

FOLKESTONE AND HYTHE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes for the meeting of the Council held at the Council Chamber - Civic Centre Folkestone on Wednesday, 27 July 2022

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Georgina Treloar and Lesley Whybrow

15. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at the meeting.

16. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2022 were submitted, approved and signed by the Chairman.

17. Chairman's Communications

The Chairman gave an update on the events he had attended recently, which included:

1. Normandy Vets - Sandgate Road Garden Remembrance,
2. Lydd Club Day,
3. Annual Civic Service - New Romney,
4. Armed Services Flag Raising - Civic Centre,
5. Armed Service - Folkestone Town Centre Luncheon,
6. Civic Service - Sevenoaks Town,
7. Canada Day Service - Shorncliffe Cemetery,
8. LCH Concert,
9. District of Sevenoaks Civic Service,
10. This week he would be attending the New Romney Country Fair.

18. Petitions

There were no petitions to be presented.

19. 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.

20. 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

21. **Announcements of the Leader of the Council**

The Leader gave the following announcements:

“Thank you Chairman and good evening to you all.

Tonight I want to continue to talk about the chaos on our roads last weekend which actually started Friday morning. There were two major causes of the disruption firstly a severe incident on the M20 which had to be closed and so the traffic was diverted off onto our local roads.

I went into Folkestone from Densole on that morning and at that time there were two lanes of mainly lorries at a virtual standstill on the A260 Canterbury Road Hill, I thought that I would be clever and come back via junction 12, go up Beachborough Hill and through Lyminge, but the junction was gridlocked with traffic moving at a snail’s pace trying to access the North bound M20. After about an hour and covering 600yards I was able to escape through Peene to East Hawkinge and then onto home. I have just described this to give you some idea of the magnitude of the situation. I was stuck in it for about an hour, pity the people trying to access the tunnel and ferries who took up to 21 hours before they got away partly caused because at the start of the day only 4 of the French customs check points were manned.

Our officers were put on alert Friday morning and worked throughout the weekend to assist the Kent Resilience Forum and Kent Police.

This situation clearly cannot be tolerated, every time there is a holiday rush, there are severe weather conditions, customs delays or strike action. A comprehensive plan to alleviate the traffic congestion must be compiled.

The Leader of Dover District Council, Councillor Trevor Bartlett and myself have co-signed a letter to the Government demanding that they invest in East Kent’s road network including finishing the dualling of the A2 and sorting out Brenley Corner, developing a nationwide network of lorry parks, and create “Smart” travel corridors and efficient borders using new technology. In the meantime to provide greater resources to the Kent Resilience Forum and Kent Police so as to manage more effectively the disruption of our roads and enable proper welfare facilities to be provided.

Having said all of this, whilst travelling around Folkestone was a complete nightmare, I am able to report that not a single resident contacted our out of hours emergency lifeline 365 control centre nor any of our Community Hubs requesting immediate emergency support. I would remind members and our residents that these support routes are available should there be a need for immediate help that can’t be provided by the blue light services.

Lifeline can be contacted 24/7 (on 01303 242615) and during normal working hours:

Folkestone Community Hub (01303 316186).
Hythe Community Hub (01303 269602).
New Romney Community Hub (01797 208590).

It is my belief that the Kent Resilience Forum, Kent Police and our officers worked flat out to try and contain an impossible situation and I would like to thank them for their dedication.

I welcome Councillor Keutenius's agreement to get the Overview and Scrutiny committee to hold a special meeting on this subject, I know that it exercises all of our minds".

Councillor McConville, on behalf of the Opposition, responded to the points raised and stated that he had also experienced the diabolical traffic situation. He requested that Stagecoach be included in any discussions, as the bus service had been deeply impacted. The bus station live information had not reflected what buses were cancelled, and the length of time buses were taking.

The Leader responded that he would of course ensure Stagecoach were included in any discussion, but stated that he was sympathetic to the nightmare situation they were facing.

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

RESOLVED:

That the announcements of the Leader be noted.

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

22. **Opposition Business**

The Leader of the Labour Group, Councillor McConville, set out the Opposition Business which related asked that a cost of living emergency be declared for Folkestone and Hythe.

