

10th October 2006 minutes

DOWNHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD TUESDAY, 10th OCTOBER 2006 7.30PM

Present:	The Mayor	Cllr M G Ford
	The Deputy Mayor	Cllr J W Doyle
	Councillors	R J R Baker MBE
		R M Bodle
	J K Fox	
	P E Freeman	
	J Groom	
	R Leach	
		Mrs S M Nunn
		S W Nunn
	J J Reed	
	C T Sampson	
	A D Stacey	
	V F Starling	
	S C Teverson	
	Borough Councillors	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
Press Correspondent	Ms S Hewitt
Members of Public	1

907. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllrs C D Bond (work commitment), C Pyatt (holiday), Mrs P A Roberts (holiday), and Borough Cllr J R Legg (personal commitment).

The apologies were accepted.

908. Declarations of Interest

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, and Cllrs Doyle, Sampson and Starling declared a pecuniary interest in Item 914, To approve payment of bills. Cllr Leach declared a non pecuniary interest in Item 920, Christmas Lights.

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

Public Participation

The member of public did not wish to speak at this meeting.

Borough Councillor Reports and Questions

The Borough Councillors had nothing to report at this meeting.

County Councillor Report and Questions

Cllr Mrs Hutson would provide her report at the end of the meeting.

Cllr Doyle advised that he had attended a meeting with the Community Forum Group and one of their concerns was the lack of information boards in the Town Centre. They had raised the fact that the information board on the Town Hall car park toilets had two empty panels either side of the map.

It was agreed that this information board should not be used for general notices as it would look untidy but other areas would be investigated.

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, resumed the meeting.

909. To approve the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting

Cllr Mrs Hutson had informed the Clerk that her report in the meeting held on 12th September 2006 should be worded as follows:

- *The NCC Countryside Access Development Officer has now met with the landowner responsible for the fencing of the footpath which links with Denver, and has agreed to widen it. He has also agreed to the dedication of the linkpath between Nightingale Lane and Rouses Lane as a right of way, which means local residents, will not need to complete legal forms, etc, to make it a right of way.*
- *Norfolk Property Services are currently valuing the Howdale Community Centre.*

- *The proposal for a new Faith School has been placed on hold. The £14.9 million funding which had been made available for this scheme would be held until Spring 2007, when the Local Development Framework would have been published, and the scheme can be reviewed.*

Cllr Mrs Hutson wished to note that although Mr Sparks advised he had liaised with NCC regarding permit parking, she had never spoken to him or seen any correspondence from him. The only areas in Norfolk which have permit parking are Norwich and more recently Great Yarmouth. The BCKL&WN is the authority that administers permit parking and NCC authorise it. It is a very lengthy and detailed process.

The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday, 12th September 2006 (pages 1931-1940) and Wednesday, 27th September 2006 (pages 1945-1946) were approved and signed as a true and accurate record, with the above amendments made.

910. To receive Correspondence

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

There were no questions.

911. Councillor's Questions

Q: A complaint was previously made about the rubbish inspector's threatening behaviour towards female shopkeepers. The BCKL&WN advised that he had been re-trained and that all businesses would be sent an information pack regarding the procedures for corporate rubbish clearance. Could the Town Council write to the BCKL&WN to complain about the rubbish inspector?

A: The Clerk would write to the BCKL&WN regarding the rubbish inspector's poor attitude and the businesses lack of knowledge regarding their rubbish.

912. To Adopt the Standing Committee Minutes

Planning and Environmental Committee

Proposed – Cllr Fox

Seconded – Cllr Nunn

‘That the minutes of the Planning and Environmental Committee meeting of Wednesday, 13th September 2006 (pages 1941-1944) be adopted.’

All in favour

913. To receive the Clerk’s Report

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

Not on agenda

Drains Hollies Car Park

Cllr Stacey reported that the Hollies car park was still suffering from problems of flooding during heavy rain storms. Mr Spencer Payne, Watlington Drains, had been asked to complete the drains survey today. However, he was unable to as the drains in the Health Centre had not been cleared of their root infestation.

