

Folkestone Town Meeting

MINUTES of the Full Council Meeting held at the Town Hall, Folkestone on Wednesday, 11th January 2023 at 7.00 p.m.

TOWN COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Abena Akuffo-Kelly, Ann Berry, Paul Bingham, Peter Gane, Jonathan Graham, Dylan Jeffrey, Nicola Keen, Mary Lawes, Connor McConville, Jackie Meade, Tim Prater, Belinda Walker, Richard Wallace and Roger West.

ABSENT: Councillor David Horton

IN ATTENDANCE: Phil Cross – Finance Officer
Georgina Wilson – Executive Assistant

1903. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Ray Field due to being on holiday.

RESOLVED: To approve apologies from Councillor Ray Field.

Proposed: Councillor Roger West

Seconded: Councillor Ann Berry

Voted: F:14, Ag:0, Ab:0

1904. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Dylan Jeffrey declared a personal interest in item 12 due to being involved in booking local rooms, but as there was no pecuniary interest Cllr Jeffrey was advised that he could take part in the discussion and vote.

1905. MINUTES

The Council was asked to receive and authorise the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 17th November 2022 and to ask the Town Mayor to sign them as a correct record.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 17th November 2022 be received and signed as a correct record with an amendment to show Cllr Akuffo-Kelly had sent apologies.

Proposed: Councillor Peter Gane

Seconded: Councillor Roger West

Voting: F:14, Ag:0, Ab:0

1906. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions were received.

1907. MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor reported on a busy few months since the last meeting and thanked the organisers of these events as well as the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Walker for her support in attending events on her behalf. Councillors were reminded of the Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration to be held on 27th January at the Garden of Remembrance.

1908. MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee's meeting of 20th October 2022 be received and signed as a correct record.

Proposed: Councillor Connor McConville

Seconded: Councillor Abena Akuffo-Kelly

Voting: F:14, Ag:0, Ab:0

1909. MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Planning Committee's meetings of 27th October and 24th November 2022 be received and signed as a correct record.

Proposed: Councillor Paul Bingham

Seconded: Councillor Jackie Meade

Voting: F:14, Ag:0, Ab:0

1910. TOWN GRANT APPLICATIONS

Councillors were invited to ask questions to those applicants who attended the meeting. Applicants were then thanked for attending and informed that a decision would be made later in the meeting in private.

1911. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2023/24

RESOLVED: To accept the schedule of meetings for 2023/24 and to approve the new dates for the Annual Council Meeting (16th May 2023) and Town Assembly (23rd May 2023) due to the Coronation and Election.

Proposed: Councillor Peter Gane

Seconded: Councillor Jackie Meade

Voting: F:14, Ag:0, Ab:0

1912. NOTICE OF VACANCIES

Following the Notice of Vacancies for East Folkestone and Central Wards, Council was asked to consider whether it wished to fill these positions in the interim period by way of co-option. If not, it should consider the most appropriate use of the remaining ward grant balances.

RESOLVED: To not co-opt due to the short timescale before the next election and to distribute the ward grant balances to the remaining Councillors in those wards; Central and East.

Proposed: Councillor Peter Gane

Seconded: Councillor Jonathan Graham

Voting: F:13, Ag:1, Ab:0

1913. NOTICE OF MOTION

Cllr Belinda Walker moved a motion for the Council to co-opt one existing councillor to replace Cllr Keutenius on the Community Services Committee and two existing councillors to replace Cllrs Brook and Keutenius on the Climate and Environment Committee. Both these committees have two further meetings in this municipal year.

RESOLVED: For the Group Leaders to nominate a replacement Councillor to fill the vacant seats in Community Services, Climate and Environment and Finance and General Purposes Committees.

Proposed: Councillor Jackie Meade

Seconded: Councillor Abena Akuffo-Kelly

Voting: F:13, Ag:0, Ab:1

1914. COMMUNITY SPACE – THE BAYLE

At the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting of 15th December 2022, Councillor Abena Akuffo-Kelly spoke regarding the possible lease of a community room at the former Dance Easy site in The Bayle. Report C/23/327 provided further information.

Councillor Akuffo-Kelly felt that due to the current cost of living crisis, taking on responsibility for another community space would not be in the best interests of the Town Council or residents of Folkestone. The proposal to take on this service was therefore withdrawn.

1915. FOLKESTONE TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2023/24

Report C/23/326 concluded the budget making process for the Town Council's precept requirements for 2023/24. Council was asked to approve the budget and agree a precept for 2023/24.

RESOLVED: To receive report C/23/326, approve the budget of £958,370 and set the precept at £952,970 (an increase of 3%).

Proposed: Councillor Connor McConville

Seconded: Councillor Belinda Walker

Voting: F:11, Ag:3, Ab:0

Proposed: To receive report C/23/326, approve the budget and increase the cost to tax payers by 3.584% to have a balanced budget.

Proposed: Councillor Dylan Jeffrey

Seconded: Councillor Ann Berry

This motion was lost.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The press and public are to be excluded for the remainder of this meeting under Section 1, sub-section 2, of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business.

Proposed: Councillor Ann Berry

Seconded: Councillor Roger West

Voting: F:14, Ag:0, Ab:0

1916. TOWN GRANT SCORES

RESOLVED: To approve all awards set out in the exempt list.

Proposed: Councillor Tim Prater

Seconded: Councillor Peter Gane

Voting: F:14, Ag:0, Ab:0

1917. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Thursday, 16th March 2023 at 7.00 p.m. – Ordinary Full Council Meeting

The meeting concluded at 7.30 pm.

.....Town Mayor