

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE REMOTE MEETING OF MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD ON 15 JULY 2020

Present: Councillor Mrs Ring (Mayor) and Councillors Adkinson, Bartlett, Mrs Blackmore, Brice, Brindle, D Burton, M Burton, Chappell-Tay, Clark, Cox, Cuming, Daley, English, Eves, Fermor, Fissenden, Fort, Garland, Garten, Mrs Gooch, Mrs Grigg, Harper, Harvey, Hastie, Hinder, Joy, Khadka, Kimmance, Lewins, McKay, McLoughlin, Mortimer, Munford, Naghi, Parfitt-Reid, Perry, Powell, Purle, Mrs Robertson, M Rose, Round, J Sams, T Sams, Spooner, Springett, Vizzard, Webb, de Wiggondene-Sheppard and Young

120. MINUTE'S SILENCE

The Council observed a minute's silence in memory of all those in the Borough and surrounding area who had lost their lives due to COVID-19, including Mr Mark Radford, Chief Executive of Swale Borough Council.

121. PRAYERS

Prayers were said by the Reverend Steve Price, Vicar of All Saints, Loose.

122. RECORDING OF PROCEEDINGS

Councillor McKay reserved his right to record the proceedings.

123. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Harwood, Newton, D Rose and Wilby.

124. DISPENSATIONS

There were no applications for dispensations.

125. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

126. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

127. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

128. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD ON 26 FEBRUARY 2020

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Borough Council held on 26 February 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed.

129. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Referring to the Coronavirus lockdown restrictions, the Mayor said that she hoped things would return to normal soon so that Members could start meeting again in the usual way.

130. PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

131. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Question to the Chairman of Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee from Mr Stuart Jeffery

Given the Council's stated 'Anti-Idling Campaign', has the Council adopted the powers provided by Regulation 12 of The Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions) (Fixed Penalty) (England) Regulations 2002 to enforce the switching off of engines when vehicles are stationary on the road?

The Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee responded to the question.

Mr Jeffery asked the following supplementary question of the Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee:

Given that over one thousand people have died since the legislation was introduced in 2002 and the implication of air pollution in exacerbating COVID infections, does the Council agree that it should have done more including enacting its powers as other English Councils have now done?

The Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee responded to the question.

Councillor Adkinson, on behalf of the Leader of the Labour Group, responded to the questions.

Question to the Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee from Ms Kate Hammond

In January you told us you had written to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government about Maidstone's housing numbers. You made various press releases about the efforts Maidstone are doing challenging the National Government's housing numbers. You then took nearly six months to write again because your first letter never arrived. How can we have confidence in your ability to negotiate housing numbers if we don't have confidence in you being able to deliver a letter?

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

Councillor Mrs Gooch, the Leader of the Independent Group, Councillor Powell, the Leader of the Independent Maidstone Group, and Councillor Perry, the Leader of the Conservative Group, responded to the question.

Ms Hammond asked the following supplementary question of the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee:

We made a request under the Freedom of Information Act to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and they told us that they have no paper or electronic records of correspondence with the Council on housing matters in the first five months of the year. How can we believe Maidstone is serious in reducing the numbers given that, from what we have seen so far, they have not been very active in the last six months?

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

Question to the Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee from Mr Steve Heeley

We were pleased to note that your second letter to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government about Maidstone's housing numbers was sent on 3rd June by post as well as by email this time. In that letter you asked for a 'sensible conversation' with civil servants about housing numbers to take place no later than 30th June. Can you update residents please on how this conversation went?

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

Councillor McKay, the Leader of the Labour Group, and Councillor Powell, the Leader of the Independent Maidstone Group, responded to the question. Councillor McKay also made reference to Ms Hammond's questions.

Mr Heeley asked the following supplementary question of the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee:

It looks like the Civil Service has not taken any notice of your letters, it has taken little notice of your emails and it has not taken any notice of the fact that you asked for a meeting before 30 June, so what demands are you actually going to make at the meeting tomorrow and what do you expect them to take notice of?

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

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2V1CYYSw5SU>

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

There were no questions from Members of the Council to the Chairmen of Committees.

133. 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. Councillor Cox expressed his sympathy with the families of those who had lost their lives due to COVID-19 and other ailments and his thanks to all those who were supporting their communities during the pandemic.

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 Harper, on behalf of the Leader of the Labour Group, and Councillor Powell, the Leader of the Independent Maidstone Group, responded to the issues raised echoing the sentiments expressed.

