

DOWNHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD TUESDAY, 11TH NOVEMBER 2008 AT 7.30PM

Present:	The Mayor	Cllr R Leach
	The Deputy Mayor	Cllr J W Doyle
	Councillors	S W Blyth
		W A Clark
		M G Ford
		P E Freeman
		S F Geary
		J Groom
		Mrs S M Nunn
		C Pyatt
		J J Reed
		Mrs P A Roberts
		D J Sharman
		Mrs P B Sharp
		A D Stacey
		Mrs V F Starling
		S C Teverson
		W A Wallace
	County Councillor	Mrs S E L Hutson
	Borough Councillor	Mrs K Mellish
	Town Clerk	Mrs J M Markwell
	Deputy Clerk	Mrs S D Porter
	Receptionist/Administrator	Miss K J Yeldham
	Norfolk Constabulary	Inspector M Bates
	Press Correspondent	Ms S Hewitt

The Mayor, Cllr Leach, welcomed Cllr Mrs Nunn back to the Council after her prolonged illness and introduced the newly appointed Receptionist/Trainee Administrator to Councillors.

1380. To receive Members' Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr J K Fox (illness), Cllr C T Sampson (prior engagement) and Borough Cllr J R Legg.

The apologies were accepted.

1381. Evacuation Procedures

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

1382. To receive Members' Declarations of Interest

The Mayor, Cllr Leach, Cllr Doyle, Cllr Freeman, Cllr Pyatt and Cllr Mrs Sharp declared a pecuniary interest in Item 1388, Payment of Bills. Cllr Sharman declared a prejudicial interest in Item 1389, The removal of the toilet block on The Howdale. Cllr Mrs Nunn declared a

pecuniary interest in Item 1396, The future development of the land adjacent to the Relief Channel.

Adjourn meeting for public participation and reports

The Mayor, Cllr Leach, adjourned the meeting.

Police

Inspector Bates reported on crimes in the last month:

- 0 Car crimes.
- 1 Burglary to dwelling.
- 2 Drug offences.
- 6 Criminal damage.
- 1 Drive off from petrol station.
- 3 Shop lifting.
- 5 Handbag and purse thefts.
- 6 Acts of violence.

Inspector Bates confirmed that the current initiative was to prohibit alcohol from the Town Centre. PC Deadman and PC Bodley had organised a paint balling event for young offenders.

In the past 8 months, of the 52 police areas in Norfolk, Downham Market was 5th for crime reduction and 13th for reported crimes. 651 crimes had been reported in this period compared with the highest figure of 2624 crimes in Norwich City Centre. Crime in Downham Market has reduced by 26% in the past 12 months.

The Mayor, Cllr Leach, wished to note that diesel was being stolen from vehicles in the surrounding villages of Downham Market.

Q: Is it classed as criminal damage when eggs are thrown at residential properties and what is the penalty? (PBS).

A: It could be classed as criminal damage if the residue from the eggs is permanent. The penalty could be a fine but if the crime is by juveniles they would probably just be reprimanded.

Cllr Blyth wished to note that 3 businesses had joined 'shopwatch' and thanked the police for introducing this initiative.

Q: Does Downham Market have a problem with homelessness and is there a police policy for this? (SCT).

A: Downham Market does not have a problem with homelessness. Areas such as Cromer, Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn have a policy because the problems exist highly in those areas.

Inspector Bates left the meeting at 7.45pm.

Public Participation

No members of public were present at the meeting.

County Councillor

Cllr Mrs Hutson reported that construction work would commence on Cannon Square on Monday, 17th November 2008, two weeks ahead of schedule, and would take approximately five weeks for completion. There were no planned road closures in conjunction with this.

Borough Councillor

Cllr Mrs Mellish reported that a judicial review was taking place in London on Thursday, 13th November 2008 regarding the Unitary Status. Councillors were reminded to document their comments on the BCKL&WN website under, 'Keep Norfolk Local'.

Father James Mather had circulated a letter to various authorities regarding the state of the churchyard; this matter would be raised at the next Local Action Group meeting on Friday, 14th November 2008.

The Mayor, Cllr Leach, resumed the meeting.

1383. To approve the Minutes

Cllr Mrs Sharp advised the following amendment:

Page 2593, Item Public Participation, 2nd paragraph, 2nd sentence should read, '*The main purpose for the meeting was to discuss flooding and the way forward for the Borough.*'

The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday, 14th October 2008 (pages 2591-2600) were approved and signed as a true and accurate record, with the above amendment.

1384. To receive correspondence

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

There were no questions.

1385. To receive Councillors questions

Q: A traffic census was conducted in Lynn Road two weeks ago and a further one is being carried out at the present time. Could the Clerk investigate with Highways why this is being done? (MGF).

A: Yes.

Cllr Mrs Roberts wished to report that the restoration of the War Memorial had been completed.

The Mayor, Cllr Leach, congratulated Cllr Mrs Roberts for organising a superb Remembrance Parade and Pause and Remember service. The public turnout was tremendous on Sunday and the readings carried out by school children on the Town Square today were commendable.

1386. To Adopt the Standing Committee Minutes

Development Committee

Proposed – Cllr Ford

Seconded – Cllr Blyth

‘That the minutes of the Development Committee meeting of Tuesday, 23rd September 2008 (pages 2575-2580) be adopted.

All in favour

Planning and Environmental Committee

Proposed – Cllr Mrs Sharp

Seconded – Cllr Geary

‘That the minutes of the Planning and Environmental Committee meeting of Wednesday, 8th October 2008 (pages 2581-2584) be adopted.

All in favour

Finance and General Purposes

Proposed – Cllr Teverson

Seconded – Cllr Stacey

‘That the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting of Thursday, 9th October 2008 (pages 2585-2590) be adopted.

All in favour

1387. To receive the Clerk’s Report

The Clerk had nothing to report to this meeting.

1388. To approve the Payment of Bills

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

The Mayor, Cllr Leach, Cllr Doyle, Cllr Freeman, Cllr Pyatt and Cllr Mrs Sharp had declared a pecuniary interest in this item.

Proposed – Cllr Teverson

Seconded – Cllr Mrs Roberts

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

For – 13

Against – 0

Abstentions – 5 (Declared Interests)

1389. To discuss the removal of the toilet block on The Howdale

Cllr Sharman had declared a prejudicial interest in this item.

The Mayor, Cllr Leach, adjourned the meeting in order for Cllr Mrs Mellish to give a report.

Cllr Mrs Mellish confirmed that she had obtained a report from the BCKL&WN for costings of demolition, refurbishment or replacement of the toilet block on The Howdale. In their report they suggested that the toilets were not fundamentally linked to shopping or tourism. The quotations were as follows:

- Internal refurbishment – £30,000.

- Substantial changes to the toilet block (installing single unisex and disabled units, attendant support, etc) – £50,000.
- Interim minor works and decoration – £3,000.
- Demolition – £15,000.
- Replacement toilet block – £80,000.

With the imminent preparation of Council precepts, Cllr Mrs Mellish urged the Town Council to consider whether it would like to take over the responsibility of The Howdale by the next financial year.

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

- The toilets on the Memorial Playing Field are not linked to shopping or tourism but these have not been vandalised (MGF).
- The Town Council is not being kept involved with the decision making (JG).
- The toilet block should be enhanced whereby it would not require regular supervision (SMN).
- A CCTV camera, linked to King’s Lynn, will shortly be placed opposite the toilet block which should reduce crime (PBS).
- The interior decoration is not too bad; it is external refurbishment that is required (PBS).
- The Town Council would need assurance from the BCKL&WN that the toilet block will be maintained after it has been refurbished (ADS).
- The toilets could be opened at 8.00am and closed at 6.00pm by an attendant (VFS).
- Young people could be asked to refurbish the building (SMN).
- The toilets should have auto-locking (MGF).
- Hazel Blears recently announced that Local Authorities are compelled to maintain public toilets (SCT).
- The toilet block is very close to residential properties, which can be distressing for those residents, who witness vandalism, verbal abuse and drug taking (DJS).
- The toilets are frequently used during Festival Week (VFS).

Councillors agreed that the interim minor works and decoration, at a cost of £3,000, should take place. Cllr Mrs Mellish would report back to the BCKL&WN.

The Mayor, Cllr Leach, resumed the meeting.

1390. To receive reports from representatives from Outside Bodies and Working Parties

i) Local Development Framework

Cllr Clark reported that a meeting with Mr Alan Gomm, LDF Manager, BCKL&WN, had been cancelled and would be rescheduled. There was nothing further to report.

ii) West Norfolk Sports Council

Cllr Pyatt read a report regarding the West Norfolk Sports Council (Appendix 3).

Cllr Ford volunteered to attend meetings of the Downham Sports Federation and liaise with Cllr Pyatt, who could then report back to the West Norfolk Sports Council.

The Clerk would write to Cllr Mrs Elizabeth Nockolds to arrange a meeting with the Downham Sports Federation and members of the Town Council.

iii) Joint Burial Committee

A report regarding the Joint Burial Committee precept had been circulated by Cllr Fox (Appendix 4).

A short discussion took place. It was noted that a 3% increase in the Joint Burial Committee was high. Cllr Teverson advised that the Town Council were obliged to pay this precept, no matter what the figures were, according to the Local Government Act 1972.

The Clerk would ask Cllr Fox to submit a copy of the Joint Burial accounts to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

1391. Town Hall

i) Report from Town Hall Management Team

Cllr Ford reported that the Feasibility Study would commence in two weeks time; completion date six weeks thereafter.

The Terms of Reference for the Town Hall Management Team were being reviewed and would be presented to Full Council in the new year.

1392. Fire Station Car Park

i) Report from the Working Party on the Heritage Centre

There was nothing to report to this meeting.

