

Folkestone Town Meeting

MINUTES of the Annual Assembly of the Town Meeting for the Parish and Town of Folkestone held at the Town Hall, Folkestone on Tuesday, 17th May 2022 at 7 p.m.

TOWN COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Abena Akuffo-Kelly, Ann Berry, Paul Bingham, Michelle Keutenius (left at 19.14pm), Ray Field (left at 20.16pm), Peter Gane, Dylan Jeffrey, Nicola Keen, Mary Lawes, Jackie Meade, Belinda Walker and Roger West.

ABSENT: Councillors Dan Brook, David Horton, Tim Prater and Richard Wallace

REPRESENTATIVES FROM OTHER ORGANISATIONS: Chief Inspector Alice Ames – District Commander for Folkestone and Hythe (Kent Police), Mary Stredwick and Dr Peter Le Feuvre – Rainbow Centre, Lauren Golden – Kent Air Ambulance Volunteer, Sam O'Connor – Homestart, Andrew Thomas – Friends of Folkestone Museum, Rev. Mark Haldon-Jones, County Councillors Laura Davidson and David Monk, District Councillor Rory Love and 3 Folkestone Electors.

IN ATTENDANCE: Jennifer Childs - Town Clerk, Ian Bishop – Town Sergeant and Vicky Deakin – Communities & Events Officer.

Prayers

Prayers were led by the Mayors Chaplain, Rev Mark Haldon-Jones.

1865. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Jonathan Graham and Connor McConville.

1866. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Dylan Jeffrey declared an interest in respect of Item 9 as a Member of the Kent Fire & Rescue Board.

1867. MINUTES

The Council was asked to receive and authorise the Minutes of the Town Meeting held on 25th March 2021 and to ask the Town Mayor to sign them as a correct record.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Town Meeting held on 25th March 2021 be received and signed as a correct record.

Proposed: Councillor Michelle Keutenius

Seconded: Councillor Jackie Meade

Voting: F:10, Ag:0, Ab:2

1868. OPENING OF PROCEEDINGS BY THE TOWN MAYOR

The Town Mayor welcomed Councillors, electors and guests to the meeting held in accordance with the requirements of Section 9(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Councillor Michelle Keutenius presented cheques to her nominated charities for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

1869. QUESTIONS FROM ELECTORS

Elector 1: Council were asked how many trees installed as part of FTC's annual sponsorship scheme and planted in the last two years have since died.

The Town Clerk responded advising that FTC are still awaiting a response from KCC on this matter and will follow up accordingly.

Elector 2: Councillors Peter Gane and Roger West were thanked by an elector for their continuing work and support of 'Green' Initiatives in Cheriton.

Elector 3: Members were asked by a representative of the Skabour events team if anything specific can be done to enhance their application for a Town Grant to improve their potential of being awarded funding support for the annual event.

The Town Clerk indicated that FTC have supported this event with funding previously and also gave a brief outline of the required criteria.

1870. REPORTS BY KENT COUNTY COUNCILLORS (FOLKESTONE AREA)

Councillor Dylan Jeffrey reported on the success of the Covid vaccination programme reporting and publicization by KCC which greatly increased the uptake and contributed to the success of the scheme overall.

An update was given in respect of the Kent Travel Saver Scheme including Cllr Jeffrey advising that the existing subsidy provision to the service is protected for 3 years.

KCC have acquired a solar farm and Cllr Jeffrey briefed the meeting in respect of the expectation for the farm to contribute to approx. 30% of KCC's Net Zero carbon reduction target and to make significant savings on electricity costs estimated at 30M over the next 40years.

An update on the recent elections was given.

The function and operations of the Temporary Dispersal Scheme was explained with an indication of the current situation in respect of asylum seekers including advising that Folkestone County Councillors continue to support the Kent Refugee Action Network with funding and additional resources. Additionally an update was given on the '.gov.uk' scheme 'Homes for Ukrainians – Sponsor Guidance' and figures in respect of the uptake from Folkestone residents.

An outline of www.letstalk.kent.gov.uk was given. This portal provides the opportunity for everyone to get involved and shape the future of Kent.

Cllr Jeffrey thanked his counterparts, County and District Councillors for their partnership working and support given to various initiatives.

Cllr Jackie Meade echoed Cllr Jeffrey's comments and thanks and also provided an update in respect of the KCC Kent Active Travel Cycle Scheme.

Councillor Rory Love reported on all the projects and initiatives he is jointly responsible for as a newly appointed member of the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee.

