webb, Wilby and Young

55. PRAYERS

Prayers were said by the Reverend Ian Parrish.

Note: Councillor Mrs Blackmore entered the meeting after the prayers (6.35 p.m.).

56. RECORDING OF PROCEEDINGS

Councillor McKay reserved his right to record the proceedings.

57. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Bartlett, Brice, Eves, Fissenden, Fort, Harwood, Hinder, Mrs Hinder, Lewins, McLoughlin, Mrs Robertson and de Wiggondene-Sheppard.

58. DISPENSATIONS

There were no applications for dispensations.

59. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

60. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

61. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

62. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD ON 17 JULY 2019

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Borough Council held on 17 July 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed.

63. MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD ON 17 JULY 2019

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Borough Council held on 17 July 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed.

64. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor updated Members on recent and forthcoming engagements and thanked them for their support.

The Mayor then drew Members' attention to a request from the Maidstone Branch of the Royal British Legion for a contribution towards the cost of a new standard flag to display in Maidstone to mark its centenary next year. She asked Members to consider making funding available from their Members' Community Grant budgets.

65. PRESENTATION OF A CERTIFICATE TO MRS FRAN WILSON CONFIRMING HER APPOINTMENT AS AN HONORARY ALDERMAN OF MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Mayor presented a certificate to Mrs Fran Wilson confirming her appointment as an Honorary Alderman of Maidstone Borough Council.

Councillor Cox, the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, Councillor Perry, the Leader of the Conservative Group, Councillor Mrs Gooch, the Leader of the Independent Group, Councillor Harper, on behalf of the Leader of the Labour Group, and Councillor Newton, on behalf of the Leader of the Independent Maidstone Group, congratulated Mrs Wilson on her appointment.

Mrs Wilson then addressed the Council and thanked Members for her appointment.

Note: Councillors Hastie and Khadka entered the meeting during this item (6.40 p.m. and 6.45 p.m. respectively).

66. PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

67. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

68. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL TO THE CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES

Councillor T Sams asked the following question of the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee:

With regard to the Committee's decision to "explore plans for a new garden community" in East Lenham, and in light of it being "the start of a long process", and the Committee evaluating this proposal against all the others, can you please inform us how much this process has cost Maidstone residents thus far?

The Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee responded to the question.

Councillor T Sams asked the following supplementary question of the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee:

What is before us with the figures calculated, we can deliver good high quality homes with the community around it to make it exist not only by itself with the countryside around it, but with the communities already there around it.

Can you give the budget the Council has set aside for this project, including the cost of additional staff time, potential new motorway junction and new station? And can you explain how the Council will compensate the residents of Lenham Heath and its neighbours who will ultimately shoulder the economic and human cost of such a large construction, on green, valuable agricultural land, to help Maidstone's housing numbers project?

The Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee responded to the supplementary question.

Councillor J Sams asked the following question of the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee:

Last Friday, September 20th, demonstrations were held world-wide, nationally and in Maidstone, with many, many children, students, their parents, and many others who support the campaign against climate change holding peaceful protests.

In Maidstone we were proud to be associated with the protest. It was polite, good humoured, its central message was to speed up any proposed positive actions and that governments and councils must take steps.

Would you firstly applaud the actions the children have taken, including supporting them taking time off school and agree with me that this is an entirely legitimate cause and support them on any future organised occasion, with any future mass strike, taking time off school?

Please show that, unlike the Secretary of State for Education, you believe that this issue is so significant, affecting the lives, and the future of the children, that their action needs positive support and endorsement.

The Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee responded to the question.

Councillor J Sams asked the following supplementary question of the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee:

It is impossible to do nothing, Greta and Greenpeace's campaign was TICK TOCK time passing.

The children said they want action now; the tipping point is thought to be about 11 years, though it may be less; 132 months, 572 weeks, about 4000 days. Would you agree and show the children we care, and we understand, and we stand together with them in this cause? We will be with them on the next occasion and will do whatever it takes. We will commit our resources and support a stoppage. Furthermore, we will organise an assembly inviting delegates from schools and community groups to come together to discuss what we can achieve and share ideas; to be done within 8 weeks. TICK TOCK!

The Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee responded to the supplementary question.

Councillor Brindle asked the following question of the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee:

Has the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee been consulted by the Director of Finance and Business Improvement regarding the disposal of land at Weaving Heath?

The Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee responded to the question.

Councillor Brindle asked the following supplementary question of the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee:

Why were the Ward Members not consulted about this in turn and is the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee aware that he is facilitating a highly controversial and unpopular development through the Council's "property hat" especially as there is an outstanding application for the area to be given Village Green Status?

The Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee responded to the supplementary question.

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

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0ZTV_hmGYs&t=4367s

Note: Councillors J and T Sams left the meeting after the question and answer session (7.15 p.m.).

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

Councillor Cox, the Leader of the Council, submitted his report on current issues.

