

FOLKESTONE TOWN COUNCIL



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AGENDA

Meeting: **Folkestone Town Council**
Date: **13 June 2024**
Time: **6.30 p.m.**
Place: **Town Council Offices, 1/2 Guildhall Street, Folkestone**

To: **Town Councillors**

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED to attend a meeting of the Folkestone Town Council on the date and at the time and place shown above to transact the business shown on the agenda below. The meeting will be open to the press and public.

Any member who wishes to have information on any matter arising on the agenda which is not fully covered in these papers is requested to contact the Town Clerk prior to the meeting.

Toni Brenchley
Town Clerk

PRAYERS

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
To receive any apologies for absence.
- 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
To receive any declarations of either personal or prejudicial interest that Members may wish to make.
- 3. MINUTES**
To receive the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 30 May 2024 and to authorise the Town Mayor to sign them as a correct record.
- 4. INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT**
The Internal Auditor's Report for 2023/24 is attached for the Council's information.
- 5. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL**
To review the effectiveness of the system of Internal Control. Councillors are asked to consider the attached Statement of Internal Control in support of the Annual Governance Statement. The Chair of the meeting and the Town Clerk to sign.

- 6. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2023/24**
To approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24 (Section 1 of the Annual Return for the year ending 31 March 2024).
The Chair of the meeting and the Town Clerk to sign.
- 7. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND ANNUAL RETURN 2023/24**
To approve the Statement of Accounts for 2023/24, the Annual Return for 2023/24 (Section 2 of the Annual Return for the year ending 31 March 2024) and the supporting Bank Reconciliation.
The Chair of the meeting to sign.
- 8. PERIOD OF EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS**
For information, the dates set for the period of exercise of public rights are 17 June 2024 to 26 July 2024, during which time members of the public may inspect accounting records by prior arrangement.
- 9. ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24**
The 2023/24 Annual Report is attached for noting.
- 10. CORPORATE PLAN 2020-2025**
The Town Clerk will brief Councillors on proposals for a review of the Corporate Plan 2020-2025.
- 11. CCTV**
The Town Clerk will update members on recent upgrades to the CCTV infrastructure, funded by F&HDC.
- 12. STORAGE LEASE**
Report C/24/365 sets out options for renewing the storage facility lease.
- 13. WORKING GROUPS**
Council is asked to approve nominations for membership to Working Groups for 2024/25, as follows:

CCTV: Cllrs Akuffo- Kelly, Laura Davison, Nicola Keen, Adrian Lockwood, Connor McConville and Belinda Walker.
Highways Improvement Plan (HIP): Cllrs Jane Darling, Laura Davison, Christine Dickinson, Nicola Keen and Belinda Walker.
- 14. POLICIES**
Code of Conduct – *Revised policy attached (as per the LGA's Model Code of Conduct)*
Publication Scheme – *Review of existing policy*
Community Engagement Policy – *Review of existing policy*
- 15. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**
19 September 2024 – Ordinary Full Council Meeting

Councillors on Committee:

Cllr Abena Akuffo-Kelly
Cllr Charlie Bain Smith
Cllr Bridget Chapman
Cllr Jane Darling
Cllr Laura Davison
Cllr Christine Dickinson
Cllr Peter Gane
Cllr Nicola Keen
Cllr Kieran Leigh
Cllr Adrian Lockwood
Cllr Connor McConville
Cllr Liz McShane
Cllr Lucy McGirr
Cllr Jackie Meade
Cllr Tim Prater
Cllr John Renshaw
Cllr Belinda Walker
Cllr Roger West

Parking available for Councillors @ 6.00pm on the precinct area at the front of the Town Hall.



Folkestone Town Council

MINUTES of the Full Council Meeting held at the Town Hall, Folkestone on Thursday, 30th May 2024 at 6.30pm.

TOWN COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Abena Akuffo-Kelly, Bridget Chapman, Jane Darling, Laura Davison, Christine Dickinson, Peter Gane, Nicola Keen, Kieran Leigh, Adrian Lockwood, Lucy McGirr, Jackie Meade, John Renshaw, Belinda Walker and Roger West.

ABSENT: Councillor Connor McConville

IN ATTENDANCE: Toni Brenchley (Town Clerk) and Jennifer Griffin (Administration Officer)

No questions were received.

2082. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Liz McShane, Tim Prater and Charles Bain Smith

RESOLVED: To accept the apologies from Councillors McShane, Prater and Bain Smith

Proposed: Councillor Nicola Keen
Seconded: Councillor Jackie Meade
Voting: F: 14, Ag: 0, Ab: 0

2083. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations.

2084. MINUTES

The Council was asked to receive and authorise the Minutes of Mayor Making held on 7th May 2024 and to ask the Town Mayor to sign them as a correct record.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 7th May 2024 be received and signed as a correct record, subject to an amendment in the spelling of Councillor Peter Gane's name.

Proposed: Councillor Lucy McGirr
Seconded: Councillor Christine Dickinson
Voting: F: 14, Ag: 0, Ab: 0

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The remainder of the Agenda has classified item 4, Minute number 2085, 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 Peter Gane
Seconded: Councillor Kieran Leigh
Voting: F: 14, Ag: 0, Ab: 0

2085. STAFFING

The Town Clerk provided an update to Councillors

RESOLVED: To approve the Personnel Sub-Committee’s suggested Agreement in relation to Post F05.

Proposed: Peter Gane
Seconded: Bridget Chapman
Voting: F: 14, Ag: 0, Ab: 0

The Town Mayor, Councillor Abena Akuffo-Kelly moved a vote of thanks to the Town Sergeant, Ian Bishop, for his dedication and hard work over the past few weeks.

2086. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

13th June 2024 – AGAR (Annual Governance and Accountability Return)

The meeting concluded at 6.45pm.

.....Town Mayor



Mr R Domingo
Folkestone Town Council
The Town Hall
1-2 Guildhall Street
Folkestone
Kent
CT20 1DY

14 May 2024

Dear Roland

Re: Folkestone Town Council
Internal Audit Year Ended 31 March 2024 – Year-End Audit report

Executive summary

Following completion of our year-end internal audit on 14 May 2024 we enclose our report for your kind attention and presentation to the council. This report contains details of the additional testing conducted at year-end and should be considered alongside the interim audit report issued following our interim audit on 23 November 2023. The audits were conducted in accordance with current practices and guidelines and testing was risk based. Whilst we have not tested all transactions, our samples have where appropriate covered the entire year to date.

Our report is presented in the same order as the assertions on the internal auditor report within the published AGAR. The start of each section details the nature of the assertion to be verified. Testing requirements follow those detailed in the audit plan previously sent to the council, a copy of this is available on request. The report concludes with an opinion as to whether each assertion has been met or not. Where appropriate **recommendations for action are shown in bold text and are summarised in the table at the end of the report.**

Our sample testing did not uncover any errors or misstatements that require reporting to the external auditor at this time, nor did we identify any significant weaknesses in the internal controls such that public money would be put at risk.

It is clear the council takes governance, policies and procedures seriously and I am pleased to report that overall, the systems and procedures you have in place are fit for purpose and whilst my report may contain recommendations to change these are not indicative of any significant failings, but rather are pointers to improving upon an already well-ordered system.

It is therefore our opinion that the systems and internal procedures at Folkestone Town Council are well established and followed.

Regulation

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require smaller authorities, each financial year, to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and prepare an annual governance statement in accordance with proper practices in relation to accounts. In addition to this, a smaller authority is required by Regulation 5(1) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 to “undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance.”

Internal auditing is an independent, objective assurance activity designed to improve an organisation's operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes. The purpose of internal audit is to review and report to the authority on whether its systems of financial and other internal controls over its activities and operating procedures are effective.

Internal audit's function is to test and report to the authority on whether its specific system of internal control is adequate and working satisfactorily. The internal audit reports should therefore be made available to all Members to support and inform them when they considering the authority's approval of the annual governance statement.

Independence and competence

Your audit was conducted by Andy Beams of Mulberry & Co, who has over 30 years' experience in the financial sector with the last 13 years specialising in local government.

Your auditor is independent from the management of the financial controls and procedures of the council and has no conflicts of interest with the audit client, nor do they provide any management or financial assistance to the client.

Engagement Letter

An engagement letter was previously issued to the council covering the 2023/24 internal audit assignment. Copies of this document are available on request.

Planning and inherent risk assessment

The scope and plan of works including fee structure was issued to the council under separate cover. Copies of this document are available on request. In summary, our work will address each of the internal control objectives as stated on the Annual Internal Audit Report of the AGAR.

It is our opinion that the inherent risk of error or misstatement is low, and the controls of the council can be relied upon and as such substantive testing of individual transactions is not required. Testing to be carried out will be "walk through testing" on sample data to encompass the period of the council year under review.

Year-End Audit

The year-end audit was conducted on site. Information was requested from the council in advance of the audit taking place, and this was reviewed along with other information published on the council's website www.folkestone-tc.gov.uk

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	TEST AT INTERIM	TEST AT FINAL	PAGE
			3
			3
B	✓	✓	3
C	✓	✓	4
D	✓	✓	4
G	✓	✓	4
H	✓	✓	5
I	✓	✓	5
J		✓	5
K		✓	7
L		✓	8
M	✓	✓	8
		✓	9
			9

Interim Audit - Points Carried Forward

Audit Point	Audit Findings	Council comments on actions taken since interim visit
B. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS, GOVERNANCE AND PAYMENTS	A breach of the procedure for tendering has occurred during the year, which the council identified and reported to Members. Whilst the Acting Town Clerk confirmed that additional support from the Chair of the Finance Committee, along with the acknowledgement and adherence of the requirements of the Financial Regulations by current staff members has significantly reduced the likelihood of any reoccurrence, I must conclude that the council has not complied with the Financial Regulations during the year under review and therefore has failed to meet the requirements of this internal control objective.	The council is aware that this impact on Annual Governance Statement 2 'We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness' which I recommend they answer as 'No' and provide an explanation to the External Auditor for the breach, and assurances of future compliance through improved internal controls.
H. ASSETS AND INVESTMENTS	I recommend the council adopts an Investment Policy to support its future decision making on placement of funds in accordance with the Statutory Guidance on Local Authority Investments and in accordance with the JPAG guidance on investments.	The council adopted an Investment Policy at the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 25 January 2024 (minute ref 1627).
I. BANK AND CASH	The bank reconciliations have not been signed in accordance with the Financial Regulations and this will need to be evidenced to me by the year-end to achieve a positive sign-off for this internal control objective.	At the final audit, I was presented with signed bank reconciliations in accordance with the regulations.

B. FINANCE REGULATIONS, GOVERNANCE AND PAYMENTS**Internal audit requirement**

This authority complied with its Finance Regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved, and VAT was appropriately accounted for.

Audit findings

Check that the council's Financial Regulations are being routinely followed

At the interim audit, I noted 'A breach of the procedure for tendering has occurred during the year, which the council identified and reported to Members.

Whilst the Acting Town Clerk confirmed that additional support from the Chair of the Finance Committee, along with the acknowledgement and adherence of the requirements of the Financial Regulations by current staff members has significantly reduced the likelihood of any reoccurrence, I must conclude that the council has not complied with the Financial Regulations during the year under review and therefore has failed to meet the requirements of this internal control objective.'

The council is aware that this impact on Annual Governance Statement 2 'We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness' which I recommend they answer as 'No' and provide an explanation to the External Auditor for the breach, and assurances of future compliance through improved internal controls.

Check that the council's Finance Regulations are being routinely followed.

Further to the detailed testing conducted at the interim audit, I reviewed the minutes and associated financial papers on the council website and am satisfied that the council has put in place sufficient Internal Controls to ensure that its adopted Financial Regulations are properly followed.

C. RISK MANAGEMENT AND INSURANCE

Internal audit requirement

This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.

Audit findings

We discussed assertion 8 on the Annual Governance Statement and whether this had any impact on the council.

“We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.”

The Clerk confirmed that they were not aware of any event having a financial impact that was not included in the accounting statements.

D. BUDGET, PRECEPT AND RESERVES

Internal audit requirement

The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.

Audit findings

A review of minutes of Finance and General Purposes Committee meetings since the interim audit show that councillors continue to receive detailed financial reports, including lists of payments and receipts, reviews of budget monitoring reports and copies of bank reconciliations. This provides councillors with sufficient information to make informed financial decisions.

At the end of the financial year, the council held circa £369,417 in earmarked reserves (EMR) split between a range of clearly identifiable projects, including circa £139,878 as a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) EMR. The council also held circa £310,725 in the general reserve. I was able to compare reserve information across the management accounts and the AGAR working documents and found the totals to be consistent.

The Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) Practitioner’s guide states *‘the generally accepted recommendation with regard to the appropriate minimum level of a smaller authority’s general reserve is that this should be maintained at between three and twelve months of net revenue expenditure’* (para 5.33).

The general reserve balance is within the recommended range.

G. PAYROLL

Internal audit requirement

Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority’s approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.

Audit findings

I reviewed the total figure being included within box 4 (staff costs) on the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and was able to confirm from the accounting software that this includes only salary payments, HMRC payments and pension contributions.

H. ASSETS AND INVESTMENTS

Internal audit requirement

Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.

Audit findings

I confirmed the asset register total matches that included in box 9 (total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets) on the AGAR and was able to trace the changes to the previous year's total against the asset register. I confirmed by sample testing of the invoices that items added during the year has been accurately recorded as the original net purchase price.

The council has a Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loan, and I confirmed the year-end balance and in year payments against the PWLB documents.

I note that as per the recommendation in the interim internal audit, the council adopted an Investment Policy at the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 25 January 2024 (minute ref 1627).

I. BANK AND CASH

Internal audit requirement

Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.

Audit findings

At the interim audit I noted 'I noted that the reconciliation and bank statement have not been signed in accordance with the Financial Regulations, and I will need to see evidence of this practice being reintroduced at the final internal audit to allow for a positive sign-off for this internal control objective.'

Financial Regulation 2.2 states 'On a regular basis, at the end of each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Chairman or a cheque signatory shall verify bank reconciliations produced by the Town Clerk. The member shall sign the reconciliations as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion be reported and noted by the Finance & General Purposes Committee.'

At the final audit, I am pleased to see that bank reconciliations are now being signed in accordance with Financial Regulation 2.2 and I was able to confirm this activity is reported to the Finance & General Purposes Committee, as evidenced in the minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2024 (minute ref 1638).

I reviewed the March 2024 bank reconciliation for all accounts and was able to confirm the year-end balances to the bank statements and found no errors.

