

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES

Tuesday, 21st April, 2026

At the meeting of the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council held in the Civic Suite, Gibson Building, Kings Hill, West Malling on Tuesday, 21st April, 2026

Present: His Worship the Mayor (Councillor C Brown), the Deputy Mayor (Councillor K B Tanner), Cllr L Athwal, Cllr B Banks, Cllr K Barton, Cllr Mrs S Bell, Cllr A G Bennison, Cllr R P Betts, Cllr T Bishop, Cllr M D Boughton, Cllr G C Bridge, Cllr R I B Cannon, Cllr L Chapman, Cllr J Clokey, Cllr A Cope, Cllr S Crisp, Cllr R W Dalton, Cllr D A S Davis, Cllr Mrs T Dean, Cllr S M Hammond, Cllr D Harman, Cllr P M Hickmott, Cllr M A J Hood, Cllr F A Hoskins, Cllr S A Hudson, Cllr D Keers, Cllr J R S Lark, Cllr A McDermott, Cllr A Mehmet, Cllr D W King, Cllr R W G Oliver, Cllr W E Palmer, Cllr S Pilgrim, Cllr B A Parry, Cllr M R Rhodes, Cllr R V Roud, Cllr Mrs M Tatton, Cllr M Taylor, Cllr D Thornewell, Cllr K S Tunstall and Cllr C J Williams

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Boxall, M A Coffin and Mrs A S Oakley.

PART 1 - PUBLIC

C 26/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

C 26/25 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Council held on 24 February 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

C 26/26 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor advised of a number of engagements attended since the last meeting of Council and made particular reference to the following civic and charity events:

- Opening of the Premier Group Tonbridge
- Signing of the Armed Forces Covenant at the East Malling Centre
- Tonbridge School's Annual Community Concert

- Tonbridge Lions Charter Lunch
- Official Photograph of the Penultimate Year of Mayors & Chair at the Maidstone Museum Library
- East Malling's Singers Concert at St James the Great Church, East Malling
- HRH the Dutchess of Gloucester's Visit to Spadework in Offham
- Tonbridge & District Scouts and Guides St George's Day Parade
- Tour and Afternoon Tea at Tonbridge School

Arrangements were being finalised for future civic and charity events and the following were noted:

- Cheque Presentation to Mayoral charities – details to be confirmed
- Annual Council – 12 May 2026

Finally, the Mayor thanked the Deputy Mayor for attending a number of events on their behalf.

C 26/27 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 26/28 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 5.6

A question was received from a member of the public pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 5.6 and related to archaeological concerns at proposed development sites in Snodland.

The answer given by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning Services was attached as Annex 1 to these Minutes and published to the 'library' area of the website (as the book containing the permanent record of the question as set out in Council Procedure Rule No. 5.16).

C 26/29 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader opened by congratulating Cllr C Williams on his recent fundraising bike ride from Red Hill to Rochester Airport in aid of the Kent, Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance, which had raised £5,400. The fundraising efforts over the last four years had reached £68,000.

Attention was drawn to the current position regarding water supply which had implications for planning application decisions and the Borough Council's Local Plan whilst concerns were addressed. The Leader was

pleased to report that he had attended a meeting with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) as part of the Water Delivery Task Force. This meeting between senior leaders from the water industry and various organisations had been productive and there was widespread recognition that the challenges being faced carried national significance and that substantial investment in water infrastructure would be necessary.

Solutions for immediate issues related to planning applications and progressing the Local Plan would be discussed with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government Planning Minister in the upcoming week as it was vital that development opportunities were progressed to support investment, jobs and economic growth.

Reference was made to the potential development of a new Costco in Aylesford and a public exhibition was arranged for Tuesday 28 April 2026 at the Capel Morris Centre at the Royal British Veterans Enterprise Village to provide more detail on the proposals.

The latest Job Fairs would take place at the Angel Centre on Wednesday 29 April 2026, starting at 1000 am. This was a good opportunity to look at employment options and a number of local employers would be attending this event.