After the Leader of the Council had submitted his report, Councillor Perry, the Leader of the Conservative Group, Councillor Mrs Gooch, the Leader of the Independent Group, Councillor McKay, the Leader of the Labour Group, and Councillor Powell, the Leader of the Independent Maidstone Group, responded to the issues raised.

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

Note: Councillor Garland entered the meeting during the questions from Council Members (7.05 p.m.).

70. JOINT REPORT OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 23 JULY 2019 AND THE AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 30 JULY 2019 - UPDATED CAPITAL STRATEGY

It was moved by Councillor Cox, seconded by Councillor Harvey, that the recommendation of the Policy and Resources Committee and the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee relating to the updated Capital Strategy be approved.

RESOLVED: That the updated Capital Strategy, attached as Appendix A to the joint report of the Policy and Resources Committee and the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee, including the updated Capital Programme set out as Table 1 within the Strategy, be agreed.

71. REPORT OF THE AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 30 JULY 2019 - AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE - ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL 2018/19

It was moved by Councillor Harvey, seconded by Councillor Cox, that the recommendation of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee relating to the Committee's Annual Report 2018/19 be approved.

RESOLVED: That the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee Annual Report 2018/19, which demonstrates how the Committee discharged its duties during 2018/19, be noted.

72. REPORT OF THE DEMOCRACY AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 4 SEPTEMBER 2019 - AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION - OUTSIDE BODIES

It was moved by Councillor Webb, seconded by Councillor Mrs Gooch, that the recommendations of the Democracy and General Purposes Committee regarding amendments to the Constitution relating to Outside Bodies be approved.

RESOLVED:

1. That the changes to Schedule 2 of the Constitution, attached as Appendix 2 to the report of the Democracy and General Purposes Committee, be agreed.
2. That the changes to Committee Terms of Reference, attached as Appendix 3 to the report of the Democracy and General Purposes Committee, be agreed.

73. REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE HELD ON 10 SEPTEMBER 2019 - LOOSE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

It was moved by Councillor D Burton, seconded by Councillor Mrs Grigg, that the recommendation of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee relating to the making (adoption) of the Loose Neighbourhood Plan be approved.

In moving the recommendation, Councillor Burton recognised the commitment and contribution of all those involved in the preparation of the Plan and asked Members to join him in congratulating the people of Loose.

RESOLVED: That the Loose Neighbourhood Plan, attached as Appendix 2 to the report of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee, be made.

74. ORAL REPORT OF THE COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2019

There was no report from the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee on this occasion.

75. ORAL REPORT OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 SEPTEMBER 2019

There was no report from the Policy and Resources Committee on this occasion.

76. ORAL REPORT OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE HELD ON 19 SEPTEMBER 2019

There was no report from the Licensing Committee on this occasion.

77. ORAL REPORT OF THE COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE ACTING AS THE CRIME AND DISORDER COMMITTEE HELD ON 24 SEPTEMBER 2019

There was no report from the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee Acting as the Crime and Disorder Committee on this occasion.

78. NOTICE OF MOTION - ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Notice of the following motion had been given by Councillor Perry:

Members of this Council are elected by the Residents of this Borough to represent their interests. And in order for Members to carry out their duties effectively the Council agrees that all committee agendas, reports and information relating to items on the agenda (Minutes etc.) should be made available to all Members; including information made exempt from publication under Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

In moving the motion, with the agreement of his seconder (Councillor D Burton), and with the consent of the meeting, Councillor Perry deleted the words *Paragraph 3 of* from the sixth line.

During the discussion, the following suggested amendment was moved by Councillor Clark, seconded by Councillor English:

Members of this Council are elected by the Residents of this Borough to represent their interests. In order for Members to carry out their duties effectively this Council agrees that all committee agendas and reports relating to items on the agenda (including minutes, supporting documentation and urgent updates) will be provided to committee members and made available to any other interested members on request.

It was suggested that this amendment be further amended as follows:

Members of this Council are elected by the Residents of this Borough to represent their interests. In order for Members to carry out their duties effectively this Council agrees that all committee agendas and reports relating to items on the agenda (including minutes, supporting documentation, ~~and urgent updates~~ *and relevant exempt information*) will be provided to committee members and made available to any other interested members on request.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 17.5, the motion, having been moved and seconded, and the suggested amendments were referred to the Democracy and General Purposes Committee.

79. RE-APPOINTMENT OF COUNCILLOR PETER COULLING OF TESTON PARISH COUNCIL AS A NON-VOTING PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE ON THE AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE, NO OTHER NOMINATIONS HAVING BEEN RECEIVED

It was moved by Councillor Harvey, seconded by Councillor English, that Councillor Peter Coulling of Teston Parish Council be re-appointed to serve as a non-voting Parish Council representative on the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee and the Hearing Panel, as required, for a three year term of office with immediate effect.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Peter Coulling of Teston Parish Council be re-appointed to serve as a non-voting Parish Council representative on the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee and the Hearing Panel, as required, for a three year term of office with immediate effect.

80. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 8.10 p.m.