

Elections & Role of a Councillor

Prospective Councillor Events
26th January 2023

Welcome...

Susan Priest

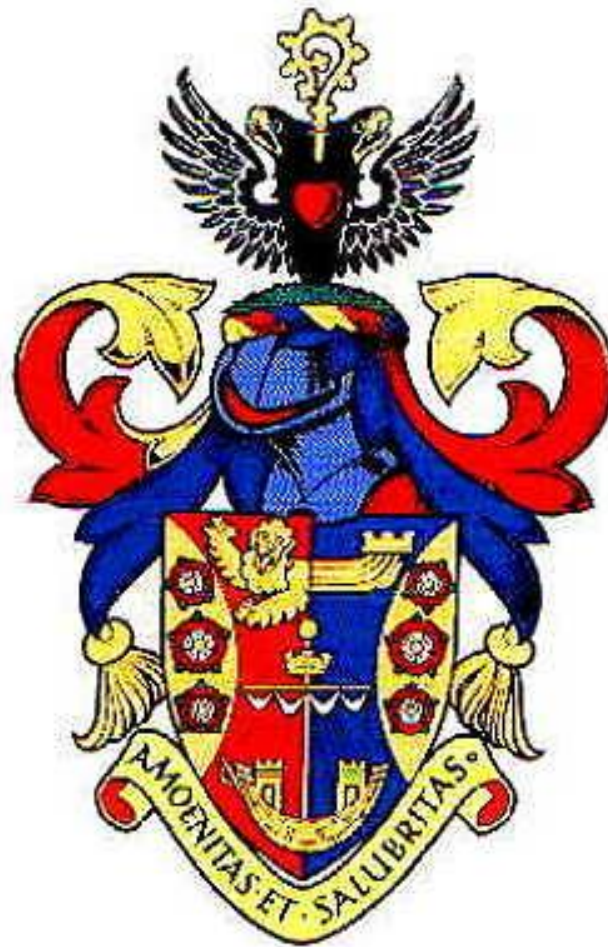
Chief Executive, Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer

- **Introduction**
- **Key documents:** [Corporate Plan](#), [Budget](#) , [Core Strategy](#), [Local Plan](#),
[HRA Business Plan](#), [Website](#), [Planning](#), [Regeneration and Housing](#) Projects
- [Remit of the District Council](#)

Introduction to Folkestone & Hythe District Council

Jemma West
Democratic Services Senior Specialist

1 April 1974



The District Council has responsibility for:

- Refuse collection
- Street cleansing
- Housing
- Environmental health and licensing
- Development control
- Planning policy
- Elections
- Building control
- Benefits and council tax
- Parks and recreation

KCC responsibilities:

- Social services
- Highways
- Education
- Public health
- Libraries
- Refuse disposal
- Consumer protection
- Transport, waste and mineral planning

Parish Council responsibilities:

- Bus shelters
- Recreation grounds
- Grants
- Consultee

The Constitution

The [Constitution](#) governs how the council operates. It is divided into 12 parts and reviewed annually.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Summary & explanation | 7. Overview and scrutiny |
| 2. Articles | 8. Officers |
| 3. Responsibility for functions | 9. Councillors |
| 4. Council | 10. Finance, contract standing orders |
| 5. Committees | 11. Other bodies |
| 6. The Executive | 12. Joint arrangements |

