

## DOWNHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

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### MINUTES OF MEETING HELD TUESDAY, 11<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2007 AT 7.30PM

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Present:	The Mayor	Cllr J W Doyle
	The Deputy Mayor	Cllr R Leach
	Councillors	S W Blyth
		W A Clark
		M G Ford
		J K Fox
		P E Freeman
		S F Geary
		J Groom
		Mrs R J Keates
		Mrs S M Nunn
		Mrs G S S Purslow
		C Pyatt
		C T Sampson
		Mrs P B Sharp
		A D Stacey
		V F Starling
	County Councillor	Mrs S E L Hutson
	Borough Councillors	J R Legg
		Mrs K Mellish
	Town Clerk	Mrs J M Markwell

Deputy Clerk	Mrs S D Porter
Norfolk Constabulary	PC A Deadman
Norfolk Constabulary	PCSO C Law
Press Correspondent	Ms S Hewitt
Downham Market by Design	Ms R M Bodle
Members of Public	2

**1108. To receive members Apologies for Absence**

Apologies had been received from Cllr J J Reed (health reasons), Cllr Mrs P A Roberts (holiday) and Cllr S C Teverson (previous commitment).

Apologies had also been received from Inspector M Bates, Norfolk Constabulary.

The apologies were accepted.

**1109. Evacuation Procedures**

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

**1110. To receive members Declarations of Interest**

The Mayor, Cllr Doyle, Cllr Fox, Cllr Leach and Cllr Mrs Sharp declared a prejudicial interest in Item 1116, to approve the Payment of Bills.

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

### Police Report

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PC Deadman reported:

There had been 75 reported crimes over the past two months, 19 (25%) of which had been detected:

- 0 Burglaries to dwellings.
- 6 Burglaries to garage/sheds.
- 15 Reports of criminal damage.
- 4 Possession of drugs.
- 7 Drive offs.
- 1 Robbery.
- 1 Theft from motor vehicles.
- 2 Theft of motor vehicles.
- 25 Other thefts.
- 11 Violence against the person.
- 3 Other crimes.

Cllr Mrs Nunn arrived at the meeting at 7.34pm.

PC Deadman advised that a 'Pub watch' system had now been launched in Town and was already proving to be successful.

The resident at 2 Broadlands had requested that a goal post be painted on the nearby wall in order to stop children kicking their footballs against his fence. The Development Committee would look into this.

The shoe shop in the High Street had now stopped parking two vehicles outside his premises but the problems with Cannon Tyres had not disappeared. PC Deadman confirmed that he would ask Insp Bates to contact Highways to investigate how to deal with the parking problems on Church Road.

A member of public arrived at the meeting at 7.38pm.

It was noted that litter bins had been set light to in the Town yesterday evening. PC Deadman would be on watch tomorrow evening in plain clothes.

Cllr Pyatt reported that a fence in The Paddocks had been cut and older children were getting through and bullying the smaller children in the play area. PC Deadman would investigate this.

Cllr Mrs Sharp reported that many people were parking all day in the ½ hour restricted lay-bys in Bridge Street and High Street. PC Deadman would investigate this.

It was also noted that cars were consistently parking on the green area in Church Road and blocking the pavement. This item would be raised at the Car parks and Highways Committee meeting.

PC Deadman and PCSO Law left the Council Chambers at 7.45pm.

### Public Participation

Members of the public did not wish to address the meeting.

## County Councillor Report

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Cllr Mrs Hutson advised that because there were double yellow lines around Cannon Square there was little Highways could do to alleviate the parking problems and this was a police matter. It was noted that Highways would be expected to assist the police with the parking problems on the pavements but not the roads.

Cllr Mrs Hutson reported:

- A meeting had been held between NCC and the Town Council regarding the redesign of Cannon Square. NCC Officers had also visited all the surrounding businesses for their comments and new designs would be drawn up.
- The Borough Council had placed three taxi ranks in Bridge Street, outside Barclays Bank, which had taken away valuable on street parking places. Cllr Fox suggested that they should be policed because taxi cabs were also using them for their own personal use.
- The Norwich City Council Unitary bid had been turned down as it had not met the criteria. However it is clear that the Government is determined that Norwich should become a unitary authority and they were now instructing the Boundary Committee (as it now is, rather than the previous independent Boundary Commission) to review the boundaries of the city with a view to enabling them to become unitary. That would have a knock on effect for the whole of the county.

## Borough Councillor Reports and Questions

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Cllr Mrs Mellish reported:

- The scaffolding in High Street South had now been removed.

