

13th March 2007 minutes

**DOWNHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD TUESDAY, 13<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2007 AT  
7.30PM**

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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

P E Freeman

R Leach

Mrs S M Nunn

S W Nunn

C Pyatt

Mrs P A Roberts

C T Sampson

P B Sharp

A D Stacey

V F Starling

S C Teverson

Borough Councillors	J R Legg
	A M Lovett
	Mrs K Mellish
County Councillor	Mrs S E L Hutson
Town Clerk	Mrs J M Markwell
Deputy Clerk	Mrs S D Porter
Norfolk Constabulary	Inspector M Bates
Borough Emergency Planning	Ms A Haines
County Emergency Planning	Mr J Ellis
Press Correspondent	Ms S Hewitt
Members of Public	1

991. To receive members Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllrs C D Bond (work commitment) and J Groom (work commitment). Cllr J J Reed did not attend.

The apologies were accepted.

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

992. To receive members Declarations of Interest

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, and Cllr Doyle declared a prejudicial interest in Item 998, To approve the Payment of Bills.

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

### Borough and County Emergency Planning Officers' Reports

Ms Haines, BCKL&WN Emergency Planning Officer, reported that the Norfolk Resilience Forum, a unit consisting of representatives from the Environment Agency, police and other multi agencies with whom the BCKL&WN and NCC work with, had recently held public consultation meetings regarding their proposal for siren discontinuance in Norfolk. West Norfolk currently has 21 sirens, 1 of which stands in Downham West, and the proposal has been made to remove the sirens because they are no longer maintainable.

Mr Ellis, NCC Principal Emergency Planning Officer, advised that the sirens were initially installed for air raid purposes during World War II and Central Government maintained them until the early 1990's. Local Authorities were then invited to take over the responsibility and it was then that Norfolk nominated theirs to operate as tidal flooding sirens. An engineer carries out an annual test on the sirens and increasing failures occur. The system runs on outdated technology, MS DOS, and spare parts for the sirens are obsolete and therefore cannot be replaced. The computer system, which has no back up facility, is operated at 4 bases; the police stations at King's Lynn, Great Yarmouth and North Walsham, and a terminal at County Hall. Because the technology is so old, when a test siren is activated a telephone message travels from Norfolk to Crystal Palace, then onto Shephards Bush, to Droitwich and a radio signal is sent to the sirens. Analogue equipment will be completely replaced by digital technology within the next 5-10 years and this is the reason it has been proposed to remove the sirens at this time.

With today's technology, high tidal activity can be predicted by the Met Office at least 10 hours ahead. With this in mind the Emergency Planning units could perform evacuation procedures in good time and as most people have a landline telephone, mobile phone, email service, etc. it is felt the old siren system would not be necessary.

Concerns were raised by Councillors and responded to by Mr Ellis. Ms Haines and Mr Ellis provided the Town Council with an information pack and leaflets

regarding the proposal and invited Councillors to contact them with any further queries.

The Mayor thanked Ms Haines and Mr Ellis for their report and they left the meeting at 7.55pm.

#### Norfolk Constabulary Report

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Inspector Bates reported the last month's crime statistics:

- House Burglaries – 0.
- Burglaries other than dwellings – 1 (in Wroxham). The offender also admitted to 5 other house burglaries and has been charged.
- Vehicle Thefts – 0.
- Thefts from Vehicles – 3 (Hillcrest, Civray Avenue and Glebe Road).
- Domestic Assaults – 1 (school girls fighting).
- Street Assaults – 1 (High Street).
- Boy Racers – 1 vehicle was seized following a previous warning.

Inspector Bates then gave a short presentation on the Safer Neighbourhood Scheme which will shortly be introduced in Downham Market, Terrington and Watlington. Each area will be served by 1-2 PCs and 6-7 PCSOs. Every eight weeks these three teams will hold a meeting with their Community Action Groups (CAGs), which will consist of representatives from the parish councils and other interested local bodies. The CAGs will determine the top three priority crimes for the area and the Safer Neighbourhood Teams will be tasked to deal with them. These priorities will be published and displayed within the relevant parishes. The CAGs will then report back to the D2 Action Group and may also request funding if required.

The Mayor thanked Inspector Bates for his report. Inspector Bates left the meeting at 8.10pm.

### Public Participation

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

### Borough Councillor Report and Questions

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Cllr Legg reported:

- At the previous Cabinet meeting the matter concerning the possible closure of the Job Centre had been raised. Cllr John Dobson, Leader of the BCKL&WN, would be making representation to retain the Job Centre in Downham Market.

### County Councillor Report

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Cllr Mrs Hutson had nothing to report at this meeting.

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, resumed the meeting.