Additional employment had been created in Tonbridge with the expansion of the Sainsbury's store into the vacant Beales units. Creating and supporting investment in the town had been a priority for the Borough Council.

The strength of the Borough's local economy was also on display at the recent West Kent Expo. This was an annual event hosted by the Borough Council in the River Centre in Tonbridge for the last three years and demonstrated the enterprise and ambition that existed across West Kent.

A brief update was provided on Local Government Reorganisation and the Borough Council's preference remained a West Kent unitary authority alongside Maidstone, Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells as this represented the strongest option for local communities. The Government consultation had now closed and a decision was expected in July.

Finally, the Leader referenced the Government's Asylum Dispersal Programme over which the Borough Council had no control and concerns around the impact on local housing and services in Tonbridge and Malling.

Full Leaders announcements were available on the Borough Council's [YouTube channel](#).

C 26/30 MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE

In order to facilitate the proper consideration of the planning applications at agenda items 9-12, and in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules, the Mayor proposed that the Council should suspend its own procedure rules and resolve itself into a committee to which rules relating to a planning committee were applied. Once these matters had been resolved the Council Procedure Rules would be reapplied. This was seconded by Cllr Boughton and

RESOLVED: That for agenda items 9 -12 Council Procedure Rules should be suspended and the Council resolve itself into a committee to which rules relating to a planning committee were applied.

MATTERS FOR DECISION AS A PLANNING COMMITTEE

C 26/31 25/00855/FL - 49 HALLSFIELD ROAD, CHATHAM

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Regulatory Services in relation to a ground floor rear extension and retrospective change of use from use class C3 residential dwelling to C2 residential institution designed to provide accommodation and personal care for up to five individuals at 49 Hallsfield Road, Chatham, ME5 9RS

The application had been deferred for determination by the Council in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.24 following consideration by the Area 3 Planning Committee on 29 January 2026.

In reaching its decision, the Council had regard to the reports considered by the Area 3 Planning Committee on 29 January 2026 and 11 December 2025, including the report of the Director of Central Services and Monitoring officer which contained exempt information in accordance with LGA 1972 Sch 12A Paragraph 5 – Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

Subsequent to previous consideration changes had occurred at the site, including the installation of a front driveway. To address this change updated drawings had been provided and revised conditions were set out in the supplementary report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Regulatory Services.

Local Members were now satisfied that initial concerns had been addressed and expressed support for the new and amended conditions. Cllr Keers proposed, Cllr Boughton seconded and it was

RESOLVED: That planning permission be granted in accordance with the submitted details, conditions, reasons and informatives set out in the substantive and supplementary reports of the Director of Planning, Housing and Regulatory Services.

C 26/32 25/01509/FL - ALLENS OAST, 4B OLD ROAD, EAST PECKHAM, TONBRIDGE

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Regulatory Services in relation to the retrospective erection of a summerhouse at Allens Oast, 4B Old Road, East Peckham, Tonbridge TN12 5ER

The application had been adjourned for determination by the Council in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.24 following consideration by the Area 2 Planning Committee on 18 February 2026.

In reaching its decision, the Council had regard to the reports considered by the Area 2 Planning Committee on 18 February and 14 January 2026 including the report of the Director of Central Services and Monitoring officer which contained exempt information in accordance with LGA 1972 Sch 12A Paragraph 5 – Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

Local Members reiterated concerns regarding the impact of the proposal on the Grade II listed building, wider heritage impacts and landscaping. Cllr Boughton proposed and Cllr Hudson seconded that retrospective planning permission be refused for the following reason:

- (1) That the unauthorised erection for a summerhouse outbuilding with flat roofed projection further towards the Grade 2 Listed Building at Strettitt Place was contrary to Policies CP24 (design), S66 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservations Areas) Act 1990 and 213A of the NPPF and created additional; harm to the setting of the historic asset.

Following a formal vote, the proposal was lost with 27 Members voting against the motion to refuse and 14 Members voting in favour.

Cllr Thornewell proposed, Cllr Clokey seconded and following a formal vote it was

RESOLVED: That planning permission be granted in accordance with the submitted details, conditions, reasons and informatives detailed in the report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Regulatory Services.

