

Folkestone Town Council

MINUTES of the Extraordinary Full Council Meeting held at the Town Hall, Folkestone on Tuesday, 21 April 2026 at 7.30 p.m.

TOWN COUNCILLORS PRESENT:

Councillors Lucy McGirr, Christine Dickinson, Kieran Leigh (7:32pm), Nicola Keen, Adrian Lockwood, Jane Darling, Connor McConville, Laura Davison, Roger West, Liz McShane, Peter Gane, Tim Prater, John Renshaw, Belinda Walker and Bridget Chapman.

APOLOGIES:

Councillors Abena Akuffo-Kelly, Charles Bain Smith and Jackie Meade.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Toni Brenchley (Town Clerk)
Jennifer Griffin (Administration Officer)

Prayers were read by Councillor Nicola Keen.

No questions were received.

2234. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Abena Akuffo-Kelly, Charles Bain Smith and Jackie Meade.

RESOLVED: To accept the apologies from Councillors Abena Akuffo-Kelly, Charles Bain Smith and Jackie Meade.

Proposed: Councillor Peter Gane
Seconded: Councillor Nicola Keen
Voting: F: 14, Ag: 0, Ab: 0

2235. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Tim Prater declared an interest, as a Kent County Councillor in Agenda Item 2237.

Councillor Nicola Keen declared an interest in Agenda Item 2237, as a KCC employee.

Councillor Kirean Leigh arrived at 7:32pm.

2236. MINUTES

Council was asked to receive and authorise the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 12 March 2026 and to ask the Town Mayor to sign them as a correct record.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 12 March 2026 be received and signed as a correct record.

Proposed: Councillor John Renshaw
Seconded: Councillor Bridget Chapman
Voting: F: 15, Ag: 0, Ab: 0

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The remainder of the Agenda classified Agenda Item 2237 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 should now leave.

RESOLVED: To exclude the Press and public.

Proposed: Councillor Nicola Keen
Seconded: Councillor Roger West
Voting: F: 15, Ag: 0, Ab: 0

2237. POTENTIAL ACQUISITION OF FORMER LIBRARY BUILDING

Report C/26/416 was presented to Council outlining the opportunities, risks, and strategic implications of FTC acquiring 2 Grace Hill (former Library), currently owned by Kent County Council (KCC).

The Town Clerk also advised Council that, as at 31 March 2026, the general reserves stand at approximately £335,000, with the remaining balance of the total reserves (£750,631) held in Earmarked Reserves.

Council is required to retain a minimum three-month operating/emergency reserve. Based on 2025/26 expenditure of £1,157,337, this equates to £289,334.

After allowing for this requirement, approximately £45,000 remains available above the minimum operating reserve.

RESOLVED: That Option A be approved, and that Folkestone Town Council proceed with the acquisition of 2 Grace Hill, Folkestone, being

the former Library building.

That Council authorises the completion and signing of the transfer documentation as per the Heads of Terms, subject to the satisfactory completion of the legal review. This option acknowledges and accepts the associated risks linked to the condition, future liabilities, and refurbishment requirements of the building.

Following acquisition, Council will:

- i) Work collaboratively with community partners to secure external grant funding to support the refurbishment and future development of the asset.
- ii) Commission and produce a full pre-development cost analysis, including feasibility studies, surveys, design development, planning and statutory approvals, professional consultancy fees, project management and procurement requirements.
- iii) Assess the financial impact on the Council's precept once full pre-development and projected capital costs are known.
- iv) Undertake a formal public consultation on the proposed refurbishment scheme and precept implications before any commitment to proceed with capital works is made.

Proposed: Councillor Tim Prater
Seconded: Councillor Peter Gane
Voting: F: 15, Ag: 0, Ab: 0

Councillor Lucy McGirr moved a vote of thanks to all those involved in the acquisition of the former Library building.

2238. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Annual Statutory Meeting - Tuesday, 5 May 2026 at 7pm
Annual Town Assembly - Tuesday, 12 May 2026 at 7pm

The meeting concluded at 8:07pm.

.....Town Mayor