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

134. REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE HELD ON 10 MARCH 2020 - LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME 2020-22

Prior to moving the recommendation of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee relating to the Local Development Scheme (LDS) 2020-2022, Councillor D Burton, the Chairman of the Committee, advised the Council that he wished to amend Table 3.1 contained within the LDS (Project Plan for the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review) as follows:

Preferred approaches consultation (Regulation 18) (with emphasis on detailed topic areas) – February 2020 2021

Referring to the report of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee, Councillor Burton said that it was stated within the reasons for the recommendation that “The Maidstone Borough Local Plan includes a commitment to review the Plan by April 2021 (Policy LPR1)”. He wished to add the following sentence to the reasons for the recommendation as he believed it to be material to the adoption of the LDS by the Council:

The April 2021 commitment was superseded by the NPPF update in 2018 requiring Local Authorities to review their Local Plans every five years; therefore, the end date for the review is October 2022.

It was moved by Councillor D Burton, seconded by Councillor English, that the recommendation of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee relating to the Local Development Scheme (LDS) 2020-2022 be approved subject to the amendment of Table 3.1 contained within the LDS (Project Plan for the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review) as follows:

Preferred approaches consultation (Regulation 18) (with emphasis on detailed topic areas) – February ~~2020~~ 2021

RESOLVED: That the Local Development Scheme 2020-2022, attached as Appendix 1 to the report of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee, be approved subject to the amendment of Table 3.1 contained within the LDS (Project Plan for the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review) as follows:

Preferred approaches consultation (Regulation 18) (with emphasis on detailed topic areas) – February ~~2020~~ 2021

135. REPORT OF THE DEMOCRACY AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 11 MARCH 2020 - CONSULTATION RESPONSE ON THE MOTION - MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

It was moved by Councillor Mrs Gooch, seconded by Councillor Perry, that the recommendations of the Democracy and General Purposes Committee relating to the membership of Committees be approved.

RESOLVED:

1. That the motion concerning the membership of Committees be approved.
2. That the amendments to the Constitution arising from the motion be approved.

136. REPORT OF THE DEMOCRACY AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 11 MARCH 2020 - AMENDED CONSTITUTION 2020/21 - REFORMATTING, MINOR AMENDMENTS AND MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS AT COMMITTEES

It was moved by Councillor Mrs Gooch, seconded by Councillor Purle, that the recommendations of the Democracy and General Purposes Committee relating to the amended Constitution 2020/21 be approved.

Amendment moved by Councillor McKay, seconded by Councillor Powell, that the recommendations of the Democracy and General Purposes Committee relating to the amended Constitution 2020/21 be approved subject to the amendment of recommendation one as follows:

That the amendments to the Constitution in Appendix 1 to the report of the Democracy and General Purposes Committee, including the additional recommendations arising from further corrections to the document, as set out in Appendix 1, be agreed subject to the amendment of the fourth column on page 2 of the Appendix relating to Questions by Members of the Public to read:

At ordinary meetings of the Council members of the public may ask questions of the Chairman of any Committee provided written notice has been given in advance as set out below.

The question and answer session will be limited to one hour.

With the following stated below:

After the Chairman of any Committee has spoken, the Mayor will ask if any Group Leader/Representative present would also like to respond.

At Committee meetings members of the public may ask questions of the Chairman provided written notice has been given in advance as set out below.

This question and answer session will be limited to half an hour.

AMENDMENT LOST

The original motion was then put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED:

1. That the amendments to the Constitution in Appendix 1 to the report of the Democracy and General Purposes Committee, including the additional recommendations arising from further corrections to the document, as set out in Appendix 1, be agreed.
2. That the reformatted and amended Constitution be adopted.

137. REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 JUNE 2020 - MARDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (REGULATION 19)

Before moving the recommendation of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee relating to the Marden Neighbourhood Plan (Regulation 19), Councillor D Burton, the Chairman of the Committee, took the opportunity to congratulate and thank everyone that had been involved in producing the document.

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 Marden Neighbourhood Plan be approved.

RESOLVED: That the Marden Neighbourhood Plan be made (adopted).

138. REPORT OF THE COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE ACTING AS THE CRIME AND DISORDER COMMITTEE HELD ON 30 JUNE 2020 - 2019/2020 STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT AND REVISED COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN

Before moving the recommendation of the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee acting as the Crime and Disorder Committee relating to the revised Community Safety Partnership Plan, Councillor Mortimer, the Chairman of the Committee, said that Members might have noticed that there was no reference to COVID-19 in the Plan.

