

Administrator

Mrs K J Martin

Press Correspondent Ms S Hewitt

Members of Public 14

813. Election of Mayor

The Mayor, Cllr Sampson, addressed the Councillors:

“Well, that was the year, that was!”

“Before we proceed with the agenda for this evening I believe that I am allowed to say a few words about the last year.

“When I was confirmed and then installed as Mayor of Downham Market a year ago, the feeling of pride, in the real sense of the word, was dominant. A degree of humility followed as soon as I sat in this chair. I remember saying that evening that there were some things that I wanted to achieve during my year as the figurehead of the council.

“Well, I think some things were achieved, certainly many things have been taken forward and some further than expected and some things haven’t changed at all. I feel a degree of frustration over the things that are dragging on a bit and a sense of disappointment where we, the Town Council, have not always been supported by higher authority. I know that I said there would be no political correctness from me and I hope that I have been true to that ideal. It is absolutely certain that it is only these substantial chair arms that have saved me from broken ribs because I know Jean has been horrified at my attitude to certain issues! I start campaigning for stocks on the Town Square tomorrow and for the power to use them the day after!”

“There have been many good things happening in Town during the year, some new initiatives and some continuing ones. Most have the backing of all in the Town but some, I know, do not have everyone’s blessing. What I am certain of, however, is that

all the events we hold in the Town are beneficial to Downham Market in the final analysis. When Sue and I have been “abroad”, in places such as Wisbech, Peterborough, Ely or Boston, on civic duties it is very, very clear that other towns and cities look upon Downham Market with some envy. They know we have a good Town Council – members and staff – and a good Town and that between us we get most things right, most of the time. Several of our neighbours would love to have a reputation like that.

“There is an interesting time ahead for us all. Many challenges await us but I firmly believe we are ready to meet them and make them opportunities for advancement. We have, after all, a seasoned sailor taking over the helm so we really have no excuse for not sailing a true course!

“One of the things I have discovered about the Town during this last year is that there are a large number of local government officers from all parts of the country who have retired here. That gives me great reassurance because they must have done their homework and decided that life here in Downham Market must have something good going for it! May we all continue to work in harmony to the greater good of the Town in particular and increasingly to our hinterland.

“Finally, may I thank all you Councillors for debating the issues so well, the Council staff for implementing our decisions – or telling so nicely that we can’t do certain things – and for the administration of all our various civic functions and last, but not least, the Mayoress. Sue has travelled on this exciting trip with me and has, I think, enjoyed it every bit as much as I have. She has mentioned the piles of paper on the study floor once or twice but lives in hope of seeing the carpet one day! I will clear it tomorrow, honest!

“Thank you for giving me the privilege of being Mayor of Downham Market for this last year.”

CLlr Pyatt addressed the Mayor and Councillors:

“This is the time when the outgoing Mayor can sit back and relax and hand the reins over to somebody else but before that I would like, on behalf of the Council, to say a big thank you to Colin and Sue for their hard work over the past twelve months.

“It does not seem that long since I was proposing him for the position of Mayor. Two Fridays ago I had the call, ‘Get in my office Pyatt I need to go through some paperwork.’ While I was on the floor on my hands and knees, the Mayor arrived saying he had to put up a marquee at 6.30am on Saturday morning, and he could only find one person to help him. Could I help? I did. The point is that Colin was up before 6.30am on Saturday to get the marquee up and then off to get changed to go to the Spalding flower show. This shows the commitment and hard work of our Mayor and the way he has got ‘stuck into’ everything thrown at him and to stand here to thank him seems the least we can do. On behalf of the Council a big thank you to you and Sue for the way you have represented Downham Market and promoted our town.”

Cllr Mrs Nunn addressed the Councillors:

“I have no hesitation in proposing Councillor Mick Ford as our Mayor for this new Council year. If he puts as much into this position as he has all his work for the Town since becoming a Councillor I feel sure he will not fail us, and the Town will have a Mayor it can be proud of.

“He has valuable managerial experience and excellent communication skills. He will, if elected, represent the Town well in the Borough and the surrounding districts. He has energy and vision and I particularly like his ideas for involving young people in the affairs of our Town. It could be a very challenging year for us all but I am sure it would be rewarding.

“With his sure hand on the tiller and given a fair wind I feel confident that he would keep us on the right track.”

Cllr Stacey addressed the Councillors:

“Cllr Mrs Nunn has said all that I could have done in proposing Cllr Ford as Mayor for the coming year, however I thought that it would be interesting to look back on what I said when proposing him as him as Mayor Elect last January. When making this kind of proposition there is always the temptation to exaggerate a person’s good points and to minimise failings; to invent the attractive features and quietly to forget the mistakes. I just wondered what I had said about Mick that fell into one of these categories!

