

DOWNHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD TUESDAY, 14th FEBRUARY 2006 7.30PM

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Present: The Mayor Cllr C T Sampson

The Deputy Mayor Cllr M G Ford

Councillors R J R Baker MBE

K W Beck

C D Bond

Mrs P M Dean

J W Doyle

J Groom

S W Nunn

Mrs P A Roberts

C Russell

A D Stacey

Mrs V F Starling

Mrs R M Turner

Town Clerk Mrs J M Markwell

Administration Officer Mrs S D Porter

Borough Councillors A M Lovett

Mrs K Mellish

County Councillor Mrs S Hutson

Press Correspondent Ms S Hewitt

757. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Cllrs R M Bodle (illness), J K Fox (Illness), Mrs S M Nunn (holiday), J J Reed (previous engagement) and S C Teverson (work commitment). Cllr C Pyatt did not attend.

The apologies were accepted.

758. Declarations of Interest

The Mayor, Cllr Sampson, declared an interest in Item 764, Payment of Bills.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of public were present at the meeting.

Proposed – Mayor Cllr Sampson

‘To invoke Standing Order 17, in order to vary the order of business and allow reports to be received from the Borough and County Councillors.’

All in favour

The meeting was adjourned.

County Cllr Mrs Hutson reported:

The Government has cut the County's budget by £19 million, which allowing for £4 million inflation, results in an overall loss of up to £23 million. Norfolk is the worse affected County in the UK. It is likely the cut will be even more in 2007/2008.

Mott MacDonald had met with funeral directors on site to ensure that funeral hearses could manoeuvre safely across and past the proposed zebra crossing in Priory Road. The assessment of this realised that the original position of the crossing would have to be moved very slightly to accommodate the hearses.

Borough Cllr Mrs Mellish reported:

Norfolk County Council own all highway roundabouts. It would not be effective for the Town Council to set up a working party to facilitate the sponsorship of them, as the permissible input given by Norfolk County Council would be minimal.

The Town Council had highlighted its concerns about the works being carried out on the Square Garage, Cannon Square. With this early intervention, the BCKL&WN enforcement officers have, and would ensure works are carried out according to the planning application.

The BCKL&WN 2006/2007 Council Tax has reduced by 3%.

Borough Cllr Lovett reported:

The parking lot behind Wellington House, at the back of Lancaster Way, is being investigated for housing.

A survey is being conducted of the taxi ranks within the Borough. If Downham Market would like a taxi rank, a letter must be sent to the BCKL&WN requesting this.

The ODPM has announced that one of the topics they would be examining is Culture. The better the result, the more money, and stars, are obtained.

The Mayor, Cllr Sampson, resumed the meeting.

759. Minutes of the Full Council Meeting

The minutes of the Town Council meetings held on Tuesday, 10th January 2006 (pages 1733-1740) and Tuesday, 31st January 2006 (pages 1755-1759) were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

760. Correspondence

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

761. Councillor's Questions

There were no questions.

762. To Adopt the Standing Committee Minutes

Car Parks and Highways Committee

Proposed – Cllr Beck

Seconded – Cllr Bond

‘That the minutes of the Car Parks and Highways Committee meetings of Tuesday 15th November 2005 (pages 1702-1707), Tuesday 20th December 2005 (pages 1724-1725) and Tuesday 17th January 2006 (pages 1744-1749) be adopted.’

All in favour

Development Committee

Proposed – Cllr Mrs Turner

Seconded – Cllr Baker

‘That the minutes of the Development Committee meeting of Tuesday 24th January 2006 (pages 1750-1754) be adopted.’

All in favour

Finance and General Purposes Committee

There were no minutes to adopt.

Planning and Environmental Committee

Proposed – Cllr Doyle

Seconded – Cllr Nunn

‘That the minutes of the Planning and Environmental Committee Meetings of Wednesday 11th January 2006 (pages 1741-1743) and Wednesday 1st February 2006 (pages 1760-1762) be adopted.’

All in favour

763. Clerk’s Report

The Clerk had nothing to report.

764. To Approve the Payment of Bills

The Mayor, Cllr Sampson, had declared an interest in this item.

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

Cllr Ford enquired about the 'Fun Ice' invoice for the Town Square event. The Clerk confirmed that a grant of £500.00 had been donated by the BCKL&WN and approximately £300.00 had been made on ticket sales.

Proposed – Cllr Mrs Roberts

Seconded – Cllr Stacey

'That the bills be paid as per the attached list.'

For – 12

Against – 0

Abstain – 1 (Declared Interest)

765. To discuss the provision of CCTV

The Mayor, Cllr Sampson, advised that the Clerk had applied for a loan from the ODPM and a decision from them was pending. The Projects Officer was also investing further funding opportunities. The CCTV Working Party was asked to liaise with the Projects Officer and provide a detailed report at the next Full Council meeting.

766. Update on management of the Howdale Community Centre

Cllr Doyle advised that a Management Committee meeting had not been held since the previous update and there was nothing further to report.

767. To discuss the Fair on the Hollies Car Park

The Mayor, Cllr Sampson, advised that he had attended the official opening of the King's Lynn Mart where the Chairman of the Eastern Region Showman's Guild paid a significant tribute to Downham Market for bringing a fair back into Town. The Opposition Leader of Norwich City Council was moved to say that he too would like to bring a fair back into Norwich, which has traditionally received resistance. Both speeches were made in front of a large crowd and it was honourable for Downham Market.

768. To discuss the Twinning Reception for the 30th Anniversary for the Twinning Club

In view of the 30th anniversary, the Mayor would be taking a gift to Civray in October 2006. A short discussion took place regarding gift ideas and an indication of cost. It was agreed that a small replica of the stone carved wall would be appropriate as this had been designed by the school children and was now part of Downham Market's heritage.