Due to the size of the council's annual budget, it does not benefit from the £85,000 protection limit offered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS). The council has mitigated this risk and opened accounts with different providers in accordance with its adopted Investment Strategy.

J. YEAR END ACCOUNTS

Internal audit requirement

Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.

Audit findings

The council, at its meeting to sign off the year-end accounts, must discuss Section 1 of the AGAR (Annual Governance Statement) and record this activity in the minutes of the meeting. **COUNCIL IS REMINDED THAT THIS MUST BE A SEPARATE AGENDA ITEM PRIOR TO THE SIGNING OF SECTION 2 OF THE AGAR (ANNUAL ACCOUNTS).**

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement

Based on the internal audit finding I recommend using the table below as the basis for that discussion.

	Annual Governance Statement	<i>'Yes', means that this authority</i>	Suggested response based on evidence
1	We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>	YES – accounts follow latest Accounts and Audit Regulations and practitioners guide recommendations.
2	We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>	NO – during the year a breach of the Financial Regulations occurred.
3	We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>	YES – the Clerk advises the council in respect of its legal powers.
4	We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>	YES – the requirements and timescales for 2022/23 year-end were followed.
5	We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>	YES – the council has a risk management scheme and appropriate external insurance.
6	We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>	YES – the council has appointed an independent and competent internal auditor.
7	We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>	YES – matters raised in internal and external audit reports have been addressed.
8	We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and. Where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>	YES – no matters were raised during the internal audit visits.
9	Trust funds including charitable – In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/asset(s), including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	<i>has met all its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>	N/A – the council is not a trustee.

Section 2 – Accounting Statements

AGAR box number		2022/23	2023/24	Internal Auditor notes
1	Balances brought forward	832,599	654,895	Agrees to 2022/23 carry forward (box 7)
2	Precept or rates and levies	915,510	952,970	Figure confirmed to central precept record
3	Total other receipts	158,335	218,763	Agrees to underlying accounting records
4	Staff costs	489,051	484,303	Agrees to underlying accounting records. Includes only expenditure allowed as staff costs (see section G)
5	Loan interest/capital repayments	39,302	39,301	Confirmed to PWLB documents
6	All other payments	723,196	622,882	Agrees to underlying accounting records
7	Balances carried forward	654,895	680,142	Cast correctly and agrees to balance sheet
8	Total value of cash and short-term investments	653,880	660,235	Agrees to bank reconciliation for all accounts
9	Total fixed assets plus long-term investments and assets	3,587,436	3,660,251	Matches asset register total and changes from previous year have been traced
10	Total borrowings	258,144	231,013	Confirmed to PWLB documents
11a	Disclosure note re Trust Funds (including charitable)	No	No	No – the council is not a sole trustee
11b	Disclosure note re Trust Funds (including charitable)	N/A	N/A	N/A – the council is not a sole trustee

Audit findings

The year-end accounts have been correctly prepared on an income and expenditure basis with the box 7 and 8 reconciliation completed. The council keeps detailed records of outstanding debtors, prepayments, stocks and stores, creditors and receipts in advance and I was able to verify the amounts included as adjustments in the year-end figures.

The AGAR correctly casts and cross casts and last year's comparatives match the figures submitted for 2022/23 and published on the council website.

The variance analysis has been completed to explain the variances exceeding 15% where required, and in my opinion, contains sufficient narrative and quantitative information for the External Auditor.

K. LIMITED ASSURANCE REVIEW**Internal audit requirement**

If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2022/23, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2022/23 AGAR tick "not covered")

Audit findings

The council did not certify itself exempt in 2022/23 due to exceeding the income and expenditure limits and this test does not apply.

Achievement of control assertions at year-end audit date

Based on the tests conducted during the year-end audit, our conclusions on the achievement of the internal control objectives are summarised in the table below and are reflected in the completion of the Annual Internal Audit Report within the AGAR.

	INTERNAL CONTROL OBJECTIVE	YES	NO	NOT COVERED
A	Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year	✓		
B	This authority complied with its Finance Regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved, and VAT was appropriately accounted for		✓	
C	This authority assesses the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these	✓		
D	The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E	Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for	✓		
F	Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved, and VAT appropriately accounted for	✓		
G	Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H	Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I	Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J	Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K	If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2022/23, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. <i>(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2022/23 AGAR tick "not covered")</i>			✓
L	The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation	✓		
M	The authority, during the previous year (2022/23) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations <i>(evidenced by the notice published on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set)</i> .	✓		
N	The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23 AGAR.	✓		
O	Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

Should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Andy Beams

Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd

Year-End Audit - Points Carried Forward

Audit Point	Audit Findings	Council comments
None		

**FOLKESTONE TOWN COUNCIL
STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL
FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st MARCH 2024**

1. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Folkestone Town Council (the Council) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions, and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

2. THE PURPOSE OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The system of internal control has been in place at the Council for the year ended 31 March 2024 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and accounts and, except for the details of significant internal control issues at section 5, accords with proper practice.

3. THE INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT

The Council:

The Council has appointed a Town Mayor, who is responsible for the smooth running of Full Council meetings and for ensuring that all Council decisions are lawful. A Chairman is appointed by each of its Committees to assume similar responsibilities.

The Council reviews its obligations and objectives and approves budgets for the following year at its December Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting. The January meeting of the Full Council approves the level of precept for the following financial year.

The Full Council meets seven times each year and receives the minutes of each of its Committees for monitoring purposes.

The Council carries out regular reviews of its internal controls, systems and procedures.

Clerk to the Council / Responsible Financial Officer:

The Council has appointed a Town Clerk who acts as the Council's advisor and administrator. The Clerk is the Council's Responsible Financial Officer and is responsible for administering the Council's finances. The Clerk is responsible for the day-to-day compliance with laws and regulations that the Council is subject to and for managing risks. The Clerk also ensures that the Council's procedures, control systems and policies are adhered to.

Payments:

All payments are reported to the Finance and General Purposes Committee. Two signatories of the Council must authorise payments, except where a scheme of delegation is in place, and sign each cheque (where this method of payment is used).

Risk Assessments / Risk Management:

The Council carries out regular risk assessments in respect of actions and regularly reviews its systems and controls.

Internal Audit:

The Council appointed an independent Internal Auditor who reported to the Council on the adequacy of its:

- records
- procedures
- systems
- internal control
- regulations
- risk management
- reviews

The effectiveness of the internal audit system is reviewed annually.

External Audit:

The Council's External Auditor, Mazars LLP, submits an annual Certificate of Audit, which is presented to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

4. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

The Council has responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control. The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by:

- the Full Council and its Committees;
- the Town Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer who has responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control environment and managing risks;
- the independent Internal Auditor who reviews the Council's system of internal control;

- Mazars LLP, the Council's external auditor, who makes the final check using the Annual Return, a form completed and signed by the Responsible Financial Officer, the Town Mayor and the Internal Auditor. The external auditor issues an annual audit certificate;
- the number of significant issues that are raised during the year.

5. SIGNIFICANT INTERNAL CONTROL ISSUES

A breach of Council's financial regulations (18.2) was made by the Town Clerk during September 2024, this was reported to Council who took appropriate disciplinary action.

The former Deputy Clerk is now the Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer and works closely with the Finance Officer, Chair of Finance and General Purposes Committee and Town Mayor to ensure the Council is fully compliant with the Council's financial regulations and acting lawfully.

The Finance Officer is now also the Deputy Clerk and is competent and confident in challenging/investigating any suspected discrepancies.

The Council strives for the continuous improvement of the system it has adopted for internal control and will continue to address any other minor issues and weaknesses raised and reported during the review process.

Town Mayor

Date:.....

Town Clerk

Date:.....

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 Form 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities*:

- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or
- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:
 - are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or
 - have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
 - The **Annual Internal Audit Report** must be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
 - **Sections 1 and 2** must be completed and approved by the authority.
 - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2024**.
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2024**. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
 - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
 - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2024
 - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
 - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
 - Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability **Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate** will be returned to the authority by email or post.

Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on the authority website/webpage:

Before 1 July 2024 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2023/24**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2023/24**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2024 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review. It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

*for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023/24

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty) and is properly signed and dated. Any amendments must be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2024.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- **You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chair, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (**Section 2, page 5**). An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the bank reconciliation is incomplete or variances not **fully** explained then additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2023) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2024).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which **must** include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2024**.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?	✓	
	Has all additional information requested, including the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights , been provided for the external auditor?	✓	
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?	✓	
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?	✓	
Section 2	Has the Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval?	✓	
	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chair of the approval meeting?	✓	
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?	✓	
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2024 been reconciled to Box 8?	✓	
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?	✓	
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? NB: do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.	✓	

**Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices*, can be downloaded from www.nalc.gov.uk or from www.ada.org.uk

Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24

Folkestone Town Council

<https://www.folkestone-tc.gov.uk/>

During the financial year ended 31 March 2024, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2023/24 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.		✓	
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2022/23, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2022/23 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2023-24 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2022-23 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	Yes	No	Not applicable
			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

23/11/2023 14/05/2024

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

ANDY BEAUMS, MULSERRY LAS LTD

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

Andy Beaums

Date

14/05/2024

*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

We acknowledge as the members of:

Folkestone Town Council

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024, that:

	Agreed		'Yes' means that this authority:	
	Yes	No*		
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>	
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.		✓	<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>	
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>	
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>	
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>	
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>	
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>	
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>	
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A	<i>has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>
			✓	

***Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

13/06/2024

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

<https://www.folkestone-tc.gov.uk/> ONLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

Folkestone Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £	
			<i>Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.</i>
1. Balances brought forward	832,599	654,895	<i>Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.</i>
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	915,510	952,970	<i>Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.</i>
3. (+) Total other receipts	158,335	218,763	<i>Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.</i>
4. (-) Staff costs	489,051	484,303	<i>Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.</i>
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	39,302	39,301	<i>Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).</i>
6. (-) All other payments	723,196	622,882	<i>Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).</i>
7. (=) Balances carried forward	654,895	680,142	<i>Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).</i>
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	653,880	660,235	<i>The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.</i>
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	3,587,436	3,660,251	<i>The value of all the property the authority owns – It is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.</i>
10. Total borrowings	258,144	231,013	<i>The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).</i>

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.</i>
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.</i>

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2024 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

SIGNATURE REQUIRED
DATE MM/YYYY

Date

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

13/06/2024

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE
Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved
COUNCIL CHAIR

Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2023/24

In respect of

Folkestone Town Council

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02 as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/> .

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2024; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor’s limited assurance opinion 2023/24

(Except for the matters reported below)* on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. (*delete as appropriate).

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

3 External auditor certificate 2023/24

We certify/do not certify* that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2024.

*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name

ENTER NAME OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

External Auditor Signature

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YYYY

FOLKESTONE TOWN COUNCIL



The Town Hall
1-2 Guildhall Street
Folkestone
Kent
CT20 1DY

Telephone: (01303) 257946

Email: enquiries@folkestone-tc.gov.uk

Web: www.folkestone-tc.gov.uk

Measures to prevent Financial Regulations breach

Councillors and officers have been made aware of the Financial Regulations to ensure all members of the Council are informed of the Financial Regulations and to follow under strict instructions at all times. The staff and Councillors have been encouraged to request financial advice if they are unsure of the procedure from the Responsible Financial Officer and Finance Officer.

The former Town Clerk, who suspended Financial Regulations (18.2) without prior approval from the Council, was subject to disciplinary action following the breach and was dismissed by Council's resolution.

During the former Town Clerk's suspension, the Deputy Clerk at the time was the Acting Town Clerk. The Council made a resolution for the Acting Town Clerk to become the permanent Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer due to the years of experience and capability of leading the Council lawfully with competent management skills of the staff. The Finance Officer has now become the Deputy Clerk and has a high level of skill in financial procedures and is competent in challenging/investigating any suspected discrepancies.

The current Town Clerk is in regular communication with the Chair of the Finance and General Purposes and the Town Mayor to ensure the Council is fully updated with new projects and acting within the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

The Town Clerk is CiLCA qualified, the Finance Officer and one more officer is studying the CiLCA qualification this year to ensure staff are fully trained.

The Town Clerk and Finance Officer have been looking at the Financial Regulations regularly, reading updates from the National Association of Local Council Clerks (NALC) to prevent breaching the Financial Regulations, any new projects will be scrutinised by the Council, following the financial procedures at all times.

.....

Town Mayor

Cllr Abena Akuffo-Kelly

.....

Town Clerk

Mrs Toni Brenchley

FOLKESTONE TOWN COUNCIL

Statement of Accounts

2023 – 2024

1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024

Folkestone Town Council

Page No(s)	Index
3	Council Information
4	Internal Auditor's Report
5 and 6	Income and Expenditure Account
7 and 8	Balance Sheet
8	Signatories
9 to 13	Notes to the Accounts

Folkestone Town Council

**Council Information
(2023/24)**

Town Mayor

Cllr B Walker

Councillors

Cllr A Akuffo-Kelly
Cllr Charlie Bain Smith
Cllr Laura Davison
Cllr John Renshaw
Cllr Bridget Chapman
Cllr Peter Gane
Cllr Jane Darling
Cllr Liz McShane
Cllr Adrian Lockwood
Cllr Nicola Keen
Cllr Lucy McGirr
Cllr Christine Dickinson
Cllr Connor McConville
Cllr Jackie Meade
Cllr Tim Prater
Cllr Belinda Walker
Cllr Kieran Leigh
Cllr Roger West

Clerk to the Council

Toni Brenchley (Town Clerk)

Auditors

Mazars LLP

Internal Auditor

Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd

Folkestone Town Council

**Internal Auditor's Report to the Council
on the Accounts for the Year ended 31 March 2024**

I certify that I have examined the Statement of Accounts and associated accounting notes on pages 4 to 12 of Folkestone Town Council, which have been prepared by the Financial Officer in accordance with the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 and CIPFA Accounting Guidance Notes for Local Councils.

I have carried out an examination in accordance with relevant auditing standards, and my agreed audit programme. I have had due regard to the internal audit obligations and responsibilities as set out in the council's annual return.

The audit included examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the Statement of Accounts, sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

In my opinion, the Statements of Accounts present fairly the financial position of Folkestone Town Council as at 31st March 2024 and its Income and Expenditure for the year then ended in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 and CIPFA Accounting Guidance Notes for Local Councils.

