

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Democracy Committee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 13 AUGUST 2015

Present: Councillor Fissenden (Chairman), and
Councillors Butler, Cuming, Daley, Mrs Hinder,
Mrs Joy, D Mortimer and Newton

Also Present: Councillors Ash and Mrs Gooch

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chittenden and English.

2. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

The following substitute members were noted:

- Councillor Mrs Joy for Councillor Chittenden
- Councillor D Mortimer for Councillor English

3. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

Councillor Ash was in attendance reserving his right to speak.

Councillor Gooch arrived at 2:14pm.

4. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED: That Councillor Fissenden be elected as the Chairman for the Municipal Year 2015/16.

5. **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED: That Councillor Cuming be elected as Vice Chairman for the Municipal Year 2015/16.

6. **DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING**

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

7. **URGENT UPDATES**

The Chairman stated that, in her opinion, the following should be taken as urgent items as they contained further information relating to item 8 on the agenda – Councillor Nominations to Outside Bodies:

- Late nomination forms for Outside Bodies
- Job Specifications for Outside Bodies with no nominations to date.

8. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members of Officers.

9. COUNCILLOR NOMINATIONS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Committee considered the nominations put forward for membership of Outside Bodies.

The Committee noted the revised period of appointment of members to the Maidstone Beauvais Twinning Association from one year to three years as agreed at their Annual General Meeting on 7 July 2015.

The Committee considered the nominations to new Outside Bodies put forward by the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee arising from the recommendations of the review of Transport in Maidstone alternatives to using the car.

The automatic memberships to Outside Bodies were noted with the correction to number 4, Kent and Medway Crime Panel being Councillor Mrs Wilson and not Councillor Mrs Blackmore.

The Committee discussed Outside Bodies where no nominations were received for vacancies and considered a review of membership of these Outside Bodies.

The Committee noted Outside Bodies with no nominations were:

- Action with Rural Communities in Kent
- Maidstone Mediation
- Maidstone Mind
- Relate West and Mid Kent
- South East Employers
- Relief in Need

The Committee considered offering the vacancies to either officers or parish councillors. It was decided that, for officers, this may create a conflict of interest, and in all cases the Council would not be able to put forward suitable councillors at a future date should a vacancy be filled in this way.

The Committee agreed a review of the Outside Bodies with unfilled vacancies was required to establish what the expectations of each Outside body was of members and what value Councillors could bring.

Councillor Mrs Hinder offered to fill the Relief in Need vacancy.

RESOLVED:

That:

1. A review of Outside Bodies be carried out by Officers to include a review of:
 - The role of each Outside Body with unfilled vacancies;
 - The requirements and expectations of its members for each Outside Body with unfilled vacancies, and;
 - How to promote these Outside Bodies to encourage nominations.

The review to include a list of all Outside Bodies and Councillor members.

Voting:

For: 8

2. The Committee agree the nominations put forward to Outside Bodies as detailed in the report dated 13 August 2015 (table on page 3) with the following changes:

a) Nominations for Maidstone Town Centre Management Liaison Group membership be agreed as follows:

- Councillor Mrs Joy – Liberal Democrat and as member for High Street Ward;
- Councillor Parvin – Conservative, and;
- Councillor Newton – Independent.

Voting:

For: 7 Against: 0 Abstain: 1

b) Maidstone YMCA – the nomination from Councillor Derek Mortimer to renew his membership from 10 September 2015, included in the Urgent Update, be agreed.

3. It be noted that the period of appointment for membership of Maidstone Beauvais Twinning Association (MBTA) was changed at the MBTA Annual General Meeting on 7 July 2015 from one year to three years.
4. The nominations to Outside Bodies put forward by the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee arising from the recommendations of the review of Transport in Maidstone – alternatives to using the car, as detailed in the report of 13 August 2015 (page 4) be agreed.
5. The automatic membership to Outside Bodies as detailed in the report of 13 August 2015 (page 5), with the amendment to the

Kent and Medway Crime Panel being Councillor Mrs Wilson and not Councillor Mrs Blackmore, be noted.

6. Councillor Mrs Hinder be nominated for the vacancy for Relief in Need.

10. OPTIONS FOR THE ELECTION OF MAYOR AND APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY MAYOR

The Committee considered reviewing the protocol by which a Mayor of Maidstone was elected and the Deputy Mayor was appointed.

The Committee discussed wider concerns with the Mayoralty at Maidstone Borough Council such as how decisions are made to change procedures, support for the Mayor, budget provision.

RESOLVED:

That:

A working group be formed to carry out a full review of Maidstone Borough Council's Mayoralty, to include a review of the protocol for the election of Mayor and appointment of Deputy Mayor with recommendations reported back to the Democracy Committee. Membership of the working group to be Councillors:

- Cuming
- Daley
- Fissenden
- Mrs Hinder
- Newton

11. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT BUDGET 2015-2016

The Committee considered the Member Development Plan and estimated budget for 2015-16. Concern was raised regarding attendance at training events.

It was noted that Group Leaders, when developing the current constitution, had expressed concerns regarding attendance at training sessions and had discussed the possibility of enhancing the training requirements set out in the constitution, concluding that this Committee would be well placed to consider this issue.

The Committee were notified that the inclusion of a training protocol in the Constitution could be considered when the new Constitution was reviewed later in the year by this Committee and could include such things as member attendance at training events and member involvement in the future formation of the member development plan.

RESOLVED:

That:

1. The Member Development Plan for 2015-16 be approved.
2. The estimated expenditure for the Member Development budget be approved.
3. The updated Member Development Policy reflecting the changes to the new Committee System be noted.

12. DURATION OF MEETING

2.00pm to 3.40pm