Councillor Mortimer explained that:

- The Plan was prepared prior to the outbreak and was based on trends and data from the previous twelve months. It was known that COVID-19 had an impact on the five priority areas and this would be considered in the delivery of the Plan in the coming months.
- There had been quite a large increase in domestic abuse and the various Partners had been adapting to support victims and empower survivors through the trauma.
- The Partnership also continued to work throughout the lockdown to support and protect young people and to engage with those at risk and was responding to increased levels of anti-social behaviour and nuisance.
- As with any emergency, the recovery phase was often longer than the crisis itself because of its broader impacts. The Safer Maidstone Partnership through the Community Safety Partnership Plan would remain agile to the pressures created by the Coronavirus and ensure that Maidstone remains a safe place to live, learn, work and visit. He would like to thank the Officers and the outreach teams for their work at this time.

It was moved by Councillor Mortimer, seconded by Councillor Kimmance, that the recommendation of the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee acting as the Crime and Disorder Committee relating to the revised Community Safety Partnership Plan be approved.

RESOLVED: That the April 2020 revision of the Community Safety Partnership Plan 2019-22, attached as an Appendix to the report of the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee acting as the Crime and Disorder Committee, be adopted.

139. REPORT OF THE DEMOCRACY AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 1 JULY 2020 - EXTENSION OF THE APPOINTMENT OF THE INDEPENDENT PERSON

It was moved by Councillor Mrs Gooch, seconded by Councillor Webb, that the recommendations of the Democracy and General Purposes Committee relating to the extension of the appointment of the current Independent Person be approved.

RESOLVED:

1. That the term for the current Independent Person be extended for one year from 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2021.
2. That the role of the Independent Person and a reserve position be advertised for appointment in 2021.

140. ORAL REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE HELD ON 7 JULY 2020

There was no report arising from the meeting of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee held on 7 July 2020.

141. ORAL REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND LEISURE COMMITTEE HELD ON 14 JULY 2020

There was no report arising from the meeting of the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee held on 14 July 2020.

142. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY MAYOR

It was moved by Councillor Munford, seconded by Councillor Cox, supported by Councillors Perry, McKay and Powell, and

RESOLVED: That Councillor Fay Lynette Gooch be duly appointed Deputy Mayor for the Borough of Maidstone until the next Annual Meeting of the Council.

The Deputy Mayor then made her Declaration of Acceptance of Office and thanked the Council for her appointment.

143. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY, COMMUNICATIONS AND GOVERNANCE
- REVIEW OF ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES FOLLOWING A
VACANCY

It was moved by Councillor Cox, seconded by Councillor Perry, that the recommendations set out in the report of the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance be approved.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Perry said that he wished to add Councillor Brindle as a Member of the Licensing Committee.

RESOLVED:

1. That the allocation of seats on Committees be as set out in Appendix 1 to the report of the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance.
2. That the wishes of the Group Leaders with regard to the membership of Committees as set out in Appendix 2 to the report of the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance be accepted with the addition of Councillor Brindle as a Member of the Licensing Committee.

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL ACTING AS CORPORATE TRUSTEE
OF THE CHARITY KNOWN AS THE COBTREE MANOR ESTATE**

144. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY, COMMUNICATIONS AND GOVERNANCE
- REVIEW OF ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES FOLLOWING A
VACANCY

It was moved by Councillor Cox, seconded by Councillor Perry, that the recommendations set out in the report of the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance be approved.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Perry said that he wished to add Councillor Springett as a Member of the Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee.

RESOLVED:

1. That it be noted that there is no impact on the allocation of seats on the Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee as a result of the vacancy on the Council.
2. That the wishes of the Group Leaders with regard to the membership of the Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee as set out in Appendix 1 to the report of the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance be accepted with the addition of Councillor Springett as a Member of the Committee.

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL ACTING AS CORPORATE TRUSTEE
OF THE QUEEN'S OWN ROYAL WEST KENT REGIMENT MUSEUM
TRUST**

145. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY, COMMUNICATIONS AND GOVERNANCE
- REVIEW OF ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES FOLLOWING A
VACANCY

RESOLVED: That it be noted that there is no impact on the allocation of seats on the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment Museum Trust Committee as a result of the vacancy on the Council.

146. DURATION OF MEETING

6.40 p.m. to 8.50 p.m.