

TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, duly convened and held at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Royal Tunbridge Wells, TN1 1RS, at 6.45 pm on Wednesday, 14 December 2022

PRESENT:

The Mayor Councillor Godfrey Bland (Chair)
Councillors Allen, Atkins, Atwood, Bailey, Barrass, Barrington-King, Brice, Britcher-Allan, Chapelard, Dawlings, Ellis, Fairweather, Fitzsimmons, Funnell, Goodship, Hall, Hayward, Hickey, Hill, Holden, Johnson, Knight, Le Page, Lewis, Lidstone, March, McMillan, Moon, Neville, Ms Palmer, Patterson (Vice-Chair), Poile, Pope, Pound, Rands, Roberts, Rogers, Rutland, Sankey, Wakeman, Warne, White, Willis and Wormington

IN ATTENDANCE:

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

FC50/22 Apologies were received from Councillors Everitt, Dr Hall and Morton

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

FC51/22 No declarations of pecuniary or significant other interest were made.

WHOLE COUNCIL ELECTIONS

FC52/22 Councillor Dawlings Moved, and Councillor Knight seconded, a motion for the Council to move to whole council elections, meaning an electoral cycle of one election every four years, with all councillors being elected and the first election under the new system being held in 2024.

The mayor noted that if the motion was not carried by at least a two-thirds majority, the council would retain the current elections by thirds.

Debate included –

In favour of whole council elections

- All out will smaller wards to come closer to the electorate
- 64% of the electorate supported the motion as well as a large number of Parishes
- Significant cost saving
- All out elections will bring the council in line with other with nation government and other organisations
- 2 member wards will be more representative and enable greater accountability, which has to be good for democracy.
- It also helps the independents councillors and those who work hard for their communities against those just standing on the party ticket.
- All out enables significant development to be made and communities to see real impacts delivered.
- Communities cannot be properly represented with third elections, meaning some communities will lose their voice and not be heard and truly achieve electoral fairness.
- Parishes will be split and left unsupported.
- All out elections will bring the Council in Line with other

government bodies.

- Community interests need protecting and this can only be achieved with all outs.
- Residences have supported the all outs due to its cost savings.

In favour of elections by thirds:

- Keeps members more focused on the wishes of electors.
- Other councils with whole-council elections had a greater number of uncontested seats.
- Has hidden cost-savings as a result of fewer public contacts, fewer by-elections, easier ballot counting and the maintenance of knowledge in election officials.
- Residents are not aware of what Ward/Parish they live in and little know who their Councillors are.
- Large wards are not very well represented
- A blend of experience and new thinking and voting by thirds allows this
- When people want change they do not always want to wait four years for this to happen.

The mayor took a recorded vote

Members who voted for the motion: Councillors Allen, Atwood, Bailey, Barrington-King, Bland, Dawlings, Fairweather, Goodship, Hayward, Hill, Holden, Knight, Lewis, March, McMillan, Moon, Neville, Ms Palmer, Patterson, Poile, Pope, Roberts, Sankey, Wakeman, Warne, White. (26)

Members who voted against the motion: Atkins, Barrass, Britcher-Allen, Brice, Chapelard, Ellis, Fitzsimmons, Funnell, Hall, Hickey, Johnson, Le Page, Lidstone, Pound, Rands, Rogers, Rutland, Willis, Wormington. (19)

COMMON SEAL OF THE COUNCIL

FC53/22 **RESOLVED** – That the Common Seal of the Council be affixed to any contract, minute, notice or other document arising out of the minutes or pursuant to any delegation, authority or power conferred by the Council.

NOTES:

The meeting concluded at 7.30 pm.