

PADDOCK WOOD TOWN COUNCIL
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MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF PADDOCK WOOD TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON Monday 20th May 2024 at 7.45 pm in The Day Centre, Commercial
Road, Paddock Wood

Members received a presentation from representatives of Putlands Leisure Centre & Fusion. A copy of the presentation is appended to the minutes.

PRESENT: Cllr D. Kent, (TWBC) in the Chair until Item C2
 Cllr R. Atkins, in the Chair after C2

Cllrs D. Dray, N. Maari, A. Mackie, R. Moon
 M. Munday, (TWBC) B. Robichaud, D. Sargison, J. Thompson,
 C. Williams.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs N Reay, Clerk to the Council
 Borough Cllr A Pitts

APOLOGIES: Cllrs N Maari & R Moon, Borough Cllrs Patterson & Birch

Prior to the start of the meeting the Clerk advised members that Cllr Mobbs had submitted his resignation. Notices of a Casual Vacancy will be posted shortly.

C1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Williams is a Director of the PWCCO Ltd.

C2 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE YEAR 2024 – 2025.

Cllr Thompson has proposed, Cllr Hamilton seconded:

That Cllr Atkins should be elected Chairman of the Council.

Cllr Atkins was elected chairman un-opposed and signed the Declaration of Acceptance.

Cllr Atkins took the Chair and made a statement which is appended to the minutes.

C3 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE YEAR 2024 – 2025.

Cllr Kent proposed, Cllr Munday seconded:

That Cllr Hamilton be elected Vice Chairman of the Council.

Cllr Hamilton was elected unopposed and signed the Declaration of Acceptance.

Signed Council Chairman:

Date:

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C4 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.

- (a) Cllr Munday proposed, Cllr Kent seconded.
That the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 15th April 2024 should be APPROVED.
CARRIED unanimously.
- (b) The minutes of the Planning Environment Committee meeting held on the 15th April 2024 & 7th May 2024. Were NOTED
- (c) The minutes of the Estates Committee meeting on the 13th May 2024 were NOTED.
- (d) The minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on Wednesday 15th May 2024 will be put before the June meeting.

C5 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

- a) C146 – Wesley Centre. Borough Councillor Warne has advised that the Wesley Centre remains on the list of potential assets for disposal in the Asset Management Plan for 2024/25. However, she has also advised that the Wesley Centre is not currently under review. Extracts from the relevant Borough documents were attached.
Cllr Hamilton advised that she had met with TWBC Premises Manager, in her capacity as Chairman of Heritage Paddock Wood, to discuss the future of the building. Cllr Munday advised that the Borough Council was waiting for the new Cabinet Member responsible to be appointed. It was agreed that the previous working group would be re-vitalised. Cllr Hamilton would be writing to interested parties, and asked that the Town Council wait until she had done so before progressing.
- b) C153 – Town Guide. The new Town Guide has been distributed.

C6 COUNCIL POLICIES

- (a) Standing Orders – The only SO order to be amended is SO18.
- (b) Terms of Reference – Cllr Hamilton proposed, Cllr Munday seconded:
That the Governance Committee should be dissolved and become a working group. The Clerk & Chair of the Personnel Committee would determine which policies should fall within the remit of the Personnel Committee.
CARRIED unanimously.
- (c) Financial Regulations – NALC issued revised Financial Regulations on the 9th April 2024. These have been substantially altered and need detailed review. The Internal Auditor has recommended that the Council adopts the existing Regulations for now and the new Regulations are reviewed and presented to Council in the summer.
Cllr William proposed, Cllr Kent seconded:
That the current Financial Regulations should be adopted.
CARRIED unanimously.

Signed Council Chairman:

Date:

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- (d) Health and Safety Policy – note the Town Council retains the services of Croner Ltd who provide compliant H & S Policies. This will be reviewed in July by Croner.
Cllr Hamilton proposed, Cllr Williams seconded:
that the Chairman signs the Health and Safety Statement
CARRIED unanimously.
- (e) Data Protection Policy – Note: The Town Council retains the services of GDPR Ltd, who supply compliant policies
- (f) Complaints procedure
- (g.) Freedom of Information Document retention policy and publication scheme.
- (h) Press & Media Policy

Cllr Atkins proposed, Cllr Kent seconded:
That agenda items A, E, F, G H, should be adopted;
CARRIED unanimously.

