

FOLKESTONE AND HYTHE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes for the meeting of the Council held at the Council Chamber - Civic Centre Folkestone on Wednesday, 29 January 2020

Present: Councillors Mrs Ann Berry (Chairman), Miss Susan Carey, John Collier, Laura Davison, *Ray Field, Gary Fuller, Peter Gane, Clive Goddard, David Godfrey, Anthony Hills, Mrs Jennifer Hollingsbee, Nicola Keen, Philip Martin (Vice-Chair), Connor McConville, Jackie Meade, David Monk, Terence Mullard, Tim Prater, Patricia Rolfe, Rebecca Shoob, Georgina Treloar, Douglas Wade, Lesley Whybrow, David Wimble and John Wing

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Danny Brook, Michelle Keutenius, Jim Martin, Ian Meyers and Stuart Peall.

Councillor Field also gave an apology for lateness.

(* for part of the meeting).

81. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at the meeting.

82. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2019 were submitted, approved and signed by the Chairman.

83. Chairman's Communications

The Chairman reported on the following:

“On Sunday 12th Both Cllr Martin and I attended the Annual Blessing of the Sea in Margate where we were able to meet the new Bishop of Dover, The Right Reverend Rose Hudson -Wilkin. This event is organised by both the Greek Orthodox Church and Margate Town Council. As usually happens a procession proceeds to the sea edge and there a cross is thrown into the sea for a young boy to retrieve. This year there were three young boys all eager to do this, Needless to say they received a round of applause for braving the freezing water.

On Monday 13th we attended Fred Wood Brignall MBE Memorial service in Lydd. Fred was KCC member, Chairman of this Council 2001-2003 and longest serving Mayor of Lydd Town Council. He always attended the District Council Annual meetings and the Chairman’s receptions. It was good to see many Councillors from around the district in attendance. He was held in high esteem and will be sorely missed.

On Tuesday 27th I attended the 75th Anniversary Service of the Holocaust at the Methodist Church Sandgate Road. It was very well attended. Students from many of the local schools attended and read out some moving readings which they had researched and composed themselves.

A musical rendition was played on the violin accompanied by piano. This was composed by the students who played. After the Church service we were invited to the Garden of Remembrance where the Kaddish was read and stones for remembrance were placed on and around the memorial, after which we tasted various dishes from several countries, all beautifully prepared and cooked by the Students of Folkestone College”.

84. Petitions

There were no petitions at the meeting.

85. Questions from the Public

The questions asked, including supplementary questions (if any), and the answers given are set out in Schedule 1, appended to these minutes.

86. Questions from Councillors

The questions asked, including supplementary questions (if any), and the answers given are set out in Schedule 2, appended to these minutes.

87. Announcements of the Leader of the Council

The Leader gave his announcements and stated that in September 2019, the Council had resolved to look at the governance arrangements of the Council, including whether to retain the existing Cabinet arrangements or introduce a committee system, or other system. During discussions at the Governance Working Group, it was apparent that such a change could not be implemented prior to May 2021. At that time, with the agreement of my Group, I offered the opposition leaders a place on my Cabinet. I am pleased to say that that process is underway and I will let the Leaders of the Groups talk about it. It compromises no-one, and the one rule that is insisted upon is that any decision the Group leaders make at Cabinet, they continue to support outside of Cabinet. However, group leaders would not be not bound if they did not make that decision. We recognise the diversity of the group of Councillors we have now, and 15 months is a long time to wait, so I think this is a very good way forward, and I am happy with the way it has been received.

The Leader of the Green group responded and thanked the Leader for this offer. She advised she had discussed this with her group, and wished to accept a place on Cabinet. She stated that she would be responsible for the portfolio of Environment, which would include the responsibility of Air Quality, and she would chair the Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group, She stated that she was pleased that Hythe would have a voice on Cabinet. She added that this was not a coalition, but power sharing, and was a temporary situation, as she still supported the implementation of a Committee system.

The Leader of the Labour Group responded and stated that the proposal was unique, and as the Labour Group worked with the party on a local and national level, he was still in consultation with the National Group on accepting a position on Cabinet. He was however watching with interest.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group responded and stated that in September, he had proposed that the Council move to a Committee system, because the current Cabinet arrangements did not include other groups. He felt it would be churlish to accept this offer, and added that the Committee system would still be the optimum preference, but he appreciated that this would be difficult to implement prior to 2021. He stated that the offer was ground breaking, and had not been done elsewhere in this format. He also added that it was not a coalition arrangement, and there would be times where the Cabinet Members disagreed, and times where they agreed and worked together. He stated that his portfolio would be Revenues and Benefits, and Anti-Fraud and Corruption, and he was keen to use the tools available within the benefits system to tackle homelessness.

Proposed by Councillor Monk,
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Hollingsbee; and

RESOLVED:

That the announcements of the Leader be noted.

88. Opposition Business

There was no opposition business at the meeting.

89. Motions on Notice

There were no motions on notice.

90. Appointment of Chief Finance Officer (S151 Officer)

The report set out recommendations on the appointment of a Chief Finance officer (Section 151 Officer).

Proposed by Councillor Monk,
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Hollingsbee; and

RESOLVED:

- 1. That report A/19/23 be received and noted.**
- 2. That Charlotte Spendley be appointed as Chief Finance Officer (s151 Officer) with effect from 30 January 2020 pursuant to s151 Local Government Act 1972.**

(Voting figures: 25 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

91. **Report to Council on a Key Decision made in accordance with the constitution's call-in and urgency rule.**

The constitution provides that, when an urgent key decision is made by the Cabinet, for which any delay in implementation, likely to be caused by the call-in process, would seriously prejudice the Council's or public interest, then the 'Call-in Rules of Procedure', Part 6.3, rules 1-6 do not apply. Key decisions, taken as a matter of urgency, must be reported to the next available meeting of the Council, together with the reasons for urgency.

Proposed by Councillor Monk,
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Hollingsbee; and

RESOLVED:
That report A/19/22 be received and noted.

(Voting figures: 25 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions).