

14th November 2006 minutes

DOWNHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

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MINUTES OF MEETING HELD TUESDAY, 14th NOVEMBER 2006
7.30PM

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Present:	The Mayor	Cllr M G Ford
	The Deputy Mayor	Cllr J W Doyle
	Councillors	R M Bodle

J K Fox

P E Freeman

J Groom

R Leach

C Pyatt

J J Reed

Mrs P A Roberts

C T Sampson

A D Stacey

V F Starling

S C Teverson

Borough Councillors	Mrs K Mellish
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County Councillor	Mrs S E L Hutson
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Deputy Clerk	Mrs S D Porter
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Administrator	Mrs K J Martin
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Press Correspondent	Ms S Hewitt
Members of Public	2

924. To receive members Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllrs C D Bond (work commitment), Mrs S M Nunn (family commitment), S W Nunn (health reasons), and Borough Cllr J R Legg (family commitment).

The apologies were accepted.

925. To receive members Declarations of Interest

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, and Cllrs Doyle, Fox and Mrs Roberts declared a pecuniary interest in Item 932, To approve payment of bills. Cllr Leach declared a non pecuniary interest in Item 939, To discuss the siting of the Fair in Downham Market in March 2007.

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, adjourned the meeting for public participation and reports.

Norfolk Constabulary Report and Questions

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Inspector Bates reported the last 2 month's statistics:

- House Burglaries – 1 (London Road).
- Burglaries other than dwellings – 2 (Animal Magic and sheds in Broomhill and Bridle Lane).

- Thefts from Vehicles – 11 (4 x James Scott Close, Wordsworth Close, Bennett Street, Heygates Mill, Paradise Road, Rosemary Way, Landseer Drive and Basil Drive).
- Vehicle Thefts – 2 (Broomhill car showroom and Railway Road).
- Assaults – 1 (Cock Drove).
- Domestic Assaults – (generally school children against school children).
- Criminal Damage – numerous incidents (Civray Avenue, High Street, Bexwell Road, Rabbit Lane and James Scott Close).
- Other reports – A drugs warrant took place on Friday, 10th November 2006, and a substantial amount of ecstasy tablets and cocaine was seized. Two people were arrested.

Cllr Mrs Roberts advised that eggs were thrown at Town Centre premises during Halloween and Bonfire night. Inspector Bates advised that more officers had been placed on duty during these occasions.

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, congratulated PCSO Tracy Millburn for her excellent handling of antisocial youngsters on the Memorial Playing Fields recently.

Inspector Bates left the meeting at 7.37pm.

Borough Councillor Reports and Questions

Cllr Mrs Mellish reported that all complaints, regarding the officer in charge of commercial waste, should be sent directly to Mr Ray Harding. The Chamber of Trade would advise the business proprietors. Cllr Leach advised that he would be attending a meeting with Mr John Dobson on Monday, 20th November 2006 and would raise this issue with him.

County Councillor Report and Questions

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Cllr Mrs Hutson reported:

- The Town Council had received a letter from NCC regarding the old Fire Station site. Cllr Fox would report on this later in the meeting.
- A decision from NCC regarding the Howdale Community Centre had been forwarded to Cllr Pyatt.
- Cllr Mrs Hutson would be attending a meeting with Highways on Thursday, 23rd November 2006. Councillors should report any areas of concern to Cllr Mrs Hutson prior to this meeting.
- Downham Market High School and Clackclose Primary School have several vacancies for school governors. Anyone interested in this should contact Cllr Mrs Hutson.

Public Participation

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One member of public wished to enquire why CCTV had been placed on hold when funding had been granted.

Cllr Sampson advised that insufficient funding had been made available to obtain the system required. Councillors were of the view that the expense was too high and the voters would not take kindly to a large increase in the precept. He advised that alternative methods were being sought and if further funding became available and the transmission costs were reduced, it was likely the project would be revisited.

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, resumed the meeting.

The members of public left the Council Chambers at 7.51pm.

926. Co-option to fill current vacancy in Downham Market East Ward

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Two candidates had applied in writing asking to be considered for co-option in the East Ward; Mr Matt Banks and Mrs Pam Sharp. Copies of their letters had been circulated to all members. The Mayor, Cllr Ford, advised that no other written applications had been received.

Councillors completed a secret ballot. The Deputy Clerk counted the votes and sealed the ballot papers. The Mayor, Cllr Ford, confirmed the results as follows:

Mr M Banks - 2 votes

Mrs P Sharp - 12 votes

Mrs Sharp was duly elected as the new Town Councillor and signed her Declaration of Office and Code of Conduct. The Mayor, Cllr Ford, welcomed her to the Council and Mrs Sharp joined the meeting.