“I looked at my notes but try as I might I could not find one instance of exaggeration or cover up so it is with some relief that I can put my hand on my heart and say that I sincerely believe that Cllr Ford should be Mayor for the coming year and am happy to second Cllr Nunn’s proposition that this should be so.”

Proposed – Cllr Mrs Nunn Seconded – Cllr Stacey

‘That Cllr Ford is elected as Mayor for the coming year’.

All in Favour

Cllr Ford and Mrs Ford received their chains of office.

814. Mayor Making and Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Cllr Ford made his Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Mayor.

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, addressed the Council:

“Firstly may I thank Cllrs Mrs Nunn & Stacey for nominating and seconding me. I consider it a privilege to represent our beautiful little market Town. Hazel, is, like me looking forward to meeting as many townsfolk as possible and spearheading what I consider to be a very forward looking Town council.

“There are many challenges ahead for local government not least the increasing workload being devolved to us from on high and often without the finance to support that. Our Town is growing rapidly and we need to ensure the infrastructure is there to support that growth. I know the Planning Committee is attempting to bring some Section 106 monies into Town via developers. Until now it has been taken by the County and we have not benefited, which cannot be right.

*“We are very much a small business getting larger annually. We need to grasp opportunities as they arise. We must also ensure we are not continually expecting the electorate to pay for developments. In other words we need to seek additional funding streams away from the **normal** precept model.*

“It will come as no surprise to learn that I still wish to widen the debate around the Town Hall ownership and development. Our Away Day gave us an opportunity to debate the issues. In addition I intend to seek the views of our townsfolk during May to attempt to gauge how they feel about the Town Hall.

“I also wish to ensure greater involvement of the public in both Council meetings and to make them feel they can make changes but need to engage to do so. We need to ensure that everyone who comes to our meetings is made to feel welcome and listened to.

“I want to promote the young people of Downham Market and to that effect will arrange for a ‘Young Peoples At Home with The Mayor’ in the Town Hall. Here we will acknowledge their contribution to the Town and raise their aspirations. At the same time we will acknowledge those in our local schools who have made significant contributions to their environment, their families or the Town in general. The Charter for Citizenship will be a major plank of this strategy. I would like the school children to identify areas where we can plant trees to green up what is in danger of becoming an asphalt jungle. A Youth Council, Youth Shelter and maybe even a Graffiti Wall will show our young people we respect their wishes and want them to feel able to contribute to the environment etc.

“Whilst I will uphold the traditions of good manners and humility of the Town Mayorship I will also hopefully bring some humour to that role – why I might even wear my shorts to a meeting when it’s too hot to be stuffy! Most of all I look forward to leading by example and hopefully chairing meetings in such a way that we all as volunteers, get home at a reasonable time after Council meetings feeling what we have contributed has made a difference. Thank you for your support we will do our best to represent the Town throughout East Anglia and in Civray later in the year.”

815. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Cllrs R M Bodle (holiday), C D Bond (did not wish to attend), Mrs P M Dean (family commitment), C Russell (out of the country), S C Teverson (work commitment) and Borough Cllrs A M Lovett and J R Legg.

A vote to accept Cllr Bond's apologies took place.

For – 1 Against – 13

The other apologies were accepted.

816. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Beck declared an interest in Item 824, To approve the payment of bills.

817. Election of Deputy Mayor

Cllr Mrs Roberts addressed the Council:

“Mr Mayor, fellow Councillors, Borough and County Councillors, members of public and other distinguished guests, I propose Cllr John Doyle as Deputy Mayor for Downham Market Town Council.

“John has a long history of serving his community wherever he has lived. He is particularly proud of doing his national service in the Royal Navy and I am sure a sense of duty was strengthening in those days. After marrying Audrey they spent most of their working life in London. That sense of duty did not leave him and he was a School Governor for 35 years at a 1600 pupil Dagenham Comprehensive School, and he eventually became Chairman, a daunting task I am sure you will agree.

“They planned to retire to Downham Market some years ago but fell so in love with it, he took early retirement and moved here in 1996. Since then he has put himself forward to serve this Town, his new community, in many ways whether it be on a practical side – putting up shelves for a charity, or volunteering again to become a trustee of Hillcrest school where he is again Chairman.

“He became a Town Councillor, and we know how hard he works for this Town in this role. He has chaired the Planning and Environmental Committee for the past two years, and an active Councillor on the Car Parks and Highways Committee, and if he is chair of a working party it meets to fulfil its remit. He now belongs to the local Royal British Legion and became Vice Chair of the Remembrance Committee. He regularly drives the local transport ambulance to get our elderly and infirm citizens to their social groups.

