

DOWNHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING HELD TUESDAY, 12TH MAY 2009 AT 7.30PM

Present:	The Mayor	Cllr R Leach
	The Deputy Mayor	Cllr J W Doyle
	Councillors	S W Blyth
		S J Collins
		J K Fox
		P E Freeman
		S F Geary
		Mrs S M Nunn
		C Pyatt
		J J Reed
		C T Sampson
		D J Sharman
		A D Stacey
		Mrs V F Starling
		S C Teverson
		W A Wallace
	Borough Councillors	A M Lovett
		Mrs K Mellish
	Town Clerk	Mrs J M Markwell
	Administrator	Mrs K J Martin
	Trainee Administrator	Miss K J Yeldham
	Press Correspondents	Ms S Hewitt
	Members of Public	7

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

1488. Election of Mayor

The Mayor, Cllr Leach, addressed the Council:

“Well here we are, surprisingly I have made it through to the end of my year relatively unscathed. The Mayor’s job is very much a team effort comprising of us four and all of our fabulous girls in the office, and the same applies to raising money for the Mayor’s Charity which this year has just touched the £1,900.00 mark. Thanks to help from the Buffs, Round Table, Rotary, Kate who jumped in the river, the High School who actually paid me to talk to them, the Stirling efforts of our Town Crier, Ray Wales, who always donates his fees to charity, to donations from many members of the public and even my younger brother Jeremiah who miraculously raised money in our talent show! Between the four of us we have visited other towns throughout the Eastern Counties spreading the word as to how brilliant Downham Market is, the Capital of the Fens.

“Locally the Chains have been seen at virtually every coffee morning or event in the Town Hall, every church, school, residential home, shops and the Chamber of Trade events coming to a crescendo at Christmas when John and I managed to eat eight Christmas dinners only to be upstaged by Joyce and Audrey who managed nine.

“One of the highlights since Christmas must have been visiting Thetford Forest in the torrential rain, to walk through a wet field, climb under a hedge and sit round a camp fire that wouldn’t burn and listen to men in shorts singing Ging Gang Gooley.

“Downham Market is growing rapidly, not only in population but character, in heart and in civic pride and is without doubt the envy of other towns and cities in the East.

“Thanks to many partnerships and dedicated groups who work with this Council, spectacular events take place nearly every month of the year, all provided without cost to the ratepayer and in fact this year the Town Council managed to reduce its precept. Long may it continue.

“During this past year we have reached Quality Parish Status, thanks to a lot of hard work by our Town Clerk and Mrs Pat Roberts, thanks to them both and of course our Deputy Town Clerk, Sara, who is well into her CiLCA course and I wish her every success.

“Also during the year our property portfolio has increased by the opening of the Old Fire Station Car Park and the acquisition of the Howdale Community Centre together with 6½ acres of open space that we can now protect and I would like to thank all involved. And of course the Town Hall is going from strength to strength especially with the opening of the cinema, and by the way we could do with some more volunteers to be usherettes and bring your own torch!

“But times are not easy, money is in very short supply and we have to monitor our housekeeping very closely and lots of changes are just around the corner. I know some of you support the Unitary proposals, others would hope for the status quo and then of course should we get a change of Government all the rules will change, so we must train and prepare for what will come. We of course are not a political council and that is the way I personally like it, we leave our views at the Council door and we concentrate on working for the common good of our community.

“For the twenty of us who sit in the Chamber, it is a bit like being married, and for a successful one, and I’ve had fifty years, you have to give and take and be mindful of other peoples’ views and to compromise and not confront.

“Before I close I must congratulate Cllr Sampson, as on Thursday he dons the red robe and pointed hat as the Deputy Mayor of the Borough of King’s Lynn and West Norfolk. Definitely finally forever my eternal thanks to, Jean, Sara, Kate, Kerry, Karen and Carol, who has unfortunately left us due to ill health. To all of you who have allowed me to be your Mayor and lead this totally intergenerational town for the past year and to John and Audrey Doyle who have carried me through and of course my wonderful wife Joyce who managed to find time to sign up to me for another fifty years.”

Cllr Sampson addressed the Council:

“Mr Mayor before you hand over the chains I, as your proposer, would just like to say a few words. I know that you wondered what I was letting you in for this time last year. I knew then and I still know now and you also know now! I hope that you and Joyce have enjoyed being

Downham Market’s Top Citizens – I nearly said Senior but that would not do as it probably is not politically correct...

“You have done a marvellous job promoting and defending the Town and you have maintained our reputation abroad in a unique and high profile way. There is a new tourist attraction in West Norfolk – Dragon Safari’s in Hilgay Fen!

“I hope the two of you are not too exhausted after the high pressure living of the last twelve months and I hope that you don’t miss it too much in the coming months – the memories are always good because the not so good ones always seem to fade away.

“Thank you for a great year and enjoy retirement!”

Cllr Fox addressed the Council:

“Mr Mayor about four months ago I stood to nominate John Doyle as Mayor Elect. I said nothing much about him assuming that everyone knew what was to be known about this man. I realise that was not the case so now I hope to fill in just a few of the gaps.

“He was born in West Ham some years ago – seeing that I no longer write articles regularly for the press I am not required to say just when! The family was obliged to move to Dagenham in 1940 thanks to Hitler.

“He was elevated to the honoured position of school captain in his last year of school so being Mayor will not be a difficult task.