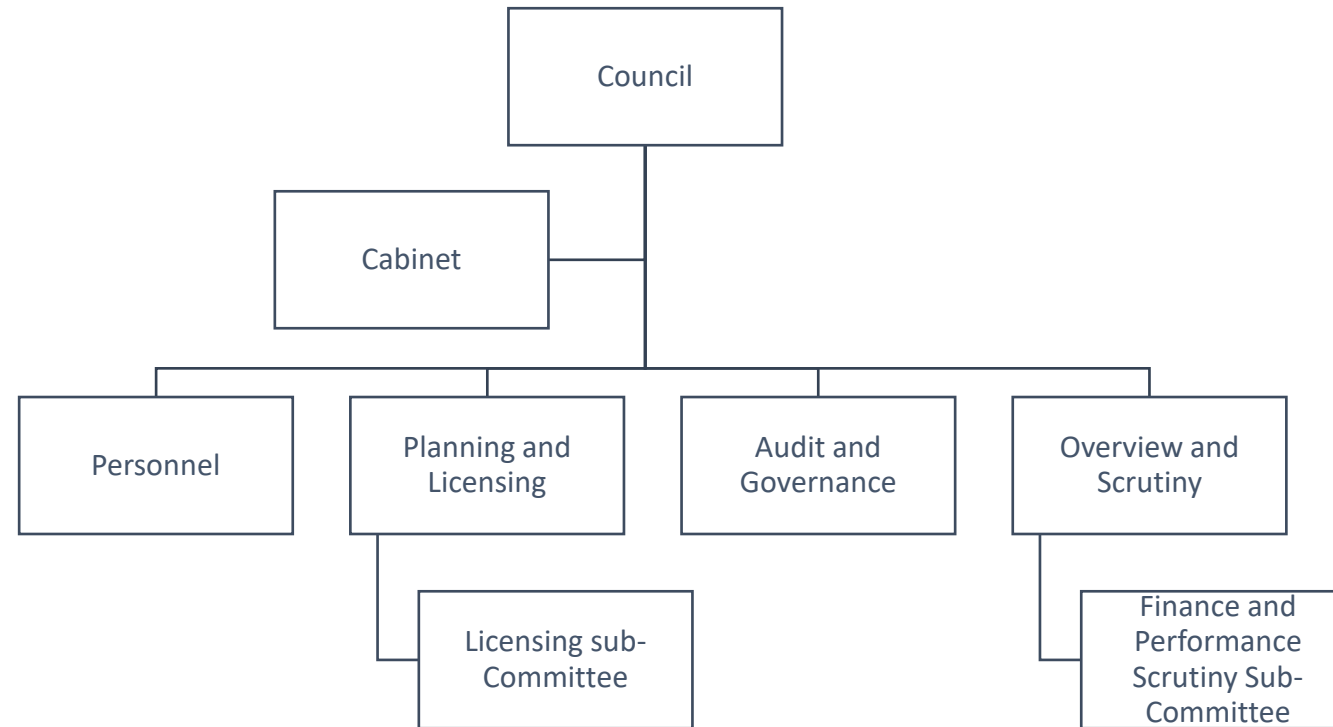
Governance - Executive arrangements

The council operates with an Executive/Leader model in terms of its [governance](#) arrangement.

Functions of the council can be divided into:-

- Non – executive functions (these decisions will be made by either Council, officers or another committee of the council).
- Functions that are not solely the responsibility of the executive – this may include decisions relating to the budget or major policies. These matters would usually be considered by Council, often with a recommendation from Cabinet.
- Executive functions – this makes up the majority of what the council does. Decisions on Executive functions can be made by Cabinet as a whole, individual Cabinet Members or officers. Cabinet must act within budget and policies.

Decision making structure



Advisory Groups/Outside bodies

- The Leader makes appointments to Advisory Groups (such as the Joint Transportation Board and the Folkestone and Hythe District and Parish Councils Joint Committee) and to various outside bodies, such as South East Employers, the Local Government Association and PATROL.

Governance and Structure

Amandeep Khroud
Monitoring Officer and Head of Legal Services

Councillor Code of Conduct

DPI – General overview

The [code of conduct](#) as set out in the Council's constitution is based on the seven principles of public which are as follows:

- Honesty;
- Openness;
- Accountability;
- Objectivity;
- Integrity;
- Selflessness;
- Leadership

Members & Officers

Protocol on councillor / employee relations:-

- Contained in part 9.3 of the constitution
- Sets out the general principles of the relations between councillors and employees
- In particular deals with strategic and operational matters (paragraph 15 of the protocol)

Protocol – Strategic and Operational Matters

“Councillors on the executive provide the strategic political leadership of the council. Employees undertake the operational running of the council carrying out the lawful decisions of the council and ensuring the council acts correctly.”

Protocol – Strategic and Operational Matters

“An executive councillor with a portfolio must make decisions on issues affecting that portfolio. It is not, however, his / her job to manage the staff charged by the Head of Paid Service and chief officers to undertake those tasks.”

Meetings - Interests

Interests must be declared:-

- Disclosable pecuniary interests
- Other significant interests
- Voluntary announcements of other interests

Registering and declaring interests

Two types of interest are set out in the council's code of conduct for councillors:-

1. Disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs) and;
2. Other significant interests (OSIs).

DPIs have to be registered.

