
Annual Council

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT on Wednesday, 13 May 2026 from 7.00 pm - 8.27 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Mike Baldock, Monique Bonney, Andy Booth, Lloyd Bowen, Hayden Brawn, Derek Carnell (Incoming Mayor), Ann Cavanagh, Shelley Cheesman, Simon Clark, Alex Eyre, Charles Gibson, Tim Gibson, Alastair Gould, Angela Harrison (Incoming Deputy Mayor), James Hunt, Carole Jackson, Elliott Jayes, Mark Last, Peter MacDonald, Claire Martin, Ben J Martin, Charlie Miller, Lee-Anne Moore, Pete Neal, Tara Noe, Tom Nundy, Chris Palmer, Richard Palmer, Hannah Perkin, Ashley Shiel, Julien Speed, Paul Stephen, Sarah Stephen, Terry Thompson, Karen Watson (Outgoing Mayor), Mike Whiting, Tony Winckless and Dolley Wooster.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Lisa Fillery, Robin Harris, Jo Millard, Tim Neal, Larissa Reed, Philip Sutcliffe and Emma Wiggins

APOLOGIES: Councillors Lloyd Chapman, Roger Clark, Kieran Golding, Rich Lehmann and Ashley Wise.

1 **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

The Mayor outlined the emergency evacuation procedure.

2 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Council meeting held on 1 April 2026 (Minute Nos. 856 – 871) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

No interests were declared.

4 **Appointment of Mayor**

The retiring Mayor advised that Councillor Derek Carnell had been nominated as Mayor elect at the Council meeting held on 18 February 2026. On being put to the vote, Members voted to support the nomination, and it was resolved that Councillor Carnell be elected Mayor for the civic year 2026 – 2027. Councillor Carrie Pollard gave a speech in support of the appointment, and Councillor Baldock spoke to endorse the decision. Councillor Carnell then read and signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office and was presented with the Mayoral badge and chain of office and the Mayoral shield.

Resolved:

(1) That Councillor Derek Carnell be appointed Mayor for the 2026-2027 Civic year.

5 **Forthcoming Mayoral Year**

Councillor Ashley Shiel gave a prayer of thanks to the outgoing Mayor and well wishes to guide the new Mayor and Council in all deliberations.

The Mayor thanked Members for electing him as Mayor for the Swale civic year 2026–2027. He announced that the charities he would support during his Mayoral year would be Cruse Bereavement Support and Prostate Cancer UK. The Mayor advised that he already had a number of engagements arranged and thanked those who had supported him.

The Mayor announced that his consort for the civic year would be Mrs Pat Carnell and called her forward to receive her consort's badge.

The Mayor then announced that his cadet for the Mayoral year would be Corporal Kalin Thomas.

6 Vote of Thanks to Retiring Mayor

The Mayor called upon the Leader to propose a vote of thanks to the retiring Mayor, Councillor Karen Watson.

The Leader expressed, on behalf of the Council and residents, appreciation for the retiring Mayor's year of dedicated service, noting that she had carried out her role with dignity, professionalism and warmth. He referred to her wide range of civic engagements and her role as an approachable ambassador for the Borough. He also acknowledged the support provided by her consort, Mr Allan Watson.

Councillor Harrison seconded the vote of thanks and spoke in support, highlighting the retiring Mayor's leadership during meetings and her engagement with community organisations across the Borough.

On being put to the vote, Members agreed the vote of thanks.

The retiring Mayor was then invited to deliver brief remarks and reflections.

The retiring Mayor reflected on her year in office, noting that she had undertaken over 160 civic engagements and highlighting the diversity, resilience and community spirit of the Borough. She referred to a range of events attended, including remembrance commemorations, community and cultural activities, and engagement with local organisations, and she paid tribute to the contribution of volunteers across Swale. The retiring Mayor spoke of more personal moments during her tenure, including sharing her experiences as a survivor of domestic abuse and raising awareness of mental health challenges, with the aim of supporting others in the community. She reported that a total of £17,653.40 had been raised during her Mayoral year in support of her chosen charities, SATEDA and Cancer Research UK, which included a £10,000 social value grant from the Council's financial system supplier, Tech One, awarded to support local charities. Individual presentations included a cheque for £3,826.52 to Cancer Research UK and two cheques to SATEDA totalling £13,826.52. The retiring Mayor also reflected on the importance of maintaining respect within the Council chamber and the need to uphold democratic values. She expressed her thanks to Members, officers, and the wider community for their support, and paid particular tribute to her consort, Mr Allan Watson, her family, officers, and her cadet for their contributions during her Mayoral year.

7 Appointment of Deputy Mayor

The Mayor advised that Councillor Angela Harrison had been nominated for the position of Deputy Mayor.