C 26/33 25/01693/PIP - LAND WEST OF 103 TONBRIDGE ROAD, HILDENBOROUGH, TONBRIDGE

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Regulatory Services in relation to a Permission in Principle for the development of between 5-7 residential dwellings as set out in Schedule 1 of the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017 (as amended) located on land at Tonbridge Road, Hildenborough.

The application had been deferred for determination by the Council in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.24 following consideration by the Area 1 Planning Committee on 26 March 2026.

In reaching its decision, the Council had regard to the reports considered by the Area 1 Planning Committee on 26 March and 12 February 2026, including the report of the Director of Central Services and Monitoring officer which contained exempt information in accordance with LGA 1972 Sch 12A Paragraph 5 – Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

Local Members reiterated concerns in respect of the potential harm of the proposed development to the Conservation Area and the designated heritage asset. Cllr Rhodes proposed, Cllr Barton seconded and following a formal vote it was

RESOLVED: That permission in principle be refused for the following reasons:

- (1) The principle of residential development at this location would result in a harmful erosion of the open setting of the Conservation Area, which contributes positively to its character. The public benefits of 5 – 7 houses would not outweigh this harm and the proposal would also be detrimental to the visual amenity of the area, conflicting with policies CP24 of the TMBC Core Strategy, SQ1 of the Manging Development and the Environment Development Plan document, and paragraphs 210, 212, 213 and 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework; and
- (2) The principle of residential development at this location would result in conflict with footnote 7 policies relating to a designated heritage asset, and is therefore considered to be a strong reason for refusing development, due to the modest public benefits of 5 – 7 houses not outweighing the harm to the setting of the Conservation Area. The development would therefore not meet the definition of Grey Belt and would not comply with paragraph 155 of the National Planning Policy Framework. It would therefore be considered inappropriate development in the Green Belt in conflict with policies CP3 of the TMBC Core Strategy, and

paragraphs 153 and 154 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

C 26/34 26/00223/DR3 - POULT WOOD GOLF COURSE, HIGHAM LANE, TONBRIDGE

Consideration was given to a proposal to grant planning permission for the installation of 3 external air source heat pumps at Poulton Wood Golf Course, Higham Lane, Tonbridge. These would replace an existing fossil fuel boiler to provide heating and hot water to the Golf Club and would be enclosed by brown louvred screening standing 3m in height.

The proposal would help address the Borough Council's commitment to reducing emissions from energy consumption in all of its buildings and ensured that climate change was a recognised commitment within the Corporate Strategy. This proposal would replace the existing gas fired boilers with air source heat pumps which produced zero emissions at source. Accordingly, the proposed development would be a benefit in terms of reducing the Borough Council's carbon (and other) emissions and compliant with the Climate Change Strategy.

In recognition that the proposal supported the reduction of carbon and other emissions, Cllr Brown proposed, Cllr Palmer seconded and it was

RESOLVED: That planning permission be granted in accordance with the conditions, reasons and informatives set out in the report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Regulatory Services

MATTERS FOR DECISION

C 26/35 PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2026/27 AND 2027/28

The proposed programme of meetings for the municipal years 2026-27 and 2027-28 were presented for consideration and were attached at Annexes 1 and 2 respectively. Management Team, Senior Officers and Cabinet Members had been consulted on the proposed dates. Subject to any amendments identified by Members the programmes would be presented to Annual Council for endorsement.

There had been a number of changes to the programme previously agreed in 2025 and these amendments were detailed in paragraph 5.1.2 of the report.

The report provided details in respect of the budget setting cycle for 2027, reminded that there were a number of significant projects to be considered by the Council during 2026/27 which might have implications for the meeting programme and explained that, under the current Local Government Reorganisation timetable, a programme of meetings post April 2028 was not required as Tonbridge and Malling Borough would

cease to exist from 1 April 2028 and a new unitary authority would be established.

