

DOWNHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD TUESDAY, 13TH FEBRUARY 2007 AT
7.30PM**

Present: The Mayor Cllr M G Ford

The Deputy Mayor Cllr J W Doyle

Councillors R J R Baker

R M Bodle

K I Byron

J K Fox

J Groom

R Leach

C Pyatt

J J Reed

Mrs P A Roberts

C T Sampson

P B Sharp

A D Stacey

Borough Councillors J R Legg

A M Lovett

Mrs K Mellish

G Wareham

County Councillor Mrs S E L Hutson

Town Clerk Mrs J M Markwell

Deputy Clerk Mrs S D Porter

Community Dev Officer Mrs E M van Deventer

Norfolk Constabulary Inspector M Bates

Members of Public 1

966. To receive members Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllrs C D Bond (work commitment), P E Freeman (holiday), Mrs S M Nunn (holiday), S W Nunn (family commitment), V F Starling (family commitment) and S C Teverson (prior engagement). Ms S Hewitt, Press Correspondent, had also given her apologies.

The apologies were accepted.

967. To receive members Declarations of Interest

Cllr Bodle declared a prejudicial interest in Item 973, To approve the Payment of Bills.

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, notified those present of the Town Council offices' emergency evacuation procedure.

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

Norfolk Constabulary Report

Inspector Bates reported the last 3 month's crime statistics: - House Burglaries - 2 (Living quarters of Mr Bees and Bennett Street). - Burglaries other than dwellings - 7 (Sue Ryder shop, property being renovated in the High Street, Old Town Close, Cherville Walk, Bridge Road, Elizabeth Avenue and Martin's Newsagents). - Thefts from Vehicles - 5 (Glebe Road, Bridge Street, Iceland car park, Bennett Street and Bees Motors). - Vehicle Thefts - 3+2 mopeds (Bennett Street, Hollies car park, Somerfield's car park). - Assaults - 2-3. - Domestic Assaults - 14 (generally school children against school children). - Street Assaults - 2 (Live & Let Live and The Swan). - Shop Lifting - 14 (Boots x 5, Tesco x 3, At Johnson, Iceland, Peacocks, Martin's Newsagents, Somerfield). Arrests have been made for 9 of these offences. - Criminal Damage - 40 (windows smashed and vehicles being damaged). 1 person was arrested and admitted to approximately 14 of these offences.

The Safer Neighbourhood Scheme will shortly be introduced in Downham Market, Terrington and Watlington. Each area will be served by 1-2 PCs and 6-7 PCSOs.

In March 2007 a new PCSO will be trained in Downham Market by PCSO Tracy Millburn, 1 will be trained in Terrington and 1 in Watlington. Between now and Easter 2008, a total of 19 PCSOs will work in these three areas; 7 in Downham Market, 6 in Terrington and 6 in Watlington.

With effect from 16th March 2007, PC Andy Dedman will be the beat officer for Downham Market.

The Mayor thanked Inspector Bates for his report. Inspector Bates left the meeting at 7.41pm.

Public Participation

The member of public did not wish to address the meeting.

Borough Councillor Report and Questions

Cllr Mrs Mellish reported: - The BCKL&WN had received in excess of 20 objection letters regarding the planning application for the Former Russell Garage.

Cllr Lovett reported: - Criticism had been made regarding the lack of traffic lights for the pedestrian crossing on Lynn Road. Cllr Lovett would be referring this to the Southern Area Road Safety Committee and County Cllr Mrs Hutson. - The Community and Culture Panel would be meeting on Tuesday, 27th February 2007 to consider the cost and allocation of CCTV.

Cllr Wareham reported: - It was good to see the attendance of a Town Councillor speaking at the Development Control Board against a recent planning application.

County Councillor Report

Cllr Mrs Hutson reported: - The County's increase in Council Tax would be 4.75% on the 2006/2007 figure due to further funding being cut from central Government, which results in an overall loss of up to £21m. Norfolk Constabulary's Council Tax would increase by 7% and the Borough's would reduce by 3%. - There are still issues with the new Priory Road pedestrian crossing; 1 light is not working, a new sign says it is not in operation but the previous sign has not been taken down which says it is closed, the stripes on the posts have not been painted and the downlighters have not been installed. Cllr Mrs Hutson would be writing a letter of concern to the NCC Planning and Transportation Department regarding the issues that have arisen with this zebra crossing. - Major resurfacing will commence on Monday, 19th February 2007 down Bexwell Road and the A10. - The bus stop outside the High School would be moved as its current siting was hazardous. - An exhibition at the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust in Welney was being held on Wednesday, 21st February 2007 regarding the Great Ouse flood plain and it was recommended that a Town Councillor attend.

