

FOLKESTONE AND HYTHE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Minutes for the meeting of the Council held at the Council Chamber - Civic Centre Folkestone on Wednesday, 24 May 2023**

**Present:** Councillors Abena Akuffo-Kelly, Mike Blakemore, Polly Blakemore, James Butcher, Bridget Chapman, Tony Cooper, Laura Davison, Gary Fuller, Clive Goddard, Liz Grant, Anthony Hills (Vice-Chair), Rich Holgate, Mrs Jennifer Hollingsbee, Anita Jones, Nicola Keen, Adrian Lockwood, Alan Martin, Elaine Martin, Jim Martin, Philip Martin (Chairman), Connor McConville, Liz McShane, Jackie Meade, Tim Prater, Stephen Scoffham, Rebecca Shoob, Jeremy Speakman, Paul Thomas, Belinda Walker, David Wimble and John Wing

Apologies for Absence: Councillors David Godfrey

1. **Election of Chairman of the Council**

Proposed by Councillor McConville,  
Seconded by Councillor J Martin; and

**RESOLVED:**

**That Councillor Akuffo-Kelly be elected as Chair of the District Council of Folkestone and Hythe until the next annual meeting of the Council, and until the acceptance of office by her successor.**

(Voting figures: 24 for, 0 against, 5 abstentions).

Councillor Akuffo-Kelly made and signed the declaration of acceptance of office, as required by Section 83 of the Local Government Act 1972, and chaired the remainder of the meeting.

The Chair of the Council then formally thanked the Council for electing her to office, and thanked her proposer and seconder.

2. **Election of Vice-Chairman of the Council**

Proposed by Councillor P Martin,  
Seconded by Councillor McConville; and

**RESOLVED:**

**That Councillor Jones be elected as Vice-Chair of the District Council of Folkestone and Hythe until the next annual meeting of the Council, and until the acceptance of office by her successor.**

(Voting figures: 29 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

Councillor Jones made and signed the declaration of acceptance of office, as required by Section 83 of the Local Government Act 1972, and also thanked her proposer and seconder.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest at the meeting.

4. **Minutes**

The minutes of the Annual meeting of the Council held on 4 May 2022 were submitted, approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman of the Council.

5. **Election of the Leader of the Council**

Proposed by Councillor Prater  
Seconded by Councillor Shoob; and

**RESOLVED:**

**That Councillor Jim Martin be elected Leader of the Council of the District Council of Folkestone and Hythe until the next annual meeting of the Council following the district elections to be held in 2027.**

(Voting figures: 14 for, 0 against, 15 abstentions).

6. **Statement from the Leader of the Council including delegation arrangements**

The Leader made the following statement:

“I would firstly like to welcome all of the new Councillors to the Chamber, I hope you quickly find your way around and if I can be of any help, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I also want, very much, to welcome back so many familiar faces from all parties, I genuinely hope that we will all be able to work together to manage the functions of the Council well, improve our local environment, and give a great service to the people of the District.

The Greens, and the LibDems have agreed to work in coalition to form the Council’s administration.

We have a great deal of agreement between the coalition partners, and we will be working together to provide all of the portfolio holders: seven Greens, and two Lib Dems.

The portfolio holders will be as follows:

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- Cllr Jim Martin – Otterpool Park and Planning Policy
- Cllr Tim Prater – Finance and Governance
- Cllr Gary Fuller – Resident Engagement and accountability
- Cllr Mike Blakemore – Community and Collaboration
- Cllr Rebecca Shoob – Housing and homelessness
- Cllr Stephen Scoffham – Climate Change and Transport
- Cllr James Butcher – Regulatory Services, building control and civic duty
- Cllr Rich Holgate – Place Plan, Heritage, Tourism and District Economy
- Cllr Jeremy Speakman – Assets and Operations

There is much for us to do, we have many repairs to make and a great deal of debris to clear up.

There is a large cumulative deficit of £18.499mill over the next four year period to fill in the accounts, there is a significant loss of £4.3million to find for Princes Parade and the council is indebted because of the Otterpool Park Project. We need to take immediate action on a number of fronts to ensure the Council can continue to function.

I can, however, give you a clear indication of three things that are going to happen:

In line with our emphasis on democratic process, the coalition has agreed to move towards a Committee System and away from the current Leader and Cabinet system. Individual Councillors will have more say and be more able to influence Council policy. This will mean greater responsibility and a lot more work, but the democratic process will be enhanced and reinforced through greater participation.

I am very grateful to our Labour colleagues for their hard work on the committee system. In line with our greater co-operation, the committee system will allow the sharing of key responsibilities including leader.

Those of you who remember the meeting of the Council in June 2019 will recall that Councillor Prater's motion to withdraw the planning permission for Prince's Parade was successful, but this democratic decision was never included on the agenda for ratification by the Cabinet. This flagrant breach of the democratic process has led to the waste of millions of pounds of local peoples money. We are determined to enhance and reinforce the democratic process within the Council and the organisations that it owns or funds.

