

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, 12th April, 2016

At the meeting of the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council held at Civic Suite, Gibson Building, Kings Hill, West Malling on Tuesday, 12th April, 2016

Present: His Worship the Mayor (Councillor O C Baldock), the Deputy Mayor (Councillor M R Rhodes), Cllr Mrs J A Anderson, Cllr M A C Balfour, Cllr Mrs S M Barker, Cllr M C Base, Cllr Mrs P A Bates, Cllr Mrs S Bell, Cllr R P Betts, Cllr T Bishop, Cllr P F Bolt, Cllr J L Botten, Cllr V M C Branson, Cllr Mrs B A Brown, Cllr T I B Cannon, Cllr M A Coffin, Cllr D J Cure, Cllr R W Dalton, Cllr D A S Davis, Cllr M O Davis, Cllr Mrs S M Hall, Cllr S M Hammond, Cllr Mrs M F Heslop, Cllr N J Heslop, Cllr S R J Jessel, Cllr D Keeley, Cllr Mrs F A Kemp, Cllr S M King, Cllr R D Lancaster, Cllr D Lettington, Cllr Mrs S L Luck, Cllr B J Luker, Cllr D Markham, Cllr P J Montague, Cllr Mrs A S Oakley, Cllr L J O'Toole, Cllr M Parry-Waller, Cllr S C Perry, Cllr H S Rogers, Cllr R V Roud, Cllr Miss J L Sergison, Cllr T B Shaw, Cllr Miss S O Shrubsole, Cllr C P Smith, Cllr Ms S V Spence, Cllr M Taylor, Cllr F G Tombolis, Cllr B W Walker and Cllr T C Walker

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ms J A Atkinson, Mrs T Dean, T Edmondston-Low, B T M Elks and A K Sullivan

PART 1 - PUBLIC

C 16/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

C 16/21 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Council held on 16 February 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

C 16/22 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor referred to the recent death of Honorary Alderman and former Mayor, George Chapman who had been a well-liked and respected Member of the Council. Details were given of arrangements for the funeral which would be attended by the Mayor.

The Mayor suggested that a letter be sent on behalf of the Council to Her Majesty the Queen with congratulations on her 90th birthday. Members endorsed the proposal accordingly.

The Council was then informed of a number of notable events attended by the Mayor since the last meeting. These included hosting a visit from Le Puy at Tonbridge Castle and attending the Kent International Pianoforte Courses final concert at Tonbridge School. The Mayor had hosted a visit to the council offices from Wouldham All Saints School when pupils had held a debate in the Council Chamber on the introduction of a tax on sugar in drinks. Reference was also made to participation in a number of the 'Clean for The Queen' events throughout the Borough.

The Mayor thanked those who had attended his Buckmore Park Karting Evening which had raised around £1,500 for his charities and the archery day at Wide Horizons which had shared the funds raised with Slide Away, one of the Mayor's charities. Members were advised that there were still some tickets available for the Mayor's Charity Dinner on 28 April.

C 16/23 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 5.6

No questions were received from members of the public pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 5.6.

C 16/24 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 5.5

No questions were received from Members pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 5.5.

C 16/25 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader gave an update on the Savings and Transformation Strategy adopted at the budget meeting in February to address the significant financial challenges facing the Council over the next four years and to underpin the Medium Term Financial Strategy. He referred to the savings of £200,000 arising from in-service efficiencies that had been delivered and reflected in the Estimates for 2016/17. Reports were expected to forthcoming meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, General Purposes Committee and the various advisory boards with proposals for cost efficiencies, savings and opportunities for new income. Attention was drawn to the detailed report and research paper published that day on financial arrangements with parish councils and how to address the funding of concurrent functions provided by the Borough Council. Further information would become available once the Cabinet had considered the matter on 20 April.

The Leader referred to the Borough Council's work with the other two West Kent districts, the County Council and others including the Police and Health Services to seek opportunities for a more cost effective way of delivering local services in order to drive up standards, minimise duplication and deliver best value. He was pleased to report that those discussions, many of which were complex by their very nature, continued to progress well and a meeting of Kent Council Leaders was due to be held the following day.

Commenting that small businesses continued to form the backbone of the Borough's economic community, the Leader was pleased to report that analysis by the finance team indicated that from April 2017 just over 1,900 businesses (representing 53.4% of all businesses within the Borough) would qualify for either small business relief or be eligible for the small business multiplier and so pay less in business rates as a result of the changes announced in the Chancellor's budget. He referred Members to the report to the next meeting of the Cabinet for a more detailed analysis of the impact of the business rates relief.

The Council had traditionally maintained one of the highest collection rates for both business rates and domestic council tax. The Leader advised that the in-year collection rates had now been finalised ready for return to government indicating that the rates remained very high with council tax at 98.87% and business rates at 99.43%. Officers were particularly pleased that the council tax result exceeded the targets set including the working age CTR claimants' collection at 83.17% which was almost 2.5% better than last year. The Leader referred to the very high level of contact from residents at the start of the new financial year when the annual council tax bills had been sent out to every household. He paid tribute to the staff who had key roles to play in supporting residents including advising them about relevant benefits and possible discounts available and helping them make the best choice of payment to avoid getting into difficulty.

Members were informed that along with all the district councils in Kent, the Council was due to review the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme this year in readiness for 2017/18. The Cabinet would be looking at the work carried out by the Kent Finance Officers group with a view to going out to consultation in June on possible amendments to the current Council Tax Reduction scheme. This was an important piece of work as it needed to balance the fact that the money being passed down from central government to help fund the scheme was being reduced all the time, whilst at the same time the Council wished to support those residents most in need. The Leader indicated that the report on this important topic was also published that day and would be considered by the Cabinet the following week.

A long standing strategic aspiration of the Council had been the regeneration of Tonbridge Town Lock. Undertaken and funded in partnership with the Environment Agency and through developer

contributions, the Leader was pleased to inform Members that the project was now completed. He also reported that since the last meeting, the new health suite at Larkfield Leisure Centre had been opened, signifying an important investment in one of the Council's award winning leisure facilities to meet customer expectations and again working in partnership with the Leisure Trust.

Finally, the Leader reported that throughout March and into April, events had taken place in virtually every area of the Borough, supporting the national 'Clean for The Queen' campaign which was designed to encourage communities to help councils clear up litter hotspots in time for the Queen's 90th birthday in April. In the Borough nearly 400 volunteers had collected over 300 sacks of rubbish and 15 new Street Monitors were signed up. This project formed part of the Borough Council's ongoing commitment to the national 'Love Where You Live' campaign and the local Kent Resource Partnership 'Love Kent Hate Litter' campaign.

C 16/26 PROPOSED LICENCE CONDITIONS FOR THE HOMEBOARDING OF DOGS AND CATS AND DOG DAY CARE ESTABLISHMENTS

Item LA 16/16 referred from Licensing and Appeals Committee minutes of 16 March 2016

RESOLVED: That the recommendations at Minute LA 16/16 be approved.

C 16/27 HAYSDEN COUNTRY PARK - SITE IMPROVEMENTS

Item CB 16/27 referred from Cabinet minutes of 22 March 2016

RESOLVED: That the recommendations at Minute CB 16/27 be approved.

C 16/28 AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Item AU 16/16 referred from Audit Committee minutes of 5 April 2016

RESOLVED: That the recommendations at Minute AU 16/16 be approved.

C 16/29 CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

Further to Decision No D160035CAB, consideration was given to an amendment to the delegations to the Director of Central Services to deal with short term property arrangements in the interests of the efficient running of the Council.

RESOLVED: That the Monitoring Officer be authorised to amend Part 3 of the Constitution to give effect to the following change to the Director of

Central Services' delegation DCS 105 to read: "To approve terms for granting leases and licences of five years or less for land or premises owned by the Council".

C 16/30 APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Central Services regarding the reappointment of three of the Town Wardens of the Tonbridge Town Lands and Richard Mylls Charity for further terms of office. Reference was made to the Charity's arrangements for reviewing the terms of office of the four Trustees (Town Wardens).

RESOLVED: That Miss J Browne be reappointed as a Town Warden for a further two year term of office to October 2018 and Dr G Court and Mr D Davis be reappointed for a further four year term to October 2020.

C 16/31 SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

RESOLVED: That authority be given for the Common Seal of the Council to be affixed to any instrument to give effect to a decision of the Council incorporated into these Minutes and proceedings.

C 16/32 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Mayor moved, it was seconded and

RESOLVED: That as public discussion would disclose exempt information, the following matter be considered in private.

PART 2 - PRIVATE

C 16/33 COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

(LGA 1972 Sch 12A Paragraph 1 – Information relating to an individual)

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Executive regarding approval of the continued absence of a Member from meetings on ill health grounds, having been accepted by the Mayor as an urgent item of late business due to their inability to attend this meeting of the Council.

RESOLVED: That in accordance with section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, approval be given for the continued absence of Councillor Ms J Atkinson from meetings on ill health grounds until 1 November 2016.

The meeting ended at 7.55 pm