C7 EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

The Staff Handbook which contains all employment policies is put forward for APPROVAL by the Council.

Note: The Town Council retains the services of Croner who provide compliant policies. The Personnel Committee has reviewed the document and will submit its comments to Croner when they review the document in July.

Cllr Thompson proposed, Cllr Williams seconded:
That the

C8 OTHER DOCUMENTS

Members reviewed & noted the following documents.

- a) Subscriptions & Licences
- b) Agreements with TWBC & other not for profit bodies and businesses.
- c) Inventory and assets list.

C9 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

Cllr Williams proposed, Cllr Munday seconded:
That the attached list should be APPROVED.
CARRIED 9 in favour, 1 against

C10 MEETING DATES 2023/2024

The Governance Committee dates were removed.
Cllr Atkins proposed, Cllr Thompson seconded:
The attached meeting dates were APPROVED.
CARRIED unanimously.

Signed Council Chairman:

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C11 FINANCE

- (a) The receipts list 1 – 66 was NOTED.
- (b) Cllr Williams proposed, Cllr Thompson seconded:
That the payments, list 1 – 73 should be APPROVED.
CARRIED unanimously.
- (c) Audit – the internal auditor attended the office on the 14th May 2024 & his report is awaited. Mazers as the external auditor have advised that the Annual Return should be received by the 30th June 2024. The Accounts and Annual Return will be presented to the Council at the meeting on the 17th June 2024.
- d) Currently the following Councillors are signatories to the bank account:

Cllrs Mobbs, Munday, Thompson, Moon, Williams

Cllr Atkins proposed, Cllr Thomspson seconded:
That Cllr Mobbs should be removed from the bank signatory mandate.
CARRIED unanimously.

Cllr Thompson proposed, Cllr Munday seconded:
That Cllr Atkins should be added to the bank mandate.
CARRIED unanimously.

Good practice suggests that Councillors authorising the payments should vary throughout the year. A monthly “rota” will be drawn up with 2 councillors identified each month to authorise payments. Most banking is done online. The RFO sets up the payments and then notifies councillors that payments are ready for authorisation.

The bank reconciliation also needs to be signed off by a Councillor each month. Again, good practice is that it should not be a bank signatory or the Chairman and should vary monthly.

A rota of the 6 councillors will be drawn up for them to check the bank reconciliation monthly and sign it off.

C12 COUNCILLOR TRAINING

Kent Association of Local Councils run a training course for both Councillors and Clerks. There are currently no physical courses available but there are a number of bitesize courses which can be done in your own time. https://www.kentalc.gov.uk/Bitesize_Training_31970.aspx If any member would like to do any of the courses please contact the Clerk.

(Cllr Hamilton left the meeting)

Signed Council Chairman:

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C13 LOCAL PLAN UPDATE - Examination-Consultation Responses

As a result of the Inspector's Initial Findings published in November 2022, there was a pause to the Local Plan Examination. During this pause, the Borough Council carried out work necessary to address soundness issues raised by the Inspector in his Initial Findings. The Council conducted a public consultation on this work that took place between 15 January 2024 and 12 April 2024. There is a dedicated webpage on the Council's website for the Consultation and any associated documentation. The responses to this consultation have been published. <https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/local-plan/examination-of-the-local-plan>

The next stage of hearings will be as follows:

Week 1

18th June AM / PM: Matter 1 (Green Belt Assessment, Sustainability Appraisal and Local Plan Review)

19th June AM / PM: Matter 3 (The Strategy of Tudeley Village)

20th June PM: Matter 8 (Meeting Housing Needs)

Week 2

16th July AM / PM: Matter 4 (The Strategy for Paddock Wood)

17th July AM / PM: Matter 7 (Highways Infrastructure) and Matter 9 (Other Matters)

18th July AM: Matter 9 (Other Matters / Round Up Session and recap on Main Modifications necessary etc)

The Chairman of the Planning Committee and the Deputy Clerk met with the Council's Planning Advisor on Tuesday 14th May 2024.