In recognition that the programme of meetings supported an efficient and effective service by ensuring that the Borough Council had the ability to take decisions in a timely manner, Cllr Boughton proposed, Cllr Betts seconded and it was

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Programme of Meetings for 2026-27 (as set out in revised Annex 1) be approved and presented to Annual Council for formal endorsement; and
- (2) the draft Programme of Meetings for 2027-28(as set out in revised Annex 2) be agreed, subject to final approval at Annual Council in May 2026.

C 26/36 CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION - FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES

The report of the Head of Finance recommended a number of changes to the Financial Procedure Rules (FPR) as set out in Part 4 (Rules) of the Constitution.

A tracked change version of the FPRs was attached at Annex 1 and the changes related to banking arrangements, corporate credit cards, financial planning and control, virements, underspending and overspending, supplementary estimates, income, fees and charges, writing off debts, insurance and risk management, inventories, orders for goods and services, payment of invoices, financial management of contracts and Medium Term Financial Strategy and Savings and Transformation Strategy. A precis of the changes proposed was set out in Section 5 of the report.

In recognition that the Finance, Regeneration and Property Scrutiny Select Committee should have the opportunity to review the proposed changes in detail, Cllr Boughton proposed, Cllr Betts seconded and it was

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the changes to the Financial Procedure Rules, as summarised in section 5 of the report and shown in Annex 1, be referred to the Finance, Regeneration and Property Scrutiny Select Committee for detailed review; and
- (2) the recommendations of the Finance, Regeneration and Property Scrutiny Select Committee be presented to a future meeting of Council

[Prior to the vote, it was clarified that funding of the establishment changes agreed at General Purposes Committee on 11 March 2026 would not be adversely affected by delaying the request to agree a virement for funds exceeding £100,000 arising from the referral of the matter to the Finance, Regeneration and Property Scrutiny Select Committee.]

C 26/37 RESULTS OF CONSULTATION ON STREET TRADING POLICY RENEWAL

Consideration was given to the recommendations of the Licensing and Appeals Committee of 25 March 2026 in respect of adopting the Street Trading Policy (attached at Annex 1).

Due regard was given to the views of the Committee, the financial and value for money considerations and in recognition of ensuring that all licensable activities taking place within the Borough were granted the appropriate permissions under the relevant legislation, Cllr Tunstall proposed, Cllr Williams seconded and it was

RESOLVED: That the Street Trading Policy (attached at Annex 1) be adopted.

C 26/38 SOUTH WEST KENT WASTE SERVICES CONTRACT RETENDER

Consideration was given to the recommendations of Cabinet of 7 April 2026 in respect of the refuse, recycling and street cleansing contract and proposals for retendering the contract on a partnership basis with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

Due regard was given to the views of the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee of 4 March 2026, the financial and value for money considerations, the legal implications and the assessment of risk.

Taking into consideration, the final tender scores detailed in the restricted Annex 2, Cllr Boughton proposed, Cllr Hudson seconded and it was

RESOLVED: That

- (1) contractor A, identified in the restricted Annex 2, be awarded the South West Kent Waste Services Contract as detailed in the report; and
- (2) a further report setting out proposals relating to the options for the financing of vehicles deployed on the contract, costs relating to the cleansing of High Speed Roads and costs associated with the cleansing of a number of Public Open Spaces, be presented to

the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee for consideration as soon as possible.

C 26/39 ANNUAL REPORT OF CHAIR

Consideration was given to the recommendations of the Audit Committee of 13 April 2026 in respect of the Audit Committee Annual Report.

In recognition that the Annual Report provided a commentary on how the Audit Committee contributed towards ensuring an effective council, Cllr Cannon proposed, Cllr Lark seconded and it was

RESOLVED: That the Annual Report be approved as an independent assurance on the adequacy of the risk management framework, the internal control environment and the integrity of the financial reporting and annual governance processes.

MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

C 26/40 MINUTES OF CABINET AND COMMITTEES

The Minutes of meetings of the Cabinet and Committees for the period February to March 2026 set out in the Minute Book (Volume 1) attached as a supplement, were received and noted.

Any recommendations to the Council from Cabinet or Committees were resolved elsewhere on the agenda.

C 26/41 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.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE

C 26/42 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no items considered in private.

The meeting ended at 9.20 pm