

FOLKESTONE AND HYTHE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes for the meeting of the Council held via Zoom - remote meeting) on Wednesday, 21 October 2020

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillors David Godfrey
Councillor Terry Mullard also gave apologies for lateness.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at the meeting.

4. Chairman's Communications

The Chairman gave the following communications:

“Firstly I would like to thank all our officers for the way they have unstintingly kept us up to date with all the many changes during the additional work load they have taken on during this most difficult of times.

Because of the restrictions of the pandemic my deputy Councillor Philip Martin and I have been unable to support many of the outside invitations that we would have normally supported.

I did manage on 15 September to support The Battle of Britain Commemoration on the Leas and also supported the Hawkinge Mayor making Ceremony of Councillor Martin on 23 September. Government guidelines were in place at both ceremonies.

On 8 October I joined in the very well organised Black History Month celebrations on Zoom, This was very well supported by many groups and individuals throughout the evening with Music, Poems, Readings and interesting stories”.

5. Announcements of the Leader of the Council

The Leader gave the following announcements:

“Thank you madam Chairman, and good evening to you all.

Well it is a long time since I last addressed the Council with my report.

Such a lot has happened since I last spoke to you all.

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I must start by praising the fantastic response of our officers in dealing with the pandemic situation as well as continuing to deliver our ambitious programmes. There are many instances of them 'Going above and beyond' in the course of their duties. In recognition of this we have extended the Christmas break. I would also like to thank those members that were able to contribute especially those working with the hubs.

With regard to Napier barracks, the situation at the moment appears to be stable, this past weekend's potential clash of divergent groups passing off with only one arrest. Again six of our officers were supporting the police to assist in controlling the situation. I will stress that this is a Home Office project although we have posted to our website a Q&A to inform our residents.

Back to our wonderful staff, we have just received the official confirmation of the outcome of the review of our Customer Service Excellence certification, not only have we fully passed all 57 categories we have gained another three compliance plus awards which brings our total to 15 which is exceptional and is an endorsement of our mantra 'Customer First'. The assessor particularly noted the enthusiasm and good will evinced by all.

Some of you have asked me to arrange a physical meeting for all of the councillors that want or can attend. To that end I am trying to arrange a meeting at Westenhanger where there is room in the marquee to set out tables with safe distancing as soon as I can confirm that I will let you know. At the present time there is no likelihood of a physical Council meeting as some members are shielding and we cannot at present legally hold hybrid meetings.

We will continue to hold Leader's Question sessions and the next virtual Council meeting is scheduled for 25 November".

The Leader of the Labour Group responded and advised that time had flown by, and it had only been a short time ago when preparations were being made for Full Council in March, which had not gone ahead. He echoed the comments relating to staff, who had adapted so well to a new way of working. He also commended the introduction of the regular Leaders Q&A sessions, helping to bridge the gap when Full Council meetings were not going ahead. He stated that the community hubs had been fantastic. With regard to Napier Barracks, he looked forward to the council working together with the Home Office to ensure that those staying at the Barracks were treated as any other resident of the district.

The Leader in reply stated that he seconded the point about Napier Barracks.

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

RESOLVED:

That the announcements of the Leader be noted.

6. Opposition Business

The Leader of the Labour Group, Councillor McConville, set out his Opposition Business which asked the council to consider applying an exemption or discount on Council Tax for care leavers aged between 22 and 25.

Proposed by Councillor McConville,
Seconded by Councillor Prater, and

RESOLVED:

That Option (b) (Refer the issue to the cabinet or relevant overview and scrutiny committee, as the case may be for their observations before deciding whether to make a decision on the issue) be agreed for the business below;

To consider a report assessing the options with the aim of exempting or significantly reducing the amount of council tax due by young people, who have left the care of Kent County Council between the ages of 22-25 who currently reside in the district of Folkestone and Hythe.

(Voting figures: 28 for, 0 against, 1 abstentions).

7. Motions on Notice

1. The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group set out his motion, which set out a number of actions for the Council to take in respect of fireworks and Chinese lanterns, as set out in the agenda.

Proposed by Councillor Prater,
Seconded by Councillor Fuller; and

RESOLVED:

That the Council takes the following action:

1. **Encourage all publicly organised firework displays within the district area to be advertised online in advance of the event by offering or signposting a free listing service, so that residents can both enjoy the celebrations and take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people;**
2. **Promote a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people and the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks, such as asking people to let neighbours know about private displays in advance, and the penalties for causing a noise nuisance late at night where not allowed by legislation;**

3. **Encourage retailers to follow the lead of Sainsburys in withdrawing the sale of fireworks to the public;**
4. **Develop and promote a voluntary local code on firework sale licenced premises to promote quieter firework options;**
5. **Write to the UK Government urging them to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those sold to the public for private display;**
6. **Encourage the public to notify KCC Trading Standards of retail outlets that are not correctly applying the regulations of the selling of fireworks both in terms of age-appropriateness, licensing and CE markings;**
7. **Given the damage they cause and risk they present, institute a ban on the release of sky lanterns from F&HDC land, and write to the UK Government urging them to consider banning sky lanterns in the UK in total.**

(Voting figures: 27 for, 0 against, 2 abstentions).

2. The Leader of the Labour Group set out his motion which asked the council to take a number of actions in order to help eradicate racism, as set out in the agenda.

Upon opening the debate, it was proposed by Councillor Field that the question now be put (as per paragraph 15.11.1 (closure motions), part 4 of the Constitution). The Chairman indicated that insufficient debate had taken place at that point, and therefore the Motion fell, and the debate was allowed to conclude.

Proposed by Councillor McConville,
Seconded by Councillor Keutenius; and

RESOLVED:

That Full Council recommend to Cabinet to consider the following:

- **To declare that this council is intolerant to racism and will continue to seek to eradicate it, Islamophobia, sexual orientation discrimination, Anti-Semitism and hate crime across the district by developing initiatives that are actively inclusive and anti-racist. This declaration, or pledge, should appear on the council's website.**
- **Commit to working with all our partners, including the KCC, national government and Kent Police, to ensure that divisive and discriminatory behaviour is not allowed to continue in our area.**
- **Be supportive of groups and individuals that are seeking to address these issues through respectful and constructive dialogue.**

- **To invite appropriate speakers on these issues to help with training for councillors and staff.**
- **To ensure the points raised above can be realised, the council should establish a community working group. This group can act as a conduit between community groups and organisations and elected representatives with the aim of building community cohesion, tackling discrimination and promoting the district**

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

3. The Leader of the Labour Group withdrew his motion which sought the council's approval to highlight its comments in response to consultation on the Government White Paper, 'Planning for the Future', as the actions requested, set out in the agenda, had been agreed by Cabinet earlier that evening.

8. **Annual Scrutiny Work Programme 2020/21**

The report presented recommendations for the work programme for the Overview and Scrutiny committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2020/21.

Proposed by Councillor Shoob,
Seconded by Councillor Keutenius; and

RESOLVED:

1. **That report A/20/02 be received and noted.**
2. **That the annual scrutiny programme (shown at appendix 1) be approved for the remainder of the municipal year 2020-21.**

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