Registering Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Must register with the Monitoring Officer:-

- Within 28 days of election
- Any changes within 28 days of the change

Criminal offence not to register or notify any change.

What happens if a councillor has an interest?

DPI

- Declare and explain interest
- Cannot participate and vote of the item
- Must leave the room
- Dispensations can be granted
- Criminal offence and breach of the code

OSI

- Declare and explain interest
- Can participate only to same extent that a member of the public can but cannot vote)
- Must withdraw to public gallery
- Dispensations can be granted
- Breach of the code

Meeting - Interests

Members may make voluntary announcements of other interests.

These are announcements made for transparency reasons alone, such as:

- membership of outside bodies that have made representations on agenda items, or
- where a member knows a person involved, but does not have a close association with that person, or
- where an item would affect the well-being of a member, relative, close associate, employer, etc. but not his/her financial position

Voluntary announcements do not prevent the member from participating or voting on the relevant item

Meetings - Miscellaneous

- Decisions reached by majority;
Committee addressed through the chairman;
- In council (but not committees) councillors stand when speaking;
- Specific rules and protocols for Planning and Licensing committees;
- Failure to attend meetings for six consecutive months; cease to be a councillor unless absence approved beforehand

Member Induction & Training

Andrina Smith
HR Chief Officer

New member training

9th & 10th May TBC

- Meet the Chief Executive & Directors
- Photo taken for ID badge & website – by Committee Services
- Session with the Monitoring Officer in order to complete Declaration of Interests, statutory responsibilities and completion of forms relating to data protection and FOI, gifts & hospitality, any other relevant documentation.
- Councillor allowances, payroll form and e-payslips
- e-learning and councillors area on intranet for Learning & Development plus outline of induction & training programme
- IT requirements discussed / kit issued with a session explaining how to access emails, Microsoft teams, outlook calendars, intranet etc.
- There may be an optional virtual session on using Microsoft Teams effectively
- Basic tour of the civic centre (particularly ground floor)
- Opportunity for Q&A

This is likely to be run as two separate events

Essential member training

w/c 9th & 15th May

- **Law & Governance**
 - How the council and committee structures contribute to the overall decision making process
 - Principles of sound and lawful decision making
 - Key elements of the constitution & code of conduct
 - What to expect at the council AGM – agenda, protocols etc
 - Reminder about Declaration of Interests etc
 - Working Groups
- **Introduction to Local Government Finance**
 - How the council is funded
 - Statement of accounts
 - Capital programme

Several other training sessions will be arranged during this period and attendance will be either remote or in person at the civic centre

Specific committee training

- Audit & Governance
 - Overview & Scrutiny
 - Planning & Licensing
 - Licensing Sub-Committee
-
- External delivery
 - Mandatory for some sessions

Potential topics for training

- Safeguarding / Prevent / Domestic Abuse / Dementia Awareness
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Communication & Reputation Management
- Information Security
- Detailed Finance training
- Information Governance
- Housing & Homelessness
- Providing Housing for the Future
- Keeping Councillors Safe
- Audit – Internal / External
- Risk Management / Whistleblowing

External sessions / information

- LGiU sessions – provide list of available free courses
- LGA sessions – provide list of available free courses
- LGA workbooks – provide links to the different topics

- SEEmp – annual induction (limited spaces available)
- LGA – annual induction (limited spaces available)
- LGA – councillor guide (we will provide an online link)

District and Parish Elections

May 2023

Paul Butler
Democratic Services and Elections Lead Specialist

Our area



- **85,000 Electors**
- **20,000 Postal voters**
- **58 Polling stations**
- **51 Elections**
- **30 District seats**
- **216 Parish / Town seats**

Elections breakdown

- Two levels of election
 - District (also known as Local or Principal Council)
 - Parish (Large parishes are called Town Councils)
- Some large Parish / Town Councils are divided into wards
 - E.g. Sandgate Village Ward of Sandgate Parish Council; or
 - Broadmead Ward of Folkestone Town Council
 - Separate Parish / Town Wards have their own election

Returning Officer

Susan Priest



- Responsible for:
Delivering a free and fair election which delivers the result expressed by voters
- Not Responsible for:
Conduct of candidates, parties or agents
Breaches of electoral law
Election finance

