

KENT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Minutes of the Meeting of the Maidstone Area Committee of the Kent Association of Local Councils held via Zoom Conference at 7pm on Monday, 29 November 2021.

Present: Councillors: Geraldine Brown (Chairman) Yalding, Peter Coulling (Vice Chairman) Teston, Helen Anderson (Secretary), Ivor Davies Boxley, Tina Clark Broomfield & Kingswood, John Clayton Detling, Anne Marie Butler Downswood, John Wilson East Farleigh, Frederick Stanley Harrietsham, Bob China Leeds, Velma Bennett Loose, Kate Tippen Marden, Otham Parish Council, Chris Douglass Teston, Tony Hemsted Tovil, Matt Lingwood and Rachel Robinson Ulcombe, Dee Ann Stead Yalding. Peter Titchener (Audit, Governance & Standards Committee Rep).

Guests: None were present.

1. **Apologies for absence.** Councillors Chris Webb Chart Sutton, Nigel Pyman Headcorn, Mike Summersgill Hunton, Carole Wright Langley and John Perry, Maidstone Borough Council.
2. **Minutes.** The minutes of the 27 September 2021 meeting were taken as read, confirmed as a correct record. These will be signed at the next available meeting held in person.
3. **Matters arising from previous minutes.** No items were raised.
4. **Executive Committee** - The draft minutes of the Executive Committee held on 16 October 2021 will be circulated to members on receipt of them.
5. **Police.**

5.1 Ward Cluster Meetings with CSU These are ongoing. Any parishes who are unaware of their meeting dates should contact Martin Jeynes (martinjeynes@maidstone.gov.uk) at MBC.

5.2 New Initiatives from Kent Police A recent talk hosted by Kent Police tackling the subject of Violence Against Women and Girls was very well received.

6. Maidstone Borough Council Matters

6.1 Parish Liaison Meeting – This will be held on 6 December.

6.2 Parish Services Scheme – Initial discussions give a working assumption of a 2% increase for 2022/23 financial year. This is awaiting formal ratification by the Full Council.

6.3 Planning Enforcement – It appears that Steve Whitehead will be leaving MBC at the end of November.

6.4 Planning Applications

6.4.1 Highways Traffic Modelling and Local Input – Concern remains regarding the non-necessity for KCC to consult parishes on highway issues for planning applications within parishes. It is felt that if KCC do not offer an objection then MBC rarely refuse an application on highway grounds. Parishes often have local knowledge of potential issues which cannot be disseminated effectively prior to comments being submitted. It was agreed to invite a member of KCC to a meeting in the near future to discuss this issue further.

6.4.2 Paper Plans – The majority of responses received supported the abolition of paper plans being sent to Parishes (apart from large application, which will continue to be forwarded). This information would be conveyed to MBC for their consideration.

6.5 Local Plan Review

6.5.1 Regulation 19 Consultation – The consultation deadline is midnight on 12 December 2021. Parishes are urged to check the documentation relating to the individual parishes for any amendments. A document from KALC Maidstone will be circulated giving a synopsis of the consultation and overarching aspects to be considered when formulating your response.

6.5.2 Impact on possible review of Government formula – Michael Gove has yet to make any announcement on a housing needs review, but it is possible that algorithm will show a reduced figure, thus potentially making Reg 19 include more housing units than would be necessary.

6.6 Parish Charter – This remains ongoing.

6.7 Model Code of Conduct – No further progress has been made and continues to be pressed by our two members who sit of the Audit, Governance & Standards Committee at MBC. It is viewed that sanctions for failure to adhere to the Code need to be formulated.

6.8 Complaint's Procedure – A new Monitoring Officer and Deputy have recently been appointed to these roles. Complaints regarding Councillor conduct must be channelled through the MO. On receipt of the complaint and any evidence submitted this will be assessed against a criteria in order to ascertain whether it should be taken forward for investigation. All processes are also independently reviewed.

7. **Civility & Respect Project** – The serious subject of bullying against many clerks' forms part of this project in order to stop the occurrence of this in Councils and highlight the consequences that such behaviour has not only for the clerk but the running of the Council. KALC will be holding various seminars in the coming months to raise awareness and training. Members in attendance condemned bullying of any kind towards its own Officers and/or Councillors. They however highlighted the issue that there was at present, very little recourse to be able to remove offenders from Councils or constrain their behaviour. It was agreed that this issue should be raised further with KALC Executive, NALC and or the LGA.
8. **Covid-19 Update** - Rates continue raise across the Borough. Mandatory face masks in shops, transport etc come back into force on Tuesday, 30 November.
9. **Date of Next Meetings** – All meeting for the foreseeable future will remain via Zoom. The next meeting will be on Monday 31 January 2022 (with MBC in attendance) and 28 March 2022.

If there are any items that you wish to be included on an agenda, then please email maidstonekalc@gmail.com.

If there are any items that you wish to be included at a MBC Parish Liaison Meeting, then please email chairman@yaldingparishcouncil.gov.uk

10. **Any Other Business** – No items were raised. Everyone was wished a Very Happy Christmas and New Year.

Meeting Closed at 8.45pm

Helen Anderson



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Secretary KALC Maidstone Area Committee