

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 1 MARCH 2016

Present: Councillors Ash, Ells, Fort, Mrs Gooch, Hemsley, Mrs Hinder, Naghi, Paterson and Mrs Wilson

Also Present: Councillors Perry and Sargeant

86. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Fissenden, Pickett and Newton.

87. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following substitute Members were noted:

- Councillor Naghi for Councillor Fissenden
- Councillor Gooch for Councillor Newton
- Councillor Wilson for Councillor Pickett

88. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman, in his opinion, accepted the following urgent items as the information was not available at the time the agenda was published, and in recognition of the length of time until the next meeting of the Committee:

- Item 16 – Policy for the Use of Jubilee Square
- Item 17 – Additional Inscription Charges

The Chairman also agreed to take the following urgent updates:

- Item 12 – Play Area Capital Schedule
- Item 14 – a newly revised Festivals and Events Strategy

89. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The Chairman adjourned the meeting from 6.35 p.m. to 6.43 p.m. to allow Members time to consider the urgent updates.

90. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor Perry was in attendance as a visiting Member and reserved his right to speak on any item on the agenda.

Councillor Sargeant was in attendance as an observer.

91. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

92. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

Councillor Hinder disclosed that she had been lobbied on item 17 – Additional Inscription Charge.

Councillor Wilson disclosed that she had been lobbied on item 11 – Plaques and People: a proposed protocol.

All Members disclosed that they had been lobbied on item 16 – Policy for the Use of Jubilee Square.

93. TO CONSIDER WHETHER ANY ITEMS SHOULD BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBLE DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

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

94. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 JANUARY 2016

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 January 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed.

95. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were no petitions.

96. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

97. CHANGE TO THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chairman advised that item 17 – Additional Inscriptions Charge would be taken after item 11 – Plaques and People: a proposed protocol.

98. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCE AND RESOURCES - PLAQUES AND PEOPLE: A PROPOSED PROTOCOL FOR THE BOROUGH OF MAIDSTONE

The Chairman advised the Committee that the author of the protocol had provided apologies for urgent medical reasons. It was also noted that additional information was to come that was not available at the time the agenda was published.

It was moved from the Chair that the item be deferred to the July meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED: That Plaques and People: a proposed protocol be deferred to the next full meeting of the Committee on 5 July 2016.

For – 9 Against – 0 Abstain – 0

Members requested a mechanism to be implemented that would allow Members to place items on the agenda without the requirement for an Officer report. The interim Director of Regeneration and Place agreed to liaise with Officers to clarify the process.

99. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC REALM -
ADDITIONAL INSCRIPTION CHARGE

Jennifer Shepherd, Head of Environment and Public Realm, presented the report detailing the charge for an additional inscription permit agreed at the January meeting as part of the Committee's fees and charges.

It was explained that the fee had been reduced from £97 in 2015/16 to £52 in 2016/17 to reflect the time spent on administration of additional inscriptions permits.

A Member had requested this return to Committee to allow consideration of the implications of the loss of potential income.

RESOLVED:

1. That the reasons for the original agreed proposal to reduce the charge for an additional inscription fee to £52 be noted; and
2. That the charge of £97 which was set for additional inscriptions for 2015/16 be retained for 2016/17.

For – 9 Against – 0 Abstain – 0

100. ORAL UPDATE OF THE PARKS AND LEISURE MANAGER - PLAY AREA
CAPITAL PROGRAMME PROJECT

Jason Taylor, the Parks and Project Manager, provided a verbal update on the Play Area Capital Programme Project, and tabled an urgent update depicting the financial monitoring and target programme.

In response to questions it was stated that:

- The Play Area Strategy had not been completed and so no play areas were currently designated as strategic.

- The scheduled Mote Park play area improvements would be implemented at the same time as the Adventure Zone project in Spring 2017.

RESOLVED: That the oral report be noted.

101. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - MAIDSTONE PARKS AND OPEN SPACES 10 YEAR PLAN

The Parks Project Manager, Jason Taylor, introduced the report providing an update on the progress of the Maidstone Parks and Open Spaces 10 Year Plan.

The Committee was advised that:

- Parishes had been engaged with as part of the preliminary work on the Plan.
- There was opportunity within the National Planning Policy Framework for an increase in green space to be funded by development.
- Member involvement in the Plan was sought, and an action plan would be produced to come to Committee in 6 months.

RESOLVED:

1. That work be continued on the Maidstone Parks and Open Spaces 10 year plan as detailed in the report of the Head of Commercial and Economic Development.
2. That committee Members be invited to give their opinions and thoughts on the draft document once produced.
3. That the final Maidstone Parks and Open spaces 10 Year Plan be scheduled for adoption in the later part of 2016 following consultation.

For – 9 Against – 0 Abstain – 0

Councillor Wilson left the meeting at 7.32 p.m.

102. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - REVISED FESTIVALS AND EVENTS POLICY

Laura Dickson, MCL Marketing and Sales Manager, introduced the report proposing amendments to the Festival and Events Policy as per the urgent update.

In response to questions it was explained that

- Events using low frequency sound would be assessed at application. Event organisers could be requested to use specialist amplifiers to reduce vibration.
- The provision of toilets at events was covered by the individual event management plan.

RESOLVED:

That the revisions to the Festivals and Events Policy as set out in the urgent update to the report of the Head of Commercial and Economic Development be approved.

For – 8 Against – 0 Abstain – 0

103. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE

The MCL Marketing and Sales Manager, Laura Dickson, provided the Committee with an update on the progress of the Destination Management Plan.

Notable achievements included the launch of new historic interpretation panels, and an audit of tourist signage and removal of redundant signage.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

104. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - POLICY FOR THE USE OF JUBILEE SQUARE

Fran Wallis, Economic Development Officer, introduced the report on the policy for the use of Jubilee Square and provided background to the issue.

The Chairman read a statement submitted by a Councillor which the majority of the Committee had received, asking for the removal of political meetings and rallies from the Undesirable Uses category.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- There was a difference between using the square and hiring the square, and clarification was sought on whether the policy affected the ability of members of the public to gather outside of the town hall.
- A Local Authority could not control political protest. If the size of a protest was deemed a concern then the police would be contacted.
- If a protest involved people with placards, no action would be required from MBC. If the protest involved the erection of a structure or amplifying equipment, then this would require MBC and KCC approval.

- It was requested that the interim Director of Regeneration and Place and the legal advisor investigate the issues raised and return with alternative wording for paragraphs 4.3.2 and 4.3.3

The Committee wished the excellent quality of the report to be noted.

RESOLVED:

1. That the proposed policy governing the use of Jubilee Square be agreed, subject to the deletion of paragraphs 4.3.2 and 4.3.3 and the Committee receiving a further report that makes clear the difference between types of use, licensing and hiring.
2. That the pricing schedule set out in paragraph 5.8.1 of the Policy be agreed.
3. That the progress toward the establishment of a Farmers Market on Jubilee Square be noted.

For – 8 Against – 0 Abstain – 0

105. DURATION OF MEETING

6.32 p.m. to 8.39 p.m.