Supporting staff



Amandeep Khroud

Monitoring Officer



Paul Butler

Deputy Returning Officer &
Democratic Services and Elections Lead Specialist



Alan Widnall

Deputy Returning Officer
Electoral Services Specialist

Core Elections Team



Folkestone & Hythe
District Council

Key dates

Registration

| | | |
|---|---------------|-------------------------|
| Register alterations | First | Tuesday 04 April 2023 |
| | Interim | Tuesday 18 April 2023 |
| | Final | Wednesday 26 April 2023 |
| Registration deadline | At 11:59:59pm | Monday 17 April 2023 |
| New Postal applications (and proxy amendments) deadline | At 5pm | Tuesday 18 April 2023 |
| New Proxy applications deadline | At 5pm | Tuesday 25 April 2023 |
| **New for 2023** Voter Authority Certificate deadline | At 5pm | Tuesday 25 April 2023 |
| Emergency Proxy applications deadline | At 5pm | Thursday 04 May 2023 |
| Clerical errors or corrections deadline | At 9pm | Thursday 04 May 2023 |

Key dates

Election

| | | |
|--|---------------|-------------------------|
| Notice of Election | | Friday 17 March 2023 |
| Nominations period starts | 10am – 4pm | Monday 20 March 2023 |
| Close of Nominations / Withdrawals / Election Agents | 4pm | Tuesday 04 April 2023 |
| Statement of Persons Nominated | By 4pm | Wednesday 05 April 2023 |
| Appointment of Poll and Count Agents deadline | At 11:59:59pm | Wednesday 26 April 2023 |
| Return of election expenses deadline: | | |
| District | At 11:59:59pm | Friday 09 June 2023 |
| Parish / Town | At 11:59:59pm | Friday 02 June 2023 |

Key dates

Poll cards and Postals

| | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Poll cards | 1 st run | Tuesday 21 March 2023 |
| | 2 nd run | Tuesday 25 April 2023 |
| Postal votes | 1 st run | Friday 14 April 2023 |
| | 2 nd run | Monday 24 April 2023 |
| Replace lost Postal votes | From - | Thursday 27 April 2023 |
| | Until 5pm | Thursday 04 May 2023 |

Qualifications to stand for election

- At least 18 years old on the day of nomination
- A British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of any member state of the European Union

....and

District criteria

AT LEAST ONE OF THESE

- a. You are, and will continue to be, registered as a local government elector for the local authority area in which you wish to stand from the day of your nomination onwards.
- b. You have occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the local authority area during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election.
- c. Your main or only place of work during the 12 months prior to the day of your nomination and the day of election has been in the local authority area.
- d. You have lived in the local authority area during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election.

Parish/Town criteria

AT LEAST ONE OF THESE

- a) You are, and will continue to be, registered as a local government elector for the parish in which you wish to stand from the day of your nomination onwards.
- b) You have occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the parish area during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election.
- c) Your main or only place of work during the 12 months prior to the day of your nomination and the day of election has been in the parish area.
- d) You have lived in the parish area or within three miles of it during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election.

Nomination Packs

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT
ELECTION IN ENGLAND**

(District elections)

**PARISH ELECTION IN
ENGLAND**

(Parish / Town elections)

Independent / Political Party

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTION IN ENGLAND

(District elections)

At District elections your description can only be, either:

- *left blank;*
- *the word 'Independent';*
- *the **registered** party name of a **registered** political party; or*
- *one of the descriptions the party has **registered** with the Electoral Commission.*

The registered party description must be no more than 6 words in length.

If you intend to stand with a registered party, you must have their authorisation to use their description and emblem

Further details of this can be found on the Electoral Commission's website.

Independent / Political Party

PARISH ELECTION IN ENGLAND

(Parish / Town elections)

At Parish / Town elections your description can be, either:

- *left blank;*
- *the word 'Independent';*
- *the **registered** party name of a **registered** political party;*
- *one of the descriptions the party has **registered** with the Commission; or*
- *something sufficient enough to identify you, which is under 6 words that is unlikely to associate you with a **registered** political party.
e.g. 'Baker in the High Street'*

If you intend to stand with a registered party, you must have their authorisation to use their description and emblem

Descriptions / Emblems

**All forms must be the original document
Copies will not be accepted**

**If you have pre-printed emblem certificates they
must be the original and contain a wet signature,
not a printed version.**

Standing for election

Nominations session:

09 February 23 3pm – 5pm

- Completing / Submitting papers
- What to expect
- Close of nominations
- When do you find out who you are up against?