Cllrs Stacey and Fox and the Deputy Clerk met Mr Payne on site and conversed with the Health Centre’s Practice Manager, Mrs G Revell. Mrs Revell advised that as the Norfolk PCT had a £30 million debt, it would be unlikely that permission would be given to have their drains cleared, especially as one of the offending drains had been built over when the extension was erected.

Off site, Mr Payne advised the Councillors that a solution for the problem would be to cut off the system from the Health Centre and install a new pipe structure which would divert the water to the mains drain in Paradise Road.

Councillors agreed that the Deputy Clerk should obtain quotations for this work and in the meantime write to the Norfolk PCT asking them to have their drains unblocked.

914. To approve the Payment of Bills

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

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, and Cllrs Doyle, Sampson and Starling had declared a pecuniary interest in this item.

Proposed – Cllr Baker Seconded – Cllr Teverson

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

For – 10 Against – 0 Abstentions – 3 (Declared Interests)

915. Update on Town Hall

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, reported that the cash flow had now been completed and a meeting would be held with Lloyds TSB to discuss the business plan on Thursday, 12th October 2006. The BCKL&WN would be proposing consideration for the transfer of the Town Hall at their next Cabinet meeting.

916. Update on management of the Howdale Community Centre

There was nothing to report at this meeting.

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

Cllr Fox reported that a letter had been sent to NCC asking for permission to retain the brick building on the old Fire Station site. This request would be subject to approval from the Cabinet members at their next meeting.

918. Town Design Statement

A report from Cllr Bodle had been circulated (Appendix 4).

Cllr Bodle advised that the next Town Design meeting would be held on Monday, 30th October 2006 and all Councillors were invited to attend. This meeting would be incorporating the Local Development Framework.

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, congratulated Cllr Bodle on her tremendous work.

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, advised that all Councillors had been issued with the Local Development Framework pack and reminded them that comments should be made to the BCKL&WN by the end of October.

919. To discuss the meeting with Mr R Brown, Planning Consultant for the land to the South East of Downham Market

Cllr Doyle reported that various Councillors had attended a meeting with Mr Brown, the planning advisor to the Purcell Group. At the meeting Councillors were invited to comment on what they would like to see incorporated into the development. Mr Brown was very receptive to the ideas and assured

Councillors that their suggestions would be strongly considered when the plans were drawn up. The matter of Section 106 money had also been raised.

A long discussion took place and the following comments were made:

- According to the Local Development Framework pack the BCKL&WN appear to be reluctant to develop Greenfield sites, which may have an impact on this particular development as this falls outside this area.
- The Purcell Group has in the past obtained planning permission for large developments and then sold the land prior to construction. It may decide to do the same for this development which could mean any suggestions made by the Town Council are never acted upon.
- The Town Council should make reference to the Local Development Framework and converse with the BCKL&WN regarding its wish list for this site, not speak directly to the developers.
- An acre of land in Downham Market holds a price tag of around £920,000. The Town Council's negotiations for Section 106 money should bear this figure in mind.
- 70,000 houses are planned for West Norfolk and of this figure many are likely to be built in Downham Market.
- The infrastructure must be put in place before a major development such as this takes place.
- Downham Market lacks investment from the BCKL&WN.

It was agreed that the Working Party (Vice Chairs and Deputy Mayor) would discuss the Local Development Framework on behalf of the Council.

The next meeting with Mr Brown would be taking place on Tuesday, 5th December 2006 at 11.00am in the Town Council offices. All Councillors were invited to attend.

Cllr Teverson noted that the new BCKL&WN Planning Control Manager and Chief Executive would be hosting a presentation and discussion evening for Parish and Town Councils regarding the Planning Protocol on the 16th November 2006 at 7.30pm.

920. Christmas Lights

(See Clerk's Report).

Proposed – Cllr Baker

Seconded – Cllr Doyle

‘That the Council gives the Clerk permission to spend approximately £900.00 plus VAT on electrical work for the lamp standards on the Town Hall car park.’