The Leader of the Council spoke in support of the nomination, highlighting Councillor Harrison's long-standing service of over 40 years, her dedication, integrity and commitment to the Borough, and her reputation as a knowledgeable, hardworking and respected Member.

Councillor Watson seconded the nomination and spoke in support, noting Councillor Harrison's experience, procedural knowledge, and the support she had provided to colleagues, together with her suitability to represent and support the Mayor in the community.

Resolved:

(1) That Councillor Angela Harrison be appointed Deputy Mayor for the 2026/27 Civic year.

8 Election of Leader

The Chief Executive outlined the procedure for the election of the Leader of the Council. Councillor Tim Gibson was nominated for the position of Leader of the Council, and the nomination was seconded by Councillor Watson. No other nominations were received. On being put to the vote, Members voted to support the nomination, and it was resolved that Councillor Tim Gibson be elected Leader of the Council for the 2026 – 2027 civic year.

Councillor Gibson thanked Members for their support and expressed his commitment to continuing to work with Members and officers to support communities, improve services and address key challenges facing the Borough.

The Leader announced that Councillor Ashley Wise would serve as Deputy Leader.

Resolved:

(1) That Councillor Tim Gibson be appointed Council Leader for the 2026-2027 Civic year.

9 Establishment of Committees and their Terms of Reference

The Leader of the Council presented the report on the establishment of committees for the 2026/27 municipal year and proposed the recommendations set out in Appendix I. The Leader of the Conservative Group seconded the proposal and reserved his right to speak.

The Leader of the SIA Group, Councillor Baldock, spoke against the recommendations, raising concerns regarding the reduction in the number of area committees and the overall number of committees, and advising that his group would not support the proposal.

Resolved:

(1) That the Committees of the Council for the Municipal Year 2026/27 be established and their terms of reference be agreed as set out in Appendix I

10 Allocation of Committee Seats and Committee Appointments 2026/27

The Leader of the Council presented the report on the allocation of seats and committee appointments for 2026–2027 and proposed the recommendations set out in the report. The Leader of the Conservative Group seconded the proposal and reserved his right to speak.

During consideration of the item, the following amendments to Appendix II were proposed and accepted:

- Urgent Decisions Committee – Councillor Julian Speed to replace Councillor James Hunt
- Economy and Property Committee – Councillor Ben Martin to replace Councillor Alex Eyre
- Housing, Health and Communities Committee – Councillor Alex Eyre to replace Councillor Ben Martin
- Planning Committee – Councillor C Gibson to replace Councillor Ben Martin

Resolved:

(1) That the political balance calculation as set out in Appendix 1 be agreed.

(2) That seats to those Committees and appointment of Members to those Committees, in accordance with the wishes of Group Leaders as set out in Appendix III be allocated and agreed subject to the below amendments:

- i. Conservative group replaces Councillor Hunt with Councillor Speed on the Urgent Decisions Committee.***
- ii. Liberal Democrat group replaces Alex Eyre with Councillor Ben J Martin on the Economy and Property Committee.***
- iii. Liberal Democrat group replaces Councillor Ben J Martin with Councillor C Gibson on the Planning Committee.***

(3) That Group's nominations for Swale's membership of the Joint Transportation Board as set out in Appendix III be agreed.

11 Borough Council Nominations to Outside Bodies and Trusts Administered by Swale Borough Council and Statutory Bodies

The Leader of the Council presented the report on Borough Council nominations to outside bodies, trusts administered by the Council and statutory bodies, and proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

The Leader of the Conservative Group seconded the proposal and reserved his right to speak.

During consideration of the item, Councillor Palmer advised that he wished to withdraw his nomination to Southern Housing, noting that Councillor Watson had previously undertaken the role.

Councillor Perkin proposed an amendment to nominate herself in place of Councillor Harrison on the Kent Health and Wellbeing Board and the Swale Local Children's Partnership Group. It was confirmed this reflected the existing position from the previous

year and was agreed.

Resolved:

(1) That the Borough Council representation on outside bodies and trusts administered by SBC and statutory bodies be as set out in Appendix III to these minutes and subject to the following amendment:

- i. Councillor Harrison be replaced with Councillor Perkin on the Kent Health and Wellbeing Board and the Swale Local Children's Partnership Group.**

12 Timetable of Meetings

The Leader of the Council presented the report on the timetable of meetings for the 2026/27 municipal year and proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

The Leader of the Conservative Group seconded the proposal and reserved his right to speak.

During debate, a Member thanked officers for arranging the timetable to avoid meetings during school half-term periods. A further comment was made emphasising the importance of ensuring that Members attended meetings of the Swale Joint Transportation Board so that it was quorate and could be held regularly.

Resolved:

(1) That the timetable of meetings for the 2026-2027 municipal year be noted.

13 Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned from 7:08pm until 7:15pm.

Chair

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All minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel