

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, MAIDSTONE ON 19 JULY 2017

Present: Councillor Greer (The Mayor) and
Councillors Adkinson, Barned, Mrs Blackmore,
Boughton, Brice, D Burton, Butler, Clark, Cox,
Cuming, Daley, Ells, Fermor, Fort, Garland, Garten,
Mrs Gooch, Mrs Grigg, Harper, Harvey, Harwood,
Hastie, Hemsley, Mrs Hinder, Mrs Joy, Lewins,
McLoughlin, B Mortimer, D Mortimer, Naghi, Newton,
Perry, Pickett, Powell, Prendergast, Mrs Robertson,
Round, J Sams, T Sams, Spooner, Springett,
Mrs Stockell, Vizzard, Webb, Webster,
de Wiggondene, Willis and Mrs Wilson

23. **MINUTE'S SILENCE**

The Council stood in silence for one minute in memory of Claire Perry, Licensing Partnership Manager, who passed away on 21 May 2017.

24. **PRAYERS**

Prayers were said by the Reverend John Corbyn, Vicar of Holy Cross Church, Bearsted.

25. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors M Burton, English, Fissenden, Munford, Mrs Ring and Wilby.

26. **APPOINTMENT OF A NON-VOTING PARISH COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATIVE TO SERVE ON THE AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED: That this item be withdrawn from the agenda as KALC Maidstone wishes to reconsider the appointment.

27. **DISPENSATIONS**

There were no applications for dispensations.

28. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

29. **DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING**

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

30. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

31. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD ON 20 MAY 2017

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Borough Council held on 20 May 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed.

32. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

During his announcements, the Mayor said that he was sure that the Council would agree to a letter being sent to Mr Mike FitzGerald, a former Member of the Borough Council and Mayor of the Borough of Maidstone, congratulating him on being awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for services to the homeless and the community in Maidstone. The Council agreed to a letter being sent by the Mayor to Mr FitzGerald.

33. PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

34. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from Members of the public.

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

Questions to the Chairman of the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee

Councillor Vizzard asked the following question of the Chairman of the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee:

A while ago, a decision was made by the Councillors that Maidstone would become a Dementia-Friendly Town. Some training was undertaken by the Council for Members, Officers, staff and businesses. Assuming that this training is not-on-going, what initiatives has MBC afforded to businesses and retailers to take forward this promise of Maidstone becoming a Dementia-Friendly Town?

The Chairman of the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee replied that:

The Council has continued to promote Maidstone as being a Dementia-Friendly Town through a range of activities including:

- A dementia-friendly walk around Mote Park designed to stimulate walkers' senses while providing a safe and enjoyable walk around the Park. It includes interpretation posts and sound posts which encourage walkers to listen to the sounds of the Park and explore the plants and environment through smell and touch. There is also a leaflet to accompany the mile long walk which was developed by the Council following training from Dementia Adventure and with funding from Maidstone Age UK.
- Through the Healthy Business Awards local businesses are encouraged to sign up to be a dementia-friendly organisation as part of the mental health well-being theme.
- The Maidstone Museum was one of four working with University College London in 2015/16 to provide activities for people identified through GP surgeries as having mild dementia. The Museum offered tea and chat based around museum objects which were available and carefully chosen to spark conversation among the age group selected (in our case over 65s). This project was recently shortlisted for a Royal Society for Public Health Award, and we await the final result.
- The Museum also hosts the monthly Café Culture, aimed at people over 65 who consider themselves to be socially isolated. Several of the group (39 on the list at present) have some form of mild dementia (as identified through the Museums on Prescription project). Sessions vary from formal speakers to informal coffee and chat sessions in the Café. Carers from two care homes have also brought their clients to the sessions.
- The Learning and Events Officer at the Museum attends Dementia Friendly Communities meetings, and receives updates via email, and staff at the Museum have visited centres for people with dementia taking objects to handle and talk about and craft activities to try.
- The Council is exploring the possibility of providing further dementia-friendly awareness training as there has been natural turnover of staff since it was last delivered.

Councillor Vizzard asked the following supplementary question of the Chairman of the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee:

What arrangements have been made by the Council to make information about these initiatives available to people suffering from dementia and their carers?