Proposed by Councillor McConville,
Seconded by Councillor Keutenius; and

RESOLVED:

That Option (c) (agree to examine the matter as part of a future scrutiny programme) be agreed for the business below:

- To declare a cost-of-living emergency for Folkestone and Hythe.
- To build on the good work the council already carries out with regards to its collaboration with the voluntary sector and convene a cost-of-living summit

Council - 27 July 2022

within the district by October, looking at every possible way in which residents can be assisted through what will be a very tough winter.

This summit should involve all the voluntary organisations within the district who currently provide assistance to residents. As well as key organisations such as Kent Police, Citizens Advice, local GP's, and the district school network.

The summit should provide a blueprint for residents to manage through the cost-of-living emergency with regards to, education, funding, and awareness.

- To both lobby our local MP and call on the leader of the council to write to the secretary of state for work and pensions for the following:
 - Immediately restore the Universal Credit supplement of £20, which was cancelled by the Government in September 2021.
 - To increase the rate of universal credit and other support payments to a sum which is appropriate to the current level of inflation.

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

23. **Motions on Notice**

1. Councillor Gane, Liberal Democrat Group, set out his motion which requested related to the disrepair of the White Lion Public house building.

Proposed by Councillor Gane,
Seconded by Councillor Keen;

That FHDC use compulsory purchase powers, or any other powers available and appropriate, to buy the building and redevelop the site.

In accordance with the council procedure rule 17.5, five members present demanded a recorded vote.

FOR: Councillors Davison, Fuller, Gane, Keen, Keutenius, J Martin, McConville, Meade, Prater, Shoob, Wade and Wing (12).

AGAINST: Councillors Miss Carey, Collier, Field, Goddard, Godfrey, Hills, Mrs Hollingsbee, P Martin, Meyers, Monk, Mullard, Rolfe, Peall and Wimble (14).

ABSTENTIONS: Councillor Mrs Berry (1).

(Voting figures: 12 for, 14 against, 1 abstentions).

The motion was therefore **LOST**.

Following the vote on this item, Councillor Miss Carey left the meeting.

2. As Councillor Whybrow had given apologies for the meeting, the Motion she had proposed fell, and would be resubmitted to the next meeting of the Council.

24. Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy 2022/23

The report sought Council approval regarding the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy for 2022/23 in accordance with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities latest guidance.

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

RESOLVED:

1. That report C/22/14 be received and noted.
2. That the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy for 2022/23 be approved.

(Voting figures: 17 for, 9 against, 0 abstentions).

25. Folkestone and Hythe District Council's Financial Contribution to the council's levelling up fund round 2 application

The report sought agreement for the Council to allocate funding for the 10% financial contribution required by the government for the council's Levelling Up Fund application.

Proposed by Councillor Monk,
Seconded by Councillor McConville; and

RESOLVED:

1. That report A/22/15 be received and noted.
2. That funds be allocated as outlined in paragraph 2.5 of the report to provide the 10% match funding financial contribution for the Folkestone – A Brighter Future project which is the subject of a round 2 Levelling Up Fund application to government.
3. That the Medium Term Capital Programme be updated following a successful submission for Levelling Up Fund to include the total award for the scheme.

(Voting figures: 25 for, 0 against, 1 abstention).

26. Review of Political Balance and Committee Membership

The report set out a summary of the need to review the political balance and membership of committees following the resignation of Councillor Brook to

Council - 27 July 2022

leave the Conservative Group and join the Folkestone and Hythe Independent Group, and Councillor Gane to leave the Conservative Group and join the Liberal Democrat Group.

Proposed by Councillor Monk,
Seconded by Councillor Wimble; and

RESOLVED:

- 1. That report A/22/13 be received and noted.**
- 2. That the results of the review into the political proportionality of the Council and allocation of committee seats on a politically proportionate basis be noted.**
- 3. That Councillor Field be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Personnel Committee.**

(Voting figures: 26 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions).

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

The constitution provides that, when an urgent decision is made by the Cabinet or Cabinet Member, 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. 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/22/12 be received and noted.

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