1393. Report on the Howdale Community Centre

i) To agree borrowing approval for £80,000 for the purchase of the Howdale Community Centre

Cllr Pyatt reported that NALC had confirmed that the Council would need to apply for borrowing approval for the £80,000 for the purchase of the Howdale Community Centre. NCC agreed that the money could be repaid over 4 years at £20,000 per annum plus interest.

Proposed – Cllr Pyatt

Seconded – Cllr Groom

‘That this Council applies for borrowing approval for the sum of £80,000 plus interest for the purchase of the Howdale Community Centre from the Communities and Local Government Office.’

All in favour

1394. Car Park Charging – Report from Cllr J K Fox

There was nothing to report to this meeting.

1395. To adopt the Freedom of Information Act New Model Publication Scheme

A copy of the Freedom of Information Act New Model Publication Scheme had been circulated (Appendix 5).

Proposed – Cllr Doyle

Seconded – Cllr Ford

‘That this Council adopts the Freedom of Information Act New Model Publication Scheme.’

All in favour

1396. To discuss the future development of the land adjacent to the Relief Channel

Cllr Mrs Nunn had declared a pecuniary interest in this item and left the meeting at 8.43pm.

Cllr Teverson read a report regarding the possible future development of the land adjacent to the Relief Channel (Appendix 6).

The Mayor, Cllr Leach, adjourned the meeting in order to allow Cllr Mrs Mellish to speak.

Cllr Mrs Mellish reported that she had communicated with a BCKL&WN Planning Officer who had confirmed that a change of use for this site should not be a problem. The area was confirmed as being in Flood Zone 3.

The Mayor, Cllr Leach, resumed the meeting.

A short discussion took place and Councillors agreed that this site should be investigated in further detail.

Proposed – Cllr Groom

Seconded – Cllr Mrs Roberts

‘That this Council investigates the possible purchase of the land adjacent to the Relief Channel and notifies the relevant people of this Council’s interest.’

All in favour

A Working Party was formed, the members being Cllr Groom, Cllr Sharman, Cllr Mrs Sharp, Cllr Teverson (as Chairman) and Cllr Wallace. Cllr Teverson wished to note that he would only stand on this Working Party for the initial project work.

Cllr Mrs Nunn returned to the meeting at 9.01pm.

1397. To discuss taking back the remaining Town’s assets held by the BCKL&WN

A short discussion took place and Councillors agreed that the Town Council should pursue the acquisition of The Willows Nature Reserve, Memorial Playing Fields and The Howdale.

The Mayor, Cllr Leach, confirmed that a meeting was being held with Cllr Nick Daubney, Leader of the BCKL&WN, on Monday, 17th November 2008, when this item would be raised again.

1398. To discuss any urgent items as agreed by the Mayor

There were no urgent items to be discussed at this meeting.

**1399. To discuss the proposition from the Planning and Environmental Committee:
‘That this Committee recommends to Full Council the adoption of the Town Design Statement – Supplementary “Guidelines for Developers”’**

A copy of the Guidelines for Developers had been circulated (Appendix 7).

Proposed – Cllr Mrs Sharp

Seconded – Cllr Geary

‘That this Council adopts the Town Design Statement – Supplementary “Guidelines for Developers”.’

For – 11

Against – 4

Abstentions – 3

Cllr Ford left the meeting at 9.12pm.

Proposed – The Mayor Cllr Leach

‘To invoke standing order 17, in order to vary the order of business and allow the Human Resources item to be discussed at this time.’

All in favour

1400. Human Resources

i) Confidential Report

A Human Resources report had been circulated (Appendix 8). None of the items within the report were confidential. Cllr Mrs Sharp read the report.

A copy of the Council Training Policy had been circulated (Appendix 9). A short discussion took place and it was agreed to remove the following paragraph:

‘That the Town Council will evaluate the effectiveness of all training’.

Proposed – Cllr Mrs Sharp

Seconded – Cllr Mrs Roberts

‘That this Council adopts the Training Policy with the removal of the paragraph as stated above.’

All in favour

On behalf of the Human Resources Committee Cllr Mrs Sharp congratulated Cllr Doyle for all the work he had done on the staff restroom (portacabin).

1401. Mayors Announcements

- Wednesday, 26th November 2008 at 7.30pm – Mayor’s At Home, Town Hall.
- Saturday, 29th November 2008 – Mayoress’ Coffee Morning, Town Hall in aid of Break Charity.
- Saturday, 29th November 2008 – Royal British Legion Dinner and Dance, Town Hall.
- Sunday, 30th November 2008 at 12.00pm – Lights Switch-On, Main events being held on the Town Hall Car Park and Town Square.
- Friday, 12th and 19th December 2008 – School Choirs, Town Square.

The Mayor, Cllr Leach, wished everyone a very happy Christmas and a prosperous new year.

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.22pm.

Chairman

Date