The Chairman of the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee replied that he would look into this matter, and respond direct to Councillor Vizzard.

Questions to the Chairman of the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee

Councillor J Sams asked the following question of the Chairman of the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee:

Can you please confirm what charge was made to the organisers of Maidstone Mela for the use of Whatman Park and its facilities?

The Chairman of the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee replied that:

The Council's Grounds Maintenance Team was asked to provide a quotation to the organisers of the event for the provision of waste collection and a toilet attendant. The Council's quotation of £605 included the provision of a toilet attendant for 7 hours and the provision of 10 euro-bins for the disposal of all waste from the event. However, there is no contractual obligation for those hiring our parks to use the Council's services, but on this occasion, the event organiser chose to do so.

Furthermore, it is usual for the Council to charge both a hire and disruption fee to organisers of large events taking place in our parks. For charitable events hosting more than 1,000 people, the combined fee would typically be in the region of £800.

However, as a means of supporting our Destination Management Plan, the Council is particularly keen to encourage more events in Whatman Park, and so on this occasion, the Council did not charge a fee nor for the Officer time spent supporting the planning of this event.

Councillor J Sams asked the following supplementary question of the Chairman of the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee:

Can the Council be proactive in supporting the delivery of next year's Mela? We all want to celebrate diversity, we have all enjoyed the Mela in the past, and it must not be perceived that the Borough Council has washed its hands of it. The programme included a list of supporters, one of which was Kent County Council, but there was not a Borough Council logo on there. Can the charge and the support be discussed at the next meeting of the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee?

The Chairman of the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee replied that:

We will be discussing this at our next meeting. I intend to talk to the Officers about all the events we hold in the Borough. We do love the Mela, it was a wonderful weekend that we had in the Park. We need to look as a Council at how we deliver and how we facilitate events, and make sure contracts are drawn up correctly etc. I'm not saying that they were not on this occasion, but we have to make sure going forward that we mean what we say we will do, and support all the events that we can support in Maidstone. I for one want to make Maidstone the event capital

of Kent; we need every event, and the Mela is a great example of cultural diversity in the Borough.

Councillor Willis entered the meeting at the conclusion of this item (6.55 p.m.).

36. 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 Perry, the Leader of the Conservative Group, Councillor Mrs Gooch, the Leader of the Independent Group, Councillor Barned, the Leader of the UKIP Group, and Councillor Harper, 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.

37. REPORT OF THE AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 26 JUNE 2017 - AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE - ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL 2016/17

It was moved by Councillor McLoughlin, seconded by Councillor Mrs Gooch, that the recommendation of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee regarding the Committee's Annual Report to Council 2016/17 be approved, and that Mrs Eileen Riden be thanked for her services as a Parish Councillor representative on the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee since its establishment, and the Standards Committee before that, until her retirement as a Parish Councillor in May 2017.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee Annual Report 2016/17, which demonstrates how the Committee discharged its duties during 2016/17, provides assurance 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.
2. That Mrs Eileen Riden be thanked for her services as a Parish Councillor representative on the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee since its establishment, and the Standards Committee before that, until her retirement as a Parish Councillor in May 2017.

38. REPORT OF THE DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE HELD ON 3 JULY 2017 - EXTENSION TO THE APPOINTMENT OF THE INDEPENDENT PERSON

It was moved by Councillor Newton, seconded by Councillor D Burton, that

the recommendation of the Democracy Committee regarding the extension of the term of office of Mrs Barbara Varney, the current Independent Person, be approved.

RESOLVED: That the term of office of Mrs Barbara Varney, the current Independent Person, be extended for a period of three years until 31 July 2020.

39. ORAL REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING, SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE HELD ON 11 JULY 2017

There was no report from the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee on this occasion.

40. ORAL REPORT OF THE COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 JULY 2017

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

41. COUNCILLOR MRS MARION RING

The Mayor announced that Councillor Mrs Marion Ring was now at home following a stay in hospital. On behalf of the Council, the Mayor wished Councillor Mrs Ring a speedy recovery.

42. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.40 p.m.