“I cannot recommend this man too highly. We would have a hard working, committed Councillor who, with his wife Audrey, will be a great support to the new Mayor during 2006/2007. I therefore put forward his name to be Deputy Mayor.”

Proposed – Cllr Mrs Roberts Seconded – Cllr Fox

‘That Cllr Doyle is elected as Deputy Mayor for the coming year.’

All in favour

Cllr Doyle and Mrs Doyle received their chains of office.

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, suspended the meeting at 7.55pm. The newly elected Mayor and Mayoress and Deputy Mayor and Mayoress left the meeting room at 7.55pm in order for the press to take photographs.

The Mayor and Mayoress and Deputy Mayor and Mayoress returned to the meeting room. The Mayor resumed the meeting at 8.02pm.

818. Representatives Appointed to Outside Bodies

The representatives to the various outside bodies were appointed as follows:

West Norfolk MIND – Cllr Mrs P A Roberts.

Joint Burial Committee – Cllr R J R Baker MBE, Mr M J Coles, Cllr J K Fox, Cllr S W Nunn, Cllr C T Sampson and Mr J F Haylett (who will stand down at the next Committee meeting).

Southern Area Road Safety Committee – Cllr J W Doyle, Cllr Mrs S M Nunn, Cllr C Pyatt, Cllr C T Sampson and Cllr A D Stacey.

National Association of Parish and Town Councils – Cllr J W Doyle and Cllr S C Teverson.

Silverdale Centre – Mr T Taylor.

Festival Committee – Cllr A D Stacey and Cllr Mrs V F Starling.

Howdale Community Centre – Cllr R M Bodle, Mr M J Coles, Cllr J Groom, Cllr C Pyatt and Cllr Mrs V Starling.

West Norfolk Tourism Forum – Cllr R M Bodle.

West Norfolk Sports Forum – Cllr C Pyatt.

West Norfolk Arts Forum – Cllr J Groom.

Downham Market Sports Federation – Cllr C Pyatt.

Rural Transport Partnership – this had been disbanded.

Regeneration Partnership – this had been disbanded.

Joint Remembrance Committee – Cllr R J R Baker MBE.

Downham Market Forum for Community Groups – no representatives required.

Crime and Disorder Partnership – Cllr K W Beck and Cllr M G Ford.

School Governors

Minor Authority Governor, Hillcrest (Crimplesham, Downham Market, Stradsett and Wereham) - Mr C Moreton.

Minor Authority Governor, Clackclose Primary School - *vacancy*.

Charities

Batchcroft Charity - Mr P Allen, Mr L Brown and Mrs J Watson.

100 Acre Charity - Mr P Allen, Mr L Brown and Mrs J Watson.

Retreat Almshouses - Mr J Haylett and Mrs J Watson.

819. Appointment of Standing Committees

The Committees were appointed as follows:

Finance & General Purposes

Cllr Baker

Cllr Beck

Cllr Bond

Cllr Mrs Nunn

Cllr Pyatt

Cllr Reed

Cllr Sampson

Cllr Stacey

Cllr Teverson

Planning&Environmental

Cllr Bodle

Cllr Mrs Dean

Cllr Fox

Cllr Groom

Cllr Nunn

Cllr Reed

Cllr Russell

Cllr Sampson

Car Parks & Highways

Cllr Beck

Cllr Bond

Cllr Fox

Cllr Pyatt

Cllr Mrs Roberts

Cllr Russell

Cllr Stacey

Cllr Starling

Development

Cllr Bodle

Cllr Mrs Dean

Cllr Groom

Cllr Mrs Nunn

Cllr Nunn

Cllr Mrs Roberts

Cllr Starling

Cllr Teverson

820. Inspection of Deeds and Trust Instruments

The Mayor, Cllr Ford, reported that a list of all Council properties, together with the deeds, leases and agreements was held in the office for all Councillors to inspect.

821. Minutes of the Full Council Meetings

The minutes of the Town Council meeting would be approved at the next Town Council meeting.

822. Councillors Questions

Q: Will the Town Council be organising any promotional activity to attract potential candidates to stand at the local elections in May 2007? (SWN).

A: The Mayor advised that Councillors Surgeries and open days would be a good avenue to promote this.

823. Clerk's Report

The Clerk's report had been circulated (Appendix 1).

824. To Approve the Payment of Bills

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

Proposed – Cllr Mrs Roberts Seconded – Cllr Pyatt

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

All in Favour

825. Dates and Times of Council and Standing Committee Meetings

A list of the meeting dates had been circulated (Appendix 3).

826. To Confirm Bank Signatories

The bank signatories were confirmed as follows:

Cllrs J W Doyle, M G Ford, J K Fox, C Pyatt, J J Reed, C T Sampson, A D Stacey and S C Teverson.

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.15pm.