Cllr Mrs Mellish advised that all Council minutes should in future be emailed to the Borough Councillors.

The Mayor, Cllr Doyle, resumed the meeting.

**1111. To approve the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting**

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The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday, 10<sup>th</sup> July 2007 (pages 2186-2193) were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

**1112. To receive Correspondence**

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

There were no questions.

**1113. Councillor's Questions**

Q: Why has the Town Hall car park been repaired with black asphalt squares? (JG).

A: The stone slabs were a trip hazard and were replaced with aluminium studs set in asphalt. However the workmanship is not satisfactory and a meeting to discuss this will be held with the contractors and Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Car Parks and Highways Committee.

**1114. To Adopt the Standing Committee Minutes**

Development Committee

**Proposed – Cllr Ford**

**Seconded – Cllr Starling**

**‘That the minutes of the Development Committee meeting of Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> July 2007 (pages 2200-2203) be adopted.’**

**All in favour**

Finance and General Purposes Committee

**Proposed – Cllr Sampson**

**Seconded – Cllr Blyth**

**‘That the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting of Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> August 2007 (pages 2210-2214) 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, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2007 (pages 2194-2197) be adopted.’**

**All in favour**

Planning and Environmental Committee

**Proposed – Cllr Fox**

**Seconded – Cllr Freeman**

**‘That the minutes of the Planning and Environmental Committee meetings of Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> June 2007 (pages 2175-2183), Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> July 2007 (pages 2184-2185), Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> July 2007 (pages 2198-2199), Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> August 2007 (pages 2204-2209) and Tuesday, 21<sup>st</sup> August 2007 (pages 2215-2221) be adopted.’**

**All in favour**

**1115. To receive the Clerk’s Report**

The Clerk had nothing to report to this meeting.

**1116. To approve the Payment of Bills**

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

The Mayor, Cllr Doyle, Cllr Fox, Cllr Leach and Cllr Mrs Sharp had declared a prejudicial interest in this item.

**Proposed – Cllr Sampson      Seconded – Cllr Stacey**

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

**All in favour**

**1117. Update on the acquisition of the Town Hall**

A report and schedule had been circulated (Appendix 3).

Cllr Ford reported that the Heads of Terms had now been agreed. He then provided a summary of the report which had been circulated. It was noted that the Borough Council staff would support the Town Council with all bookings for the first year. The Away Day being held on Saturday, 6<sup>th</sup> October 2007, would allow Councillors to discuss the future management of the Town Hall in greater detail.

Cllr Teverson had issued members his concerns regarding the acquisition of the Town Hall. These were duly noted. A long discussion took place and members agreed that the Town Council should proceed with the purchase of the Town Hall.

**Proposed – Cllr Ford**

**Seconded – Cllr Sampson**

**‘That the transfer of the Town Hall and its assets should transfer without further delay and the solicitors be instructed to proceed.’**

**All in favour**

The Mayor, Cllr Doyle, noted that the back door on the Town Hall had today been replaced by the BCKL&WN.

The Mayor, Cllr Doyle, congratulated Cllr Ford for the hard work he had put in for the acquisition of the Town Hall.

**1118. To discuss request for funding for Downham Market by Design**

A report from the Chairman of Downham Market by Design, Ms Bodle, had been circulated (Appendix 4).

A long discussion took place; Councillors made the following comments/suggestions:

- Downham Market by Design has done a wonderful job over the past two years for the completion of the Town Design Statement and it will be an important document for the Town. The Town Council has supported it financially during that process but because it is an independent body it should now be self financing, although the Town Council could contribute a starter fund.
- The Town Council supports and donates annual grants to other large Committees in the Town and could consider doing this for Downham Market by Design.
- The Town Design Statement will form a major part of the planning process and the Town Council should provide support.
- Downham Market by Design should not be an organ of the Town Council.
- It is the intention of Downham Market by Design to develop the Town Design Statement through Downham Market and its hinterland. As the document will involve other parishes, funding should also be provided by them.
- The Planning and Environmental Committee funded the Town Design Statement through to the publication of the document. Now that it has changed its name under a constitution it is an independent body and should remain so.

The Mayor, Cllr Doyle, adjourned the meeting in order to allow Ms Bodle to address the meeting.

Ms Bodle advised that research, public consultation and a vast amount of work from many local volunteers had taken place over the past 2½ years and the publishing of the final document was imminent. However the document will invariably need updating, possibly every 2 years, and when the Local Development Framework is adopted and published it is probable that it will need updating again. Downham West Parish Council has offered support.

The Mayor, Cllr Doyle, resumed the meeting.

