KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of a meeting of the County Council held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 17 September 2026.

PRESENT: Mr J Baker, Mr B Black, Mr O Bradshaw, Mr A Brady, Mr M Brice, Mr M Brown, Mr D Burns, Mr C Burwash, Mr A Cecil, Mr P Chamberlain, Mr W Chapman, Mr B Collins, Mrs T Dean, MBE, Mr S Dixon, Mr M Ellis, Ms S Emberson, Mr J Eustace, Mr L Evans, Mr J Finch, Mr R Ford, Mrs B Fordham, Mrs G Foster, Mrs M Fothergill, Mr M Fraser Moat, Mr B Fryer, Mr M Harrison, Mr S Heaver, Mr J Henderson, Mr C Hespe, Mr M A J Hood, Mr A J Hook, Mrs S Hudson, Mr S Jeffery, Ms L Kemkaran, Ms I Kemp, Mr A Kennedy, Mr A Kibble, Mr P King, Mrs M Lawes, Rich Lehmann, Mr T Mallon, Mr R Mayall, Mr T Mole, Miss D Morton, Mr M Mulvihill, Mr M Munday, Ms C Nolan, Mr P Osborne, Mrs C Palmer, Mr R Palmer, Mr M Paul, Mrs B Porter, Mr T Prater, Mr H Rayner, Mr A Ricketts, Mrs S Roots, Ms C Russell, Mr G R Samme, Mr T L Shonk, Mr D Sian, Mr P Stepto, Mr R G Streatfeild, MBE, Dr G Sturley, Mr P Thomas, Mr A Thorp, Mr D Truder, Mr R Waters, Mr P Webb, Mr N Wibberley, Mrs P Williams and Mr D Wimble.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr J Cook (Head of Democratic Services) and Ms P Der Man (Head of Law - Monitoring Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

96. Lord's Prayer
(Item 1)

The meeting started with a reading of the Lord's Prayer, led by Reverend Steve Kirk-Smith.

97. Apologies for Absence
(Item 2)

The Head of Democratic Services reported apologies from Mr Bill Barrett, Mr James Defriend, Mr Marc Logen, Mr Nigel Williams, Mr Peter Evans, Mr Mike Sole, Mr Colin Sefton, Mr John Moreland, Miss Amelia Randall and Mr Rob Yates.

98. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Significant Interests in items on the agenda
(Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

99. Freedom of the County - Brigade of Gurkhas
(Item 4)

1. The Chairman formally welcomed Lt Col Sean Parr RE, Major Khadkabahadur Gurung, Major Babindra Gurung, and RSM Nick Chadwick, representing the Brigade of Gurkhas, to the meeting. The Chairman also thanked Sir George Jessel DL, Mr Bryan Sweetland, Mr Gary Cooke, Mr Peter Lake, Reverend Kirk-Smith and the Mayor of Medway, for their attendance.

2. Ms Kemkaran proposed, and Mr Palmer seconded the motion that:

   "The County Council declares its thanks for and acknowledges the distinguished service of the Brigade of Gurkhas to the Crown and the United Kingdom and, in recognition of that service, formally grants the Brigade of Gurkhas the Freedom of the County."

3. The Chairman invited Mr Prater, Mr Burwash, Mr Thomas, Mr Dixon, Mr Thorp, Mr Hood, Mr Hook, Mr Streatfeild, Ms Nolan, Mr Shonk and Mr Kennedy to speak.

4. The Chairman put the motion in paragraph 2 to the vote and the voting was as follows.

For (69)

Mr J Baker, Mr B Black, Mr O Bradshaw, Mr A Brady, Mr M Brice, Mr M Brown, Mr D Burns, Mr C Burwash, Mr A Cecil, Mr P Chamberlain, Mr W Chapman, Mr B Collins, Mrs T Dean, Mr S Dixon, Mr M Ellis, Ms S Emberson, Mr J Eustace, Mr L Evans, Mr J Finch, Mr R Ford, Mrs B Fordham, Mrs G Foster, Mrs M Fothergill, Mr M Fraser Moat, Mr B Fryer, Mr M Harrison, Mr S Heaver, Mr J Henderson, Mr M A J Hood, Mr A J Hook, Mrs S Hudson, Mr S Jeffery, Ms L Kemkaran, Miss I Kemp, Mr A Kennedy, Mr A Kibble, Mr P King, Mrs M Lawes, Mr R Lehmann, Mr T Mallon, Mr R Mayall, Mr T Mole, Miss D Morton, Mr M Mulvihill, Mr M Munday, Ms C Nolan, Mr P Osborne, Mrs C Palmer, Mr R Palmer, Mr M Paul, Mrs B Porter, Mr T Prater, Mr H Rayner, Mr A Ricketts, Mrs S Roots, Ms C Russell, Mr G R Samme, Mr T L Shonk, Mr D Sian, Mr P Stepto, Mr R G Streatfeild, Dr G Sturley, Mr P Thomas, Mr A Thorp, Mr D Truder, Mr R Waters, Mr P Webb, Mr N Wibberley and Mr D Wimble.

Against (0)

Abstain (2)

Mr C Hespe and Mrs P Williams.

Motion carried.

5. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman signed the document conferring the Freedom of the County to the Brigade the Gurkhas. The Chairman

presented the document to Lt Col Sean Parr RE and invited him to respond.

6. Lt Col Sean Parr RE expressed his sincere thanks to the County Council for bestowing the honour. He highlighted the long-standing relationship between Kent and the Brigade, the contribution of Gurkha soldiers and their families to local communities, and the shared values of service, loyalty and respect. He stated that the granting of the Freedom of Kent would be received with great pride and gratitude as recognition of generations of service and sacrifice, and of the special bond between the Brigade of Gurkhas and the County of Kent.

7. Major Khadkabahadur Gurung, reflected on his own service as a third-generation Gurkha and highlighted the long-standing presence of the Brigade in Kent, particularly the Queen's Gurkha Engineers and Royal Gurkha Rifles and their families. He thanked the people of Kent for their continued support and friendship, including assistance provided following recent flooding in Nepal. He added that the granting of the Freedom of Kent would mark another proud milestone in the enduring relationship between Kent and the Gurkha community and expressed his hope that this friendship would continue to grow and flourish for generations to come.

8. Major Babindra Gurung thanked the County Council for the honour and highlighted the strong relationship between the regiment, its families and the communities of Kent. He expressed gratitude for the support provided by local authorities, schools and residents in helping Gurkha families settle within the county. He described the granting of the Freedom of Kent as a symbol of the friendship and respect shared between the Brigade of Gurkhas and the people of Kent, and recognised Kent as a place many Gurkha families now proudly call home.

RESOLVED that:

The County Council declares its thanks for and acknowledges the distinguished service of the Brigade of Gurkhas to the Crown and the United Kingdom and, in recognition of that service, formally grants the Brigade of Gurkhas the Freedom of the County.