Signature:



**Andy Beams (Director)
Eastgate House
Dogflud Way
Farnham
Surrey
GU9 7UD**

Date: 14th May 2024

**Income and Expenditure Account
for the Period ended 31 March 2024**

	2023 / 24	2022 / 23
	£	£
INCOME		
Precept on District Council	952,970	915,510
Bank and Investment Interest	27,990	12,002
Allotments	9,932	10,634
Rental Receipts	15,900	15,809
Museum/Heritage Sales	13,408	7,172
Play Areas Funding	0	9,000
Community Infrastructure Levy	71,058	65,741
CCTV Safer Streets Grant	60,185	28,085
Other	20,290	9,892
	-----	-----
	1,171,733	1,073,845
	-----	-----
 EXPENDITURE		
Employees/Administration	528,941	530,728
Democratic Costs	44,414	0
Civic and Ceremonial	20,137	24,834
Premises	157,499	164,464
Services	371,926	503,530
Fees	5,782	7,244
Museum/Heritage	17,787	20,749
	-----	-----
	1,146,486	1,251,549
	-----	-----

GENERAL FUND

	2023 / 24	2022 / 23
	£	£
Balance as at 1 April	235,189	248,400
Add: Total Income	1,171,733	1,073,845
Deduct: Total Expenditure	1,146,486	1,251,549
	<u>260,436</u>	<u>70,696</u>

Transfer (to)/from Reserves and Provisions:

New Services	0	93,687	
Tree Planting	0	(20,000)	
Museum/Heritage	7,512	52,100	
Tourism	0	0	
Bus Shelters	0	(3,500)	
Ward Grants	0	19,393	
Town Grants	3,985	(1,217)	
Salt Bins	0		
FTC Elections	30,600	(10,200)	
Armed Forces Day	3,445	(3,445)	
Anti-Litter Campaign	0	0	
Benches	0	0	
Play Areas	492	86,606	
CCTV Maintenance	4,378	(20,202)	
Christmas Events (Cheriton)	1,300	(420)	
Neighbourhood Fund (CIL)	(71,058)	(31,882)	
Christmas Gifts for Children	0	0	
Community Transport	65,679		
Guildhall Umbrella Project	2,308	3,117	
Allotment Deposits	(650)		
Friends of Folkestone Museum	(2,379)		
Outstanding Invoices	4,677	50,289	455
			0
			0
 General Reserve Balance at 31 March	 <u>310,725</u>	 <u>235,188</u>	

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024

Fixed Assets	2023 / 24		2022 / 23	
	£	£	£	£
Freehold Land and Buildings	700,000		700,000	
Vehicles and Equipment	612,586		551,531	
Community Assets	<u>2,347,665</u>	3,660,251	<u>2,335,905</u>	3,587,436
		<u>3,660,251</u>		<u>3,587,436</u>
Current Assets				
Sundry Debtors	13,952		0	
HM Revenue & Customs - VAT	24,995		50,391	
Prepayments	9,808		0	
Stock Balance (Museum Merchandise)	2,392		895	
Current Bank Account	72,920		101,232	
Emergency Current Account	76,385			
Deposit Bank Account	28,168		50,000	
Short Term Investments	480,000		500,000	
Receipts Account	1,165		1,000	
Cash Not Presented	0		0	
Petty Cash	0		48	
Museum Shop Float	100		100	
Corporate Credit Card	<u>1,497</u>	711,382	<u>1,500</u>	705,166
Current Liabilities				
Sundry Creditors	0		2,332	
Receipts in Advance	8,079		6,154	
Accruals	<u>23,161</u>	31,240	<u>41,784</u>	50,270
Net Current Assets		<u>680,142</u>		<u>654,896</u>
Long Term Liabilities				
PWLB Outstanding Loan for Office Building	<u>231,013</u>	231,013	<u>258,144</u>	258,144
Net Assets		<u>4,109,380</u>		<u>3,984,188</u>

	2023 / 24	2022 / 23
	£	£
Represented by:		
Fixed Asset Restatement Account	3,660,251	3,587,436
PWLB Outstanding Loan for Office Building	(231,013)	(258,144)
Capital Receipts Reserve	0	0
Earmarked Reserves and Provisions: -		
Tree Planting	20,000	20,000
Museum/Heritage	151,802	159,313
Tourism	4,735	4,735
Bus Shelters	3,500	3,500
Town Grants	267	
		4,253
FTC Elections	0	
		30,600
Armed Forces Day	0	3,445
Salt Bins	6,168	6,168
Anti-Litter Campaign	2,000	2,000
Benches	100	100
Play Areas	12,903	13,395
CCTV Maintenance	15,824	20,203
Christmas Events (Cheriton)	1,369	2,669
Neighbourhood Fund (CIL)	139,878	68,820
Christmas Gifts for Children	2,217	2,217
Community Transport	5,624	71,303
Guildhall Umbrella Project	0	2,308
Allotment Deposits	650	
Friends of Folkestone Museum	2,379	
Outstanding Invoices	0	4,679
General Reserve	310,725	235,188
	<u>4,109,380</u>	<u>3,984,188</u>

The statement of accounts represents fairly the financial position of the Council as at 31 March 2024 and reflects its Income and Expenditure for the year.

.....
Town Mayor

.....
Responsible Financial Officer

Date.....

Date.....

Notes to the Accounts
31 March 2024

1. Statement of Accounting Policies

These accounts cover the Town Council's full year of operations for the period 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024.

i) Accounting Convention

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Accounting Guidance Notes for Local Councils (the Guide) issued by The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) as applicable to a medium sized local Council. Consequently, the latest accounting policies, as set out in the Guide and, so far as they apply to this Council, have been adopted for the Council's Statement of Accounts.

ii) Fixed Assets

Assets in the balance sheet for 2023/24 are valued on the following basis:

Town Hall	purchase price (June 2011)
Statutory Allotments	actual cost
Parks Land	actual cost
Civic Regalia	
	professional valuation 2006
Statue and Memorial	insurance valuation 2013
Folkestone Collection	insurance valuation 2013
Other	
	purchase price where known (or estimated value)

iii) Capital Receipts

Capital receipts arising from the disposal of fixed assets are taken to the Capital Receipts Reserve until such time as they are used to finance new capital expenditure.

iv) Debtors and Creditors

The revenue accounts of the Council are maintained on an accruals basis in accordance with the guide. That is, sums due to or from the Council during the year are included whether or not the cash has actually been received or paid in the year.

v) PWLB Loan

In March 2011 the Council borrowed £500,000 from the Public Works Loans Board for the purchase of permanent office accommodation. Repayments of £39,301 (including interest) were made in 2023/24. The current outstanding capital amount is £231,013.

vi) *Leases*

The Council has no commitments under finance leases. Rentals payable under operating leases or contract hire agreements are charged to revenue on an accruals basis.

vii) *Reserves and Provisions*

The Council has arranged for appropriate reserves and provisions as shown below: -

General Reserve	£310,725	For unforeseen expenditure and emergencies
Tree Planting	£20,000	For tree planting
Museum/Heritage	£151,802	Lottery funding, internal and external contributions towards the development of the Museum/Heritage Centre
Tourism	£4,735	For the development of a tourism service
Bus Shelters	£3,500	For new bus shelters
Town Grants	£268	For town grants awarded by the Grants Committee
Salt Bins	£6,168	For additional salt bins in Folkestone
Anti-Litter Campaign	£2,000	For an Anti-Litter Educational Campaign
Benches	£100	For the installation and maintenance of benches
Play Areas	£12,903	For the maintenance of play areas
CCTV Maintenance	£15,824	For new installations of CCTV
Christmas Events (Cheriton)	£1,369	For the provision of Christmas events in Cheriton
Neighbourhood Fund (CIL)	£139,878	For the provision of infrastructure required to support growth within the town
Christmas Gifts for Children	£2,217	For the provision of Christmas gifts for children
Community Transport	£5,624	For the provision of community transport to/from the Town Hall
Allotment Deposits	£650	Deposit held from allotment tenants
Friends of Folkestone Museum	£2,379	Donation for the development of Folkestone Museum

viii) *Investment Income*

Investment income/bank interest for 2023/24 was £27,990.

2. **Agency Work**

During the year, the Council undertook no agency work on behalf of other authorities.

During the year, the Council commissioned no agency work to be performed by other authorities.

3. **Tenancies**

During the year the following tenancies were held:

Council as landlord

Tenant	Property	Rent p.a.	Repairing/ Non-Repairing Non-Repairing
Silver Screen Cinema	The Town Hall	£12,000	

Council as tenant

Landlord	Property	Rent p.a.	Repairing/ Non-Repairing
Martello Plastics Ltd	Storage	£18,000	Non-repairing

4. Publicity

Publicity	2023/24 £	2022/23 £
Recruitment Advertising	347	232
Publicity	908	537
Other	0	0
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	1,255	769
	<hr/>	<hr/>

5. S.137 Expenditure

Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) enables the Council to spend up to the product of £9.93 per head on the electoral roll in any one year for the benefit of the people in its area on activities or projects not specifically authorised by other powers.

	2023/24
	£
The theoretical amount available for this purpose was (34,660 x £9.93)	<u>344,174</u>

The following expenditure was incurred under this power during the year:

Payee	Description	Amount
Cheriton Baptist Church	Urban Pastors	£2,000
St Eanswythes School	Beach School Equipment	£767
Folkestone Optimist Hockey Club	Schools Outreach Programme	£2,500
Kent Coast Volunteering	Good Neighbours Service Folkestone	£2,500
Folkestone Festivals	Bands at the Bandstand	£2,500
Total		£10,267

6. Pensions

For the year of account, the Council's contributions equal 19.6% of employees' pensionable pay. These contributions are likely to change in future years as a result of the Actuary's regular pension reviews and any Government changes.

The employers' pension costs are charged to the Kent Superannuation Fund accounts in respect of qualifying employees and are equal to the contributions paid to the scheme for these employees.

Contributions to the Kent Superannuation Fund are determined by the fund's actuary and are set to meet 100% of the liabilities of that fund, in accordance with relevant Government regulations.

7. Fixed Assets

At 31 March the following assets were held:

	2024		2023	
	£		£	
<u>Freehold Land and Buildings</u>				
The Old Town Hall, Folkestone	<u>700,000</u>	700,000	<u>700,000</u>	700,000
<u>Vehicles and Equipment</u>				
Computer and Office Equipment	39,805		22,710	
Office Machinery	3,025		3,025	
Office Furniture	52,355		52,355	
Furniture (Council Chambers)	28,300		28,300	
Screen/Sound Equipment (Council Chambers)	24,900		24,900	
Street Furniture	26,750		26,750	
Bus Shelters	27,500		27,500	
Speed Watch Equipment	2,251		2,251	
CCTV Equipment	143,578		130,450	
Christmas Lights	72,658		72,370	
Play Equipment	150,000		150,000	
Other	<u>52,718</u>	623,840	<u>10,920</u>	551,531
<u>Community Assets</u>				
Allotment Land (2 sites)	2		2	
Parks Land (8 sites)	1		1	
Council Regalia and Artefacts	118,102		117,596	
William Harvey Statue	124,833		124,833	
War Memorial	59,073		59,073	
Gurkha Memorial	30,000		30,000	
Power Columns x 11 (Cheriton High Street)	4,400		4,400	
The Folkestone Collection (Museum/Heritage)	<u>2,000,000</u>	<u>2,336,411</u>	<u>2,000,000</u>	<u>2,335,905</u>
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS		3,660,251		3,587,436

The basis of valuation of the above assets is set out in the Accounting Policies (Note 1). The contra-entry is reflected in a Fixed Asset Restatement Account.

8. Fixed Assets - Disposals

During the year there were no disposals of fixed assets.

9. Creditors and accrued expenses	2023/2024
	£
Trade Creditors	31,239
Deferred Income	13,952
Prepayments	9,808

10. Charitable Funds

The Town Mayor of Folkestone raises funds for charitable purposes during his/her term of office. The funds are held by the Council in separate accounts and disbursed at the Mayor's discretion.

	Balance at 01/04/2023	Contribution to fund	Payments	Balance at 31/03/2024
	£	£	£	£
Mayoress's Charitable Funds	1,875	4,351	3,085	3,141

	Balance at 01/04/2023	Contribution to fund	Payments	Balance at 31/03/2024
	£	£	£	£
Town Mayor's Christmas Fund	15,033	10,338	10,900	14,471

11. Capital Commitments

The Council purchased a community minibus total of £61,055 marked as capital expenditure during the financial year 2023/24.

12. Contingent Liabilities

The Council is not aware of any other contingent liabilities at the date of these accounts.

13. Democratic Costs


Folkestone Town Council four-year election commencing in the year 2023/24 cost of £44,187.

Folkestone Town Council

Prepared by: _____ Date: _____
Name and Role (Clerk/RFO etc)

Approved by: _____ Date: _____
Name and Role (RFO/Chair of Finance etc)

	Bank Reconciliation at 31/03/2024		
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2023		653,879.75
	ADD		
	Receipts 01/04/2023 - 31/03/2024		1,210,502.19
			1,864,381.94
	SUBTRACT		
	Payments 01/04/2023 - 31/03/2024		1,204,147.40
A	Cash in Hand 31/03/2024 (per Cash Book)		660,234.54
	Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
	Petty Cash	31/03/2024	0.00
	HSBC Current Account	31/03/2024	72,920.42
	HSBC Deposit Account	31/03/2024	28,167.68
	HSBC Receipts Account	31/03/2024	1,165.00
	Credit Card (FairFX)	31/03/2024	1,496.50
	Museum Shop Float	31/03/2024	100.00
	Short Term Investment Account	31/03/2024	480,000.01
	Old Credit Card	31/03/2024	0.00
	Unity Trust Bank	31/03/2024	76,384.93
			660,234.54
	Less unrepresented payments		
			660,234.54
	Plus unrepresented receipts		
B	Adjusted Bank Balance		660,234.54
	A = B Checks out OK		



ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

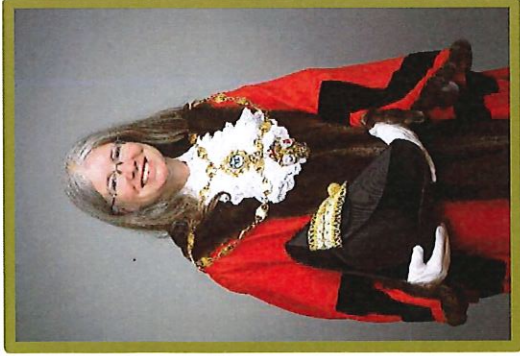


Town Clerk
FOLKSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

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TOWN MAYOR 2023 - 2024



Being Mayor this year has been a great honour and has given me a greater insight into the behind the scenes workings of the Town Hall and into some of the wonderful people and organisations in our town. I believe the arts, music and cultural side of our town is second to none. We also have a strong sense of community with many working hard to ensure that no one is left behind – the work that goes on with the more marginalised parts of our society is quite humbling to see, with so many going above and beyond to help out.

