



Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council will be run for the next four years by the Conservatives in partnership with the Independent Alliance (Kent) Party, after an agreement between the two parties was reached.

Following the Borough Council elections on Thursday 4 May 2023, Conservative candidates were elected to 20 out of 44 seats. This means they no longer hold an overall majority of seats, although remain the largest party ahead of the Liberal Democrats, with 11 seats.

With 2 seats on the Council following the election of Mike Taylor and Wendy Palmer in Borough Green and Platt, Independent Alliance (Kent) have agreed and signed a partnership with the Conservatives to secure the administration of the Council for the next 4 years.

The agreement means that the Conservatives retain leadership of the Council and its Leader, Matt Boughton, was re-elected as Leader of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council at Annual Council yesterday (Wednesday 17 May 2023). Independent Alliance (Kent) Leader, Mike Taylor, has been appointed to the Cabinet, where he will hold the portfolio for Planning.

Commenting on the partnership, Conservative Leader Matt Boughton said *“While we were disappointed to lose our overall majority on the Council, at the elections on 4 May 2023 residents made clear that they continue to trust the Conservatives, as we are the largest party by quite a margin on the Council.*

*“Therefore it is right we sought to form an administration and I am delighted we have agreed a partnership with Independent Alliance (Kent). We have much in common and there is a level of trust and goodwill between both parties.*

*“This is a new era for Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council; one which will see co-operation and partnership between all parties at its heart. Our administration will continue to listen to everyone across the borough to do what is right for Tonbridge and Malling.”*

*Independent Alliance (Kent) Leader Mike Taylor said “Matt is responsible for the recent changes to the Council that has allowed this new trust to flower. Whilst we were very disappointed not to get all five of our Candidates home, coincidence has put us in a strong position to address the fears of residents right across the Borough as the Local Plan develops, and to ensure we get maximum benefit from new Government planning policies as they are implemented”*

The partnership means the administration of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council will be stable until the next Borough Council elections, and the Council can continue delivering high quality services at a great value for money over the next 4 years.