927. To approve the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting

Cllr Bodle advised that the 3rd paragraph of Item 919 (page 1959) should read as follows:

"It was agreed that the Working Party (Vice Chairs and Deputy Mayor) would discuss the Local Development Framework and report back to Full Council."

The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday, 10th October 2006 (pages 1955-1961) were approved and signed as a true and accurate record, with the above amendment.

928. To receive Correspondence

A list of correspondence had been circulated (Appendix 1).

Cllr Mrs Roberts advised that staff were encouraged to attend relevant East of England training courses. This was noted.

929. Councillor's Questions

Q: Unfortunately, Downham Market Skaters and Riders (DMRS) were not successful for their funding bid of £50,000. People were asked to vote for Downham Market or Wymondham and the majority vote would win. Unfortunately the publicity did not appear to be in Downham Market's favour and this could be the reason they were not successful.

Eastern Daily Press wrote an article in Wymondham's favour, and Anglia TV transmitted their report from Tacleston, not Sandy Heath, which meant that coverage did not reach Downham Market viewers, only Wymondham. The Lynn News and Sky East provided excellent coverage and support. Could the Citizen News write an article to illustrate that the competition had not been fair on the DMSR group? (CP).

A: Yes

Q: Could the Clerk write to Anglia TV and the Big Lottery Fund, with a copy to the MP, to advise that the competition had not been reasonable? (CP).

A: Yes.

Cllr Mrs Hutson advised that she would also make representation regarding this matter.

Proposed – Cllr Doyle

Seconded – Cllr Fox

'That the Clerk sends a letter to Anglia TV and the Big Lottery Fund on behalf of the Town Council.'

All in favour

Q: The Town Council has made increasing use of the Town Crier. Could an annual honorary payment be considered? (CTS).

A: The Town Crier had previously advised that his services were voluntary and any recompense should be made to charity. This would be referred to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Q: Could the Town Council write to BCKL&WN regarding the Town Hall car park toilets as one cubicle has been out of order for 7 weeks? (RL).

A: Mr Tony Porter, BCKL&WN, has confirmed that a part is on order and in hand. The Clerk would chase this up.

Q: Could the Town Council write to Mott MacDonald asking that the beleisha beacons be installed as a matter of urgency? (ADS).

A: Cllr Mrs Hutson would investigate this.

Q: Could Smith of Derby ensure the Town Clock faces are synchronised with each other and that it chimes on the hour? (CTS).

A: An engineer from Smith of Derby has been contacted regarding this.

Cllr Mrs Roberts thanked Councillors for attending Armistice Day, Pause and Remember and the Remembrance Service.

930. To Adopt the Standing Committee Minutes

Planning and Environmental Committee

Proposed – Cllr Fox

Seconded – Cllr Bodle

'That the minutes of the Planning and Environmental Committee meeting of Wednesday, 4th October 2006 (pages 1952-1954) be adopted.'

All in favour

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 17th October 2006 (pages 1967-1975) had not been circulated to members and would be presented for adoption at the Full Council meeting in January 2007.

Development Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 11th October 2006 (pages 1962-1966) had not been circulated to members and would be presented for adoption at the Full Council meeting in January 2007.

Car Parks and Highways Committee

Proposed – Cllr Stacey

Seconded – Cllr Leach

'That the minutes of the Car Parks and Highways Committee meeting of Tuesday, 3rd October 2006 (pages 1947-1951) be adopted.'

All in favour

Finance and General Purposes Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 24th October 2006 (pages 1976-1979) had not been circulated to members and would be presented for adoption at the Full Council meeting in January 2007.

931. To receive the Clerk's Report

The Clerk's report had been circulated (Appendix 2).

Not on agenda

Planning and Environmental Committee

Cllr Fox advised that a planning application had been submitted by HSBC to provide disabled access into their branch, which would encroach onto the Town Square. The Town Council and BCKL&WN refused the application and HSBC has submitted amendments which still require part of the Town Square to be built on, which is not acceptable.

A short discussion took place and members agreed unanimously that a policy should be written regarding changes to any Town Council owned land. This would be referred to the Planning and Environmental Committee.

Finance and General Purposes Committee

Cllr Sampson advised that the Clerk would not be available for the Finance and General Purposes meeting on Tuesday, 5th December 2006. Members agreed that this meeting should be the normal business meeting and the proposed budget should be discussed instead on Tuesday, 12th December 2006.

The Chairmen of each Committee were reminded that they would now be expected to attend the meeting on Tuesday, 12th December 2006.

Proposed – Cllr Sampson

Seconded – Cllr Pyatt

‘That the business of the two Finance and General Purposes Committee meetings in December is switched round as agreed.’

All in favour

932. To approve the Payment of Bills

A list of bills had been circulated (Appendix 3).

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, and Cllrs Doyle, Fox and Mrs Roberts had declared a pecuniary interest in this item.

Cllr Fox advised that the Smith of Derby invoice should be withheld until the Town Clock had been put right.

Proposed – Cllr Stacey

Seconded – Cllr Doyle

‘That the bills be paid as per the attached list with the exception of the Smith of Derby invoice, which should be delayed.’

For – 10 Against – 0 Abstentions – 4 (Declared Interests)

933. Update on Town Hall

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, reported that Mr Matthew Henry, BCKL&WN, had been delegated to negotiate the Heads of Terms for the Town Hall. A meeting to discuss this would be organised shortly. Further figures had been received from the BCKL&WN in order to update the monthly cash flow. The BCKL&WN Cabinet had in principal approved the transfer of the Town Hall.

934. Update on management of the Howdale Community Centre

Cllr Pyatt reported that a new key system had been fitted at the Centre to eradicate misuse of the Centre. Signs had been purchased to prohibit dogs on the fields and these would be erected this week.

935. Update on the purchase of the Fire Station site, Priory Road, Downham Market

Cllr Fox reported that a confirmation letter had been received from NCC today, to advise that their Chief Executive, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Human Resources, Finance, Property and Corporate Affairs had approved the Town Council's revised proposals to retain the brick building on the old Fire Station site. However, the letter advised that the claw back provisions would not be varied as the sale of the property was on very favourable terms. The terms of the sale would be finalised shortly.

936. Local Development Framework

Cllr Mrs Roberts reported that the Working Party (Vice Chairs and Deputy Mayor) had examined the Local Development Framework (LDF) Preferred Option Paper and compiled a draft response from the Town Council. It was noted that the deadline for the response to the BCKL&WN was Monday, 20th November 2006, 12.00pm. The response was circulated to members and a long discussion took place regarding its content.

Concern was raised that in view of the importance of the Local Development Framework the Town Council's response should be far more in depth. It was therefore agreed that all Councillors who were able to attend should meet at the Town Council offices on Thursday, 16th December 2006 at 12.00pm to review the response.

937. Report on Anglia in Bloom

Cllr Doyle reported that the Working Party had met with Mr Tony Porter and two gardening officers from the BCKL&WN. The judge's route had been discussed and would be reconsidered. It was suggested that pennants displaying the Anglia in Bloom logo could be placed on the lamp standards. The trees on the Town Square, one of which was dead, were deemed too big for their location and would be replaced with more suitable size trees in the future. The live tree would be replanted in the Willows Nature Reserve. Two planters would be placed either side of the toilets on the Town Hall car park to part screen the doors. Planters would also be placed on Hythe Bridge in banks of four or five to maximise their effect. A carpet bed to commemorate the Rotary Club's 50th Anniversary would be laid on the green at the top of Priory Road.

It was suggested that the Castle and the Crown Hotels be rewarded with £100.00 each to encourage their already impressive displays, and a grant of £25.00 to any Town Centre property that takes part in the BCKL&WN's hanging basket scheme. It may also be possible to help with the cost of the necessary brackets. Leaflets would be distributed nearer the time and it was recommended that a sign be erected on the four entrances into Town.

A 'Best Kept Garden' scheme may be taken up providing suitable people can be sought to run and judge it.

938. To discuss extension to Town Council premises

A copy of the plans to extend the Council offices had been circulated to all members.

Cllr Doyle reported that the current offices may be too small for future staffing increases, and any scheme to move into the Town Hall may well be some time away. The possibility of extending this building and increasing its value could therefore be beneficial. With this in mind plans for an extension had been drawn up. The building would extend out towards the car park by approximately twelve feet. This would enable a corridor to be placed in the building which would enable the Chambers to be detached from the reception area, upstairs offices and Registrars. This layout would also provide added security for the staff. The Working Party and the Clerk had reviewed the plans and would now need to obtain estimates for the work, seek before and after valuations, and apply for planning permission.

Proposed – Cllr Doyle Seconded – Cllr Stacey

'That the Working Party is given authority to seek planning permission, estimates and a valuation of the current building and its subsequent valuation, post any development, and refers back to Full Council for a decision.'

For – 13 Against – 1 Abstentions – 0

939. To discuss the siting of the Fair in Downham Market in March 2007

Cllr Leach had declared a non pecuniary interest in this item.

Cllr Reed reported that last year's fair and breakfast had been very successful; an event looked forward to by many dignitaries from other towns. Cllr Mrs Roberts was thanked for the hard work she had put in to make the breakfast so enjoyable.

The fair organised by the Showmen's Guild had been set up neatly with some excellent rides and side stalls, as well as a good selection of children's rides. The fair had been packed away and gone by the early hours of the Sunday morning, and the Hollies had been left very clean with no sign that it had been there. The living vans and lorries had parked on the Howdale tidily and caused no problems. There was only one complaint raised by a Councillor, who has since resigned, about a lorry blocking an entrance. This was investigated and found to be unsubstantiated.

