
Annual Council

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 3HT on Wednesday, 15 May 2024 from 7.00 pm - 8.34 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Mike Baldock, Monique Bonney, Andy Booth, Lloyd Bowen, Hayden Brawn, Derek Carnell, Ann Cavanagh, Lloyd Chapman, Shelley Cheesman, Roger Clark, Simon Clark, Charles Gibson, Tim Gibson, Alastair Gould, Angela Harrison, James Hunt, Carole Jackson, Elliott Jayes, Mark Last, Rich Lehmann, Peter Macdonald, Peter Marchington, Claire Martin, Ben J Martin (Mayor), Charlie Miller, Lee-Anne Moore, Pete Neal, Tara Noe, Tom Nundy, Chris Palmer, Richard Palmer, Hannah Perkin, Ashley Shiel, Julien Speed, Paul Stephen, Sarah Stephen, Terry Thompson, Mark Tucker, Angie Valls, Karen Watson (Deputy Mayor), Tony Winckless, Ashley Wise and Dolley Wooster.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Robin Harris, Chris Lovelock, Jo Millard, Larissa Reed and Emma Wiggins.

OFFICERS PRESENT (VIRTUALLY): Janet Dart.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Kieran Golding, James Hall, Mike Henderson and Mike Whiting.

1 **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

The Retiring Mayor outlined the emergency evacuation procedure.

2 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 17 May 2023 (Minute Nos. 1 – 16) and the Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 3 April 2024 (Minute Nos. 795 - 809) were taken as read, approved and signed by the retiring Mayor as correct records.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

No interests were declared.

4 **Appointment of Mayor**

The retiring Mayor advised that Councillor Ben J Martin was nominated as Mayor elect at the Council meeting on 3 April 2024. On being put to the vote, Members voted to support the nomination, and it was resolved that Councillor Ben J Martin be elected Mayor for the civic year 2024 - 2025. Councillor Claire Martin gave a speech to support the decision to elect Councillor Ben J Martin as Mayor, and Councillor Charles Gibson spoke to endorse the decision. The Mayor read and signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office and was presented with his badge of office and flowers.

Resolved:

(1) That Councillor Ben J Martin be elected as Mayor for the Civic Year 2024 - 2025.

5 **Forthcoming Mayoral Year**

The Mayor thanked Members for their support and said he hoped to play a part in promoting the many positive attributes Swale had to offer. The Mayor announced that the charities he would be supporting throughout his mayoral year were Swale Action to End Domestic Abuse (SATEDA) and LUPUS (UK). He highlighted the work that both charities carried out. The Mayor announced that he would be accompanied at events by a variety of consorts and he announced that Petty Officer cadet Jayden Smith from the Sheppey Sea Cadets would be his cadet for his Mayoral year. Finally, the Mayor said he hoped for respect for each other, for officers and for the community.

6 **Vote of Thanks to Retiring Mayor**

The Leader proposed a vote of thanks to the Retiring Mayor. The Deputy Leader seconded the vote of thanks and on being put to the vote, Members agreed.

The Mayor presented the retiring Mayor with a civic shield, certificate, mayor's badge and flowers.

The retiring Mayor thanked her consort, Councillor Paul Stephen, her mayor's cadet Lauren Smethurst and her Civic Attendant Chris Lovelock who was retiring from his role. The retiring Mayor spoke fondly of her term as Mayor and said she had attended approximately 179 events. She drew attention to some of the highlights, including the Mayor's Civic Awards that were held the previous day.

The retiring Mayor said approximately £4,000 had been raised for her charities and would be shared between Challenger Troop, Kent Wildlife Rescue Service and Diversity House. She highlighted the charity bike ride around the Isle of Wight which members of staff and her consort took part in and had raised over £1,700. She also thanked various organisations in the Borough who had been given support throughout her mayoral year.

7 **Appointment of Deputy Mayor**

The Mayor announced that the decision to appoint a Deputy Mayor elect was taken at the Council meeting on 3 April 2024, and it was resolved that Councillor Karen Watson be elected as Deputy Mayor for the civic year 2024 - 2025.

The Leader gave a speech in support which was seconded by Councillor Angela Harrison.

The Deputy Mayor read out and signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Officer and was presented with her chain of office and flowers.

The Deputy Mayor thanked Members and announced that her consort would be Mr Allan Watson.

8 **Establishment of Committees and their Terms of Reference**

The Leader introduced the report which sought to establish the Committees of the Council for the municipal year 2024 - 2025 and agree their terms of reference. The Leader proposed the recommendation which was seconded by the Deputy Leader and on being put to the vote, Members agreed the recommendation.

Resolved:

(1) That the Committees of the Council and Terms of Reference, as set out in Appendix I to the report be agreed for the 2024 - 2025 municipal year.

9 Allocation of Committee Seats and Committee Appointments 2024 - 2025

The Leader introduced the report and proposed the recommendations which were seconded by the Deputy Leader. On being put to the vote, Members agreed the recommendations.

Resolved:

(1) That the political balance calculation as set out in Appendix I to the report be agreed.

(2) That the allocation of seats to Committees, in accordance with the wishes of Group Leaders, as set out in Appendix I to these minutes, be agreed.

(3) That Group's nominations for Swale's membership of the Joint Transportation Board as set out in Appendix II to these minutes be agreed.

10 Borough Council Nominations to Outside Bodies and Trusts Administered by Swale Borough Council (SBC) and Statutory Bodies

The Mayor said the Borough Council Nominations to Outside Bodies and Trusts were set out on Appendix III which had been published on the Council's website and circulated to Members. The Leader proposed the recommendations which were seconded by the Deputy Leader.

Upon being put to the vote, Members agreed the recommendation.

The complete list of outside bodies are attached as Appendix III to these minutes.

Resolved:

(1) That the Borough Council representation on outside bodies and trusts administered by SBC and statutory bodies be as set out in Appendix III to these minutes.

11 Timetable of Meetings

The Leader introduced the report and proposed the recommendation which was seconded by the Deputy Leader.

Resolved:

(1) That the timetable of meetings for the 2024 - 2025 municipal year be agreed.

12 Exclusion of Press and Public**Resolved:**

(1) That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended,

the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 – Information relating to any individual.

13 Waiver of Six-Month Councillor Attendance rule

The Leader proposed the recommendation which was seconded by the Deputy Leader.

Several Members sent their good wishes to Councillor Mike Henderson.

Resolved:

(1) That health grounds were an appropriate reason to waive the requirement under s85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 for Councillor Mike Henderson to attend a Council meeting within six months of his last attendance.

14 Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7.57 pm until 8.23 pm.

Mayor

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All minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel