

MINUTES
of
A Meeting of New Romney Town Council
Held in the Assembly Rooms, New Romney
on Monday 13th January 2025
Commencing at 6.46pm

PRESENT: The Right Worshipful the Mayor of New Romney,
Councillor John Rivers

Town Ward:

Councillors: J Davies, J Houston, P Carey, L Phillips and D W Wimble

Coast Ward:

Councillors: P Thomas, J Hiscock, P Coe, K Terry, S O'Hare and
E Carr

In Attendance:

Town Clerk	-	Mrs C Newcombe
Mayor's Chaplain		
KCC Councillor	-	Cllr A Hills

IN THE CHAIR

The Mayor – Councillor J Rivers

The Mayor's Chaplain led the Council in prayer.

The formal business of the meeting commenced **@6.47PM.**

453/2024-25 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received and noted, as follows:

Councillor Hodges	-	due to a medical appointment
Councillor Meredith	-	who was unwell
Councillor Rev Cn McLachlan	-	who was unwell

454/2024-25 **DISPENSATION TO PARTICIPATE**

No new applications for Dispensation to Participate had been processed by the Town Clerk.

455/2024-25 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

@6.47PM Councillor Hiscock declared a Personal Interest in respect of Town Council finance reports due to her employment of a contractor who is also employed by the Town Council. (Minute Ref 466/2024-25 refers)

456/2024-25 **REPORT OF THE KENT COUNTY COUNCILLOR**

KCC Councillor Hills presented his written report, which included information and updates relating to plans for a large-scale solar farm on

Romney Marsh and proposed changes to local democracy. The aforementioned report was duly received and noted. There were no questions on this occasion.

457/2024-25 **REPORTS OF THE DISTRICT COUNCILLORS**

FHDC Councillor Thomas presented his written report, which included details of meetings attended and information and updates relating to the planned solar farm for Romney Marsh and proposed devolution plans for Kent as well as details of ward grant funding allocated during the current financial year. The aforementioned report was duly received and noted. There were no questions on this occasion.

Councillor Wimble had not submitted a report but verbally advised that he had attended a recent community meeting about proposals for a large solar farm.

458/2024-25 **ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING**

It was not necessary to adjourn the meeting as no public questions or statements had been received in writing.

459/2024-25 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

None.

460/2024-25 **RE-CONVENING OF MEETING**

Not applicable.

461/2024-25 **MINUTES**

The Chairman presented the minutes of the **Full Council Meeting** held on **16th December 2024**, copies of which had been previously circulated to all Councillors, and it was:

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Thomas

SECONDED BY: Councillor Davies

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 16th December 2024 be approved and signed as a true and correct record.

Councillors Carey, Houston, Carr and Wimble abstained from voting as they had not been present at the afore-mentioned meeting.

The Chairman subsequently signed the afore-mentioned minutes.

462/2024-25 **MAYOR'S REPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS**

(i) The Mayor's report regarding civic engagements attended since the last meeting was not available on this occasion due to the Christmas break.

(ii) The Mayor reported that he had communicated with the local MP regarding proposals for a new medical hub for Romney Marsh and that he

had participated in an initial meeting. It was advised that an update report would be issued in due course in respect of this matter.

463/2024-25 **TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

The Town Clerk's report was received and noted and read as under:

MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL – 13TH JANUARY 2025 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

Actions completed since the Full Council meeting held on 16th December 2024

1) The Proprietor of The Acres (Dog Exercise Fields) has been duly notified that the Town Council does not wish to progress the proposal for a Dog Exercise Field at **Coney Banks**, Church Road, any further.

2) The Chairman's report regarding the proposed **Medical Hub for New Romney** has been issued to the Secretary of State for Health and the MP for Romney Marsh, together with an invitation for a meeting to discuss the proposals further.

Additional Items of Report

None.

Town Clerk 6th January 2025

Further Items of Report

The Clerk reported that following publication of the Notice of Casual Vacancy for Coast Ward Councillor, a valid petition had been received by the District Council and a **by-election** would, therefore, be held which, if contested, would be at a cost to the Town of £7,420.00.

464/2024-25 **STANDING ORDER NO.14**

No questions had been submitted in accordance with Standing Order 14.

465/2024-25 **STANDING COMMITTEES**

(i) Councillor Terry presented the minutes of the **Planning & Environment Committee** meeting held on **18th December 2024**, which were duly received and noted.

(ii) Councillor Thomas presented the minutes of the **Personnel Committee** meeting held on **18th December 2024**, which were duly received and noted.

466/2024-25 **RFO'S FINANCIAL REPORTS FOR 2024-25**

The Clerk presented final payments and receipts and final bank reconciliation for the month of **November 2024**, which were duly received and noted and it was:

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Davies

SECONDED BY: Councillor Terry

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY – that the finance reports for the month of November 2024 be hereby received and approved.

Payments and receipts for the month of **November 2024** being in the amounts as detailed below:

November 2024	Receipts:	Payments:
NatWest Current Account	£51,720.52	£51,720.52
Unity Trust Current Account:	£89,560.51	£150,356.50
Lloyds Bank Business Account:	£300,081.69	£281,644.00
NatWest Business Reserve Account:	£1,510.70	£150,269.62
Petty Cash:	£0.00	£73.46
Lloyds Bank Corporate Card:	£308.66	£367.66
Lloyds Bank Instant Access Online Saver	£3,563.11	£0.00
NSIB	£0.00	£0.00

467/2024-25 **COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES' REPORTS**

None.

