

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, MAIDSTONE ON 21 MAY 2022

Present: Councillor Mrs Gooch (Mayor) and Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Brice, Brindle, Burton, Cannon, Clark, Cleator, Coates, Conyard, Cooke, Cooper, Cox, English, Eves, Forecast, Fort, Garten, Mrs Grigg, Harper, Harwood, Hastie, Hinder, Holmes, Jeffery, Joy, Khadka, Kimmance, Knatchbull, McKenna, Mortimer, Munford, Naghi, Newton, Parfitt-Reid, Perry, Mrs Ring, Mrs Robertson, Rose, Round, Russell, J Sams, T Sams, Spooner, Springett, Trzebinski, R Webb, S Webb, de Wiggondene-Sheppard, Wilby, D Wilkinson, T Wilkinson and Young

1. **PRAYERS**

Prayers were said by the Very Reverend John S Richardson of All Saints Church.

2. **WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS**

The Mayor welcomed Councillors Maureen Cleator, Richard Conyard, Stuart Jeffery, Sandra Knatchbull, Dan Wilkinson and Tom Wilkinson to their first meeting of the Council following the elections on 5 May 2022.

3. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Bartlett and Bryant and from Mike and Maureen FitzGerald, former Mayor and Mayoress of the Borough of Maidstone, who usually attended the Annual Meeting, but were unable to do so on this occasion.

4. **DISPENSATIONS**

There were no applications for dispensations.

5. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

The Interim Deputy Head of Legal Partnership and Monitoring Officer advised the Council that there was no requirement under the Members' Code of Conduct for Members to disclose an interest in the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel relating to the Members' Allowances Scheme. Members' Allowances were defined in the Code as an "Authority Function" and there was no requirement under the Code for Members to disclose an interest when an "Authority Function" was being discussed.

There were no disclosures of interest by Members or Officers.

6. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CURRENT MAYOR 2021/22

The Mayor thanked the Council for electing her as Mayor in May 2021. She then provided an overview of events and engagements throughout the year, highlighting the relaunch of Maidstone Market, a visit to the Maidstone Gin Distillery, the annual Court of Survey Cruise, the Street Festival in Maidstone Town Centre, the Mela in Mote Park, the Elmer the Elephant public art trail, the Christmas lights switch-on in Jubilee Square, officially starting construction work at LOC 8 (a new mixed use business park on the Ashford Road at junction 8 off the M20), celebrating 25 years of the Turkey Mill Business Centre, opening the Maidstone Innovation Centre and attending numerous services, openings and performances.

The Mayor said that she had worked hard to promote a positive image of the Borough and to show that it was open for business. She thanked Members and Officers for their support and wished her successor all the very best for his Mayoral Year.

Note: Councillor Wilby entered the meeting during the announcements (9.10 a.m.).

8. ELECTION OF MAYOR FOR THE ENSUING MUNICIPAL YEAR

It was moved by Councillor Clark, seconded by Councillor Munford, supported by Councillors Burton and Rose, and

RESOLVED: That Derek John Mortimer, a Councillor of the Borough, be duly elected Mayor of the Borough of Maidstone until the Annual Meeting of the Council in 2023.

**** THE MAYOR (COUNCILLOR MORTIMER) IN THE CHAIR****

9. CONGRATULATIONS TO THE MAYOR

The Mayor received congratulations on his election from scholars representing local schools as follows:

Samuel Ludlow	Maidstone Grammar School
Ellie Newmarch	Maidstone Grammar School for Girls
Isaac O'Connell	Archbishop Courtenay Primary School

10. THE RETIRING MAYOR

It was moved by Councillor Burton, seconded by Councillor English, supported by Councillors Munford and Harper, and

RESOLVED: That the hearty thanks of this Council be given to Councillor Mrs Fay Gooch and Mr Peter Gooch for the admirable discharge of their duties as Mayor and Mayor's Consort during the past year, and for their courteous approach to all sections of the community.

11. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

12. MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD ON 13 APRIL 2022

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Borough Council held on 13 April 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed.

13. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD ON 13 APRIL 2022

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Borough Council held on 13 April 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed.

14. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY MAYOR FOR THE ENSUING MUNICIPAL YEAR

It was moved by Councillor Cox, seconded by Councillor Naghi, supported by Councillors Springett and Harper, and

RESOLVED: That Councillor Gordon Newton be duly appointed Deputy Mayor for the Borough of Maidstone until the Annual Meeting of the Council in 2023.