I have hosted several events locally, including fundraisers for my three chosen charities this year – the Rainbow Centre, Shepway Spectrum Arts and the Marigold Centre, Age UK. I have hosted school and Brownie visits to the Town Hall to talk to children about the Mayoralty and local democracy, hosted a contingent of dignitaries from our twinned province of Mechinagar, Nepal and welcomed a Danish journalist, a Swedish Youth Orchestra and a Friendship group from Calais to Folkestone. I have visited and supported fellow Cinque Port Mayors in their fundraising events too. I have been to civic events, and it has been a real joy to observe some of the ancient and well-established traditions locally.

I had the honour of representing the town at the memorial for Lord Boyce, former Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, at Westminster Abbey in London. I also had the pleasure of meeting the Princess Royal, Princess Anne, when she visited Folkestone. As well as representing Folkestone in other towns around Kent and beyond, I have supported the civic events in Folkestone. It has been the most incredible honour to have laid a wreath for our fallen, on behalf of the town on several occasions, most notably at Remembrance Sunday, and on Canada Day. I was also delighted to have had the chance to honour William Harvey, one of our town's famous inhabitants. I was also at the service for Samuel Plimsoil and was so pleased to hear that the day to honour him is going to be added to the civic calendar this year.

The local events have been a real pleasure to attend, I have spoken to primary, secondary and college students and encouraged them to get involved in their communities. I was delighted to present awards to those who were nominated by the public to receive a Town Mayor's Award for services to the town.

We are delighted, via the Town Council's Grant Scheme, to continue to offer support towards the valuable contribution made by many voluntary groups and organisations in the fields of arts; sport; culture; social care; services for children and young adults; services for the elderly and people with disabilities; and many others who contribute to the wellbeing of the local community.

I want to thank the Officers, fellow Councillors, Able Cadet Ilya Ovsyannikov and Chaplain Fr John for being with me and supporting me in what has been a hugely enjoyable but busy year. Folkestone is a town with a rich history, it is a vibrant town today and has a bright future ahead and it has been good to be part of that story this year.

Councillor Belinda Walker
The Worshipful Town Mayor of Folkestone (2023-24)

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

For the Period ended 31 March 2024

	2023/24	2022/23
INCOME	£	£
Precept on District Council	952,970	915,510
Bank and Investment Interest	27,990	12,002
Allotments	9,932	10,634
Rental Receipts	15,900	15,809
Museum/Heritage Sales	13,408	7,172
Play Areas	0	9,000
Community Infrastructure Levy	71,058	65,741
CCTV High Street Fund	60,185	28,085
Other	20,290	9,892
	-----	-----
	1,171,733	1,073,845
	-----	-----
 EXPENDITURE		
Employees/Administration	528,941	530,728
Democratic Costs	44,414	0
Civic and Ceremonial	20,137	24,834
Premises	157,499	164,464
Services	371,926	503,530
Fees	5,782	7,244
Museum/Heritage	17,787	20,749
	-----	-----
	1,146,486	1,251,549
	-----	-----

GENERAL FUND

Balance as at 1 April		235,189		248,400
Add: Total Income		1,171,733		1,073,845
Deduct: Total Expenditure		<u>1,146,486</u>		<u>1,251,549</u>
		260,436		70,696
Transfer (to)/from Reserves and Provisions:				
New Services	0		93,687	
Tree Planting	0		(20,000)	
Museum/Heritage	7,512		52,100	
Bus Shelters	0		(3,500)	
Ward Grants	0		19,393	
Town Grants	3,985		(1,217)	
FTC Elections	30,600		(10,200)	
Armed Forces Day	3,445		(3,445)	
Benches	0		0	
Play Areas	492		86,606	
CCTV Maintenance	4,378		(20,202)	
Christmas Events (Cheriton)	1,300		(420)	
Neighbourhood Fund (CIL)	(71,058)		(31,882)	
Lunches for Children	0		0	
Christmas Gifts for Children	0		0	
Community Transport	65,679		0	
Guildhall Umbrella Project	2,308		3,117	
Allotment Deposits	(650)		0	
Friends of Folkestone Museum	(2,379)		0	
Outstanding Invoices	4,677	50,289	455	164,492
General Reserve Balance at 31 March		<u>310,725</u>		<u>235,188</u>

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024

Fixed Assets	2023/24		2022/23	
	£		£	
Freehold Land and Buildings	700,000		700,000	
Vehicles and Equipment	612,586		551,531	
Community Assets	2,347,665	3,660,251	2,335,905	3,587,436
		3,660,251		3,587,436
Current Assets				
Sundry Debtors	13,952		0	
HM Revenue & Customs - VAT	24,995		50,391	
Prepayments	9,808		0	
Stock Balance (Museum Merchandise)	2,392		895	
Current Bank Account	72,920		101,232	
Emergency Current Account	76,385		0	
Deposit Bank Account	28,168		50,00	
Short Term Investments	480,000		500,000	
Receipts Account	1,165		1,000	
Petty Cash	0		48	
Museum Shop Float	100		100	
Corporate Credit Card	1,497	711,382	1,500	705,166
		680,142		654,896
Current Liabilities				
Sundry Creditors	0		2,332	
Receipts in Advance	8,079		6,154	
Accruals	23,161	31,240	41,784	50,270
		680,142		654,896
Net Current Assets		680,142		654,896
Long Term Liabilities				
PWLB Outstanding Loan for Office Building	231,013	231,013	258,144	258,144
		4,109,380		3,984,188
Net Assets		4,109,380		3,984,188

	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
Represented by:		
Fixed Asset Restatement Account	3,660,251	3,587,436
PWLB Outstanding Loan for Office Building	(231,013)	(258,144)
Capital Receipts Reserve	0	0
Earmarked Reserves and Provisions:-		
New Services	0	0
Tee Planting	20,000	20,000
Museum/Heritage	151,802	159,313
Tourism	4,735	4,735
Bus Shelters	3,500	3,500
Ward Grants	0	0
Town Grants	267	4,253
FTC Elections	0	30,600
Armed Forces Day	0	3,445
Salt Bins	6,168	6,168
Anti-Litter Campaign	2,000	2,000
Benches	100	100
Play Areas	12,903	13,395
CCTV Maintenance	15,824	20,203
Christmas Events (Cheriton)	1,369	2,669
Neighbourhood Fund (CIL)	139,878	68,820
Christmas Gifts for Children	2,217	2,217
Community Transport	5,624	71,303
Guildhall Umbrella Project	0	2,308
Allotment Deposits	650	0
Friends of Folkestone Museum	2,379	0
Outstanding Invoices	0	4,679
General Reserve	<u>310,725</u>	<u>235,188</u>
	4,109,380	3,984,188

THE TOWN COUNCIL'S MISSION

THE TOWN COUNCIL'S MISSION

The theme for this review and our mission for the future is:

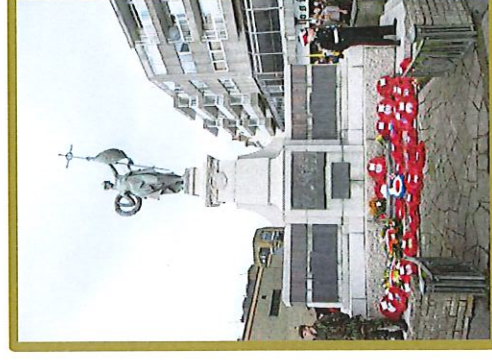
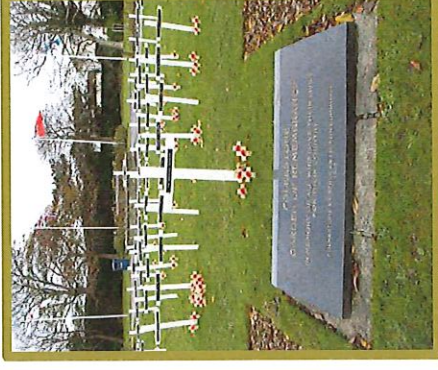
“To revitalise our town of Folkestone, restore civic pride and regenerate a community spirit.”

We aim to do this by:

- *Improving the appearance and quality of the environment in which we live*
- *Encouraging a greater participation in the governance of our town by all sectors of society*
- *Working in partnership with Folkestone and Hythe District Council, Kent County Council, and other organisations to improve the public services in the town*
- *Working in partnership with the business and leisure communities to improve the experience of our visitors and thereby encourage the growth of tourism*
- *Supporting the work of community groups and voluntary organisations with grant aid and co-ordinating their activities to improve the social fabric of our community*
- *Working in partnership with Folkestone and Hythe District Council's Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership to reduce the level of crime and anti-social behaviour in the town and encouraging the socially excluded back into the fold*
- *Sustaining the principals of “Quality Gold Council” status, following accreditation*

Future Events and Notes for your Diary

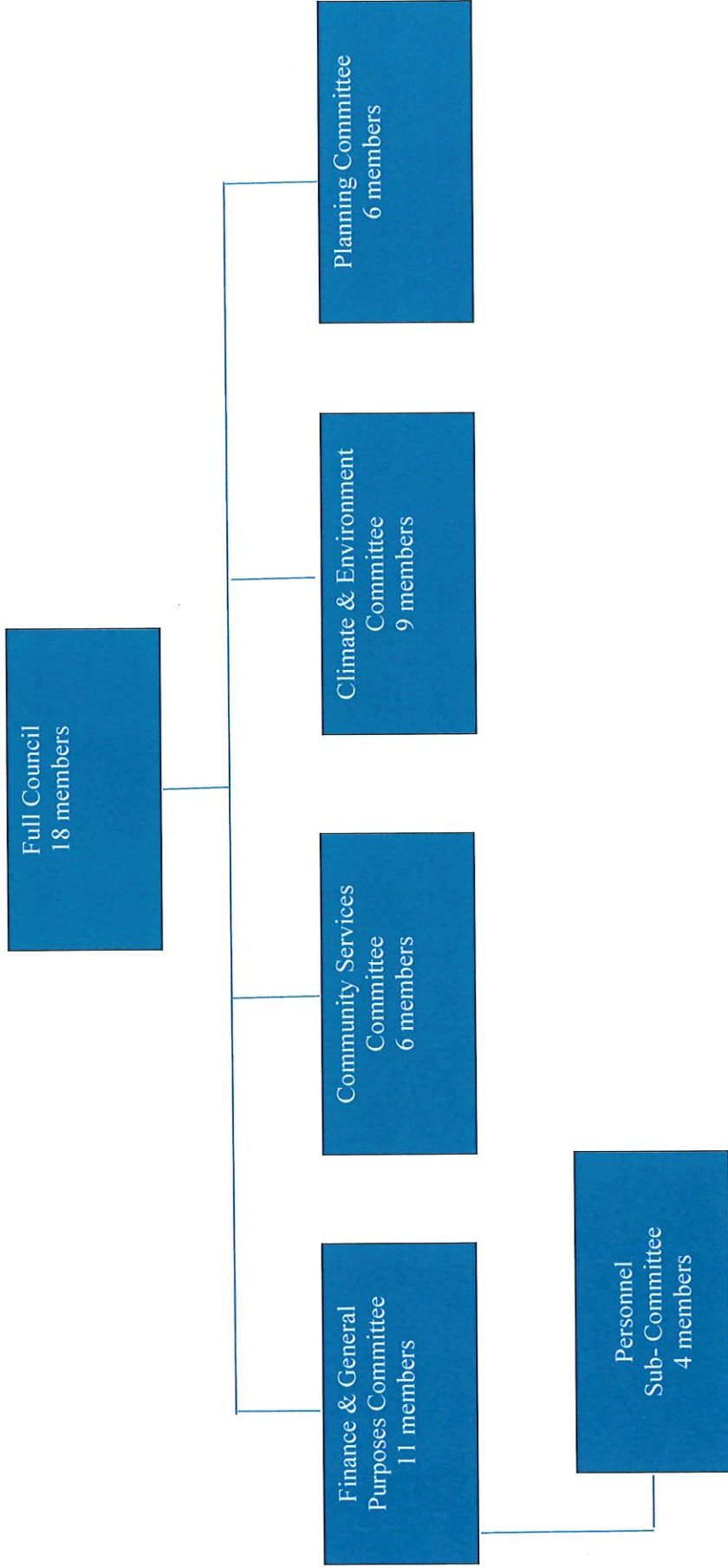
Date	Event
1 June 2024	Samuel Plimsoill Service
2 June 2024	William Harvey Sunday
6 June 2024	Normandy D-Day Service
6 June 2024	80 th Anniversary D-Day Beacon Lighting
30 June 2024	Armed Forces Day
1 July 2024	Canada Day
7 July 2024	Town Sunday
*7 July 2024	<i>Blessing of the Fisheries</i>
15 August 2024	VJ Day Anniversary
15 September 2024	Battle of Britain Wreath Laying
*20 October 2024	<i>Trafalgar Day Service</i>
3 November 2024	Dedication of Garden of Remembrance
10 November 2024	Remembrance Sunday
11 November 2024	Machine Gun Corps
TBC December 2024	Mayor's Yr6 Christmas Concert
27 th January 2025	Holocaust Memorial Day
TBC May 2025	Mayor Making



*Organised by an external organisation

COUNCIL STRUCTURE

The Council's decision-making process operates through a committee structure.



In the region of 50 Council/Committee meetings are held every year, together with a wide range of working group meetings.

Committee Meetings 2024/25

	Planning Committee 19.00 (Thursday)	Community Services Committee 19.00 (Tuesday)	Climate & Environment Committee 19.00 (Tuesday)	Finance & General Purposes Committee 19.00 (Thursday)	Personnel Sub-Committee 18.00 (Thursday)	Full Council 19.00 (Thursday)
April 2024	25	2	2 (19:45)	18	18	Tuesday 7 (Annual Council) Tuesday 14 (Town Assembly)
May 2024	30					
June 2024	27	4	11	13		13 (AGAR Meeting)
July 2024	25					
August 2024	29			22	22	
September 2024	26					19
October 2024	31	8	15	17		14
November 2024	28					
December 2024	TUES 17			12		
January 2025	30					9
February 2025	27	4	11	13	13	
March 2025	27					13
April 2025	24	1	8	17	17	Tuesday 6 (Annual Council) Tuesday 13 (Town Assembly)
May 2025	29					

Please note that all meeting dates are provisional and may be subject to change and/or cancellation.
Please check the Town Council website for up-to-date information www.folkestone-tc.gov.uk

Community Services Committee

The Community Services Committee met regularly throughout the year.