468/2024-25 **CAPITAL PROJECTS REPORT**

(i) The Maude Community Centre Project Update Report was not available on this occasion due to the close proximity of the Christmas break.

(ii) The Maude Community Centre Project Financial Update Report was duly received and noted.

(iii) Having duly considered the matter of proposed rent charges for the Maude Community Centre Ground Floor Sports Pavilion and the Maude Community Centre Annex as well as proposed hire charges for the Maude Community Centre First Floor Community Hall and the Annex Building Imbert Room, it was:

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Terry

SECONDED BY: Councillor O'Hare

RESOLVED – that (i) the Town Council approves the Rent Charges for 2025-26 in respect of the Maude Community Centre Ground Floor Sports Pavilion and the Maude Community Annex Building as presented; (ii) a comparative study of hall hire charges across the Romney Marsh area be undertaken to provide insights into the regional practices and pricing trends to be compiled into a report for presentation to Full Council, to be reviewed at the next available Full Council meeting; and that (iii) following comprehensive review of comparative hall hire charges across Romney Marsh, a revised and expanded set of hire rates [in respect of the Maude Community Centre First Floor Community Hall and the Annex Building Imbert Room] be compiled to:

- **Better accommodate both community and external users from outside of the immediate area**
- **Provide flexible hire options that encourage greater use of Council facilities whilst ensuring affordability and fair use.**

*Rent charges for 2025-26 in respect of Sports Pavilion tenancy and Annex tenancy were, therefore, set as below:

Maude Community Centre Ground Floor Sports Pavilion Annual Rent Charge (inc VAT):

Base Rent Charge: £700.00 per calendar month

20% discount to reflect estimated max NRTC usage at 20% per year:

-£140.00 per calendar month

Adjusted Rent Charge: £560.00 per calendar month

Further 50% discount to reflect sports clubs' maintenance of sports field and reflect costs not, therefore, incurred by NRTC:

-£280.00 per calendar month

Final Adjusted Rent Charge: £280.00 per calendar month

Maude Community Centre Annex Rent Charge (inc VAT):

Base Rent Charge: £900.00 per calendar month

20% discount to reflect estimated max NRTC usage at 20% per year:

-£180.00 per calendar month

Adjusted Rent Charge: £720.00 per calendar month

469/2024-25 **ST MARTIN'S FIELD ACCESS**

Having duly considered recurring issues with damage to and by the ground fixings for existing drop-down bollards which provide access for larger vehicles onto St Martin's Field for events, it was:

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Thomas
SECONDED BY: Councillor Houston

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY – that the opinions of at least two local companies be sought as to what would be the best course of action to resolve St. Martin’s Field access issues.

@7.39PM the Mayor’s Chaplain left the meeting.

470/2024-25 **KALC COMMUNITY AWARDS 2025**

Having duly considered participation in the KALC Community Award Scheme 2025 and potential Town Council nominations, it was:

(i)

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Rivers
SECONDED BY: Councillor Coe

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY – that New Romney Town Council adopts the KALC Community Award Scheme 2025.

(ii)

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Terry
SECONDED BY: Councillor O’Hare

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY – that Kosh and Uri Patel be nominated by the Town Council for a 2025 KALC Community Award*.

*Councillor Terry to provide the required supporting statement for the afore-mentioned nomination.

471/2024-25 **WHITE RIBBON CAMPAIGN**

(i) Having duly considered an opportunity to work towards White Ribbon Accreditation and make a commitment towards encouraging transformational cultural change in the community in respect of men’s violence against women, it was:

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Thomas
SECONDED BY: Councillor Coe

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY – that New Romney Town Council agrees, in principle, to explore the White Ribbon Scheme further and, in the interim, authorises the Town Clerk to consult with Town Council staff in regard to potential employee involvement.

472/2024-25 **CINQUE PORTS CONFEDERATION PODCAST**

Having previously agreed to participating in the Cinque Ports Confederation project to create a Confederation podcast and to promote the Cinque Port Town of New Romney specifically through creation of an additional New Romney-specific podcast as part of this project , it was:

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Rivers

SECONDED BY: Councillor Terry

RESOLVED – that (i) costs in the amount of £1,000.00 excluding VAT for the development and publication of a New Romney podcast through the Cinque Ports Confederation be hereby approved – to be funded from the Confederation Reserve Fund and that (ii) Councillor Thomas be appointed to represent the Town Council and be interviewed about the civic history of New Romney for the podcast.

473/2024-25 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

@7.51PM, having duly considered the nature of matters to now be discussed, it was:

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Hiscock

SECONDED BY: Councillor Thomas

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY – that due to the sensitive legal nature of information about to be considered, it is advisable in the public interest that the Public and Press be temporarily excluded and they are now instructed to withdraw.

KCC Councillor Hills left the meeting at that time.

474/2024-25 **ON-GOING MATTERS**

The Clerk provided an update in respect of the on-going legal matter relating to the Maude Community Centre (formerly CHSPN) s106 Agreement.

Due to a personnel issue, the Private & Confidential session and the meeting were brought to a conclusion by the Chairman **@7.59PM** with any remaining matters* deferred to a future meeting of the Council.

*There was, in any case, nothing to report under remaining agenda items.

NB: All documents referred to herein are available at the Town Hall for perusal on request, except for those documents of a sensitive / legal nature discussed in private session, including documents relating to staff matters which remain Private and Confidential in accordance with Data Protection legislation.

Minutes prepared by the Town Clerk