### **993. To approve the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting**

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It was noted that an amendment should be made on page 2064 under the County Councillor's report where line 6 should read:

*'...a new sign says it is in operation but the previous sign has not been taken down which...'*

The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday, 13<sup>th</sup> February 2007 (pages 2062-2071) were approved and signed as a true and accurate record with the above amendment.

994. To receive Correspondence

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

There were no questions.

995. Councillor's Questions

Cllr Bodle congratulated the Mayor, Cllr Ford, for involving the young townsfolk and their families in a large civic event, which was successful and enjoyed by all.

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, advised that proprietors in the High Street had complained to the Town Council that the drains underneath the Town Square were blocked. As a consequence of their complaints the Town Council contracted Watlington Drains to carry out emergency works. It concluded that the blockage had been caused by cooking fat. The Mayor, Cllr Ford, reported back to the businesses and advised them that the Town Council did not own the drains and any future blockages would need to be sorted out by them.

996. To Adopt the Standing Committee Minutes

Planning and Environmental Committee

**Proposed – Cllr Fox**

**Seconded – Cllr Doyle**

**‘That the minutes of the Planning and Environmental Committee meeting of Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> February 2007 (pages 2059-2061) be adopted.’**

**All in favour**

**997. To receive the Clerk's Report**

The Clerk had nothing to report at this meeting.

**998. To approve the Payment of Bills**

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

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, and Cllr Doyle had declared a prejudicial interest in this item.

Proposed – Cllr Sampson      Seconded – Cllr Mrs Roberts

**‘That the bills be paid as per the attached list.’**

For – 15 Against – 0      Abstentions – 2 (Declared Interests)

**999. Update on the acquisition of the Town Hall**

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, reported that scaffolding had been erected over the balcony of the Town Hall in order that the floor of it could be made stable. The Working Party would be meeting with Cllr Dobson next week to clarify details of the Heads of Terms.

**1000. Update on management of the Howdale Community Centre**

Cllr Pyatt reported that the Howdale Community Centre Management Committee had confirmed that they would like to place a notice board either in the Town Hall, on the toilets in the Town Hall car park or in the library. The notice board would be paid for by local business sponsorship. This would be referred to the Planning and Environmental Committee for consideration.

Two new principals would be taking over Little Tinkers on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2007 and renaming it Clever Clogs. DADS currently store a 40ft trailer at the Barkers site but have been advised that it can no longer be held there. Councillors were asked to contact Cllr Pyatt if they were aware of any other storage facility sites.

It was agreed to defer the report on the Howdale Community Centre until the end of the meeting under confidentiality.

#### **1001. Update on purchase of the Fire Station site, Priory Road, Downham Market**

Plans of the old Fire Station site were displayed for members to view.

Cllr Fox reported that a new planning application had been submitted to the BCKL&WN to include the internal alterations to the outbuilding, which were made in consultation with the Heritage Society. The plans for the outbuilding as a Heritage Centre, if approved, would incorporate floor and wall space, storage facilities, a kitchen area and a meeting room.

The loan of £275,000 had been drawn down today over a 25 year term; this would be a repayment of £25,000 per annum, and tenders for the building work were being sought by the Clerk.

#### **1002. Report from D2 meeting**

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Cllr Sharp reported that at the last D2 meeting a youth report had been circulated to members of the group and the representative from the fire service, in particular, had found this to be very useful. It was suggested that a kick wall

be placed on the Memorial Playing Field and this would be investigated. The police would be funding £15,000 towards a CCTV scheme.

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, advised that the youth workers were talking to approximately 100 young people per week and the project appeared to be very valuable.

### **1003. Report on Anglia in Bloom**

Cllr Doyle reported that the BCKL&WN had replaced the trees on the Town Square with a species called Amanagawa (small flowering Japanese cherry tree), which would be more in keeping with the surroundings. Suggestions had been made to place a planter on each side of the bench near the Town Clock, and if they are deemed to be able to carry the weight, place double hanging baskets on the poles on the Town Hall car park.

The best kept garden competition was receiving a good response, and prizes and certificates were being considered for the winners and runners up. The Horticultural Society had already handed out 500 leaflets and further advertisements regarding this event would be publicised.

Work was still in process on the Willows to tidy it up and make the area more accessible.

Contact had been attempted by Cllr Doyle and Mr Tony Porter on several occasions to meet with the manager of Tesco, but to no avail. Emails had also not been responded to. This was being pursued.

Many of the local businesses had advised that they would be displaying hanging baskets outside their premises and at least one was preparing to dress their windows in the Downham Market Anglia in Bloom colours during the judging period.

The BCKL&WN was currently considering the possibility of replacing the Town Centre litter bins in 2008 to introduce uniformity. This was still in negotiation.

It was agreed that a formal letter should be sent to the manager of Tesco advising him that the Anglia in Bloom chairman and BCKL&WN coordinator, Mr Tony Porter, would like to meet with him to discuss the idea of revamping one of their grass beds. The Clerk would deal with this.

