

## FOLKESTONE AND HYTHE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### **Minutes for the meeting of the Council held at the Council Chamber - Civic Centre Folkestone on Wednesday, 19 December 2018**

**Present:** Councillors Mrs Ann Berry, Miss Susan Carey, John Collier, Malcolm Dearden, Alan Ewart-James, Peter Gane, Clive Goddard, David Godfrey, Miss Susie Govett, Ms Janet Holben, Mrs Jennifer Hollingsbee, Len Laws, Rory Love, Michael Lyons (Vice-Chair), Philip Martin, Ian Meyers, David Monk, David Owen (Chairman), Dick Pascoe, Paul Peacock, Stuart Peall, Damon Robinson, Mrs Carol Sacre, Russell Tillson, Mrs Susan Wallace, Mrs Rodica Wheeler and Roger Wilkins

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Mrs Claire Jeffrey, Mrs Mary Lawes and Frank McKenna

#### **57. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest at the meeting.

#### **58. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2018 were submitted, approved and signed by the Chairman.

#### **59. Chairman's Communications**

The Chairman gave the following update:

“In the past fortnight, it has been my privilege – and I do mean a privilege, to attend 2 of our local school prize givings. Firstly at the Marsh Academy which is a fine example of a relatively new initiative within the UK education system and secondly the Folkestone School for Girls, a Grammar school which consistently produces excellent results. Both schools prepare their pupils for future life within the Community and enable their students to achieve their best whether it be to enter further education or University and subsequently build careers of which anyone could be proud. Both schools have relatively young and vibrant principals supported by extremely enthusiastic senior support staff that it has been my pleasure to meet. We can justifiably be proud to have such schools within our District.

Tonight, we say farewell to a very well-known member of our Civic staff. Martin Spence is retiring at the end of this month, and this evening is therefore his final Council Meeting as Civic Attendant. From 1978 until 1994, Martin served our country in the Army as a member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Royal Irish Rangers and he became an infantry Section Commander. Upon leaving the Army, Martin joined Dover District Council and his duties included being the Chairman's Chauffeur. In 2001 he joined this Council as a Civic Warden, a jack of all trades including security work, manning the Reception Desk as well as supporting our customers when using the self service computers. Until recently he was also the Chairman's Chauffeur, a role now taken over by Dave Turner. He has however until this evening retained his other responsibilities including those for or Civic arrangements. Past colleagues will agree with me that Chairmen come and

Chairmen go, but it is invaluable that there is a continuity in the background to guide us and provide stability. Martin, you have certainly provided that. May I wish you on behalf of all present, our thanks for your service and our best wishes for a long and happy retirement. I am pleased to announce that Dave Turner will assume Martin's Civic Role, and we welcome Mike Smith, who will support Dave as required.

It only remains for me to wish all Members, Officers, visiting dignitaries and Members of the Public both here tonight, but also watching on the webcast, a very Happy and peaceful Christmas”.

60. **Petitions**

There were no petitions to be submitted.

61. **Questions from the Public**

There were no public questions submitted for the meeting.

62. **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.

63. **Announcements of the Leader of the Council**

The Leader of the Council made the following announcements:

“Thank you Chairman. Good evening to you all.

I have not got a lot to say tonight as this meeting follows so quickly on from the last. I am just going to have a brief look forward to the New Year.

The first thing will be that we will set a balanced budget, no mean feat in these straitened times. Cabinet will consider the case for the Princes Parade development once the planning permission has been granted. Then I expect for outline planning permission for the Otterpool Park green town to be applied for at the same time as our revised Core Strategy comes on time. Then a trial of modular house building should be undertaken at our Biggins Wood site.

On the Marsh at the Mountfield Hub site, we will continue the building of small start up/commercial premises to be available for rent. And finally we are establishing a Folkestone Town Centre regeneration board headed up by our MP Damian Collins.

I will now wish you all a Happy Christmas and a Healthy New Year”.

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Meyers, responded and stated that as always, there was nothing in the Leaders announcements that he could disagree with. He applauded the move towards a balanced budget.

With regard to Otterpool and Princes Parade, he stated that there had been significant achievements on bringing the projects to where they were now.

The trial of modular housing was particularly of interest to him and he noted that Legal and General had gone into the manufacture of modular housing in this country, producing British jobs, which he stated was very good indeed.

He wished Members and Officers a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New year, from himself and his party. He then extended a heartfelt thanks to those working over the festive period, especially those in the Medical profession and service industries.

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

**RESOLVED:**

That the announcements of the Leader be noted.

(voting figures: 27 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

**64. Opposition Business**

The UKIP group had brought the following Opposition Business:

“ The UKIP Group would wish to bring our concern to the attention of the Council in the matter of Councillors Questions and the restrictions attached to them.“

Councillor Laws, on behalf of the opposition, outlined the reasons for bringing the business, raising concerns that some of the questions asked at recent meetings of the Council had not been answered fully, or misleading responses had been given. The rules of the constitution prevented the questions from being brought again for a six month period. He added that some of the answers given in recent months had been frivolous and condescending. The constitution did not allow questions to be frivolous, and the same rules should be applied to answers given.

The Leader responded on behalf of the administration, stating that should a Member feel their question was not fully answered, or answered frivolously, they should raise this with the Head of Paid Service to investigate further.

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

**RESOLVED:**

That the issue raised be noted, with no further action taken.

(Voting figures: 22 For; 5 Against; 0 Abstentions).

65. **Motions on Notice**

There were no motions on notice.

66. **Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2019/20**

The report recommended the adoption of a replacement Council Tax Reduction scheme for 2019/2020, which was to be implemented with effect from 1 April 2019.

Proposed by Councillor Dearden,  
Seconded by Councillor Ewart-James; and

**RESOLVED:**

1. **That report A/18/16 be received and noted.**
2. **That Non Dependant charges be maintained within the new scheme.**
3. **That the new Council Tax Reduction scheme be adopted from the 2019/20 financial year as required by S13A and Schedule 1A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended.**

(Voting figures: 25 for, 2 against, 0 abstentions).

67. **Councillors Access to Information**

The report considered the recommendation of cabinet on the issue relating to a Members right to access Council documents and information, and in particular to access legal advice and commercially sensitive information. It outlined the findings of the Task Group (established by the Leader) who were instructed to discuss and investigate the above issue.

Proposed by Councillor Tillson,  
Seconded by Councillor Owen; and

**RESOLVED:**

1. **That report A/18/17 be received and noted.**
2. **That the Assistant Director – Governance, Law and Regulatory Services be instructed to prepare a guidance note on this issue for the benefit of Councillors**

(Voting figures: 23 for, 4 against, 0 abstentions).