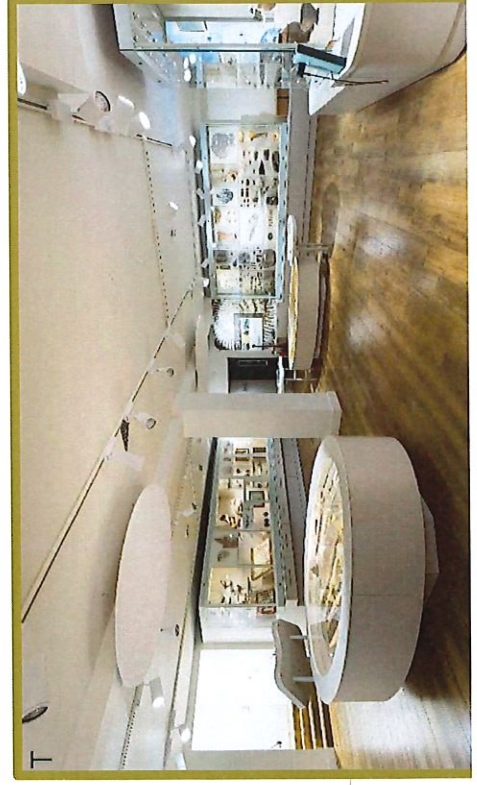
Once again, Folkestone Town Council delivered a successful Armed Forces Day on The Leas to circa. 15,000 members of the public to acknowledge Service Personnel, Veterans and Cadets past, present and future. FTC expresses its gratitude to all the military battalions, performers, organisations and service providers with special thanks to the amazing volunteers that gave up their time and worked so hard to ensure the event was a success and to enhance visitors' experiences.

During 2023 there were new and updated additions to the existing Christmas lighting scheme with further developments and improvements being considered for 2024 and beyond. The annual Christmas Light Switch On in November was a great success with a series of music and dance acts from local primary schools and youth groups delighting the crowds followed by the headline act East 17 which did not disappoint and thrilled thousands that were in attendance.

This year's Kwik Cricket is in the process of being organised, and hopefully we can revive the School's Football Competition this year.

Our Museum is improving all of the time; it has seen a 20% increase in visits this year, equating to 30,000 visits. We helped celebrate our local Rotary branch's centenary, the work of film & TV designer Mike Perry and diversity at the seaside with exhibitions. We welcomed over 60 school classes to the Museum and entertained over 2,500 children with our weekend and holiday workshops.

Thanks to all the officers at the Town Council who deliver so successfully on the events and services for our town.



Councillor Roger West Councillor Abena Akuffo-Kelly
Chair *Vice Chair*

Committee Members 2023/24:
Councillors Abena Akuffo-Kelly, Bridget Chapman, Peter Gane,
Lucy McGirr, Liz McShane and Roger West.

Planning Committee

In rapidly shifting times, it is inevitable that we encounter ever increasing complexity and pressures from applicants to a rightly broadening range of stakeholders. Most of our applications are domestic and in this realm the balance of interests will often be tricky when demand for housing is high.

As a Committee, we have worked very hard to try to understand the impact of proposals on neighbouring properties whilst encouraging development, particularly when it increases or sustains local employment. It is not always easy for non-technical people to interpret technical drawings and whereas some applicants provide excellent documents, including 3D projections and contextual information, many comprise quite abstract line drawings which show nothing of adjacent buildings and the effect of proposals on them. We rely heavily on open-access satellite data to fill in what the applicant is not showing us.

A major concern is the lack of applicants to take on the provisions of the Building Safety Act 2023 in the wake of Grenfell. There is a mistaken assumption that it only applies to tall buildings whereas in fact it puts an onus on all construction projects to consider at the earliest stages of design, the safety of the end user. Too many applications imply that this can be somehow retrofitted when the Building Regulations are signed off. The Committee are engaged in trying to promote setting all development 'up for success'. The cost of a failure to do so, is otherwise borne by those who can least afford to do so.

Another major issue is assessing Prior Approval Applications particularly relating to Class E commercial to C3 housing. Applicants often seem to think that as 'planning permission' is not required, they should be automatically granted 'prior approval', but this is not the case. Issues such as transport, impact on neighbours, noise, contamination, flood risk and most importantly provision of adequate natural light in all habitable rooms, need to be satisfied. The solution may mean the removal of parts of the existing building rather than shoe-horning as much as possible into the existing envelope. These applications require plenty of technical consideration but of course can release valuable opportunities to address need.

Lastly the Committee notes that applications for works to trees in conservation areas are nearly always inadequately detailed. The consequent research needed then requires a great deal of time. Our trees and wildlife opportunities are a vital resource for both nature and the wellbeing of residents and visitors. The Committee has tried to be helpful in making suggestions where it has taken issue with proposals. The Committee trusts that planning matters have been fairly considered over the last year. There is often a fine line between the acceptable and the unacceptable. We recognise the need to provide new construction, new uses and good housing. 'Setting us up for success' does not mean making the perfect the enemy of the good.

Councillor Charles Bain Smith
Chair

Councillor John Renshaw
Vice Chair

Committee Membership 2023-24: Councillors Charles Bain Smith, Jane Darling, Laura Davison, Christine Dickinson, Lucy McGirr and John Renshaw.

Finance and General Purposes Committee

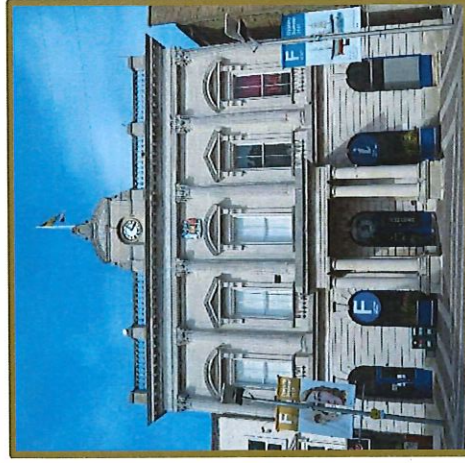
It was another busy year for the Finance and General Purposes Committee and I was privileged to continue as Chair.

The Committee met during the year and discussed many of the Council's important projects: the minibus scheme, the continuous support of our community parks, our tree and flower planting commitments within the town, our commitment to providing CCTV and our new partnership with Swale BC in delivering our CCTV monitoring for the town. We also continue to look at ensuring funds are available to undertake important works on our Town Hall.

The Committee recommended a well-produced, balanced budget to Council, which was approved, ensuring this coming year keeps the Council in a secure financial position.

I would like to thank all members of the Committee for their vital contributions during the meetings and all the staff who produced reports and offered guidance and advice.

Councillor Connor McConville
Chair



Councillor Tim Prater
Vice Chair



Committee Membership 2023/24: Councillors Bridget Chapman, Jane Darling, Laura Davison, Christine Dickinson, Peter Gane, Nicola Keen, Kieran Leigh, Adrian Lockwood, Connor McConville, Tim Prater and Belinda Walker.

Personnel Sub-Committee

The last year has not been without its challenges, there have been a number of issues, and staff changes that the Committee has had to deal with. As always for those Councillors who sit on the Personnel Committee, I would like to thank them for being pragmatic in their views and for making themselves, along with staff, available at short notice.

Going forward into the coming year I am hoping that things will have settled down and that we are able to continue to support our amazing staff team, without whom no Committee would run smoothly. I would also like to take the opportunity to welcome new members of staff and thank them for their contributions.

During the period 2023/24, despite the challenges that they were faced with, staff completed a comprehensive training programme. This was despite the extra roles and responsibilities that they willingly took on.

Moving into 2024/25 I am hoping that the Personnel Committee, with approval from Full Council, will be able to return to looking at ways that we can support our staff with training opportunities, both internally and externally to progress further in their fields.



Councillor Nicola Keen
Chair

Councillor Peter Gane
Vice Chair

Sub-Committee Membership 2023/24: Councillors Bridget Chapman, Peter Gane, Nicola Keen and Connor McConville

Climate & Environment Committee

The Climate and Environment Committee consists of ten Councillors and has met four times throughout the year.

The Committee considers many items affecting our environment including the tree planting schedule, flower and shrub bed maintenance as well as commenting on the Play Parks Upgrade project.

The Committee is committed to raising awareness of Fair Trade in the local community and putting the climate and environment at the heart of what we do and achieved mobilization of cafes/restaurants to serve Fairtrade tea and coffee, retailers to sell Fairtrade certified products, held events and ran campaigns to achieve impactful media coverage. As a result, during 2023 the Council was successful in achieving Fairtrade Town status for Folkestone, demonstrating that a cross section of the community are united in their support for Fairtrade and for farmers and workers in developing countries.

Councillor Abena Akuffo-Kelly
Chair

Councillor Lucy McGirr
Vice Chair



Committee Members 2023/24: Councillors Abena Akuffo-Kelly, Charles Bain Smith, Jane Darling, Kieran Leigh, Lucy McGirr, Liz McShane, Jackie Meade, John Renshaw and Roger West

Grants Awarded 2023/24

T= Town Grant W = Ward Grant

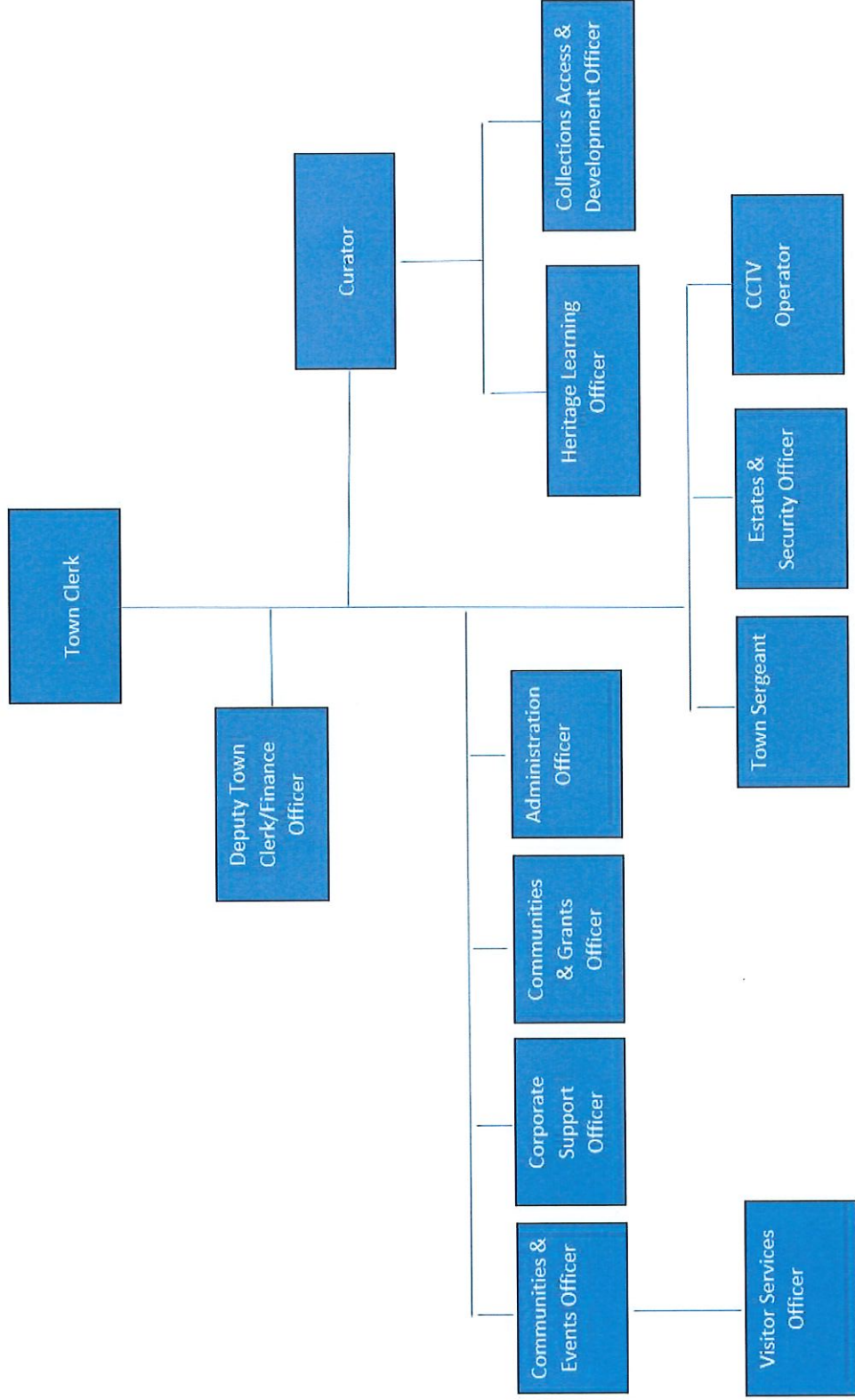
TYPE	ORGANISATION	PURPOSE	AWARD £
W	Oliver Senton	D&D East Kent – Who Needs Theatre?	150
W	Folkestone Pride	Pride Month	100
W	Harbour Ward Residents Association	Stade Planters	202.50
W	The Chambers	Make A Stand For Music	150
W	RBL Cheriton and Morehall Branch	Hosepipe for Jubilee Tree	45.50
W	Screen South	Folkestone Documentary Festival	250
W	All Souls Church	Fridge for Community Coffee Mornings	200
W	Screen South	Folkestone Documentary Festival	250
W	Folkestone Trawler Race	Folkestone Trawler Race Weekend	150
W	Folkestone Trawler Race	Folkestone Trawler Race Weekend	100
W	1 Degree East	Bringing together local theatre makers	150
T	Strange Cargo	The Resident Platform	2,500
T	Folkestone Gospel Singers	Singing For Health	800
T	HG Wells Short Story Competition	HG Wells Short Story Competition 2023	600
T	Screen South	Folkestone Documentary Festival	2,500
T	Cheriton Baptist Church	Urban Pastors	2,000
T	Disabled Friends and Family	Disabled Cycling Project	920
T	St. Eanswythes School	Beach School Equipment	767.11
T	Living Words Arts	Wintering	2,500
T	Sunflower House	Folke Art	2,000
T	Folkestone Optimist Hockey Club	Schools Outreach Programme	2,500
T	National Coastwatch Institution, Folkestone Station	Replacement of Marine VHF Radios	1,379.49
T	The Folkestone-Hythe Operatic & Dramatic Society	Pantomime Costumes	900
T	Kent Coast Volunteering	Good Neighbours Service Folkestone	2,500
T	Touchbase Care CIC	Community Christmas meals for adults with disabilities	950
T	Omus One Space	Abominable Micmen	2,500
T	Shepway Spectrum Arts CIC	Disabled Access Fire Door Entrance/Exit	2,500

