

Borough Councillors G Wareham

Norfolk Constabulary Inspector M Bates

Press Correspondent Ms S Hewitt

Members of Public 3

774. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Cllrs C D Bond (illness), Mrs P M Dean (family commitment), S C Teverson (work commitment), Mrs R M Turner (illness), Cllr C Pyatt (previous commitment). Borough Cllrs J R Legg, A M Lovett and Mrs K Mellish, and County Cllr Mrs Hutson.

The apologies were accepted.

775. Declarations of Interest

The Mayor, Cllr Sampson, and Cllr Bodle declared an interest in Item 781, Payment of Bills.

Cllrs Bodle, Ford and Mrs Roberts declared an interest in Item 789, To discuss recommendation from Planning and Environmental Committee 'That this Committee recommends to Full Council that it follows the style of County Highways in not allowing A-frame boards on footways.'

Cllr Russell declared an interest in Item 791, to discuss vandalism and anti social behaviour in Downham Market.

The Mayor, Cllr Sampson, adjourned the meeting.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public wished to address 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 Police and Borough Councillors.’

All in favour

Cllr Doyle arrived at the meeting at 7.35pm.

Inspector Bates reported the last two months statistics:

Vehicle thefts – 1.

Theft from vehicles – 2.

House Burglaries – 1 (Rabbit Lane).

Burglaries other than dwellings (Industrial premises) – 8 (Bennett Street homes, twice on the Memorial Playing Field clubhouse, the 4x4 Garage Dealer by the Railway Station, the Insurance Company at 17 High Street, Whickers and the Salvation Army Hall).

Domestic Violence – 5 (including 3 on school pupils and 1 on a police officer).

Serious Violence – 4 (Railway Station, Somerfield Store, Victoria Street and Trafalgar Road).

High Profile Crime – 1. In January a large group of 14/15 year olds travelled from King’s Lynn to fight with a group from Downham Market. However, the Downham Market gang, who were 19/20 year olds, met them armed with weapons, and it got out of control. 2. A few arson attacks took place on dwellings via letterboxes.

The Mayor, Cllr Sampson, advised that the café at the Railway Station had been broken into in the early hours of one morning a few weeks ago. The police officer on site didn't appear to be well informed of the area, as he hadn't known the Post Office in Railway Road had closed four years ago. Cllr Ford advised that the maps at the Wymondham Centre were incorrect; hence police officers being sent to the wrong locations. Insp Bates had been made aware of this at the Crime Prevention meeting.

Cllr Doyle advised that the call box outside the Downham Market Police Station did not appear to be working. Insp Bates would investigate this.

The Mayor, Cllr Sampson, thanked Insp Bates for his report.

Insp Bates left the meeting at 7.45pm.

Borough Cllr Wareham reported:

The Town Council Planning and Environmental Committee had recently written to him enquiring whether he would be able to represent the Town Council at a Development Control Board (DCB).

He advised that as a member of the DCB he would have the opportunity to represent Downham Market as a Ward Councillor, but would not be able to represent the Town Council on their behalf, as he would have to declare an interest. Cllr Wareham advised that he would put this in writing.

A short questions and answers session took place and it was agreed that Cllr Wareham would invite the chair of the Standards Committee and a planning officer to meet with the Planning and Environmental Committee.

Cllr Fox advised that Cllr Wareham had been elected to represent Downham Market, but was not allowed to do so because he sits on a particular board. It was suggested that the ODPM be written to regarding these harsh regulations.

The Mayor, Cllr Sampson, thanked Cllr Wareham for his report and resumed the meeting.

Cllr Wareham left the meeting at 7.58pm.

776. Minutes of the Full Council Meeting

The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 14th February 2006 (pages 1763-1769) were approved and signed as a true and accurate record. It was noted that the proposition in Item 764, page 1766, had been amended to 'Seconded by Cllr Stacey', in the original minutes.

777. Correspondence

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

It was noted that Mr David Cusdin, West Norfolk & Breckland Rural Transport Partnership (RTP) Officer left his post in February 2006.

778. Councillor's Questions

There were no questions.

779. To Adopt the Standing Committee Minutes

There were no Standing Committee minutes to adopt at this meeting.

780. Clerk's Report

The Clerk's Report had been circulated (Appendix 2).

Downham Market Charter

Cllr Mrs Nunn had distributed a draft copy of the Charter to all Cllrs. Cllrs were asked to give their comments as soon as possible. The Clerk would add this item to the next Full Council agenda.

Standards Board

Cllr Reed and Cllr Baker would be applying to stand on the BCKL&WN's Standards Board. Part of this application requires two local Town/Parish Councils or a representative of such Councils to nominate them.

It was agreed for the Clerk to send a letter of support from the Town Council for both Cllrs.

Projects Officer Report

A copy of the report had been circulated (Appendix 3).

NALC Conference 2006

The NALC conference is being held in Liverpool on 22nd to 24th September 2006. The cost per person is £235 with additional costs for dinner, travelling and accommodation. The Council incurs all expenses, and volunteers should confirm their interest in attending the conference at the next Full Council meeting. The Clerk would add this item to the agenda.

781. To Approve the Payment of Bills

A list of bills had been circulated (Appendix 4).

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

Proposed – Cllr Mrs Roberts

Seconded – Cllr Baker

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

For – 13

Against – 0

Abstain – 2 (Declared Interest)

782. To discuss the proposed new Community Interest Company

A report from Mr Martin Stewart had been circulated (Appendix 5).

Proposed – Cllr Ford

Seconded – Cllr Groom

‘That this Council accepts the report and supports it fully.’

All in favour

Cllr Groom advised that the original Regeneration Partnership had been co-ordinated by the Town and Borough Councils, and the Community Interest Company (CIC) should be moved forward by the same organisations. Anyone wishing to be involved should contact the Mayor, Cllr Sampson, and/or Cllr Groom. The CIC would however be mindful of the number of Town Cllrs becoming members.

A short discussion took place and it was agreed that the name, 'Downham Market Community Interest Company (DMCIC)' could not be used as the Downham Market Council Information Centre already uses this acronym.

783. To discuss future of the 'Forum for Community Groups'

The Mayor, Cllr Sampson, reported that he had attended a meeting with Ms Maxine Fiander, the Funding Advisor for the West Norfolk Voluntary and Community Action (WNVCA). Ms Fiander had confirmed that their organisation would be happy to take on the 10-12 groups left in the Downham Market Forum. The Clerk would write a letter of support to the WNVCA.

784. To discuss the provision of CCTV

The Mayor, Cllr Sampson, advised that the Clerk was still awaiting a decision from the ODPM regarding the loan.

The Projects Officer reported that she had received a detailed crime report from the police, which detailed the 'hot spots' of the Town. A further meeting would be held with the police on the various ways of running CCTV.

Q: Is the Town Square a 'hot spot'? (MGF).

A: The Projects Officer would investigate.

Q: Has the Chamber of Trade been asked to contribute to CCTV? (MGF).

A: This would not be done until the final costs were known.

785. Update on management of the Howdale Community Centre

Cllr Doyle advised that a Management Committee meeting had not been held and there was nothing to report.

786. To discuss the Fair on the Hollies Car Park

Cllrs Reed and Mrs Roberts reported that the fair plans were almost finalised. There was nothing further to report.

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

The Clerk advised that authorisation for a loan from the ODPM had still not been received. A response from Norfolk Property Services regarding the Town Council's request to go on site to investigate the building was also still outstanding. There was nothing further to report.

788. To approve purchase of a plaque for the Town Clock as recommended by the Planning and Environmental Committee

Cllr Fox reported that three quotes had been obtained for a plaque on the west face of the Town Clock, to match the plaque on the reverse side. Few companies had been able to provide a cast iron plaque, but Crofts Castings had been able to, at a very reasonable cost. The Planning and Environmental Committee had approved the wording on the plaque, and had agreed not to add the Heritage Lottery logo as this would take up a lot of space on the plaque and would also treble the cost.

Proposed – Cllr Baker

Seconded – Cllr Ford

‘That the Town Council meets the cost of the Crofts Castings quote for a Town Clock plaque.’

All in favour

789. To discuss recommendation from Planning and Environmental Committee

‘That this Committee recommends to Full Council that it follows the style of County Highways in not allowing A-frame boards on footways.’

Cllrs Bodle, Ford and Mrs Roberts had declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item.

Cllr Doyle advised the reasoning for the Planning and Environmental Committee’s decision to refer this item to the Full Council. A few weeks ago an A-frame had been displayed on the Town Square and a letter had been sent to that business advising them not to display it there. It had been felt that it could be seen as prejudicial to allow other businesses to display their A-frames on the Town Council owned footway. It had therefore raised the question of possibly forbidding all A-frames on Town Council land.

A long discussion took place and it was pointed out that some of the businesses were hidden from the pedestrians’ view and A-frames were their only way of advertising their trade. It was agreed that the Town Council wished to support these businesses and the following suggestions were made:

Advertise businesses on finger posts.

Advertise businesses on one A-frame.

Ask businesses to sponsor a planter in order to advertise their business.

Allow A-frames on the footway only, not on the Town Square.

Ask the businesses to apply to the Planning and Environmental Committee for approval and permission to display their A-boards

Cllr Baker left the meeting at 8.58pm.

Proposed – Mayor Cllr Sampson Seconded – Cllr Mrs Roberts

‘That suitable advertising may be permitted on Town Council property at the Town Council’s discretion when applications are received.’

For – 13 Against – 1 Abstain – 1 (Declared Interest)

The Mayor, Cllr Sampson, adjourned the meeting in order to allow public participation.

A member of the public addressed the members and agreed with the proposal.

The Mayor, Cllr Sampson, resumed the meeting.

The members of public left the meeting at 9.07pm.

790. To discuss the need for taxi ranks in Downham Market

A short discussion took place. It was agreed that Downham Market would benefit from a taxi rank. Suggestions for taxi rank sites were the railway station and/or in the ‘Drop Off Zone’ outside the Town Hall.

Proposed – Cllr Ford

Seconded – Cllr Stacey

‘That this Council supports the Borough Council’s proposal to have a taxi rank in Downham Market.’

For – 14 Against – 1 Abstain – 0

The Clerk would write to Borough Cllr Lovett to advise of the Town Council's approval.

791. To discuss vandalism and anti social behaviour in Downham Market

Cllr Russell read a letter from a resident regarding the state of the Memorial Playing Field.

Cllr Ford was annoyed that the resident had written to complain about the BCKL&WN's cleaner for the Memorial Playing Field. Cllr Ford advised that his work was exemplary and it had been very unfair to say otherwise.

As this land belongs to the BCKL&WN, Cllr Russell was asked to respond to the resident advising them to refer their complaint to them directly.

Human Resources report (confidential item)

Proposed – Mayor Cllr Sampson

Seconded – Cllr Ford

‘To invoke Standing Order 17, in order to vary the order of business and delay this confidential item to the end of the agenda.’

All in favour

793. Human Resources report (confidential item)

Proposed – Mayor Cllr Sampson

Seconded – Cllr Ford

‘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 Reed

Seconded – Cllr Mrs Roberts

‘That the annual pay increase is 2.95% for the staff.’

For – 14

Against – 0

Abstain – 0

Cllr Russell – No vote

The Mayor, Cllr Sampson, closed confidentiality.

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.30pm.