Cllr Love explained his reasons for being unable to support the proposed cycling lanes for Cheriton including the significant loss of essential parking spaces on Cheriton High Street should the scheme be implemented and believing this would have a detrimental impact on local businesses and traders.

An update was given regarding the logistical compromises and route strategy implemented to assist in the management of lorries carrying aggregate waste with associated dispersal of potentially harmful dust enroute to the Recycled Aggregate Production Facility, Caesars Way via Ashley Avenue, Cheriton.

A new community centre has been established within Folkestone Library and Cheriton Library has been refurbished including the installation of new artwork with contributions from local organisations.

Cllr Love provided a briefing and expressed his support regarding the Governments proposed changes to its existing waste and recycling policy which would allow householders to deposit DIY waste for free. Attendees were encouraged to promote the current consultation and invite members of the public to take part online at:

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/consultation-on-diy-waste-and-call-for-evidence/>

1871. REPORTS BY FOLKESTONE & HYTHE DISTRICT COUNCILLORS (FOLKESTONE AREA)

Councillor Laura Davison provided updates on the following:

- As a member of the Town Centre Working Group, briefed the meeting on current status of Folkestone's Place Plan including current considerations for uses of the FOLCA building with community spaces and local organisations to feature.
- The implementation of monthly Police Surgeries for Central Ward and held at Folkestone Town Hall.
- Folkestone Music Town
- Incredible Edible
- Enhanced district wide litter picking
- The loss of the Disability Information Service Kent (DISK) in Folkestone and advised on potential new support services for this community locally
- Newly established Licensing Forum

Councillor David Monk gave a further update on the Place Plan including advising that Folkestone & Hythe District Council are currently writing a bid to be submitted applying to the Central Government 'Levelling Up Fund'.

Information was also provided in respect of the Community Led Local Development (CLLD) Scheme indicating that priority is currently being given to the prevention of deprivation in East Folkestone which includes a project to regenerate Ship Street.

Councillor Ray Field, as cabinet member of the Transportation and Digital Transformation Committee, provided a report on free Wi-Fi being made available across Harbour Ward led by KCC and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) to be widely implemented, with the first system to be installed at Sandgate Road Car Park as part of the new parking strategy currently being developed. Councillor Field also highlighted the new CAP Access Point scheme soon to be rolled out in towns and parishes, and that over 60% of the district residents are now using 'my account' and as 70% of those residents use it via mobile phones the platform is currently being upgraded to make it more user friendly.

1872. REPORTS BY KENT POLICE

Chief Inspector Alice Ames of Kent Police reported on their priorities and activities of the last financial year from April 2021 – end March 2022.

- 0.3% increase in crime (lowest of any Kent district) which was attributed to strong partnership working locally, specifically Folkestone with the Chief Inspector giving thanks to all involved.

- Significantly enhanced and ongoing support of vulnerable women and girls with a review currently being conducted to ascertain how this specific support can be best delivered moving forward.
- Ongoing plans, arrangements and strategies implemented and developed in respect of and to support the Jubilee Events.
- Publicization and promotion of a new initiative 'My Community Voice', an additional crime reporting portal to complement the existing 101 service and intended for lower risk / lower priority cases.

1873. REPORTS BY KENT FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Unfortunately, representatives from Kent Fire & Rescue Service were not in attendance.

1874. REPORTS BY COMMUNITY GROUPS

Dr Peter Le Feuvre, Chair of Folkestone Rainbow Centre Trustees reported on the increased demand at foodbanks, for housing and escalating homelessness due to the current economic climate. As such, there is a huge demand on this service and the advice required and one of the support mechanisms being considered is to expand food services by providing a subsidised supermarket for which, premises are currently being sought.

Andrew Thomas, Chair of the Friends of Folkestone Museum provided an update on greatly increased membership take-up including from overseas, forthcoming events and projects, zoom talks delivered and looking forward the organisation of the following:

- Collation of local historical information to be coordinated to support additional directional / informational signage and enhanced visitor information.
- Civic Day at The Quarterhouse
- Further development of the Schools Outreach Programme

1875. DATES OF THE NEXT MEETINGS OF FOLKESTONE TOWN COUNCIL

16 June 2022 at 6.30 p.m. – Ordinary Full Council Meeting

22 September 2022 at 7.00 p.m. – Ordinary Full Council Meeting

16 April 2023 – (Provisional Town (Electors) Annual Assembly)

The Mayor reiterated her thanks to all the speakers for everything they and their colleagues have done during another challenging year.

The Meeting concluded at 20.45 pm.

.....Town Mayor

DRAFT