The council will have two seats at the hearing and Troy Hayes will attend each session. A councillor or the deputy clerk would attend the sessions as well.

The budget had been discussed and the budgeted amount of £10,000 will be sufficient to cover planning consultants' fees.

C14 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES

To receive updates from representatives

- (a) Chairman's meeting – No Report
- (b) Paddock Wood Business Association – No Report
- (c) Bereko Committee - No Report
- (d) KALC – no meeting
- (e) Medway Valley Line – the group are planning a trail around Paddock Wood next year, which will start & finish at the John Brunt Pub. Members are asked if they had any suggestions for inclusion in the trail.
- (f) Hop Pickers Line – the group are looking for ideas for the sculpture on the Countryside site. The silhouettes will be installed at the end of June on the

Signed Council Chairman:

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lamp posts. It is hoped that a walking and cycling route will be incorporated into the new development at Queen Street

- (g) Youth Council – a meeting was being arranged with the church Youth leader.
- (h) Putlands Leisure Centre – at the Meet the Manger event a request was made to improve to improve the centre internally
- (j) Highway Improvement Plan – there is a new online mapping tool which will allow residents to highlight where there are problems.
- (k) IAG – the next meeting will take place on the 19th June 2024.

Cllr Atkins proposed, Cllr Thompson seconded:

Under section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (admission to meetings) Act 1960 the following items should be exempt from the press and public for commercial reasons.

CARRIED unanimously.

C15 COMMUNITY CENTRE

- a) The CC liaison meeting with the directors took place on the 14th May 2024. The minutes of the meeting were circulated to members.
- b) The Clerk & the Council's FM advisor met with the contractors on Monday 13th May 2024. The clerk reported that the final issues of concern had been resolved.

Cllr Munday proposed, Cllr Mackie seconded:

That the Deed of Contract should be signed.

CARRIED with 1 abstention.

C16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Monday 17th June 2023, at 7.45 pm in The Day Centre, Commercial Road.

The meeting closed at 9.45 pm.

Signed Council Chairman:

Date:

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STATEMENT MADE BY CLLR RODNEY ATKINS FOLLOWING HIS ELECTION AS CHAIRMAN OF PADDOCK WOOD TOWN COUNCIL – 20TH MAY 2024.

I will thank the outgoing chair – while short in duration Cllr Don Kent, has performed his role with the full respect of full council.

I intend to run this council as per agreed Standing Orders and the “Respect and Civility” agreement that this council has agreed.

As chair I have a duty to ensure that council meetings run smoothly; that all business is carefully considered and that all councillors who wish to speak can do so. It is good practice I as chair, to refer to the clerk for impartial professional advice.

As the chair I have no extra powers. For instance, it is unlawful for a council to delegate decision making to any individual councillor, and my case this is no different as chair. However, my role does carry some additional responsibilities, such as when a vote is tied, I may use a second, or casting vote. Incidentally, this additional vote can be used any way as I see fit, and I am not obliged to vote the same way as I did for my original vote.

Councillors should keep their contributions to the meeting short and to the point – no one enjoys listening to others who speak for too long. One of my roles as chair is to ensure that meetings are kept to time; therefore, if a councillor is asked to curtail the length of their contribution, this must be respected. Council meetings are about teamwork, collective decision making and reaching consensus, not winning or scoring points off each other. Even if councillors disagree strongly with the way a discussion is working out, they should never engage in personal attacks on others, as this is against the Code of Conduct and not in the spirit of the “Civility and Respect” pledge that this town council has agreed. Councillors should strive to keep proceedings good-humoured and remember that everyone – members and officers – are working to the same aim: to make constructive decisions collectively that benefit the community.

In accordance with agreed Standing Orders - Only one councillor is permitted to speak at a time. If more than one councillor wants to speak, then I shall direct the order of speaking and I would appreciate it if councillors raised their hand indicating they would like to speak and then be invited to speak.

Thank you

Signed Council Chairman:

Date:

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