Cllr Fox advised that one of the beleisha beacons on the Priory Road crossing did not have suitable shading on it for the bedroom of the adjacent property. Cllr Mrs Hutson would investigate this.

Cllr Sampson asked if the entrance to the layby on Bexwell Road, opposite the High School, could be included when the major resurfacing work was done. Cllr Mrs Hutson would pursue this.

Cllr Sharp advised that a proposal to dispose of the flood sirens countywide had been made, and consultation meetings were currently being held. The cost to dismantle them would be £85,000 but the cost to run them is £35,000 per annum. Cllr Mrs Hutson would pass on these concerns.

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, resumed the meeting.

968. To approve the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting

The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday, 9th January 2007 (pages 2034-2041) were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

969. To receive Correspondence

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

There were no questions.

970. Councillor's Questions

Q: A large and unsightly wall has been erected in Wales Court by the owners. Could a letter be sent to Pearl and Coutts asking them why they have done this within a Conservation Area without planning permission? (JKF). A: Yes.

Q: The Job Centre will be closing shortly. Could a letter be sent to dignitaries to prevent this closure? (RL). A: Yes.

971. To Adopt the Standing Committee Minutes

Planning and Environmental Committee

Proposed - Cllr Fox Seconded - Cllr Sampson

'That the minutes of the Planning and Environmental Committee meetings of Wednesday, 10th January 2007 (pages 2042-2043) and Wednesday, 24th January 2007 (pages 2056-2058) be adopted.'

All in favour

Development Committee

Proposed - Cllr Mrs Roberts Seconded - Cllr Byron

'That the minutes of the Development Committee meeting of Tuesday, 23rd January 2007 (pages 2050-2055) be adopted.'

All in favour

Car Parks and Highways Committee

Proposed - Cllr Stacey Seconded - Cllr Leach

'That the minutes of the Car Parks and Highways Committee meeting of Tuesday, 16th January 2007 (pages 2044-2049) be adopted.'

All in favour

972. To receive the Clerk's Report

The Clerk advised that Ms Helen Scott had requested that a stall be placed on the market to promote the election. It is believed that she is the agent for the Labour party.

Members confirmed that no political parties should be permitted to promote their organisations.

The Clerk advised that the Standards Board had requested that a 'Survey of Authorities' questionnaire be completed by the Clerk and a separate questionnaire by a Councillor.

Cllr Mrs Roberts volunteered to complete it.

973. To approve the Payment of Bills

A list of bills had been circulated (Appendix 2).

Cllr Bodle had declared a prejudicial interest in this item.

Proposed - Cllr Sampson Seconded - Cllr Stacey

'That the bills be paid as per the attached list.'

For - 13 Against - 0 Abstentions - 1 (Declared Interests)

974. Update on Town Hall

A report from the Town Hall Working Party had been circulated (Appendix 3).

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, advised that the community audit would be held over a four month period, to include two public consultations in the Town Hall, face to face

meetings with people in the Town and students at the schools, a leaflet distribution to the Town and surrounding villages and a full report advising the current usage, future usage and funding potential.

Proposed - Cllr Fox Seconded - Cllr Groom

'That the Town Council engage the Civic Trust to perform the community audit at a cost of £9450 + VAT, once the Heads of Terms have been agreed with the BCKL&WN.'

All in favour

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, reported that a survey had been sent to residents within the North Ward by Borough Cllr Wareham. The survey reflected a very negative attitude to the transfer of the Town Hall to the Town Council. A response to the survey would be submitted in the press shortly.

975. Update on management of the Howdale Community Centre

There was nothing to report at this meeting.

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

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Loan needs to be drawn down

Cllr Fox reported that John Stephenson had drawn recommended designs for the internal part of the existing Fire Station building. These were still under consideration. The loan would need to be drawn down in this financial year as the paperwork would expire in April 2007.

Proposed - Cllr Fox Seconded - Cllr Sampson

'That the Council draws down the loan of £275,000 for the purchase of the Fire Station site.'

