

**DOWNHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD TUESDAY, 9<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 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
		J K Fox
		P E Freeman
		J Groom
		R Leach
		Mrs S M Nunn
		S W Nunn
		C Pyatt
		J J Reed
		Mrs P A Roberts
		C T Sampson
		P B Sharp
		A D Stacey
		V F Starling
	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

Press Correspondent Ms S Hewitt

Members of Public 1

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

Apologies had been received from Cllrs C D Bond (work commitment) and S C Teverson (no reason provided).

Cllr Bond's apology was accepted. Members wished Cllr Teverson to provide an explanation for his apology.

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

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, and Cllrs Bodle and Doyle declared a prejudicial interest in Item 954, To approve the Payment of Bills.

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

The Borough Councillors had nothing to report at this meeting.

**County Councillor Report and Questions**

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Cllr Mrs Hutson reported:

- Norfolk County Council would be totally opposed to Norwich City Council's bid for unitary status; the set up costs alone would be £12m,

which could be better spent on essential public services. Cllr Mrs Hutson hoped the Town Council would also be against this proposal, and its response would need to be received by NCC by 15<sup>th</sup> January 2007.

- The County's increase in Council Tax was likely to be in the region of 4.5-5% on the 2006/2007 figure due to further funding being cut from central Government, which results in an overall loss of up to £21m. NCC is investigating the possibility of switching street lighting off from 12am-5.30am to save costs. This proposal is in the preliminary stages and it is not yet known whether it will take place.
- Central Government has cut £1m from the promised funding for Police Community Service Officers (PCSO's).

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, resumed the meeting.

**948. Co-option to fill current casual vacancy in Downham Market North Ward**

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Two candidates had applied in writing asking to be considered for co-option in the North Ward; Mr Matt Banks and Mr Kenneth Byron. Copies of their letters had been circulated to all members. The Mayor, Cllr Ford, advised that no other written applications had been received.

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, invited Mr Byron to address the Councillors and adjourned the meeting.

Mr Byron provided a brief history of himself and the Mayor, Cllr Ford, resumed the meeting.

Councillors completed a secret ballot. The Town Clerk and Deputy Clerk counted the votes and sealed the ballot papers. The Mayor, Cllr Ford, declared that Mr Byron had received the majority vote.

Mr Byron was duly elected as the new Town Councillor and signed his Declaration of Office and Code of Conduct. The Mayor, Cllr Ford, welcomed Mr Byron to the Council and he joined the meeting.

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

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The minutes of the Town Council meetings held on Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> November 2006 (pages 1985-1994) and Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> December 2006 (pages 2023-2026) were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

**950. To receive Correspondence**

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

Cllr Bodle advised that a response regarding the unitary bid should be received by NCC by 15<sup>th</sup> January 2007. It was therefore agreed that the Committee Chairmen, Deputy Mayor, Mayor, and any other interested Councillors would convene after this meeting to arrange a suitable date to discuss and consider the Town Council's response.

The Clerk reported that the NCAPTC would be giving a presentation on Wednesday, 31<sup>st</sup> January 2007 regarding Quality Parish Status. Councillors interested in attending should advise the Clerk.

**951. Councillor's Questions**

Q: Residents are complaining about the persistent bonfires being held in the daytime by builders working in the vicinity. Could the Clerk contact Environmental Services to report this? (RL).

A: Yes.

Q: Are the BCKL&WN Planning Case Officers making life difficult for the Planning and Environmental Committee? (RJR).

A: The BCKL&WN Planning department has recently been reorganised. Communication has improved vastly and correspondence has increased, which are both a vast improvement.

**952. 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 meeting of Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> October 2006 (pages 1967-1975), Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2006 (pages 1995-1997), Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> November 2006 (pages 2008-2011) and Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2006 (pages 2027-2033) be adopted.’**

**All in favour**

Development Committee

It was noted that the last sentence in the second paragraph of page 1964, Item 624, should read, ‘It was noted that the land adjacent to Heygates had been earmarked for employment use.’

