

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Folkestone Town Meeting

MINUTES of the Extra Ordinary Council Meeting held at the Town Hall, Folkestone on Thursday, 9th November 2023 at 6.00 p.m.

TOWN COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Abena Akuffo-Kelly, Charlie Bain Smith, Bridget Chapman, Jane Darling, Laura Davison, Peter Gane, Nicola Keen, Kieran Leigh (arrived at 7.30pm), Adrian Lockwood, Connor McConville, Lucy McGirr, Liz McShane, Jackie Meade, Tim Prater, John Renshaw, Belinda Walker and Roger West.

ABSENT:

IN ATTENDANCE: Toni Brenchley – Deputy Town Clerk, Roland Domingo (from 7.30pm) – Finance Officer, Georgina Wilson - Executive Assistant, and Steve Nash, Town Clerk (from 6.15pm – 6.25pm).

No questions were received.

1999. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Christine Dickinson.

RESOLVED: To accept the apologies from Councillor Christine Dickinson.

Proposed: Councillor Belinda Walker
Seconded: Councillor Bridget Chapman
Voting: F: 16, Ag: 0, Ab: 0

2000. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The remainder of the Agenda has classified items 3 and 4, Minute number 2001 and 2002, as disclosing exempt information under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) thereby excluding the press and public from the meeting whilst this item is debated. Press and members of the public left the meeting.

Proposed: Councillor Nicola Keen
Seconded: Councillor Adrian Lockwood
Voting: F: 16, Ag: 0, Ab: 0

2001. APPEAL PANEL

RESOLVED: To appoint Cllr Liz McShane to the Appeals Panel.

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Proposed: Councillor Nicola Keen
Seconded: Councillor Jackie Meade
Voting: F: 16, Ag: 0, Ab: 0

RESOLVED: To appoint Cllr Nicola Keen to the Appeals Panel.

Proposed: Councillor Jackie Meade
Seconded: Councillor Belinda Walker
Voting: F: 16, Ag: 0, Ab: 0

RESOLVED: To appoint Cllr Christine Dickinson to the Appeals Panel.

Proposed: Councillor Peter Gane
Seconded: Councillor Nicola Keen
Voting: F: 16, Ag: 0, Ab: 0

2002. STAFFING

Members of the Appeals Panel (Cllrs Liz McShane and Nicola Keen), Personnel Committee (Cllrs Jane Darling – as substitute member for Cllr Nicola Keen, Peter Gane and Connor McConville) and Finance and General Purposes Committee (Cllrs Laura Davison, Adrian Lockwood and Tim Prater) were asked to leave the room for the next portion of the meeting.

Councillors remaining were Councillors Abena Akuffo-Kelly, Charlie Bain Smith, Bridget Chapman, Lucy McGirr, John Renshaw, Roger West and Belinda Walker.

The Town Clerk joined the meeting at 6.15pm and left the meeting at 6.45pm.

A short comfort break was taken.

Councillors discussed the evidence and the following resolutions were made.

RESOLVED: That the Officer in question has committed gross misconduct.

Proposed: Councillor Bridget Chapman
Seconded: Councillor Lucy McGirr
Voting: F: 6, Ag: 0, Ab: 1

RESOLVED: That the Officer in question is dismissed with immediate effect.

Proposed: Councillor Bridget Chapman
Seconded: Councillor Lucy McGirr

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Voting: F: 7, Ag: 0, Ab: 0

All Councillors returned to the meeting (7.30pm), Cllr Kieran Leigh was present from this point. The Mayor thanked everyone for taking part in the investigation and Councillor Jackie Meade also thanked the Officers involved in the investigation.

2003. RECRUITMENT OF ADDITIONAL STAFF

Councillor Connor McConville gave an update on the current situation with regards to the Grounds Maintenance project.

RESOLVED: To resolve that the proposals brought forward in report F/23/02 and subsequent minute "To switch from the use of external service provision and move to the recruitment of two new grounds staff and permit the Town Clerk to take this project forward." to FGP on the 31st August be abandoned. That our contractual arrangements with Harmer and Sons with regards to safety and maintenance of play parks continue. That we continue to monitor and assess our budgets for tree planting, flowerbeds and parks moving forward to ensure value for money.

Proposed: Councillor Connor McConville

Seconded: Councillor Peter Gane

Voting: F: 17, Ag: 0, Ab: 0

Councillor Connor McConville gave an update on the current situation with regards to the CCTV project.

RESOLVED: To resolve that the proposals brought forward in report F/23/03 and subsequent minute "To switch from the use of external service provision and move to the recruitment of one CCTV Operator and volunteers and permit the Town Clerk to take this project forward." to FGP on the 31st August are implemented. Subject to the removal of volunteers. To agree the recruitment of a CCTV controller as set out in the agreed job description. To delegate to the Town Clerk to move forward with the establishment of a CCTV control room within the Town Hall, including software upgrades to allow remote access to CCTV network, with appropriate safeguards. To agree to receive £48,500 from Folkestone and Hythe District Council as part of the Safer Streets Initiative. To agree that the Town Clerk together with the finance officer and chair of FGP review the CCTV maintenance contract as well as potential for income generation through additional CCTV provision.

Proposed: Councillor Connor McConville

Seconded: Councillor Charles Bain Smith

Voting: F: 17, Ag: 0, Ab: 0

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2004. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

16th November 2023 at 7.00 p.m. – Ordinary Full Council Meeting

The meeting concluded at 8.35pm.

.....Town Mayor