**1004. To discuss Town Meeting**

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, advised that the Annual Town Meeting would be in the same format as last year. Residents would be invited to arrive at 7.00pm and engage with Councillors on an informal basis prior to the formal meeting at 7.30pm. A small exhibition of stalls would be available for residents to visit. The Norfolk Constabulary Chief Inspector would also be available to take questions from the floor during the formal meeting.

It was noted that people wishing to stand for Council would need to submit their applications to the BCKL&WN by 12.00pm on Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> April 2007. Nomination packs would be made available on the evening.

Cllr Mrs Roberts noted that a Councillors Surgery was being held in March and information regarding the Elections would be available to those interested.

**1005. Report from Cllr Fox on the Downham Market and Downham West Joint Burial Committee**

A report had been circulated (Appendix 3).

Cllr Fox gave a brief summary of the report. There were no questions.

**1006. Recommendation from Cllr John Fox that the following Policy be adopted by Full Council:**

*‘Whenever the Town Council offices are used for a meeting outside normal working hours/day the Chairman of the meeting, or another nominated member, shall remain with the person locking the premises until this procedure has been completed’.*

A short discussion took place and it was agreed to amend the policy as follows:

‘Whenever the Town Council offices are used for a meeting by the Town Council or any other body outside normal working hours/day the Chairman of the meeting, or another nominated member, shall remain with the person locking the premises until this procedure has been completed.’

It was noted that this policy wording should be written on the terms and conditions of the hire agreement for hirers of the meeting room.

Proposed – Cllr Fox

Seconded – Cllr Mrs Nunn

**‘That the Town Council adopts the Policy with amendment as stated above.’**

All in favour

**1007. To note that the Finance and General Purposes Committee has agreed that the Human Resources Working Party becomes a Sub Committee; this will require it to keep minutes of all meetings**

Cllr Sampson reported that the Finance and General Purposes Committee had recommended that a Human Resources Sub Committee be set up whereby a formal agenda and a record of the minutes were produced. The formation of this Sub Committee would protect the staff members and the Town Council.

Cllr Stacey left the meeting at 8.57pm.

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

**1008. Mayor’s Announcements**

- Annual Town Meeting – Town Hall, Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2007, 7.00pm.
- Civic Service – The Salvation Army Church and Meeting Place, Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2007 at 3.00pm.
- Water Festival – Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2007 (not Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> August 2007 as previously announced).

**Proposed – The Mayor Cllr Ford      Seconded – Cllr Doyle**

**‘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

Ms Hewitt and the member of public left the Council Chambers at 8.58pm. Cllrs Mrs Hutson, Legg, Lovett and Mellish were invited to remain.

**1009. Update on management of the Howdale Community Centre**

See Confidential Report.

**Proposed – Cllr Pyatt**

**Seconded – Cllr Sampson**

**‘That the Council agrees in principle to pursue the purchase the Howdale Community Centre at a cost of £80,000.’**

For – 16 Against – 0 Abstentions – 1

**1010. Human Resources report (confidential item)**

See Confidential Report.

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**Proposed – Cllr Mrs Roberts**

**Seconded – Cllr Sampson**

**‘That the Clerk receives a salary increase from spinal point 34 to 37 as from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 plus the annual pay increase.’**

For – 15 Against – 0 Abstentions – 2

**Proposed – Cllr Mrs Roberts**

**Seconded – Cllr Nunn**

**‘That the Deputy Clerk receives a salary increase from spinal point 23 to 29 as from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 plus the annual pay increase.’**

For – 16 Against – 0 Abstentions – 1

**Proposed – Cllr Mrs Roberts**

**Seconded – Cllr Bodle**

**‘That the Community Development Officer is appraised by the Clerk in March 2007 and her salary is reassessed in June 2007.’**

All in favour

**Proposed – Cllr Mrs Roberts**

**Seconded – Cllr Nunn**

**‘That the Filing Clerk’s job title is changed to Administration Assistant and that she is placed on spinal point 5 pro rata as from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 plus the annual pay increase.’**

All in favour

**Proposed – Cllr Mrs Roberts**

**Seconded – Cllr Byron**

**‘That the General Duties Officer receives the annual pay increase.’**

All in favour

**Proposed – Cllr Teverson**

**Seconded – Cllr Leach**

**‘That the Administrator/Receptionist receives a salary increase from spinal point 7 to 10 as from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 plus the annual pay increase.’**

All in favour

**Proposed – Cllr Mrs Roberts**

**Seconded – Cllr Bodle**

**‘That the Clerk sends a letter to the previous Projects Officer informing her that the grievance and appeal proceedings have been finalised by the Town Council.’**

All in favour

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.37pm.