

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, MAIDSTONE ON 23 JULY 2014

Present: Councillor Thick (The Mayor) and Councillors Ash, Black, Mrs Blackmore, Burton, Butler, Chittenden, Collins, Cox, Cuming, Daley, Edwards-Daem, Ells, English, 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, Mrs Stockell, de Wiggondene, Willis, J A Wilson and Mrs Wilson

22. **PRAYERS**

Prayers were said by the Reverend Bill Miller, Minister at Maidstone Baptist Church.

23. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Springett, Vizzard and Watson.

24. **DISPENSATIONS**

There were no applications for dispensations.

25. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

Paul Fisher, the Head of Legal Services, disclosed an interest in the question to be asked by Councillor Hogg of the Leader of the Council relating to the Mid-Kent Improvement Partnership and, in particular, proposed structural changes to Mid-Kent Legal Services. With the agreement of the Council, Mr Fisher remained in the meeting when the question was put and answered.

26. **DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING**

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

27. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

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

28. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD ON 7 JUNE 2014

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Borough Council held on 7 June 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed.

29. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor updated Members on recent/forthcoming engagements and charity events. The Mayor said that the Garden Party had been particularly well attended this year, with guests including visitors from Beauvais, and the sum of £1,075 had been raised for the Charity Fund. He would like to thank Members and the Mayoral team for their help and support over an extremely busy period.

The Mayor then introduced "Brenchley Bear" which was being used to promote the permanent Collections and a forthcoming exhibition at the Museum. It was noted that "Teddy Bear Story" featuring bears from the Collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum of Childhood would run from 9 August 2014 to 1 November 2014.

30. PETITIONS

The Mayor said that he had decided not to exercise his discretion to waive the requirement for two weeks' notice to be given of the intention to present a petition to the Council. On this occasion, there had been no urgent reason for the petition to be heard at short notice.

31. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

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

"Having lived in Fant my entire life I've recently observed the conversion of single homes into houses in multiple occupation, for example in Bower Lane, Florence, Douglas and Upper Fant Roads. This results in over density in an inner urban area with resultant problems such as parking, congestion, lack of amenity space and a deterioration of the local environment.

I would like to ask the Council how they intend to address this issue in the forthcoming Local Plan and what measures they intend to take in advance of the Local Plan coming into place?"

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 Labour Group, then responded to the question.

Mr Lloyd Porter asked the following question of the Leader of the Council:

"What procedures and actions would the Leader take if one of their Councillor's family was politically targeted through media intervention?"

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.

Miss Abigail Hogg asked the following question of the Leader of the Council:

"For many residents in Maidstone, preserving Green Belt land is important. What is the Leader's policy on protecting the Green Belt land around Maidstone from being built 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.

A supplementary question asked by Miss Hogg of the Leader of the Council was rejected by the Mayor on the grounds that it did not relate to the original question or the reply.

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

<http://live.webcasts.unique-media.tv/mbc183/interface>

32. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

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

"Now that a number of Councils have joined together to use each other's services, calling themselves MKIP, would the Leader agree that the legal side of MKIP should be brought in front of scrutiny so that scrutiny can ensure that any restructuring of this service will be even stronger than what we currently have at present at Maidstone Borough Council".

The Leader of the Council responded to the question.

Councillor Paine asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development:

"I was delighted to hear news of unprecedented investment in Maidstone's transport system, almost £16m from the Local Enterprise Partnership.

One of the largest schemes to secure funding involves reconfiguring roads to turn the town centre bridge gyratory back into a two way system, just

under £5m.

Will the Cabinet Member champion Maidstone's corner and lobby KCC to ensure that, as part of this scheme, they take the opportunity to improve links for cyclists, pedestrians, and public transport at the same time? This is a once in a lifetime chance to address these problems at the heart of our town centre."

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development responded to the question.

Councillor Newton asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Economic and Commercial Development:

"Whilst entering the Town Hall this evening we commend the refurbishment of the area occupied by Voluntary Action Maidstone.

However, many Members of this Council attended the Economic and Commercial Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings when it was recommended and agreed that a Tourist Information presence would be returned to the Town Hall.

It was agreed that it would be supported by VAM with additional support from MBC Officers.

It was further agreed that VAM were to have volunteers trained in the tourism aspects of this Borough and they confirmed that they were keen to give MBC their support in this role.

The result is that the only visible tourist display is the most minimal rotating stand secluded behind the door of Maidstone Town Hall.

It is not easily accessible and is certainly a very poor effort to promote the Borough of Maidstone.

Does the Cabinet Member consider this is an acceptable way to help to promote Maidstone, the County Town of Kent?"

The Cabinet Member for Economic and Commercial Development responded to the question.

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

<http://live.webcasts.unique-media.tv/mbc183/interface>

33. 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. One question was ruled out by the Mayor as it did not relate to an issue raised in the original speech.

34. 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 Paine, that the allocation of seats on Committees be as set out in Appendix A 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 Overview and Scrutiny Committee	1 seat from Independent to Labour
General Purposes Group	1 seat from Conservative to Vacancy
Licensing Act 2003 Committee	1 seat from UKIP to Labour
Standards Committee	1 seat from UKIP to Vacancy

RESOLVED: That the allocation of seats on Committees be as set out in Appendix A 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 Overview and Scrutiny Committee	1 seat from Independent to Labour
General Purposes Group	1 seat from Conservative to Vacancy
Licensing Act 2003 Committee	1 seat from UKIP to Labour
Standards Committee	1 seat from UKIP to Vacancy

Note: See Minute 38 below. The Community, Leisure Services and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee is now the Community, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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

35. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

It was moved by Councillor Mrs Blackmore, seconded by Councillor Greer, that the wishes of the Group Leaders with regard to the membership of

Committees and Substitute membership, as set out in the lists circulated, 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, be accepted.

Note: See Minute 38 below. The Community, Leisure Services and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee is now the Community, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

36. REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD ON 14 JULY 2014 - ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL 2013/14

It was moved by Councillor Black, seconded by Councillor de Wiggondene, that the recommendation of the Audit Committee relating to its Annual Report to Council 2013/14 be approved.

RESOLVED: That the Audit Committee's Annual Report 2013/14 (attached as Appendix A to the report of the Committee), which demonstrates how the Committee has discharged its duties during 2013/14, provides assurance to the Council that important internal control, governance and risk management issues are being monitored and addressed by the Committee, and provides additional assurance to support the Annual Governance Statement, be noted.

37. REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE HELD ON 10 JULY 2014 - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

It was moved by Councillor J A Wilson, seconded by Councillor English, that the recommendation of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee relating to the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2013/14 be approved.

RESOLVED: That the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2013/14, attached as Appendix A to the report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee, be approved.

38. REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE HELD ON 10 JULY 2014 - PROPOSED REVISIONS TO ARTICLE 6 OF THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

It was moved by Councillor J A Wilson, seconded by Councillor English, that the recommendations of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee relating to proposed revisions to Article 6 of the Council's Constitution be approved.

RESOLVED:

1. That the proposed revisions to Article 6 of the Council's Constitution, as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee, be approved.

2. That the Community, Leisure Services and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee be renamed the Community, Environment and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

39. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS - AMENDMENTS TO THE SCHEME OF DELEGATION OF EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

The Mayor announced that this report was for information only.

40. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.45 p.m.