

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF
MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL
HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, MAIDSTONE ON
4 DECEMBER 2024**

Present: Councillor Perry (The Mayor) and
Councillors Burke, Cannon, Cleator, Coates, Conyard,
Couch, Cox, Dawes, English, Field, Forecast, Fort,
Mrs Gooch, Greenan, Harper, Harwood, Higson,
Jeffery, Jenkins-Baldock, Kehily, Khadka, McKay,
Milham, D Naghi, M Naghi, Oliver, Parfitt, Rodwell,
Round, Russell, J Sams, T Sams, Springett,
Summersgill, Sweetman, M Thompson, S Thompson,
Trzebinski, Wales, D Wilkinson and J Wilkinson

76. MINUTE'S SILENCE - MRS WENDY MARLOW

The Council stood in silence for one minute in memory of Mrs Wendy Marlow, a former Member of the Borough Council, who sadly passed away in August.

77. PRAYERS

Prayers were said by the Reverend Silke Tetzlaff, Rector of All Saints Church, Staplehurst.

78. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barwick, Clark, Cooke, Jones, Riordan and Spooner.

79. DISPENSATIONS

There were no applications for dispensations.

80. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

With regard to the notice of motion relating to Freedom of the Borough for Maidstone's key workers, Councillors Cleator and Jeffery stated that they were key workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was suggested that most of the people in the room had probably been key workers during the pandemic.

81. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

82. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

83. PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

84. NOTICE OF MOTION - FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH FOR KEY WORKERS

The following motion was moved by Councillor Jeffery, seconded by Councillor English:

March 2025 will be the fifth anniversary of the first COVID-19 lockdown. Covid killed over 230,000 people in the UK and over 600 in our Borough including many key workers across all sectors. The lockdowns affected our communities deeply and during this time of deep anxiety, sadness and loss, it was the key workers from the public, private and voluntary sectors that kept working and kept people alive.

The UK Government defined key workers as those whose work was critical to the COVID-19 response. These can be divided into the three economic sectors:

The public sector included people working in health and social care, education and childcare, the police, defence and justice, fire and rescue, local and national government (inc. parish councils) including waste collection and disposal, public safety and national security, public service broadcasting, transport and other key public services.

The voluntary sector included people working in health and social care, community support.

The private sector included people working in the growing, production, sale and distribution of food and other necessary goods, veterinary medicine, transport services, utilities including energy, communications and water, and financial services.

Key workers therefore covered the public, private and voluntary sectors and it seems reasonable for a representative from each to accept the award on behalf of all organisations and workers in their sector.

This Council therefore resolves:

- 1. That agreement be given in principle that pursuant to Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, on behalf of Maidstone's key workers (critical workers as defined by HM Gov during the COVID-19 pandemic), the following organisations in recognition of the eminent services rendered to this Borough during the COVID-19 pandemic,*

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust (on behalf of all key workers in the public sector)

Involve Kent (on behalf of all key workers in the voluntary sector)

One Maidstone (on behalf of all key workers in the private sector)

be admitted to be Honorary Freemen of the Borough of Maidstone.

2. *That the roll of Honorary Freedom of the Borough be amended to include the above organisations and to express that it is received on behalf of all key workers in the Borough for eminent services rendered to this Borough during the COVID-19 pandemic.*
3. *That an extraordinary meeting of the Council be convened in March 2025 around the 5th anniversary of the first lockdown to resolve the same accordingly.*

RESOLVED:

1. That agreement be given in principle that pursuant to Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, on behalf of Maidstone's key workers (critical workers as defined by HM Gov during the COVID-19 pandemic), the following organisations in recognition of the eminent services rendered to this Borough during the COVID-19 pandemic,

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Voting: 31 – For 3 – Against 8 – Abstentions

85. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.10 p.m.