There are a very complexed set of obstacles to remove, and this will take some time, but I can state, this evening, very clearly, that Prince's Parade is Saved!

I am looking forward to many interesting debates and I hope that everyone in this chamber will feel able to contribute. My greatest hope is that all members will feel able to come and discuss matters with me regardless of their political allegiance because it is only by working together, will we be able to deliver the services our community needs".

7. **Appointments to Committees and Sub-Committees of the Council (including the appointment of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen)**

The report listed the committees and sub-committees of the Council. The report had been circulated to Members at the meeting.

Proposed by Councillor Prater,  
Seconded by Councillor J Martin; and

**RESOLVED:**

1. **That report A/23/07 be received and noted.**
2. **That the necessary appointments to the committees and sub-committees of the Council for the municipal year 23/24, as set out in the report before members, but with Councillor Paul Thomas as the independent member appointed to the available seat on the Planning and Licensing Committee, be agreed.**

(The recommendations were agreed by affirmation of the meeting).

Proposed by Councillor McConville,  
Seconded by Councillor J Martin; and

**RESOLVED:**

**That Councillor McShane be elected Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee for the municipal year 23/24.**

(The recommendations were agreed by affirmation of the meeting).

Proposed by Councillor McConville,  
Seconded by Councillor J Martin, and

**RESOLVED:**

**That Councillor P Blakemore be elected Vice-Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee for the municipal year 23/24.**

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(The recommendations were agreed by affirmation of the meeting).

Proposed by Councillor McConville,  
Seconded by Councillor J Martin; and

**RESOLVED:**

**That Councillor Meade be elected Chair of the Planning and Licensing Committee for the municipal year 23/24.**

(The recommendations were agreed by affirmation of the meeting).

Proposed by Councillor McConville,  
Seconded by Councillor J Martin; and

**RESOLVED:**

**That Councillor Keen be elected Vice-Chair of the Planning and Licensing Committee for the municipal year 23/24.**

(The recommendations were agreed by affirmation of the meeting).

Proposed by Councillor Davison,  
Seconded by Councillor J Martin; and

**RESOLVED:**

**That Councillor McConville be elected Chair of the Personnel Committee for the municipal year 23/24.**

(The recommendations were agreed by affirmation of the meeting).

Proposed by Councillor McConville,  
Seconded by Councillor J Martin; and

**RESOLVED:**

**That Councillor Holgate be elected Vice-Chair of the Personnel Committee for the municipal year 23/24.**

(The recommendations were agreed by affirmation of the meeting).

**8. Delegation of non-Executive functions**

The Council's constitution requires that the scheme of delegations be agreed by the Council at its annual meeting. The report set out the scheme.

Proposed by Councillor Prater,  
Seconded by Councillor J Martin; and

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That report A/23/03 be received and noted.**
- 2. That the scheme of delegation be agreed in so far as it relates to the non-executive functions of the Council.**

(The recommendations were agreed by affirmation of the meeting).

**9. Schedule of meetings for 2023/24**

The Council is required to approve the annual schedule of meetings for the municipal year 2023/2024. The proposed annual schedule of meetings for 2023/24 was appended to the report, including dates for the whole of May for the following municipal year, as per the Council Procedure rules set out in part 4.2, paragraph 1.1.2(i) of the constitution.

Proposed by Councillor Prater,  
Seconded by Councillor McConville;

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That report A/23/01 be received and noted.**
- 2. That the updated schedule of meetings for 2023/24 (appended to these minutes) be adopted.**

(The recommendations were agreed by affirmation of the meeting).

**10. Annual report on policies and strategies adopted by Cabinet and update on urgent decisions 2022/23**

The report was the annual report of policies and strategies that have been adopted, by Cabinet, during the 2022/23 municipal year.

Proposed by Councillor Prater,  
Seconded by Councillor J Martin; and

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That report A/23/02 be received and noted.**

(The recommendations were agreed by affirmation of the meeting).

**11. Annual report of the Audit and Governance Committee 2022/23**

The report summarised the achievements of the Audit and Governance Committee against the terms of reference for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 and detailed the impact that it has made on the overall system of internal control in operation.

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Proposed by Councillor J Martin,  
Seconded by Councillor Prater; and

**RESOLVED:**

1. That report A/23/06 be received and noted.

(The recommendations were agreed by affirmation of the meeting).

12. **Annual report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2022/23**

The report set out the work that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Finance and Performance Sub-Committee have completed during 2022/2023.

Proposed by Councillor McConville,  
Seconded by Councillor J Martin; and

**RESOLVED:**

1. That report A/22/04 be received and noted.

(The recommendations were agreed by affirmation of the meeting).

13. **Annual Scrutiny work programme 2023/24**

This report presented recommendations for the work programme for the overview and scrutiny committee for 2023/24.

Proposed by Councillor J Martin,  
Seconded by Councillor Prater; and

**RESOLVED:**

1. That report A/23/05 be received and noted.
2. That the annual scrutiny programme for 2023-24 attached to the report be approved.

(The recommendations were agreed by affirmation of the meeting).