

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEMOCRACY AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 21 JUNE 2023

Present:

Committee Members:	Councillor Munford (Vice-Chairman in the Chair) and Councillors Bartlett, Clark, English, Hastie, Jeffery, Perry, Rose and Springett
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6. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cooper, Thompson and Webb.

7. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following Substitute Members present were:

- Councillor Clark for Councillor Thompson
- Councillor Hastie for Councillor Cooper
- Councillor Springett for Councillor Webb

8. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman informed the Committee that an urgent update, consisting of nomination papers for Item 14 – Allington Memorial Green Trust, which had been circulated.

9. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor Burton was in attendance for all Items on the agenda.

Councillor Hinder was in attendance for Item 17 – Community Governance Review (Parishes) – Stage 2 Consultation.

10. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Councillor Jeffery declared an interest in Item 14 – Allington Green Memorial Trust as he had submitted a nomination for the Trust.

Councillor English declared he was a Member of Tovil and Bearsted Parish Councils in relation to Item 17 – Community Governance Review (Parishes) – Stage 2 Consultation.

Councillor Munford declared he was a Member of Boughton Monchelsea Parish Council in relation to Item 17 – Community Governance Review (Parishes) – Stage 2 Consultation.

Councillor Springett declared she was a Member of Bearsted Parish Council in relation to Item 17 – Community Governance Review (Parishes) – Stage 2 Consultation.

11. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

All Councillors on the Committee disclosed they had been lobbied on Item 17 – Community Governance Review (Parishes) – Stage 2 Consultation.

12. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public as proposed.

13. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 MARCH 2023

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

14. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 MAY 2023

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

15. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

16. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

17. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions to the Chairman.

18. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager updated the Committee on its Work Programme stating that the Committee had items upcoming in September.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

19. ALLINGTON MILLENNIUM GREEN TRUST

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager outlined the report on the outside body and stated that a nomination for a Director of Allington Millennium Green Limited had been received in an urgent update. The Democratic and Electoral Services Managers also stated that the successful nomination would be a Corporate Trustee rather than being a Trustee themselves.

RESOLVED: That Stuart Jeffery be appointed to the position of Director of Allington Millennium Green Limited.

20. AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Director of Strategy, Insight & Governance outlined the report and highlighted the recommended change to introduce a requirement that a motion on notice signed by at least two members would be required to bring a motion for the removal of the Leader of the Council to the Council.

In response to questions the Director of Strategy, Insight & Governance stated that two members was the same number of members as required by previous versions of the constitution.

RESOLVED: That

1. Council be recommended to approve the amendment to part A2, 7.2 The Leader as set out in Option 1 of this report; and
2. The use of the Monitoring Officer's delegation to amend the Constitution attached at Appendix 1 to the report be noted.

21. MEMBER TRAINING 2023/4 - DISCUSSION PAPER

The Director of Strategy, Insight & Governance outlined the report and various training sessions in the next year including: carbon literacy training, preparing for the changes to whole council elections and four year planning cycle.

The Committee considered the training programme and requested the following additional topics for the programme: financial training, audit and equality training, diversity and inclusion training.

RESOLVED: That the approach to Member training for 2023/24 be noted and the additional training topics identified by the Committee be included.

22. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW (PARISHES) - STAGE 2 CONSULTATION

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager presented the report and identified the parish boundary changes in each proposal to go to Stage 2 consultation. It was emphasised that the decision for the Committee would be to take these proposals to Stage 2 consultation, not to determine whether the proposals would go ahead at this stage, and that the Committee would consider the outcome of the consultation in September before full Council would make the final decision on whether to adopt the outcome of the review.

The Committee supported the majority of the proposals to go through to Stage 2 consultation and identified those for further discussion. In particular the Committee expressed concern on proposal 3d with the future of Grove Green if it became unparished as a result of a Stage 2 consultation, which the Committee felt should be avoided. There were concerns that it was a significant proposal that had not arisen from Stage 1 consultation and that there were significant benefits to the area of being part of Boxley parish. However some members of the Committee felt that the question should still be asked of residents as to whether they wished to remain part of Boxley parish, form their own parish or become unparished. On balance the Committee determined not to go ahead with proposal 3d in the Stage 2 consultation.

The Committee also considered a petition to abolish Tovil parish council under proposal 10a. A petition containing 87 signatures to remove Tovil Parish Council had been submitted and the Committee considered this alongside the factors set out in the report and determined not to take the proposal forward.

RESOLVED: That

1. The list of proposals set out at Appendix A be approved, with the removal of Proposal 3d – Consider Grove Green element of Boxley Parish, for Stage 2 consultation.
2. The two tier approach to consultation as set out in Appendix B, be approved; and
3. The work and provisional indication on Parish size changes set out in Appendix C, be noted.

23. DURATION OF MEETING

6:30pm to 8:12pm