T	Folkestone Festivals		Multicultural Festival	2,500
T	Smoking Apples Theatre		We Are More Alike Than You Think We Are!	2,000
T	Go Folkestone		Central Folkestone Community E-Waste Collection	650
T	Folkestone Festivals		Bands at the Bandstand	1,233.40
T	Folkestone Festivals		Bands at the Bandstand	1,266.60
W	Pavement Pounders Community Interest Company		Crossings Remembered	200
W	Pavement Pounders Community Interest Company		Crossings Remembered	200
W	Cheriton Bowls Club		New Mower for Green	400
W	Cheriton Bowls Club		New Mower for Green	200
W	Cheriton Bowls Club		New Mower for Green	200
W	South Kent Mind		Safe Spaces	200
W	Tyson Road Resident Association		Children's Xmas Party – Friday 15 th December 2023	225
W	Tyson Road Resident Association		Children's Xmas Party – Friday 15 th December 2023	150
W	Tyson Road Resident Association		Children's Xmas Party – Friday 15 th December 2023	150
W	Tyson Road Resident Association		Children's Xmas Party – Friday 15 th December 2023	225
W	The Real Power Of Music CIC		Music And The Body	281.50
W	The Real Power Of Music CIC		Music And The Body	200
W	Pavement Pounders Community Interest Company		Crossings Remembered	150
W	Ensor's		Christmas Community	200
W	Ensor's		Christmas Community	100
W	Ensor's		Christmas Community	100
W	Ensor's		Christmas Community	100
W	Ensor's		Christmas Community	100
W	Ensor's		Christmas Community	100
W	Community Donation Station		Lighting and Heating in the Shop	882
W	FTC Reserve		Cheriton Christmas Lights	200
T	Cheriton Bowls Club		New Mower for Green	200
T	Playground Proms		Playground Proms	937
T	Channel Rotary		Channel Triathlon	500
T	Folkestone Rescue		Funding Towards a Beach Supervisor Role	1,250
T	Fourth Wall		Fourth Wall Folkestone: A Takeover	1,006.14
T	Music and Arts for the Shepway Community		Shepway Community Choirs	1,250

W	United Response		Community Food Larder	500
W	Pavement Pounders	Community Interest Company	Crossings Remembered	80
W	Cheriton Bowls Club		New Mower for Green	400
W	Cheriton Bowls Club		New Mower for Green	170
W	Cheriton Bowls Club		New Mower for Green	170
W	Strange Cargo		Charivari 2024	250
W	MOLO Czechs & Slovaks	in Folkestone	Mothers Without Hands	200
W	Folkestone Live		Folkestone Live (theatre, children shows & stand up comedy)	200
W	Shepway Spectrum Arts CIC		Window Blinds	200
W	Shepway Spectrum Arts CIC		Window Blinds	100
W	Shepway Spectrum Arts CIC		Window Blinds	100
W	Folkestone First Timers CIC		First Timers Music Programme 2024	300
W	Folkestone First Timers CIC		First Timers Music Programme 2024	300
W	Folkestone First Timers CIC		First Timers Music Programme 2024	175
W	Folkestone First Timers CIC		First Timers Music Programme 2024	200
W	Folkestone Women's Forum		Take Up Space Festival	250
W	Baby Basics Folkestone		Baby Basics	250
W	ShivaNova/Equator Festival LTD		Women of the World International Women's Day Event	200
W	Custom Food Lab		Taking Root Creative Nature Club	150
W	Folkestone Music Town CIC		Music May	200
W	Music and Arts for the Shepway Community		Shepway Community Choir	200
W	Healing Image Projects CIC (HIPCIC)		Women Of Faith	130
T	Strange Cargo		Charivari 2024	2,000
T	Folkestone First Timers CIC		First Timers Music Programme 2024	1,250
T	Folkestone Music Town CIC		Music in May	2,000
T	Music and Arts for the Shepway Community		Shepway Community Choirs	375
T	Folkestone Rescue		Funding Towards a Beach Supervisor Role	1,250
T	MOLO Czechs & Slovaks	in Folkestone	MOLO 2024	700
W	Folkestone First Timers CIC		First Timers Music Programme 2024	100
W	Folkestone Music Town CIC		Music in May	500
W	Folkestone Music Town CIC		Music in May	200

W	Folkestone Music Town CIC	Music in May	220
W	Folkestone Sports Centre Trust	Pickle Ball Equipment	170
W	Folkestone Malayalee Association	FMA Easter/Vishu/Eid Programme	200
Total			60,611.74

Staffing Structure



Officer Contact Details

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<p>Roland Domingo Deputy Town Clerk/Finance Officer Tel: As Above Email: roland.domingo@folkestone-tc.gov.uk</p>	<p>Darran Cowd Curator Tel: As Above Email: darran.cowd@folkestone-tc.gov.uk</p>
<p>Georgina Wilson Corporate Support Officer Tel: As Above Email: georgina.wilson@folkestone-tc.gov.uk</p>	<p>Ian Bishop Town Sergeant Tel: As Above Email: ian.bishop@folkestone-tc.gov.uk</p>
<p>Vicky Deakin Communities & Events Officer Tel: As Above Email: vicky.deakin@folkestone-tc.gov.uk</p>	<p>Liz Timmins Communities & Grants Officer Tel: As Above Email: liz.timmins@folkestone-tc.gov.uk</p>
<p>Alison Moore Collections Access & Development Officer Tel: As Above Email: alison.moore@folkestone-tc.gov.uk</p>	<p>Jennifer Griffin Administration Officer Tel: As Above Email: jennifer.griffin@folkestone-tc.gov.uk</p>
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Your Local Councillor

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<p>Charlie Bain Smith (Labour)</p>	<p>Ward: Folkestone Central Tel: 01303 257946 Email: charliebain.smith@folkestone-tc.gov.uk</p>	<p>Peter Gane (Liberal Democrats)</p> <p>Ward: Cheriton West Tel: 01303 257946 Email: peter.gane@folkestone-tc.gov.uk</p>
<p>Bridget Chapman (Labour)</p>	<p>Ward: Harbour Tel: 01303 257946 Email: bridget.chapman@folkestone-tc.gov.uk</p>	<p>Nicola Keen (Labour)</p> <p>Ward: Harbour Tel: 01303 257946 Email: nicola.keen@folkestone-tc.gov.uk</p>
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Connor McConville (Labour)	Ward: East Folkestone Tel: 01303 257946 Email: connor.mcconville@folkestone-tc.gov.uk	Liz McShane (Central)	Ward: Central Tel: 01303 257946 Email: liz.mcshane@folkestone-tc.gov.uk
Lucy McGirr (Labour)	Ward: East Folkestone Tel: 01303 257946 Email: lucy.mcgirr@folkestone-tc.gov.uk	Jackie Meade (Labour)	Ward: East Folkestone Tel: 01303 257946 Email: jackie.meade@folkestone-tc.gov.uk
Tim Prater (Liberal Democrats)	Ward: Harvey West Tel: 01303 257946 Email: tim.prater@folkestone-tc.gov.uk	John Renshaw (Liberal Democrats)	Ward: Cheriton West Tel: 01303 257946 Email: john.renshaw@folkestone-tc.gov.uk
Belinda Walker (Labour & Co Operative)	Ward: Central Tel: 01303 257946 Email: belinda.walker@folkestone-tc.gov.uk	Roger West (Liberal Democrats)	Ward: Cheriton West Tel: 01303 257946 Email: roger.west@folkestone-tc.gov.uk



Salubritas et Amoenitas

Delightfulness and Healthiness

This report will be made public on
7 June 2024

**Folkestone
Town Council**



Report Number **C/24/365**

To: Full Council
Date: 13 June 2024
Status: Non-Exempt
Responsible Officer: Town Clerk

Subject: RENEWAL OF STORAGE LEASE AGREEMENT
REPORT C/24/365

SUMMARY: This report provides two options for the renewal of the storage unit lease due to end in September 2024.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Council is asked to approve the recommendations set out below because:

- a) The Council is committed to control and manage its stored assets safely and accessible for the mayoral car and minibus parking.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To receive and note Report C/24/365
2. To choose an option from either Option 1 or 2 for the renewal of the storage unit lease.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The storage unit lease commenced on the 1st October 2023, and is due to expire in September 2024. The storage unit has been utilised for storing Council and Museum assets, parking and charging the minibus and mayoral car. An electric charging point was installed adjacent to the storage unit for charging the electric minibus and the mayoral car.

2.0 PREVIOUS ARRANGEMENT

The previous storage unit was provided by one of the Council's main contractors, located in Hawkinge. The Landlord did not provide the mayoral car and minibus parking. The Landlord was charging £3,600 per annum for the storage unit, with the Council hiring a garage for the mayoral car at £1,056 per annum.

Most of the Council assets had previously been poorly stored, with the Christmas lights being placed on the ground and damp accumulating inside the storage unit. The previous storage unit was a shipping container placed on top of another shipping container. In order to access the storage unit, a fork lift truck needed to be used to get into the storage unit.

It was proving difficult to gain access the storage unit each time, storing additional equipment in the storage unit was challenging and the location was a couple miles out of Folkestone.

3.0 CURRENT ARRANGEMENT

The location of the new storage unit is easily accessible within Folkestone and convenient for contractors and officers to store additional Council equipment, collect equipment and for parking the mayoral car before and after mayoral engagements with an electric charging point adjacent to the unit.

The minibus and mayoral car will need to ensure high security measures are in place. Fortunately, the Landlord has multiple security measures including an intruder alarm system, bolted gate to enter the site and additional bolted door to enter the storage unit.

Communication with the Landlord has been straight forward. The Landlord is content for the officers to attend the storage unit outside of normal working hours.

The Council is currently in a one year lease until the end of September 2024, with the Landlord charging £18,000 per annum. Parking of the mayoral car was part of the original agreement. However, since the original agreement the Landlord has accommodated the storage of the minibus and installation of the electric charging point at no extra charge.

4.0 LANDLORDS'S PROPOSALS

The Landlord has provided two options if Council wish to renew the lease agreement for the storage unit:

Option 1 - 1-year lease, with the price remaining the same, £18,000 per annum.

Option 2 - 3-year lease, £15,996 per annum with a guaranteed fixed price with no inflationary increase.

By agreeing to enter into a three-year lease, the Council will save £6,012 over the three years.

CONTACT OFFICER

If you have any queries about this report, please contact The Town Clerk of the Council.

Tel: 01303257946 or email toni.brenchley@folkestone-tc.gov.uk prior to the meeting.



Code of Conduct

This policy was adopted by Folkestone Town Council at its meeting held on: 12th May 2020 – Minute 1692.

Introduction

Pursuant to section 27 of the Localism Act 2011, Folkestone Town Council ('the Council') has adopted this Code of Conduct to promote and maintain high standards of behaviour by its members and co-opted members whenever they conduct the business of the Council, including the business of the office to which they were elected or appointed, or when they claim to act or give the impression of acting as a representative of the Council.

This Code of Conduct is based on the principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership.

Definitions

For the purposes of this Code, a 'co-opted member' is a person who is not a member of the Council but who is either a member of any committee or sub-committee of the Council, or a member of, and represents the Council on any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the Council, and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee.

For the purposes of this Code, a 'meeting' is a meeting of the Council, any of its committees, sub-committees, joint committees or joint sub-committees.

For the purposes of this Code, and unless otherwise expressed, a reference to a member of the Council includes a co-opted member of the Council.

Member obligations

When a member of the Council acts, claims to act or gives the impression of acting as a representative of the Council, he/she has the following obligations.

1. He/she shall behave in such a way that a reasonable person would regard as respectful.
2. He/she shall not act in a way which a reasonable person would regard as bullying or intimidatory.
3. He/she shall not seek to improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.
4. He/she shall use the resources of the Council in accordance with its requirements.
5. He/she shall not disclose information which is confidential or where disclosure is prohibited by law.



Registration of interests

6. Within 28 days of this Code being adopted by the Council, or the member's election or the co-opted member's appointment (where that is later), he/she shall register with Folkestone & Hythe District Council's Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in Appendices A and B.
7. Upon the re-election of a member or the re-appointment of a co-opted member, he/she shall within 28 days re-register with the Monitoring Officer any interests in Appendices A and B.
8. A member shall register with the Monitoring Officer any change to interests or new interests in Appendices A and B within 28 days of becoming aware of it.
9. A member need only declare the existence but not the details of any interest which the Monitoring Officer agrees is a 'sensitive interest'. A sensitive interest is one which, if disclosed on a public register, could lead the member or a person connected with the member to be subject to violence or intimidation.

Declaration of interests at meetings

10. Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to an interest in Appendix A the member shall not participate in a discussion or vote on the matter. He/she only must declare what his/her interest is if it is not already entered in the member's register of interests or if he/she has not notified the Monitoring Officer of it.
11. Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to an interest in Appendix A which is a sensitive interest, the member shall not participate in a discussion or vote on the matter. If it is a sensitive interest which has not already been disclosed to the Monitoring Officer, the member shall disclose he/she has an interest but not the nature of it.
12. Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to an interest in Appendix B, the member shall not vote on the matter. He/she may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting.
13. A member only must declare his/her interest in Appendix B if it is not already entered in his/her register of interests or he/she has not notified the Monitoring Officer of it or if he/she speaks on the matter. If he/she holds an interest in Appendix B which is a sensitive interest not already disclosed to the Monitoring Officer, he/she shall declare the interest but not the nature of the interest.
14. Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to a financial interest of a friend, relative or close associate (other than an interest of a person in Appendix A), the member shall disclose the nature of the interest and not vote on the matter. He/she may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. If it is a 'sensitive interest' the member shall declare the interest but not the nature of the interest.



Dispensations

15. On a written request made to the Council's proper officer, the Council may grant a member a dispensation to participate in a discussion and vote on a matter at a meeting even if he/she has an interest in Appendices A and B if the Council believes that the number of members otherwise prohibited from taking part in the meeting would impede the transaction of the business; or it is in the interests of the inhabitants in the Council's area to allow the member to take part or it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

OLD POLICY



Appendix A

Interests described in the table below.

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain by the member or by his/her spouse or civil partner or by the person with whom the member is living as if they were spouses/civil partners.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the Council) made to the member during the 12-month period ending on the latest date referred to in paragraph 6 above for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a member, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract made between the member or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the member is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the Council — (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land	Any beneficial interest in land held by the member or by his/her spouse or civil partner or by the person with whom the member is living as if they were spouses/civil partner which is within the area of the Council. 'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the member or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the member is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) held by the member or by his/her spouse or civil partner or by the person with whom the member is living as if they were spouses/civil partners to occupy land in the area of the Council for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the member's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the Council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the member, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the member is living as if they were spouses/civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.
Securities	Any beneficial interest held by the member or by his/her spouse or civil partner or by the person with whom the member is living as if they were spouses/civil partners in securities* of a body where— (a) that body (to the member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the Council; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the member, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the member is living as if they were spouses/civil partners has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

*'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

*'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.



Appendix B

An interest which relates to or is likely to affect:

- (i) any body of which the member is in a position of general control or management and to which he/she is appointed or nominated by the Council;
- (ii) any body—
 - (a) exercising functions of a public nature;
 - (b) directed to charitable purposes; or
 - (c) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which the member of the Council is a member or in a position of general control or management;
- (iii) any gifts or hospitality worth more than an estimated value of £50 which the member has received by virtue of his or her office.

OLD POLICY



CODE OF CONDUCT

Adopted ???? – Full Council – Minute ????

To be reviewed – ????

Review Date – ????

1.0 Introduction

The Local Government Association (LGA) has developed this Model Councillor Code of Conduct, in association with key partners and after extensive consultation with the sector, as part of its work on supporting all tiers of local government to continue to aspire to high standards of leadership and performance. It is a template for councils to adopt in whole and/or with local amendments.

All councils are required to have a local Councillor Code of Conduct.

The LGA will undertake an annual review of this Code to ensure it continues to be fit-for purpose, incorporating advances in technology, social media and changes in legislation. The LGA can also offer support, training and mediation to councils and councillors on the application of the Code and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the county associations of local councils can offer advice and support to town and parish councils.

2.0 Definitions

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, a “councillor” means a member or co-opted member of a local authority or a directly elected mayor. A “co-opted member” is defined in the Localism Act 2011 Section 27(4) as “a person who is not a member of the authority but who

a) is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the authority,

or;

b) is a member of, and represents the authority on, any joint committee or joint subcommittee of the authority;

and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee”.

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, “local authority” includes county councils, district councils, London borough councils, parish councils, town councils, fire and rescue authorities, police authorities, joint authorities, economic prosperity boards, combined authorities and National Park authorities.

3.0 Purpose of the Code of Conduct

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist you, as a councillor, in modelling the behaviour that is expected of you, to provide a personal check and balance, and to set out the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against you. It is also to protect you, the public, fellow councillors, local authority officers and the reputation of local government. It sets out general principles of conduct expected of all councillors and your specific obligations in relation to standards of conduct. The LGA encourages the use of support, training and mediation prior to action being taken using the Code. The fundamental aim of the Code is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of councillor and local government.

4.0 General principles of councillor conduct

Everyone in public office at all levels; all who serve the public or deliver public services, including ministers, civil servants, councillors and local authority officers; should uphold the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#), also known as the Nolan Principles.

Building on these principles, the following general principles have been developed specifically for the role of councillor.

In accordance with the public trust placed in me, on all occasions:

- I act with integrity and honesty
- I act lawfully
- I treat all persons fairly and with respect; and
- I lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of councillor.

In undertaking my role:

- I impartially exercise my responsibilities in the interests of the local community
- I do not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person
- I avoid conflicts of interest
- I exercise reasonable care and diligence; and
- I ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with my local authority's requirements and in the public interest.

5.0 Application of the Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct applies to you as soon as you sign your declaration of acceptance of the office of councillor or attend your first meeting as a co-opted member and continues to apply to you until you cease to be a councillor.

This Code of Conduct applies to you when you are acting in your capacity as a councillor which may include when:

- you misuse your position as a councillor
- your actions would give the impression to a reasonable member of the public with knowledge of all the facts that you are acting as a councillor;

The Code applies to all forms of communication and interaction, including:

- at face-to-face meetings
- at online or telephone meetings
- in written communication
- in verbal communication
- in non-verbal communication
- in electronic and social media communication, posts, statements and comments.

You are also expected to uphold high standards of conduct and show leadership at all times when acting as a councillor.

Your Monitoring Officer has statutory responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Conduct, and you are encouraged to seek advice from your Monitoring Officer on any matters that may relate to the Code of Conduct. Town and parish councillors are encouraged to seek advice from their Clerk, who may refer matters to the Monitoring Officer.

6.0 Standards of councillor conduct

This section sets out your obligations, which are the minimum standards of conduct required of you as a councillor. Should your conduct fall short of these standards, a complaint may be made against you, which may result in action being taken.

Guidance is included to help explain the reasons for the obligations and how they should be followed.

7.0 General Conduct

7.1 Respect

As a councillor:

I treat other councillors and members of the public with respect.

I treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the local authority with respect and respect the role they play.

Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word. Debate and having different views are all part of a healthy democracy. As a councillor, you can express, challenge, criticise and disagree with views, ideas, opinions and policies in a robust but civil manner. You should not, however, subject individuals, groups of people or organisations to personal attack.

In your contact with the public, you should treat them politely and courteously. Rude and offensive behaviour lowers the public's expectations and confidence in councillors.

In return, you have a right to expect respectful behaviour from the public. If members of the public are being abusive, intimidatory or threatening you are entitled to stop any conversation or interaction in person or online and report them to the local authority, the relevant social media provider or the police. This also applies to fellow councillors, where action could then be taken under the Councillor Code of Conduct, and local authority employees, where concerns should be raised in line with the local authority's council-officer protocol.

7.2 Bullying, harassment and discrimination

As a councillor:

I do not bully any person.

I do not harass any person.

I promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person.

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) characterises bullying as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying might be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident, happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or phone calls, happen in the workplace or at work social events and may not always be obvious or noticed by others.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 defines harassment as conduct that causes alarm or distress or puts people in fear of violence and must involve such conduct on at least two occasions. It can include repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and contact upon a person in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person.

Unlawful discrimination is where someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics are specific aspects of a person's identity defined by the Equality Act 2010. They are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Equality Act 2010 places specific duties on local authorities. Councillors have a central role to play in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the local authority's performance and strategic aims, and that there is a strong vision and public commitment to equality across public services.

7.3 Impartiality of officers of the council

As a councillor:

I do not compromise, or attempt to compromise, the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the local authority.

Officers work for the local authority as a whole and must be politically neutral (unless they are political assistants). They should not be coerced or persuaded to act in a way that would undermine their neutrality. You can question officers in order to understand, for example, their reasons for proposing to act in a particular way, or the content of a report that they have written. However, you must not try and force them to act differently, change their advice, or alter the content of that report, if doing so would prejudice their professional integrity.

7.4 Confidentiality and access to information

As a councillor:

I do not disclose information:

a. given to me in confidence by anyone

b. acquired by me which I believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, unless

i. I have received the consent of a person authorised to give it;

ii. I am required by law to do so;

iii. the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person;

or

iv. the disclosure is:

- 1. reasonable and in the public interest; and**
- 2. made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the local authority; and**
- 3. I have consulted the Monitoring Officer prior to its release.**

I do not improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of my role as a councillor for the advancement of myself, my friends, my family members, my employer or my business interests.

I do not prevent anyone from getting information that they are entitled to by law.

Local authorities must work openly and transparently, and their proceedings and printed materials are open to the public, except in certain legally defined circumstances. You should work on this basis, but there will be times when it is required by law that discussions, documents and other information relating to or held by the local authority must be treated in a confidential manner. Examples include personal data relating to individuals or information relating to ongoing negotiations.

7.5 Disrepute

As a councillor:

I do not bring my role or local authority into disrepute.

As a Councillor, you are trusted to make decisions on behalf of your community and your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. You should be aware that your actions might have an adverse impact on you, other councillors and/or your local authority and may lower the public's confidence in your or your local authority's ability to discharge your/its functions. For example, behaviour that is considered dishonest and/or deceitful can bring your local authority into disrepute.

You are able to hold the local authority and fellow councillors to account and are able to constructively challenge and express concern about decisions and processes undertaken by the council whilst continuing to adhere to other aspects of this Code of Conduct.

7.6 Use of position

As a councillor:

I do not use, or attempt to use, my position improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of myself or anyone else.

Your position as a member of the local authority provides you with certain opportunities, responsibilities, and privileges, and you make choices all the time that will impact others. However, you should not take advantage of these opportunities to further your own or others' private interests or to disadvantage anyone unfairly.

7.7 Use of local authority resources and facilities

As a councillor:

I do not misuse council resources.

I will, when using the resources of the local authority or authorising their use by others:

- a. act in accordance with the local authority's requirements; and**
- b. ensure that such resources are not used for political purposes unless that use could reasonably be regarded as likely to facilitate, or be conducive to, the discharge of the functions of the local authority or of the office to which I have been elected or appointed.**

You may be provided with resources and facilities by the local authority to assist you in carrying out your duties as a councillor.

Examples include:

- office support
- stationery
- equipment such as phones, and computers
- transport
- access and use of local authority buildings and rooms.

These are given to you to help you carry out your role as a councillor more effectively and are not to be used for business or personal gain. They should be used in accordance with the purpose for which they have been provided and the local authority's own policies regarding their use.

7.8 Complying with the Code of Conduct

As a Councillor:

I undertake Code of Conduct training provided by my local authority.

I cooperate with any Code of Conduct investigation and/or determination.

I do not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is likely to be involved with the administration of any investigation or proceedings.

I comply with any sanction imposed on me following a finding that I have breached the Code of Conduct.

It is extremely important for you as a councillor to demonstrate high standards, for you to have your actions open to scrutiny and for you not to undermine public trust in the local authority or its governance. If you do not understand or are concerned about the local authority's processes in handling a complaint you should raise this with your Monitoring Officer.

8.0 Protecting your reputation and the reputation of the local authority

8.1 Interests

As a councillor:

I register and disclose my interests.

Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Monitoring Officer to establish and maintain a register of interests of members of the authority.

You need to register your interests so that the public, local authority employees and fellow councillors know which of your interests might give rise to a conflict of interest. The register is a public document that can be consulted when (or before) an issue arises. The register also protects you by allowing you to demonstrate openness and a willingness to be held accountable. You are personally responsible for deciding whether or not you should disclose an interest in a meeting, but it can be helpful for you to know

early on if others think that a potential conflict might arise. It is also important that the public know about any interest that might have to be disclosed by you or other councillors when making or taking part in decisions, so that decision making is seen by the public as open and honest. This helps to ensure that public confidence in the integrity of local governance is maintained.

You should note that failure to register or disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest as set out in **Table 1**, is a criminal offence under the Localism Act 2011.

Appendix B sets out the detailed provisions on registering and disclosing interests. If in doubt, you should always seek advice from your Monitoring Officer.

8.2 Gifts and hospitality

As a councillor:

I do not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimated value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence on my part to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the local authority or from persons who may apply to the local authority for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.

I register with the Monitoring Officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50 within 28 days of its receipt.

I register with the Monitoring Officer any significant gift or hospitality that I have been offered but have refused to accept.

In order to protect your position and the reputation of the local authority, you should exercise caution in accepting any gifts or hospitality which are (or which you reasonably believe to be) offered to you because you are a councillor. The presumption should always be not to accept significant gifts or hospitality. However, there may be times when such a refusal may be difficult if it is seen as rudeness in which case you could accept it but must ensure it is publicly registered. However, you do not need to register gifts and hospitality which are not related to your role as a councillor, such as Christmas gifts from your friends and family. It is also important to note that it is appropriate to accept normal expenses and hospitality associated with your duties as a councillor. If you are unsure, do contact your Monitoring Officer for guidance.

9.0 Appendices

9.1 Appendix A – The Seven Principles of Public Life

The principles are:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must disclose and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

9.2 Appendix B Registering Interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)** which are as described in "The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012". You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests)**.

"Disclosable Pecuniary Interest" means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

"Partner" means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
2. A 'sensitive interest' is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a 'sensitive interest' you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.
5. [Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take

any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it]

Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in **Table 2**), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in Table 1) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise, you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –

- a. your own financial interest or well-being;
- b. a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate; or
- c. a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other Registrable Interests as set out in **Table 2** you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied

9. Where a matter (referred to in paragraph 8 above) **affects** the financial interest or well-being:

- a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;

b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

10. [Where you have an Other Registerable Interest or Non-Registerable Interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it]

9.3 Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the [Relevant Authorities \(Disclosable Pecuniary Interests\) Regulations 2012](#).

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

Contracts	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the
	councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council — (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land and Property	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. 'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
Licenses	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.

<p>Securities</p>	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where—</p> <p>(a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and</p> <p>(b) either—</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.</p>
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*'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

*'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

9.4 Table 2: Other Registrable Interests

You must register as an Other Registrable Interest :

- (a) any unpaid directorships
 - (b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
 - (c) any body
 - exercising functions of a public nature
 - directed to charitable purposes or
 - one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public or policy (including any political party or trade union)
- of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

9.5 Appendix C – the Committee on Standards in Public Life

The Council has undertaken this review whilst the Government continues to consider the recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in their report on [Local Government Ethical Standards](#). If the Government chooses to implement any of the recommendations, this could require a change to this Code.

The recommendations cover:

- Recommendations for changes to the Localism Act 2011 to clarify in law when the Code of Conduct applies
- The introduction of sanctions
- An appeals process through the Local Government Ombudsman
- Changes to the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012
- Updates to the Local Government Transparency Code
- Changes to the role and responsibilities of the Independent Person
- That the criminal offences in the Localism Act 2011 relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests should be abolished

The Local Government Ethical Standards report also includes Best Practice recommendations. These are:

Best practice 1:

Local authorities should include prohibitions on bullying and harassment in codes of conduct. These should include a definition of bullying and harassment, supplemented with a list of examples of the sort of behaviour covered by such a definition.

Best practice 2:

Councils should include provisions in their code of conduct requiring councillors to comply with any formal standards investigation and prohibiting trivial or malicious allegations by councillors.

Best practice 3:

Principal authorities should review their code of conduct each year and regularly seek, where possible, the views of the public, community organisations and neighbouring authorities.

Best practice 4:

An authority's code should be readily accessible to both councillors and the public, in a prominent position on a council's website and available in council premises.

Best practice 5:

Local authorities should update their gifts and hospitality register at least once per quarter, and publish it in an accessible format, such as CSV.

Best practice 6:

Councils should publish a clear and straightforward public interest test against which allegations are filtered.

Best practice 7:

Local authorities should have access to at least two Independent Persons.

Best practice 8:

An Independent Person should be consulted as to whether to undertake a formal investigation on an allegation and should be given the option to review and comment on allegations which the responsible officer is minded to dismiss as being without merit, vexatious, or trivial.

Best practice 9:

Where a local authority makes a decision on an allegation of misconduct following a formal investigation, a decision notice should be published as soon as possible on its website, including a brief statement of facts, the provisions of the code engaged by the allegations, the view of the Independent Person, the reasoning of the decision-maker, and any sanction applied.

Best practice 10:

A local authority should have straightforward and accessible guidance on its website on how to make a complaint under the code of conduct, the process for handling complaints, and estimated timescales for investigations and outcomes.

Best practice 11:

Formal standards complaints about the conduct of a parish councillor towards a clerk should be made by the chair or by the parish council, rather than the clerk in all but exceptional circumstances.

Best practice 12:

Monitoring Officers' roles should include providing advice, support and management of investigations and adjudications on alleged breaches to parish councils within the remit of the principal authority. They should be provided with adequate training, corporate support and resources to undertake this work.

Best practice 13:

A local authority should have procedures in place to address any conflicts of interest when undertaking a standards investigation. Possible steps should include asking the Monitoring Officer from a different authority to undertake the investigation.

Best practice 14:

Councils should report on separate bodies they have set up or which they own as part of their annual governance statement and give a full picture of their relationship with those bodies. Separate bodies created by local authorities should abide by the Nolan principle of openness and publish their board agendas and minutes and annual reports in an accessible place.

Best practice 15:

Senior officers should meet regularly with political group leaders or group whips to discuss standards issues.

The Council has committed to reviewing the Code on an annual basis to ensure it is still fit for purpose.

_____ **POLICY ENDS** _____



PUBLICATION SCHEME

Adopted 12 May 2020 – Full Council – Minute 1692

To be reviewed – Annually

Review Date – ????

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This is the model publication scheme for parish, town and community councils (known collectively as 'local councils') in England and Wales. Local councils are first tier of local government. There are over 10,000 such councils in England and Wales and they have a wide range of powers at their disposal

2.0 SCHEME PURPOSE

- 2.1 The purpose of the scheme is to be a means by which local councils can make a significant amount of information available routinely, without waiting for someone to specifically request it. The scheme is intended to encourage local councils to publish more information proactively and to develop a greater culture of openness and transparency.
- 2.2 In accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 the scheme specifies the classes of information which local councils publish or intend to publish. Bearing in mind local councils are so diverse in size and functions it was decided the most practical approach was that the model scheme should firstly be comprised of a number of core classes of information which are mandatory. However, it also includes a number of documents (within those core classes) as well as a group of totally 'new' optional classes. Any optional documents within a core class of information are clearly specified therein. The idea behind such an approach is that councils can incorporate the optional documents and classes as they see fit to reflect the information they provide to the general public on a local basis. It is not however, a prerequisite that a council adopts any of the optional documents or classes. The intention behind the inclusion of optional classes and documents is to add a degree of choice and flexibility in the scheme.
- 2.3 The information contained in each class will be available in a variety of formats namely in hard copy on request from the clerk of the council, by inspection at the council office or other suitable premises by prior appointment or, where a council has a website some of the information may be available thereon.

3.0 CORE CLASSES OF INFORMATION

Reasonable charges may be raised for the provision of copies of the documents or information listed in each of the classes. The classes are as follows:-

3.1 COUNCIL INTERNAL PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE

Minutes of council, committee and sub-committee meetings

- limited to the last 2 years.

Annual Report

Optional documents:-

Agendas and supporting papers for council, committee and sub-committee meetings - limited in each case to the forthcoming / immediate meeting.

Terms of Reference for Committees

3.2 CODE OF CONDUCT

Members Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Members Register of Interests

3.3 PERIODIC ELECTORAL REVIEW

This is information concerning changes to the electoral arrangements for parish, town and community councils. It includes recommendations for the creation of new wards, the amendment of existing wards, proposals for the names of new wards and alterations to the number of councillors to be elected to the council.

3.4 EMPLOYMENT PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE

Equal Opportunities Policy

Health & Safety Policy

Staffing Structure

Exclusions – ‘personal records’ i.e. appraisals, employee salary details, disciplinary records, sickness records and the like by virtue of being personal data protected by the General Data Protection Regulations.

3.5 PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Responses to planning applications

3.6 AUDIT AND ACCOUNTS

Annual return form – limited to the last financial year

Annual Statutory report by auditor (internal and external) – limited to the last financial year

Receipt/Payment books, Bank Statements from all accounts – limited to the last financial year

Precept request – limited to the last financial year

VAT records – limited to the last financial year

Financial Regulations and Standing Orders

Asset Register

Risk Assessments

Exclusions – all commercially sensitive information e.g. quotations and tenders, loan documentation and insurance policies.

With regard to quotations and tenders, this information is treated as confidential to ensure that the whole tender process is fair i.e. if tender information is released to a third party prior to the end of the tender period those who initially submitted tenders could be undercut and/or unfairly disadvantaged.

4.0 OPTIONAL CLASSES OF INFORMATION

4.1 DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

Policy Statements issued by council

Responses made by council to consultation papers

Analysis of responses received to public consultations by the council

Complaints handling procedure

4.2 BYELAWS

Made for any of the following purposes:-

The regulation of a mortuary and post mortem room

The regulation of a pleasure ground

The regulation of any baths, swimming pool, bathing place or wash-house

The regulation of the hiring of pleasure boats in a park or pleasure ground provided by a council

To control dogs and dog fouling

4.3 COUNCIL CIRCULAR/NEWSLETTERS

Town, parish, community guide

History of town, parish or community (or similar commissioned publication)

4.4 ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT & TOURIST INFORMATION-

This relates only to information produced by the council.

4.5 ALLOTMENTS

Plans, Standard Tenancy Agreements

Exclusions – individual tenancy agreements and rent payments records under both privacy and data protection laws

Information available under the model publication scheme

Information to be published	How the information can be obtained	Cost
Class 1 – Who we are and what we do (Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts) This will be current information only		
Who's who on the Council and its Committees	Hard copy/notice board/website	See below
Contact details for Town Clerk and Council members (named contacts where possible with telephone number and email address (if used))	Hard copy/notice board/website	See below
Location of main Council office and accessibility details	Hard copy/notice board/website	See below
Staffing Structure	Hard copy/website	See below
Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it (Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit) Current and previous financial year as a minimum Annual return form and report by auditor		
	Hard copy/website	See below

Finalised budget		Hard copy/website	See below
Precept		Hard copy/website	See below
Borrowing Approval letter		N/A	
Financial Regulations		Hard copy/website	See below
Grants given and received		Hard copy/website	See below
List of current contracts awarded and value of contract		Hard copy	See below
Members' allowances and expenses		Hard copy	See below
Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing (Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews) Town Plan (current and previous year as a minimum) Annual Report (current and previous year as a minimum) Quality Status		Hard copy/website	See below
		Hard copy/website	See below
		Hard copy/website	See below
		Hard copy/website	See below

Local charters drawn up in accordance with DCLG guidelines	Hard copy/website	See below
Class 4 – How we make decisions (Decision making processes and records of decisions)		
Current and previous council year as a minimum		
Timetable of meetings (Council, any committee/sub-committee meetings and parish meetings)	Hard copy/notice board/website	See below
Agendas of meetings (as above)	Hard copy/website	See below
Minutes of meetings (as above) – N.B. this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	Hard copy/website	See below
Reports presented to council meetings – N.B. this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	Hard copy/website	See below
Responses to consultation papers	Hard copy/website	See below
Responses to planning applications	Hard copy/website	See below
Bye-laws	Hard copy/website	See below
Class 5 – Our policies and procedures (Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities)		
Current information only		

<p>Policies and procedures for the conduct of council business:</p> <p>Procedural standing orders Committee and sub-committee terms of reference Code of Conduct for Councillors Policy statements</p>	<p>Hard copy/website Hard copy/website Hard copy/website Hard copy/website</p>	<p>See below See below See below See below</p>
<p>Policies and procedures for the provision of services and about the employment of staff:</p> <p>Internal policies relating to the delivery of services Equality policy Health and safety policy Recruitment policies (including current vacancies) Policies and procedures for handling requests for information Complaints procedures (including those covering requests for information and operating the publication scheme) Information security policy Schedule of charges (for the publication of information)</p>	<p>Hard copy/website Hard copy/website Hard copy/website Hard copy/website Hard copy/website Hard copy/website Hard copy/website Hard copy/website</p>	<p>See below See below See below See below See below See below See below See below</p>
<p>Class 6 – Lists and Registers Currently maintained lists and registers only Any publicly available register or list (if any are held this should be publicised; in mist circumstances existing access provisions will suffice) Assets register Disclosure log (indicating the information that has been provided in response to requests; recommended as good practice, but may not be held by Town/Parish Councils) Register of members' interests Register of gifts and hospitality</p>	<p>Hard copy Hard copy Hard copy Hard copy/website Hard copy</p>	<p>See below See below See below See below See below</p>
<p>Class 7 – The services we offer (Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses)</p>		

Current information only		
Allotments	Hard copy/website	See below
Burial grounds and closed churchyards	N/A	
Community centres and village halls	N/A	
Parks, playing fields and recreational facilities	Hard copy/website	
Seating, litter bins, clocks, memorials and lighting	Hard copy	See below
Bus shelters	Hard copy	
Markets	N/A	
Public conveniences	N/A	
Agency agreements	N/A	
A summary of services for which the council is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees (e.g. burial fees)	Hard copy	See below

Contact details:

Town Clerk, Folkestone Town Council, Town Hall, 1-2 Guildhall Street, Folkestone, CT20 1DY

Tel: (01303) 257946 C/O Email: townclerk@folkestone-tc.gov.uk georgina-wilson@folkestone-tc.gov.uk

SCHEDULE OF CHARGES

This describes how the charges have been arrived at and should be published as part of the guide.

TYPE OF CHARGE	DESCRIPTION	BASIS OF CHARGE
Disbursement cost	Photocopying @ 30p per A4 sheet (black and white) and 40p per A3 sheet (black and white)	Actual cost
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2 nd class
Statutory Fee	N/A	N/A
Other	N/A	N/A



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Adopted 12 May 2020 – Full Council – Minute 1692

To be reviewed – Every four years

Review Date – May 2024

Folkestone Town Council's policy on community engagement is an overarching framework to better coordinate how we consult and engage with our community, to give Folkestone residents more opportunities to have their say on the services the council provides.

This policy builds on good practice which already exists in the town and acknowledges the council's genuine desire to place engagement at the heart of our role in championing the needs of our communities and involving them in decisions that affect them. We are committed to delivering services, policies and strategies that reflect local priorities, requirements and aspirations.

Crucially, it seeks to establish the minimum standards we will follow when developing a consultation and engagement exercise to ensure that the many different "communities" in the town have a voice in the debate around how services are delivered. It acknowledges the need to provide appropriate opportunities for communities to participate at whatever level they wish to influence how services are provided, decision making and policy development.

1. Background

Folkestone Town Council recognises its essential role to work more closely together and with local people to:

- Shape public services according to what local taxpayers really want.
- Work with a greater range of organisations that provide public services in the town
- Provide good value for money

This builds on Government's Big Society aspirations and sets out a framework of how we will work with residents and partners from the public, private and voluntary sectors to give local people more of a say on what services they want and need and how they would like them delivered.

It sets out:

- Our objectives for community engagement and how these will be achieved
- Our guiding principles for consultation and community engagement
- The key tasks, we as an organisation will undertake to implement our approach to community engagement and consultation

2. Our Objectives

We have set out objectives for what we wish to achieve from engaging and consulting with our communities:

- Strengthen, develop and sustain opportunities for local people and groups to influence what happens in their communities
- Provide opportunities for communities to shape and influence the development and delivery of quality services and policies that reflect local needs and priorities
- Manage and co-ordinate community engagement activities to ensure consistency, quality, participation, compliance and avoid duplication
- Ensure that community engagement activities provide opportunities for participation for all sections of the community, particularly people and groups that are often missed out of community engagement activities
- Listen to communities and feedback to participants about the outcomes of the community consultation and engagement
- Listen and learn from our own and others' experience and share community engagement skills and knowledge of putting the citizen at the heart of decision making

3. Our Guiding Principles:

- **We will follow a consistent approach to planning for community engagement and consultations:** Our consultations will be pre-planned, have a clear purpose and outcome. We will carefully consider the target audience and the methods used to engage them.
- **We will actively seek to bring the voluntary and community sector on board:** With many organisations providing services in Folkestone, this sector has huge potential for making a consultation work. They can reach parts of the community that we may find hard to reach.

- **Elected councillors will encourage involvement:** Encouragement from elected councillors is crucial to the success of a good consultation. They are strategically placed in the community to build relations with residents and are often well-respected.
- **We will listen and feed back:** Consultation results will be properly analysed and used to inform decisions about how we deliver services. We will feedback overall responses from consultations, the council's subsequent decision (where specific to service) and how the consultation influenced it.
- **Recording and sharing information with relevant stakeholders:** Information from engagement and consultation will be captured in a structured way that is compliant with the General Data Protection Regulations and this together with summary key messages and outcomes, will be shared with councillors, officers, partners and other audiences as appropriate.

4. Who is the Policy for?

We recognise that the council alone cannot achieve the ambitions set out in this policy. Everyone has a part to play in community engagement and consultation particularly:

- **All residents in Folkestone**
- **Elected councillors, who play a key role in actively encouraging involvement at a very local level**
- **Council staff, everyone is involved in community engagement activity in various forms**
- **Community and voluntary sector organisations, who provide local services, work directly with local groups and organisations and with members of usually excluded groups and represent the view of their sectors.**
- **Partners, by working with other organisations and partnerships to make sure services across the town complement each other.**

We will work with other organisations, such as the police, schools and colleges, health service providers and groups and individuals from the community, voluntary and private sectors to make sure that community engagement activities influence the future direction of the town.

5. How will we measure our achievements?

It is important to understand how we are doing when it comes to evaluating the success of this policy. We will use a variety of methods to measure this, including:

- Perceptions of residents, who feel Folkestone Town Council engages with them in relation to its decision making.
- Evidence of information from consultation and engagement that influences council services.

6. What has been achieved so far?

Folkestone Town Council already engages on a range of issues utilising many different forms of engagement. The purpose of this policy is to introduce a consistent and compliant way in which we plan, develop and share learning from engagement and consultations to influence the way in which we continue to provide services in the future.

_____ **POLICY ENDS** _____