A Working Party was set up to organise the design and cost and contact the original stone sculptor to ascertain whether this would be something she could do and how much it would cost. The members were Cllrs Ford (as Chair), Groom and Mrs Roberts.

769. To discuss recommendation from Car Parks and Highways Committee

'That this Committee recommends to Full Council that a working party is formed to discuss with the BCKL&WN and have an input into the sponsorship of roundabouts.'

The Mayor, Cllr Sampson, reported that a letter had been received from Mr Chris Bamfield, Head of BCKL&WN's Leisure and Public Open Spaces, advising that the sponsorship of the Bexwell Roundabout was still under discussion. With regard to the size of sponsorship plaques on roundabouts, in accordance with the County Policy on signs, there is a maximum size permissible.

In view of Borough Cllr Mrs Mellish's report, it was agreed not to form a Working Party, but to discuss this at the Car Parks and Highways meeting as an agenda item. The Clerk would add this item to the agenda.

The Mayor, Cllr Sampson, suspended the meeting.

Borough Cllr Mrs Mellish advised that as soon as the Bexwell Roundabout is sponsored, there is likely to be immediate interest from local businesses to sponsor other roundabouts. Cllr Mrs Mellish advised that the Car Parks and Highways Committee should liaise with Mr Bamfield and herself when further sponsorships take place.

The Mayor, Cllr Sampson, resumed the meeting.

770. To discuss recommendation from Car Parks and Highways Committee

‘That this Committee recommends to Full Council that a working party is set up to consider the implications of car parking charges in Downham Market.’

A short discussion took place and it was agreed to form a Working Party. The members were Cllrs Baker, Beck, Bond, Mrs Dean (as Chair), Ford and Stacey. As this entails financial implications the Clerk advised that it would not be possible for outside bodies to be part of this Working Party.

771. To discuss recommendation from Car Parks and Highways Committee that a meeting is arranged with Cllr N Daubney, Head of Regeneration, Mr M George and other BCKL&WN officers to discuss the condition of the paving slabs on the Town Square

Cllr Beck advised that the kerbing in the Town and the new kerbing around the Town Square is crumbling away and does not appear to be wearing very well. It was agreed to form a Working Party. The members were Cllrs Beck (as Chair), Doyle and the Mayor, Cllr Sampson. The Working Party would contact Highways, as well as the other officials requested by the Car Parks and Highways Committee, to discuss this at a meeting.

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

The Mayor, Cllr Sampson, advised that authorisation for a loan had been applied for and the Clerk was awaiting a decision from the ODPM. A holding letter had been sent to Norfolk Property Services and a request to them had been made for authorisation to go on site to investigate the building and be able to obtain quotes for its demolition.

The Mayor, Cllr Sampson, suspended the meeting.

County Cllr Mrs Hutson advised that she had been kept up to date on this matter and is available to help the Clerk if necessary.

The Mayor, Cllr Sampson, resumed the meeting.

773. Human Resources report (confidential item)

Proposed – Mayor Cllr Sampson Seconded – Cllr Beck

‘To invoke Standing Order 5a, that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw.’

All in favour

See Confidential Report (Confidential Appendix 1).

Proposed – Cllr Mrs Roberts

Seconded – Cllr Baker

‘That the Clerk receives a salary increase from spinal point 33 to 34 as from 1st April, 2006 and will receive a further spinal point increase when obtaining the SILCA qualification.’

‘That the Administrative Officer becomes the Deputy Clerk and works towards a full understanding of the function of a Responsible Financial Officer and receives a salary increase from spinal point 22 to 23 from 1st April, 2006 and will receive a further spinal point increase when obtaining the SILCA qualification.’

All in favour

Proposed – Cllr Mrs Roberts

Seconded – Cllr Doyle

‘That the Trainee Administrator/Receptionist post have the title of Administrator/Receptionist only.’

‘That the Town Council offices be open to the public 5 days a week from 10-4pm, including lunch times, from 1st March 2006.’

‘That the Filing Clerk’s hours are increased to 10 per week from 5, which will cover the staggered lunch breaks from 1st March, 2006.’

‘That the staff training budget be directly managed by the Town Clerk.’

All in favour

Employment Specialist

Proposed – Cllr Mrs Roberts

Seconded – Cllr Mrs Turner

‘That this Council retains the services of an employment specialist, Mr Terry Wilshin. His charge is £35.00 per hour, and initially he will need to evaluate all current policies

on grievance and disciplinary procedures and ensure all new legislation is being incorporated. He would also need to check staff contracts paying particular attention to holiday and sickness allowances, at a one-off charge of approximately £250.00. Mr Wilshin is also able to offer two to three hour training sessions on basic employment law for a cost of approximately £120.00. This would not only be for staff, but members of the Human Resources Working Party could also attend.'

All in favour

Delegated Powers on Employment Issues

Proposed – Cllr Mrs Roberts

Seconded – Cllr Baker

'That a Sub Committee of the Mayor (as Chair), Deputy Mayor, Chair of Finance and General Purposes Committee, Chair of Human Resources Working Party and the Clerk be given delegated powers to make decisions on employment issues that are beyond the remit of the Human Resources Working Party as and when they arise.'

All in favour

The Mayor, Cllr Sampson, closed confidentiality.

774. Mayor's Announcements

Mayor's At Home – Town Hall, Thursday, 23rd February 2006. Councillors are expected to arrive at 7.00pm-7.15pm.

St Winnold's Event – Friday, 7th April 2006. Tickets are being sold strictly on a first-come-first-serve basis.

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.49pm.