All in favour

Councillors agreed that the Chamber of Trade could display the Christmas lights.

921. Report on the Circus

Cllr Reed reported that a circus had visited Downham Market and held shows on the Howdale on 25th, 26th & 27th September 2006. Each performance had been very successful and worthwhile. The Howdale was left clean and tidy and no complaints had been received. Cllr Reed noted his bitter disappointment with the Town Council attendance and wished to specifically thank the Mayor, Cllr Ford, and Cllrs Bodle, Groom and Sampson, the Clerk and Borough Cllr Mellish for their support. It is hoped that the circus will return to Downham Market twice in 2007.

Cllr Mrs Nunn wished to note that she had not attended the circus due to personal commitments.

Cllr Nunn wished to note that he had not favoured the circus coming to Town and Cllr Reed's invitation had been of a bullying and authoritative nature, which is why he had not attended.

Cllr Reed took exception to this comment and advised that his invitation had been written in a light-hearted fashion, expressing only the traits of his usual personality.

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

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

Cllr Mrs Hutson reported:

- The Old Fire Station – Cllr Mrs Hutson spoke to the Asset Management Director of NPS who told her that he could see no problem with the retention of the brick building to accommodate an alternative resource. The matter will be put to the Property Reference Panel on Monday, 6th November 2006 for formal approval. Cllr Mrs Hutson spoke to the Chairman of that Panel and the Consultative Leader who also advised that they had no objection. After the Panel meeting the proposal will then be referred to the Chief Executive for final approval. Cllr Mrs Hutson will continue to chase this.
- Howdale Community Centre – Negotiations are still ongoing to agree a base value and whether it should be aligned to a long term possible development or a playing field value. It is likely to incur a 100% claw back clause for 80 years. Cllr Mrs Hutson will continue to chase this.
- The status of the pathway between Rouses Lane and Nightingale Lane – The Countryside Access Development Officer confirms that he is putting it to the legal documents that this should be designated a bridleway, not least because that it is the status of both the ends.
- Other ongoing problems – Parts of the Town suffer from flooding because drains are blocked by roots from Willow trees. Cllr Mrs Hutson is investigating possible solutions for this.

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, thanked Cllr Mrs Hutson for her report and resumed the meeting.

922. Mayor's Announcements

- Mayors At Home – Town Hall, Thursday 9th November 2006, 7.30pm. Councillors should arrive from 7.00pm.
- Mayors Award for Citizenship – Town Hall, Saturday 3rd February 2007, 6.00pm-8.00pm.
- Local Democracy Week – Taking part at the High School, 16th October-20th October 2006.
- Civray 30th Anniversary – Cllr Ford was honoured to represent the Town in Civray as Mayor of Downham Market and was pleased to present them with a commemorative plaque from the Town Council and plant an oak tree in their town. The Mayor of Civray, Monsieur Brunet, wished to send his high regards to the Town Council.
- Poppy Launch – Town Hall car park, Friday 27th October 2006.
- Pause and Remember – Town Square, Saturday 11th November 2006, 11.00am.
- Remembrance Service – Sunday 12th November 2006 – Parade leaves Town Square at 2.30pm – Service 3pm at St Edmunds Church.
- Local Development Framework BCKL&WN consultation meetings – 1. Town Hall, Thursday 12th October 2006, 3.00pm-8.00pm and 2. Town Hall car park, Friday 13th October 2006.
- Royal British Legion Concert – Town Hall, Sunday 5th November 2006.

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 Lovett, Mellish and Mrs Hutson, Ms Hewitt and the member of public left the meeting room at 8.50pm.

923. Human Resources report (confidential item)

See Confidential Report.

Proposed – Cllr Reed

Seconded – Cllr Sampson

‘That this Council gives the HR Working Party the authority to discontinue the post of Projects Officer and to release the current post holder as soon as possible, taking whatever action is necessary.’

For – 12 Against – 0 Abstentions – 1

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

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.55pm.