There had been two letters concerned the siting of the fair on the Hollies. One was from A T Johnson, which was accompanied by an untitled petition,

and a general complaint about the failures of the regeneration scheme and that the market should be returned to its original site. Mr Johnson was sent a response asking for further clarification on his complaint but a reply was not sent back. The other letter, from the Chamber of Trade, also included the results of a survey of a number of businesses in the Town. The petition lost credence because it included suggestions for siting the fair in London or Cllr Reed's back garden or Halcyon Homes Estate. On investigation it is understood that this suggestion was made by a Councillor with a local business.

The St Winnold's Fair Working Party believes the fair brings considerable benefits to the Town in terms of new visitors, persuading local residents to use their Town Centre, raising awareness of Downham Market and its attractions, doing something for teenagers and small children and celebrating its heritage.

This year Radio Norfolk covered the event and journalists were in the Town for several hours giving free publicity to traders.

Next year there will of course be pressure on parking arrangements and it is important that the Town Council attempts to delay the start of the Wilkinson development and gets the old Fire Station site in operation as soon as possible. It may even be possible to introduce a Park and Ride scheme at that time from the Memorial Playing Field car park. There are an increased number of on street parking spaces in Town and there are no parking restrictions in some residential roads close to the Town Centre, all of which could be publicised in the Downham News. Suggestions for a multi storey car park, with parking charges, should be pursued, financed by an agreement with a developer.

Once again there would still be a number of parking spaces at the Health Centre end of the Hollies, on the Somerfield section behind the fish shop and next to Somerfield itself.

The Working Party are currently considering other attractions to raise the profile of what is becoming the major week in the Town's yearly calendar.

A discussion took place and it was suggested that the fair and the Civic Breakfast should be held on separate occasions to alleviate parking problems. This was noted.

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, reported that he had today received a letter from Bishop Taxis to advise that they had provided a successful Park and Ride service when the Chamber of Trade held their Swinging Sixties event a few years ago, and this service could be provided for the Council when the Wilkinson development takes place. A response to Mr Bishop would be sent without delay.

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, advised that he had spoken to Cllr John Dobson regarding the possibility of running this scheme from the Memorial Playing

Field car park and he had agreed that in principle he could not see that the BCKL&WN would raise any objections.

Proposed – Cllr Reed Seconded – Cllr Mrs Roberts

‘That the St Winnold Fair is held next year in the week commencing Monday, 26th March 2007, with the Civic Breakfast on Friday, 30th March 2007 and The Showmen’s Guild Fair on the Hollies car park.’

For – 9 Against – 4 Abstentions – 1

940. To discuss new representative needed for the 100 Acre Charity and the Batchcroft Charity

All Councillors had received a copy of the letter from the Hundred Acre Charity advising of a vacancy and recommending that Mrs Day be appointed as the Council representative.

Cllr Sampson advised that the Committee meets 4-5 times a year which includes 1 site visit and 1-2 meetings for Downham Market and Wimbotsham residents.

Cllr Mrs Roberts advised that Mrs Day was a pleasant and friendly person. There were no other nominations.

Proposed – Cllr Mrs Roberts Seconded – Cllr Sampson

‘That Mrs Judith Day is appointed as the Council representative for the Hundred Acre Charity and Batchcroft Charity.’

All in favour

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, adjourned the meeting for the County Councillor report.

Cllr Mrs Hutson had nothing further to report.

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, resumed the meeting.

Proposed – The Mayor Cllr Ford

‘To invoke Standing Order 17, in order to vary the order of business and allow the Human Resources item to be discussed under confidentiality at the end of the meeting.’

All in favour

941. Mayor’s Announcements

- Blood Donor Sessions – Town Hall, Monday, 20th November 2006

- Christmas Lights Switch On – Town Hall Car Park, Sunday, 26th November 2006, Commencing 3.00pm (Lights on at 4.15pm in the company of Hilgay Silver Band)
- Town Design Statement meeting – Town Hall, Monday, 4th December 2006, 6.30pm for 7.00pm. Theme - what should be incorporated to support the economy of the Town?
- Mayors Award for Citizenship – Town Hall, Friday 23rd February 2007, 6.00pm-8.00pm

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, thanked Councillors for attending his Mayor's At Home.

Proposed – The Mayor Cllr Ford Seconded – Cllr Fox

'To invoke Standing Order 5a, that in the view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest, that the public and/or the press be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw.'

All in favour

Cllrs Mrs Hutson and Mrs Mellish and Ms Hewitt left the Council Chambers at 9.20pm.

942. Human Resources report (confidential item)

See Confidential Report.

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, closed confidentiality and resumed the meeting.

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.25pm.