What happens next?

- Briefing for candidates and election agents
- Information Packs
- Your campaign
- Poll cards / Postal votes
- Various deadlines

Polling Day

- 58 polling stations across our area
- Open from 7am until 10pm
- Nearly 250 members of staff at stations alone
- Aware of some polling station changes already:
 - Brenzett Village Hall to TBC
 - The Neptune Pub to Dymchurch Village Hall
 - Hawkinge Scout Hut to Hawkinge Pavillion (Hawkinge Football Club)
 - Hythe Town Football Club to Win Pine House

Agents

- Election Agents (District only)
 - Responsible for election campaign and return of expenses
 - Single point of contact for Candidate(s)
- Polling Agents
 - Attend the polling station on your behalf
 - Observe process
 - Can mark a copy of their own register
 - That register can not be removed until close of poll
- Postal Vote Agents
 - Notify Paul before opening session begins
 - Maximum of 1 per candidate

Ballot Papers...

District

1 x Ballot Box

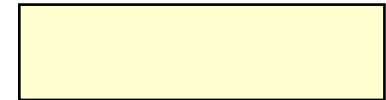
White



Parish / Town

1 x Ballot Box

Yellow



Verification and Count

- Three Hills Sports Park
- Two stage process
 - Verification
 - Count
- All elections verified at the same time
- District and Parish verification / counts will happen on Friday, 05 May 2023
- Declarations made as soon as practicable, then posted online

District Election expenses

- Responsibility of the **Election Agent**
- Submit expenses to the Deputy Returning Officer:
 - Paul Butler
 - By Friday 09 June 2023
 - Via email: elections@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk (scanned copies)
 - Via post: Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, CT20 2QY
- Spending limit: £806, plus 0.07p per local government elector
- More info at: [Electoral Commission Expenses](#)

Parish Election expenses

- Responsibility of the **Candidate** for Parish/Town elections
- Submit expenses to the Deputy Returning Officer:
 - Paul Butler
 - By Friday 02 June 2023
 - Via email: elections@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk (scanned copies)
 - Via post: Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, CT20 2QY
- Spending limit: £806, plus 0.07p per local government elector
- More info at: [Electoral Commission Parish Expenses](#)

Elections Act 2022

For May 2023

- Voter ID at polling stations
 - Voter Authority Certificate
 - Campaigner restrictions
 - Private areas in stations / female staff
- Accessibility at the polling station
 - Polling Station visits
 - Polling Station Companion
 - Audible Ballot Paper V 2.0
- Reduction of subscribers from 10 to 2 for District elections from 04 May 23

In the future

- Changes to overseas elector rights
- Postal votes
- Proxy votes
- Preventing undue influence
- Changes to EU citizens
- Changes to voting system at PCC elections

More details at:

www.electoralcommission.org.uk/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/our-views-and-research/elections-act

www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/elections-act-2022

County By-election

- Hythe West Division
- Nominations – Friday 27 January to Friday 03 February 2023
 - Working days only between 10am until 4pm
- 10 Subscribers needed to support your nomination
<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/local-elections-england>
- Polling Day – Thursday 02 March 2023 between 7am and 10pm
- Verification & Count – Friday 03 March 2023

Contacts

- Election team

Direct Dial 01303 853188

Public elections number 01303 853497

elections@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/elections

- Electoral Commission

Direct Dial 03331 031928

Inc. campaigning, donations and spending money

www.electoralcommission.org.uk

Further information & guidance

Campaigning

Electoral Commission

District Campaign guidance

[Guidance for candidates - Campaign at District Elections](#)

Parish/Town Campaign guidance

[Guidance for candidates - Campaign at Parish Elections](#)

ICO guidance

https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1589/promotion_of_a_political_party.pdf

Still to come...

| | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------|---|-------------------|
| Saturday 28 January 2023 | 10am – 12pm | Informal drop-in session | CAP, Civic Centre |
| Thursday 09 February 2023 | 3pm – 5pm | Elections process, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completing a nomination pack• Timetable recap• Elections act update | Online webinar |
| Tuesday 11 April 2023 | 5pm – 630pm | <u>Invite only</u> Candidate & Agent briefing | Online webinar |

Questions?

In attendance: Please wait behind
Online: elections@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk