

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, 13th April, 2021

At the meeting of the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council held via video-conferencing on Tuesday, 13th April, 2021

Present: Her Worship the Mayor (Councillor Mrs J A Anderson), the Deputy Mayor (Councillor R V Roud), Cllr M C Base, Cllr Mrs P A Bates, Cllr Mrs S Bell, Cllr R P Betts, Cllr J L Botten, Cllr M D Boughton, Cllr V M C Branson, Cllr G C Bridge, Cllr C Brown, Cllr R I B Cannon, Cllr A E Clark, Cllr M A Coffin, Cllr D J Cooper, Cllr R W Dalton, Cllr D A S Davis, Cllr M O Davis, Cllr Mrs T Dean, Cllr N Foyle, Cllr N J Heslop, Cllr P M Hickmott, Cllr M A J Hood, Cllr F A Hoskins, Cllr S A Hudson, Cllr D Keers, Cllr Mrs F A Kemp, Cllr D W King, Cllr K King, Cllr J R S Lark, Cllr D Lettington, Cllr Mrs R F Lettington, Cllr B J Luker, Cllr P J Montague, Cllr Mrs A S Oakley, Cllr L J O'Toole, Cllr W E Palmer, Cllr M R Rhodes, Cllr H S Rogers, Cllr J L Sergison, Cllr T B Shaw, Cllr N G Stapleton, Cllr K B Tanner, Cllr Mrs M Tatton, Cllr M Taylor, Cllr Miss G E Thomas, Cllr D Thornewell, Cllr F G Tombolis and Cllr C J Williams.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T Bishop, S M Hammond and A Kennedy.

PART 1 - PUBLIC

C 21/21 HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE PHILLIP, DUKE OF EDINBURGH

As a mark of respect to His Royal Highness the Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh who had sadly passed away on Friday 9 April the Council observed a two minute silence.

The Mayoral statement released on the day of the announcement from Buckingham Palace was as follows:

“On behalf of the council and the people of Tonbridge and Malling, I offer our heartfelt condolences to the Royal Family.

Prince Philip’s huge contribution to our monarchy, to public life in this country and his unstinting support for Her Majesty The Queen made him a much loved figure. His loss will be felt deeply, not just by his family and the people of the United Kingdom but across the Commonwealth and around the world.’

C 21/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

C 21/23 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Council held on 23 February 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

C 21/24 MINUTES OF EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the proceedings of the extraordinary meeting of the Council held on 17 March 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

C 21/25 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor advised that she had attended the following Covid secure and/or socially distanced engagements since the last meeting of the Council:

- Air Ambulance Kent, Surrey & Sussex Webinar

This event had illustrated the valuable work undertaken by the Air Ambulance in providing emergency medical care for the people living, working and travelling in the area. Attention had also been drawn to the number of training courses offered in first aid and CPR.

Finally, the Mayor expressed appreciation for the work being undertaken by NHS staff, volunteers and Borough Council staff at the vaccination centres at Tonbridge Baptist Church, the Angel Centre and at 'pop-up' centres around the Borough. Appreciation was also recorded to Borough Council staff for maintaining a high level of service with many continuing to work remotely.

C 21/26 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 21/27 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 21/28 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader delivered the following statement to the Council:

'Thank you, Madam Mayor.

I should like to begin by making my own tribute to Prince Philip, reflecting the sorrow of many people across the Borough – and indeed, nation – at the loss of such a great man.

The outpouring of sorrow has understandably been from many communities across the UK since we learnt on Friday noon that Prince Philip had died.

Prince Philip gave so much to this country, to Her Majesty The Queen and to his family. There are so many aspects on which he had a positive impact and influence on so many people. He was a patron, president or member of more than 800 organisations.

He will be especially remembered for his inspiration on designing and championing the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, in which hundreds of thousands take part every year, to develop their skills and mature into more confident, capable and caring people and to give them a sense of responsibility to themselves and their communities.

He understood the requirements of responsibility, the demands of duty and the sacrifices of service. He had foresight in his support for so many causes.

I should like to update Council on the Covid data within the Borough and the Borough Council's own support for businesses and the unlocking of restrictions.

We are continuing to see Covid infections within the Borough falling. The latest update that I have received reports 17 active cases; with a downward trend, so a seven-day rate of 7.6 per 100,000, compared to the immediate previous rate of 18.2.

Vaccination take-up has generally been very high across the Borough. Yesterday, a pop up vaccination facility was set up in East Malling. This was specifically secured in light of lower vaccination take up.

This was a much-welcomed local provision, with more than 70 residents vaccinated during the day. Indeed, take up was so great that the facility remained open for a further 90 minutes, with a nurse having to collect further vaccine doses after the first hour of the facility opening.

Yesterday was also the first day of the opening of non-essential retail and outdoor hospitality. Councillor Des Keers (Chairman of the Licensing and Appeals Committee) and I, joined by our licensing officers and the Police, held a virtual meeting for licence holders from across the Borough a couple of weeks ago in preparation for this next stage of the road map. Reports I have received today are that despite a cold Monday night, licensed premises had a busy evening; with the Borough Council working closely with the Police in visiting premises, providing support and advice to business owners.

As of today, mandatory grant funding totalling £8.4m has been paid to businesses affected by the lockdown restrictions since last November.

This is approximately 75% of the total funding received from Government. The Local Restrictions Support Grant scheme is still open for applications for the period 16 February 2021 to 31 March 2021. Those businesses that have not applied have until 31 May to make an application.

Members will be aware that during his budget statement, the Chancellor announced “restart” grants aimed at non-essential retail and the leisure and hospitality sectors, also holding a business rates account.

On 6 April, the Borough Council received funding of just over £5.1m to launch this scheme to our business sector. The one-off amounts are prescribed according to rateable value of premises occupied and the type of business and organisation. Grants of up to £18,000 are available to businesses that have re-opened since 1 April.

I am pleased to advise you that this afternoon we have been able to open applications for this new grants scheme. The Media team will be initiating social media posts, and we have also commenced the job of emailing businesses we believe may be eligible.

Businesses have also been notified that they can submit their applications (with a deadline of 30 June), and we aim to make the first payments by the end of this month. Obviously there will be some businesses who do not meet the scheme’s criteria above. So, an alternative (discretionary) scheme is to be launched in the next week or so for those businesses once we have received funding from government.

Members of Area Three will be particularly aware that planning permission has been granted for the Aylesford Newsprint site. The investment of £180 million, securing 3,000 jobs on site and a further 2,000 in the supply chain is a massive vote of confidence in our area. We can now look forward to the regeneration of the site and to securing much-needed jobs for our communities, tackling the impact of the Covid pandemic, and to improving the local transport network.

This coming Saturday, the Tonbridge Saturday market will be opening in a new town central location – at the Sovereign Way mid car park. I am delighted that the Borough Council has been able to secure an improved location for the market, an example of delivering economic support and an outcome for the market traders in being located in the area of town of their own choice. This is also the location of the monthly Sunday Farmers' market and added to the new Artisan market at the Castle, we have now locations for all three markets in the town centre.'

The Group Leaders also paid tribute to His Royal Highness The Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh.

C 21/29 CHANGES TO THE TMBC HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE POLICY IN LIGHT OF NEW STATUTORY TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE STANDARDS

Item LA 21/4 referred from Licensing and Appeals Committee of 9 March 2021.

RESOLVED: That the recommendation at Minute Number LA 21/4 be approved.

C 21/30 LEYBOURNE LAKES COUNTRY PARK - NEW LAKESIDE FACILITY

Item CB 21/39 referred from Cabinet of 16 March 2021

RESOLVED: That the recommendation at Minute CB 21/39 be approved.

C 21/31 VIRTUAL MEETINGS AND HOMEWORKING

Item CB 21/40 referred from Cabinet of 16 March 2021

RESOLVED: That the recommendation at Minute CB 21/40 be approved.

C 21/32 PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2021/22 AND 2022/23

Consideration was given to the proposed programme of meetings for 2021/22 and the draft programme for 2022/23. Subject to any amendments recommended by Members, the programmes would be presented to Annual Council for endorsement.

Reference was made to the opportunity to increase the intervals between meetings (as set out in paragraph 1.3.2 of the report) and the Director of Central Services clarified that the intention was not to reduce the number of meetings held but to create better spacing across the municipal year.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Programme of Meetings for 2021/22 (as set out at Annex 1) be approved and presented to Annual Council for formal endorsement;
- (2) the revised layout for the Programme be approved (as detailed in the report); and
- (3) the draft Programme of Meetings for 2022/23 (as set out at Annex 2) be agreed, subject to final approval at Annual Council in May 2022.

C 21/33 AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Item AU 21/ referred from the Audit Committee of 6 April 2021

RESOLVED: That Minute Number AU 21/ be approved.

C 21/34 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.

The meeting ended at 8.07 pm