Councillors added further comments/suggestions:

- Paragraph 4 of the constitution states the Town Council's address as the contact point. It was agreed that the Town Council's address should be deleted.
- The Town Council's meeting room could be used for occasional free use when the Downham Market by Design group needs to meet. However it was noted that the Town Council had recently turned down the WI for the use of the meeting room.

Cllr Legg left the Council Chambers at 8.59pm.

The Mayor, Cllr Doyle, adjourned the meeting in order to allow Ms Bodle to address the meeting.

Ms Bodle advised that further consultations would be taking place and a meeting would be held in the Town Hall. In order for these consultations to take place Downham Market by Design would require financial help.

Cllr Ford, Chairman of the Development Committee, agreed to take this matter forward at the next Committee meeting.

Cllr Mrs Mellish and a member of the public left the Council Chambers at 9.01pm.

**1119. To discuss the upgrading of the area surrounding the War Memorial**

There was nothing to report to this meeting.

**1120. Report on the Howdale Community Centre**

There was nothing to report to this meeting.

**1121. To discuss letter from Christopher Fraser, MP**

The Mayor, Cllr Doyle, reported that a letter had been received from Christopher Fraser, MP regarding constituents' issues about The Howdale. A response had been sent from the Clerk. The letter would be available for Councillors to view in correspondence.

Ms Bodle left the Council Chambers at 9.02pm.

**1122. Update on the Water Festival**

The Mayor, Cllr Doyle, advised that earlier this year the Development Committee had invited him to do something to highlight the river areas of the Town. A small group had previously attempted this, but failed, and the Town Council felt it could benefit from their experience, and a Committee was formed. Mr Howard Phillips was elected as Chairman for the Committee. Cllr Leach, and later Cllr Blyth, joined the Committee. During the initial meetings it was felt that dragon boat racing would be spectacular and provide the impact the Town Council were looking for. After presenting estimated figures to the Town Council and approval to proceed, the Water Festival was born. Whilst keeping a tight control of the finances it was agreed that the event should be free for all visitors.

On the morning of the Water Festival the Committee were not sure how successful it would be. It was not until Cllr Mrs Hutson arrived and said that having just driven through Downham Market it seemed as if the whole Town were on the streets, heading towards the river. Excellent feedback had been received from those involved in the dragon boat racing and the Deputy Clerk was rescued from the river by a Newfoundland dog! It was a marvellous day for the Town, and those involved, including this Council, can be proud of its achievements. In February 2007 the Council agreed to underwrite a budget of £7,014 to cover the event. The event came in under budget and the final cost to the Council, with sponsorship, less donations, would be approximately £3200.

Councillors congratulated the Water Festival Committee for working extremely hard and holding an excellent event. It was agreed that the Mayor, Cllr Doyle, should obtain estimates with the aim to holding this event in 2008.

**1123. To discuss sports issues**

Cllr Ford reported that a meeting had been held a week ago at the sports hall on the Memorial Playing Fields regarding the possibility of having a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) on the existing tennis courts area. Mr Neil Grommett would be conducting a survey, at a cost of £4,000, to establish what sport facilities people wanted in the Town. It was suggested at that meeting that the Town Council may wish to contribute to the cost of the survey – this would be taken to the Development Committee for consideration.

**Proposed – The Mayor Cllr Doyle**

**‘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**

A member of public left the Council Chambers at 9.12pm.

**1124. To discuss any urgent items as agreed by the Mayor**

There were no urgent items to discuss at this meeting.

**1125. Mayor’s Announcements**

- Anglia in Bloom Award Ceremony – Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup> September 2007, Ipswich – The Mayor, Deputy Clerk and Community Development Officer would be attending.
- Charity Evening – Thursday, 27<sup>th</sup> September 2007, Titash Indian restaurant, sittings at 5.30pm and 8.00pm – 30% of the takings will go to The Norfolk Hospice Tapping House.
- Mayor’s Charity Evening – Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> October 2007 at 7.30pm, Town Hall.
- St George’s Day Commemoration (to coincide with William Shakespeare’s birthday) – April 2008 – The Town will be dressed in flags, two concerts will be held and many other events will take place on the Town Square including an enactment of George and the Dragon, maypole dancing, Morris dancers, etc and Shakespeare readings from the balcony of the Town Hall.
- Mayor’s Awards for Young People (sponsored by the Lynn News) – Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2008, Town Hall – The deadline for nominations will be Friday, 18<sup>th</sup> January 2008.

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**Proposed – The Mayor Cllr Doyle**

**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**

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**1126. Human Resources report (confidential item)**

See Confidential Report.

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

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.19pm.