All in favour

977. Report from D2 meeting:

a) Mobile CCTV The Mayor, Cllr Ford, reported that the D2 Action Group was currently reconsidering a mobile CCTV scheme. Mr Karl Weeks, the CCTV Controller in King's Lynn, together with Mr John Greenhaulgh, the Community Safety Officer, were investigating the cost for this. These enquiries have already illustrated that the cost would be less than half of the original quote a year ago.

b) Graffiti Wall The Mayor, Cllr Ford, advised that Reeds had offered their wall to be used for graffiti. However the D2 Action Group had considered that because this wall was down an alley the fumes may be dangerous to the public. The young people have advised that they would want the wall to be accessible in the centre of Town and this is still being considered.

c) Youth Work The anti-social behaviour team have worked very hard with Mrs Tracey Millburn, the PCSO, concerning problems around the Methodist Church, by engaging the young people, not just sending them away.

The Community Development Officer advised that the Council had funded a youth pilot project through the Methodist Circuit, whereby two youth workers interact with young people and build relationships with them.

The Community Development Officer was congratulated on getting this project started.

978. Report on Anglia in Bloom

Cllr Doyle reported that a member of the Horticultural Society had helped to walk and finalise the judge's route. The Salvation Army had been sent a letter requesting that their bible garden be used as part of the route, with a donation of £100 if accepted. Four brackets for hanging baskets would be placed on the Town Hall and a large planter placed either side of the toilets on the Town Hall car park. The seat around the tree on the cricket pitch would be renovated and an avenue of trees would be planted in the memorial garden in the Memorial Playing Fields. The railway station would be supplied with three planters and Heygates Mill had agreed to erect a large banner on their wall. Leaflets would be distributed to properties nearer the time asking them to make a special effort for Anglia in Bloom. The best kept garden competition would proceed in conjunction with Anglia in Bloom. It was noted that two of the three trophy cups could not be found and if any Councillors knew of their whereabouts, to let the Town Clerk know.

Cllr Leach advised that the planter situated between the Iceland and Town Hall car park was consistently being moved by motorists in order for vehicles to drive over the footpath. It was suggested that it be swapped with the larger planter by Boots. The Clerk would ask the General Duties Officer to organise this.

979. Recommendation from the Planning and Environmental Committee that the following Policy be adopted by Full Council: The policy of Downham Market Town Council towards Town Council owned land is that the Council will keep the open spaces and walkways clear of any development that may impede the right of way. Any buildings will be maintained and developed only within the style of the area. Any movement away from this policy shall only be acceptable upon a two thirds majority vote of the Town Council

Cllr Fox advised that at the previous Full Council meeting members were asked to examine the wording and report back to this meeting. It was noted that members of the Planning and Environmental Committee had agreed to amend the last sentence to, 'Any movement away from this policy shall only be acceptable by an absolute majority vote of the Town Council.'

Proposed - Cllr Fox Seconded - Cllr Stacey

'The policy of Downham Market Town Council towards Town Council owned land is that the Council will keep the open spaces and walkways clear of any development that may impede the right of way. Any buildings will be maintained and developed only within the style of the area. Any movement away from this policy shall only be acceptable by an absolute majority vote of the Town Council.'

All in favour

Proposed - The Mayor Cllr Ford

'To invoke Standing Order 17, in order to vary the order of business and allow the Water Festival item to be brought forward in order for the Community Development Officer to report.'

All in favour

980. Recommendation from the Development Committee that this Council underwrites the cost of the Downham Market Water Festival on 11th August 2007

Cllr Doyle reported that the Development Committee had proposed to hold an event by the river area in order to highlight its importance within the Town. A Working Party which had been set up agreed to stage a dragon boat race for the entire day on Saturday, 11th August 2007. This would cost £4,854 comprising two boats, an events manager, all necessary safety equipment, liability insurance and a PA system. An additional cost of £2,160 would also be required for the shore based facilities. It is possible that a grant of £3,000 can be obtained and sponsorship and site lettings of £2,000 could be achieved.

Cllr Doyle thanked the Community Development Officer for her hard work on this project.

Cllr Sampson, Chairman of Finance and General Purposes Committee, advised that funds were available in the reserve account, should the Town Council need to use it for this event.

A short discussion took place. Concern was raised that 14 teams of 9-11 members would be difficult to achieve. It was noted that even if this event was not successful in its initial year, it would still raise the profile of the river area, which in its own right would be an achievement.

Proposed - Cllr Baker Seconded - Cllr Doyle

'That the Town Council underwrites £7,014 towards the Dragon Boat river event.'

For - 13 Against - 1 Abstentions - 0

The Community Development Officer left the meeting at 8.30pm.

