

TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, duly convened and held at the Council Chamber, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 1RS, at 6.30 pm on Wednesday, 5 October 2022

PRESENT:

The Mayor Councillor Godfrey Bland (Chair)

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

IN ATTENDANCE: William Benson (Chief Executive) and Claudette Valmond (Head of Legal Partnership and Interim Monitoring Officer)

MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE TO SUSPEND COUNCIL PROCEDURAL RULES 11.4 AND 13.6

FC26/22 Councillor Dawlings moved, and Councillor Holden seconded, a motion without notice under Council Procedural Rule. CPR24.1 to suspend CPR 11.4 and CPR 13.6.

The purpose of was to ensure the matter was debated here and not referred to another Committee without discussion.

The Mayor took a vote by affirmation.

RESLOVED – That CPR 11.4 and 13.6 be suspended for the duration of this meeting.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

FC27/22 Apologies were received from Councillors Goodship, Hickey, Ms Palmer and Rands.

Councillor Johnson was not present

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

FC28/22 No declarations of pecuniary or significant other interest were made.

MOTION ON NOTICE FROM COUNCILLOR DAWLINGS

FC29/22 Councillor Dawlings moved, and Councillor Holden seconded, the recommendations set out in the report.

Councillor Dawlings proposed the following motion under CPR 24.1 to suspend both CPR 11.4 and CPR 13.6. The purpose of suspending CPR 11.4 and CPR 13.6 is simply to ensure that the matter is debated here this evening and not referred to another Committee without discussion.

There were 5 people registered to speak:

- Parish Councillor – Kim Fletcher for Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish Council
- Parish Councillor Clare Escombe for Hawkhurst Parish Council
- Councillor Nick Blackwell for Southborough Council
- Mrs Jill Andrew for Goudhurst Parish
- Councillor Charles Mackonochie for KALC

DEBATE

Debate included –

In favour of all out elections:

- Would allow smaller wards bringing representatives closer to the electorate.
- It also allows for a single councillor who can galvanize the local electors to elect them and not have someone in some cases some 14 miles away.
- The new Boundary changes would sever the communities.
- Areas did not feel continuing to elect by thirds will add any value to their town and do not want to see councillors who live outside the area represent residents.
- Allowed longer-term planning.
- Elect by thirds would have ramifications on rural areas.
- Avoid three-member wards which would see smaller wards subsumed into larger areas.
- Reduces the cost of elections, regularly highlighted as a priority during Budget consultations.
- Distinct elections allows greater public awareness of who their representatives are.
- Some towns who have been joined since Saxon times will be separated with new Boundary plans.
- Rural areas feel they will be forgotten if attached to Urban areas due to disparity in size.
- Rural Communities must be protected and LGBCE changes are required.

In favour of elections by thirds:

- Gives electorate more opportunities to influence the direction of the Council
- In principle it was stressed that election by thirds offered the best deal for local people.
- Keeps members more focused on the wishes of electors.
- Has hidden cost-savings.
- Full transparency is required if making a change to the original proposals as it was felt this was not provided originally.

The Mayor took a recorded vote.

Members who voted for the motion: Councillors, Allen, Atkins ,Atwood, Bailey, Barrass, Barrington-King, Bland, Brice, Chapelard, Dawlings, Everitt, Fairweather, Hall, Hayward, Hill, Holden, Knight, Lewis, McMillan, March, Moon, Neville, Patterson, Poile, Pope, Roberts, Rogers, Rutland, Sankey, Wakeman, Warne, White, Wormington. (33)

Members who voted against the motion: (0)

Members who abstained for voting: Councillor Britcher-Allan, Dr Hall, Ellis, Funnell, Fitzsimmons, Le Page, Lidstone, Morton, Pound, Willis (10)

COMMON SEAL OF THE COUNCIL

FC30/22 **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 Time Not Specified.