15. NEW MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor updated Members on forthcoming engagements including Proms in the Park, the 2022 Battle of Britain Air Show at Headcorn Aerodrome, the Maidstone Borough in Bloom Competition and the Kent Cup Final Volleyball tournament at the Leisure Centre, and asked them for their support.

16. ELECTION OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL IN ACCORDANCE WITH CORE PROVISION A2, 7.2 OF THE CONSTITUTION

It was moved by Councillor Perry, seconded by Councillor Cooper, and

RESOLVED: That Councillor Burton be elected as the Leader of the Council in accordance with Core Provision A2, 7.2 of the Constitution.

17. REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL ON APPOINTMENTS TO THE EXECUTIVE AND THE DELEGATION OF EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

The Leader of the Council advised the Council that:

- The Scheme of Delegation of Executive Functions would be as set out in the document circulated and the Delegation of Executive Functions to Officers would be as set out in Part B of the Constitution.
- His appointments to portfolios were as follows:
 - Councillor John Perry - Lead Member for Corporate Services and Deputy Leader
 - Councillor Lottie Parfitt-Reid - Lead Member for Communities and Public Engagement
 - Councillor Martin Round - Lead Member for Environmental Services
 - Councillor Simon Webb - Lead Member for Housing and Health
 - Councillor Claudine Russell - Lead Member for Leisure and Arts
 - Councillor Paul Cooper - Lead Member for Planning and Infrastructure
- The Proper Officer would implement the changes into the Constitution and give effect to the consequential amendments to Policy Advisory Committees arising from the portfolios.

18. TO CONSIDER ANY MOTION MOVED BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL IN RESPECT OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S PROGRAMME FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2022/23

It was moved by Councillor Burton, seconded by Councillor Cooper, that the Administration's programme for the Municipal Year 2022/23 be approved.

In presenting the programme, Councillor Burton advised the Council that:

He did not intend anything in his speech to form a particular pledge or priority item for the Executive to move forward without reference to the Policy Advisory Committees. Throughout the process of changing the Council's governance arrangements, the undertaking was given to make sure that all Councillors are given the opportunity to shape decisions before they are made, and he honoured that commitment. In setting out the programme for the Municipal Year, there was an expectation that more would be added to it throughout the year with the input of all Councillors.

Priorities included:

- The commitment to the Council acquiring an additional 1,000 houses to be reserved for local people on affordable terms in addition to the yield anticipated from developer contributions but within the overall housing target (1,000 to be a start and not a limit);
- The expansion of the Council's programme of financial inclusion, through existing programmes and as part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund award;
- Maintaining a tough stance on crime and anti-social behaviour, working closely with the Police and utilising the Council's own powers and resources;

- Continuing work in strategic planning whilst awaiting the examination of the Draft Local Plan, including a review of the Community Infrastructure Levy;
- Delivery of community infrastructure, including consideration of Heather House;
- Decisions in relation to the Leisure Centre and the refurbishment of the galleries at Maidstone Museum;
- Reviewing the Council's social housing allocation policy;
- Tackling the issues associated with other local authorities continuing to relocate residents to the Borough without the necessary support; and
- The commitment to tackling climate change in everything the Council does.

RESOLVED: That the Administration's programme for the Municipal Year 2022/23 be approved.

19. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY, COMMUNICATIONS AND GOVERNANCE - ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES

In accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Council considered the allocation of seats to each Political Group in relation to its various Committees.

It was moved by Councillor Burton, seconded by Councillor Perry, and

RESOLVED: That the allocation of seats on Committees be as set out in amended Appendix 1 to the report of the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance circulated at the meeting.

20. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES:

In accordance with Section 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Council considered the appointments to its Committees and Substitutes.

It was moved by Councillor Burton, seconded by Councillor Cooper, and

RESOLVED: That the wishes of the Group Leaders with regard to appointments to Committees and Substitutes, as set out in the schedule circulated at the meeting, be accepted.

21. ADOPTION OF THE SCHEME OF DELEGATION OF NON-EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

It was moved by Councillor Burton, seconded by Councillor Perry, and

RESOLVED: That the Scheme of Delegation of Non-Executive Functions, as set out in Parts B and C of the Constitution, be adopted.

22. REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL - MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

It was moved by Councillor Burton, seconded by Councillor English, and

RESOLVED: That the Members' Allowances Scheme recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel, with the exception of the SRA for the Leader of the Opposition, be adopted and added to the Constitution, as set out in Appendix B.

23. DURATION OF MEETING

9.00 a.m. to 10.40 a.m.