981. To accept amended Standing Orders

A copy of the amended Standing Orders had been circulated (Appendix 4).

Cllr Stacey reported that the Working Party had been working on the current update for 8 months and noted the areas of amendment: - Standing Orders have not changed although some sections, notably those in the Finance section have been moved to the Financial Regulations in 'Annex C'. - One addition has been made in Order 16c which contains the new mandatory evacuation procedures. - Order 16 xi brings the appointment of the Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of Standing Committees forward to be included in the business of the Annual Meeting. - Order 38c rationalises the participation of County and Borough Councillors in Town Council meetings.

It was noted that matters of Council Policy would be recorded in a separate document, maintained and updated by the Clerk rather than being incorporated as an annex to Standing Orders.

Proposed - Cllr Stacey Seconded - Cllr Fox

'That the Town Council adopts the Standing Orders as have been circulated to Councillors as the current Standing Orders.'

All in favour

Councillors congratulated the Working Party for all their hard work on producing the amended Standing Orders.

982. Report from Cllr Bodle on the Town Design Statement

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, congratulated Cllr Bodle for organising an excellent exhibition at the Town Hall and providing an informative presentation.

A copy of Cllr Bodle's report had been circulated (Appendix 5).

Cllr Bodle gave a brief summary of the report. It was noted that the charitable organisation, Planning Aid, had provided a great deal of information at no cost to the Council.

It was noted that the Local Development Framework Working Party should meet shortly and make recommendations to the BCKL&WN prior to the publication date.

983. Report from the Property Working Party

Cllr Doyle reported that plans, which had recently been drawn for an extension on the Council offices, had been placed on hold due to financial implications. Parts of those plans were for a staff rest room/dining area and upstairs toilet. As these utilities were still required, it would be more cost effective to submit the full planning application as this would not incur any additional charges.

Proposed - Cllr Doyle Seconded - Cllr Baker

'That the Town Council submits the whole planning application in order that the Council can be in a position to do the work as and when required.'

For - 13 Against - 1 Abstentions - 0

984. Report on the St Winnold's Day

Cllr Mrs Roberts reported that the St Winnold's Breakfast would be held on Friday, 30th March 2007. Attending Councillors are expected to host dignitaries on the day. The East Anglican Roman Catholic Bishop blessing the Town and markets will be The Right Reverend Michael Evans.

985. Report from Cllr Mrs Roberts on Quality Parish Status

A copy of Cllr Mrs Roberts' report had been circulated (Appendix 6).

Cllr Mrs Roberts gave a brief summary of the report. It was agreed that Cllr Fox would oversee the publication and distribution of the Annual Report.

986. To discuss Town Meeting

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, reported that the Annual Town Meeting would be held on Tuesday, 3rd April 2007 in the Town Hall. The format would be similar to that in 2006, whereby residents could have an informal discussion with Councillors from 7.00pm-7.30pm, at which time the formal meeting would commence.

It was noted that a representative from Norfolk Constabulary had not been invited in 2006 and residents had felt that they should attend. The Clerk would invite the police to attend this year's Town Meeting.

It was agreed that the stalls should be manned by as many Councillors as possible, and the police could also be encouraged to have a stall.

The members of public left the Council Chambers at 8.55pm.

987. To discuss meeting to encourage New Councillor candidates for the election on Thursday, 3rd May 2007

The Clerk advised that two sessions would be held at the Town Council offices on Thursday, 1st March 2007; 2.00pm-4.00pm and 7.00pm-9.00pm and asked that as many Councillors attend as possible. Posters had been erected around Town, an article had been placed in the Downham News and a further article would be placed in the Lynn News encouraging people to attend the open sessions.

988. Council Policy for Emergency Evacuation of the Building

Cllr Fox reported that an Emergency Evacuation procedure had been produced and erected at the fire doors of the Council offices (Appendix 7). Councillors agreed to adopt the instructions displayed as the actual Policy.

989. Human Resources report (confidential item)

There was nothing to report at this meeting.

990. Mayor's Announcements

- Mayors Award for Citizenship - Town Hall, Friday 23rd February 2007, 6.00pm-8.00pm. The Mayor, Cllr Ford, advised that a young dancer, a young singer, and a choir from Hillcrest and from Wimbotsham would be singing. - Annual Town Meeting - Town Hall, Tuesday 3rd April 2007, 7.00pm. - Civic Service - The Salvation Army Church and Meeting Place, Sunday 15th April 2007.

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.00pm.