**Proposed – Cllr Mrs Roberts**

**Seconded – Cllr Bodle**

**‘That the minutes of the Development Committee meetings of Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> October 2006 (pages 1962-1966), Wednesday, 31<sup>st</sup> October 2006 (pages 1980-1982) and Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> November 2006 (pages 2003-2007) be adopted.’**

**All in favour**

Car Parks and Highways Committee

**Proposed – Cllr Stacey**

**Seconded – Cllr Freeman**

**‘That the minutes of the Car Parks and Highways Committee meetings of Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2006 (pages 1983-1984) and Tuesday, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2006 (pages 1998-2002) be adopted.’**

**All in favour**

Finance and General Purposes Committee

**Proposed – Cllr Sampson**

**Seconded – Cllr Pyatt**

**‘That the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meetings of Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> October 2006 (pages 1976-1979), Tuesday, 5<sup>th</sup> December 2006 (pages 2012-2017) and Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> December 2006 (pages 2018-2022) be adopted.’**

**All in favour**

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

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

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

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

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

**Proposed – Cllr Stacey**

**Seconded – Cllr Sampson**

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

**For – 14 Against – 0  
Vote – 1**

**Abstentions – 3 (Declared Interests)**

**No**

**955. Update on Town Hall**

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, reported that he had obtained the latest booking details from the BCKL&WN excluding the final two months of 2006, which would follow shortly. The BCKL&WN were currently having difficulty in obtaining indemnity insurance; this to be discussed by the Working Party at their next meeting.

**956. To agree the Precept for the Financial Year 2007/2008 as recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee**

The 2007/2008 proposed budget had been circulated (Appendix 4).

Cllr Doyle commended the Chairmen of each Committee in sustaining a low increase.

Cllr Doyle wished to note that 2007 would be the 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary for the Royal British Legion, and the main war memorial should be restored in recognition of this. Cllr Doyle advised that he had, prior to the meeting, discussed the possibility of adding £1,500 to the budget with the Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, Cllr Sampson.

Cllr Sampson reported that he had discussed this with the Clerk and it would be reasonable to add this to the budget.

Cllr Sampson advised that a dual budget had been set by the Finance and General Purposes Committee; one to include the Town Hall figures and one without. As it now seemed unlikely that the transfer of the Town Hall would take place in April 2007, the budget which included the Town Hall figures would not be considered at this stage.

Cllr Bodle was concerned that although the Town Council were anticipating ambitious ventures in the future, budgets were not being set for such projects. As the Town Council did not have constraints on its budget such as NCC and the BCKL&WN, it should be more creative and disciplined regarding putting money aside each year. This was noted.

**Proposed – Cllr Sampson      Seconded – Cllr Baker**

**‘That the Town Council precept for the financial year 2007/2008 is £204,100, plus an additional £1,500 for the war memorial, making a total of £205,600. If confirmation of the acquisition of the Town Hall in the financial year 2006/2007 is received before 20<sup>th</sup> January 2007 the figures may be revised accordingly.’**

**For – 17 Against – 0      Abstentions – 0      No Vote – 1**

It was noted that the Town Council’s budget had increased by approximately 3.5%.

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

Cllr Pyatt reported that the Howdale Management Committee would like to place a notice board within the Town Centre, to be sponsored by local businesses. It was agreed that the Management Committee should confirm where they would like the notice board to be situated and refer this to the Planning and Environmental Committee for approval.

Cllr Pyatt advised that signs would shortly be erected around the grounds of the Howdale Community Centre advising that dogs were not permitted on the fields.

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

As detailed in the Clerk's Report, Cllr Fox reported that the Town Council's Solicitor had read the Terms of Sale from NPS and approved its content.

NPS were insisting that a Level 3 asbestos survey had to be carried out by a member of their accredited suppliers. A Level 3 asbestos survey must be obtained because the building which is going to remain would be a public access. The Clerk was currently obtaining quotations.

Cllr Fox advised that if the Town Council were to purchase the Fire Station site it would then be able to contract a Level 3 asbestos survey to a company of its choice.

**Proposed – Cllr Doyle**

**Seconded – Cllr Mrs Roberts**

**'That the Council proceeds with the purchase of the fire station site and carries out the asbestos survey after the completion of sale.'**

**For – 17 Against – 0 Abstentions – 0**

**No Vote – 1**

**959. Report from D2 meeting:**

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a) **Mobile CCTV**

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, advised that the cost for permanent CCTV would be very expensive and as a consequence had to be placed on hold. However, the £16,000 available in the budget could be used for a mobile scheme. Hunstanton had already piloted this and reported that crime was reduced by 35%.

Cllr Fox noted that negotiations for a mobile CCTV scheme had been discussed previously but was eventually rejected as the costs for the supply and fixture of the brackets would be too high.

It was agreed that as it would not be costing the Council any money the recommendation from this Council to the D2 Action Group would be to proceed.

b) **Graffiti Wall**

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, advised that an article had gone into the Lynn News regarding a graffiti wall, although the site had not yet been announced.

**960. Report on Anglia in Bloom**

Cllr Doyle reported that the plans for Anglia in Bloom were progressing well. The next Working Party meeting would be held on Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> January 2007 to consider the main points.

It was noted that the various war memorials around Town all needed tidying up. Cllr Doyle advised that this work would not fall within Anglia in Bloom. Cllr Mrs Roberts noted that the restoration of war memorials was not the

responsibility of Parish and Town Councils, as they were originally erected and raised by public prescription.

**961. To discuss bringing the Circus to Downham Market in March 2007**

Cllr Reed advised that he had attempted to secure a circus for one week on the Howdale, week commencing Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> March 2007. It would be anticipated that Jay Miller's Circus would attend, as they did so in 2006, and provide 5-6 performances during that week. The circus would not have any wild animals.

Cllr Stacey wished to note that Cllr Reed had gone to a lot of trouble organising a fair initially and then a circus as an alternative event, for which he should be commended.

**Proposed – Cllr Reed Seconded – Cllr Stacey**

**'That this Council attempts to secure a circus on the Howdale during the week commencing 26<sup>th</sup> March 2007 to perform for a full week.'**

**For – 15 Against – 2 Abstentions – 0 No Vote – 1**

**962. 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 reported that the Planning and Environmental Committee members had agreed this policy wording. Councillors were asked to examine the wording and report back at the next Full Council meeting. The Clerk would add this item to the next agenda.

It was noted that this policy should be written within the Standing Orders when it had been approved.

**963. Proposed by Cllr Mrs S M Nunn**

**'That the Town Council writes to the Refuse Service Team protesting against the recent leaflet – Bank Holiday Collection'**

Cllr Mrs Nunn advised that the following statement on the BCKL&WN leaflet headed, 'Bank Holiday Collection' was unjust, "We require you to place waste and recycling at the collection point by 7.00am. You must not put out items for collection before 7.00pm the day before collection."

It was noted that failure to comply could result in a £1,000 fine.

Many Downham Market residents are elderly and some feel vulnerable and threatened in the dark. It would not be reasonable to expect them to put their wheelie bins out after 7.00pm, particularly if the weather conditions were wet or icy, which could cause them to have a nasty accident.

Cllr Mrs Nunn requested that Ms Hewitt write about this in her next article in the Lynn News.

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, adjourned the meeting.

Cllr Mrs Mellish advised that a scheme was in place for elderly, disabled or infirm residents who find it difficult to place their bins on the pavement. Those wishing to arrange an alternative collection point at their property should write to Cllr Brian Long at the BCKL&WN. They should state where they would wish their bins to be collected from and the reason why.

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, resumed the meeting.

**Proposed – Cllr Mrs Nunn**

**Seconded – Cllr Groom**

**‘That the Town Council writes to the Refuse Service Team protesting against the recent leaflet – Bank Holiday Collection.’**

**For – 13 Against – 4 Abstentions – 0**

**No Vote – 1**

**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.’**

**For – 17 Against – 0 Abstentions – 0**

**No Vote – 1**

**964. Mayor’s Announcements**

- Mayors Award for Citizenship – Town Hall, Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2007, 6.00pm-8.00pm. The Mayor, Cllr Ford, would be examining the nominations shortly. It is hoped all Councillors can attend this event.

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

**‘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.’**

**For – 17 Against – 0 Abstentions – 0**

**No Vote – 1**

Cllrs Mrs Hutson, Legg, Lovett and Mrs Mellish and Ms Hewitt left the Council Chambers at 8.55pm. Cllr Baker left the meeting at 8.55pm.

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

See Confidential Report.

**Proposed – Cllr Reed**

**Seconded – Cllr Groom**

**‘That this Council accepts the contract from Country Grounds Maintenance to take effect as soon as possible.’**

**For – 16 Against – 1 Abstentions – 0**

**No Vote – 1**

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

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.05pm.