“On leaving school he joined the building trade which was interrupted by two years National Service in the Royal Navy during which he served on the Cruisers Superb and Cumberland.

“In 1960 he married Audrey and they have two sons, Steven and Mark, and six grandchildren aged between six and fifteen.

“In 1963 they built their own chalet bungalow in Audrey’s home village in Bedfordshire. Obviously thought he made a good job of it because in 1968 started his own business as a small builder (couldn’t think of a gag for that one!)

“In 1978 he became a Parent Governor at the school their children attended and then moved on to be a Local Education Authority Governor moving on in 1986 to become Vice Chairman and in 1989 Chairman of Governors at a 1600 pupil comprehensive school as well as being a Governor of one of the feeder primary schools.

“Since retiring (I use that word reservedly) to Downham Market in 1996 John has worked with many different groups in the town including The Willows and the Parents Resource Centre. In 1979 he was appointed a Governor at Hillcrest School and became Chairman in 1999.

“John was elected to the Downham Market Town Council in 2003, was Mayor in 2007/08, and set up the Water Festival in 2007.

“So now you all know a little more about this man and I would ask for your support in my nominating him as Mayor for 2009/10.”

Proposed – Cllr Fox

Seconded – Cllr Blyth

‘That Cllr Doyle is elected as Mayor of Downham Market for the ensuing year.’

All in favour

There being no other nominations, Cllr Doyle was duly elected.

1489. Mayor Making and Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Cllr Leach received his past Mayor’s badge.

Cllr Doyle and Mrs Doyle received their chains of office.

Cllr Doyle presented Mrs Leach and Mrs Doyle with a bouquet of flowers.

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

The Mayor, Cllr Doyle, addressed the Council:

“Firstly can I thank my proposer and seconder and all of you for giving me the opportunity to serve our town once again as its Mayor, a task which I accept with pride? Can I also thank Audrey for consenting to be Mayoress once again because she is the person who makes sure I’m in the right place at the right time and supports me throughout the year?”

“The theme of my Mayoral year will once again be as before, ‘WE THE PEOPLE’. I will again try to bring the community to the fore and involve as many people as possible in the life of our town, as well as promoting the business interests of the town because with a growing young population we need local jobs for them to do and career paths for them to follow.

“Can I at this point say a few words about our retiring Mayor? That’s a play on words because as all of you will know he is anything but retiring, although he has admitted to me recently that no one really now believes his father was a Jewish U-Boat Commander who beached his boat one night in Canvey Island and I am also pleased to announce his daughters have bought him a new joke book so we may possibly be spared the current crop in the future.

“But in all seriousness I must say John has been one of the most popular Mayors our town has ever had. During his year of office he has given a staggering amount of time to the post, it was not unusual for him to be in or around the office from nine in the morning to four in the afternoon, and then attend meetings in the evening. John’s Mayoral style has been equally at home in all situations and I can tell you that he is held in high regard within the surrounding areas because of the way both he and Joyce have presented themselves and represented the town during the many civic events they have attended in the area.

“They have been excellent representatives of our town and we can all be proud of them and for the responses they received from other Civic Dignitaries throughout the area. He will be a hard act to follow. Anyway thank you John and Joyce for all you have done for our town and for an excellent Mayoral year.

“As I have said my year will be dedicated to the people and bringing everyone together as much as possible. Later this year, hopefully, we will restructure the way our Council works

which will make better use of Councillors time and provide a clear path for new Councillors to take on responsibilities but more of that later. I have chosen for my Mayoral Charity this year the local charity 'Rebecca's Wishes' which sends terminal ill children on holidays and helps with equipment etc so I would ask people to be generous throughout the year for this worthy cause. Thank you once again for giving me the opportunity to serve our town and its people as the Mayor."

1490. To receive Members' Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr M G Ford (holiday), Cllr J Groom (work commitment) and County Cllr Mrs S E L Hutson (illness).

The apologies were accepted.

Cllr J R Legg would be late to the meeting.

1491. To receive Members' Declarations of Interest

Cllr Fox, Cllr Leach and Cllr Wallace declared a prejudicial interest in Item 1499, to approve the payment of bills.

Public Participation

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

Members of the public and Councillors did not wish to address the Council.

The Mayor, Cllr Doyle, resumed the meeting.

1492. Election of Deputy Mayor

Cllr Stacey addressed the Council:

"Mr Mayor, Councillors. I should like to propose as Deputy Mayor, one of our numbers who is long standing as a Councillor, experienced in just about every aspect of Council work and, I believe respected by all who work with him. I have tried to persuade him to stand as Mayor or Deputy for a number of years but business and family commitments have always prevented him. He has also, over the years, been involved in many of the town's activities including Downham Arts, Downham Market Festival, Lions International, and support for the performing arts in general and DADS in particular.

"He has become known in Council and Committee Meetings as "Mr Point of Order" and has a wide knowledge of our Standing Orders. He led the team set up to purchase the Old Fire Station and develop it as our new car park as well as leading the quite difficult discussions with the Heritage Society to establish the Old Fire Station building as a Heritage Centre. He has also been at the forefront of our negotiations to take over the Town Hall, to produce plans to develop it and in particular to start our own very successful cinema programme.

"He is, of course, Cllr John Fox, a local man; an excellent speaker, honed to perfection in his capacity as announcer at many, many public occasions. He has a presence, intelligence, powers of persuasion and the ability to get on with people. He knows pretty well everyone in

Downham Market and I can think of no one who would make a better Deputy Mayor and in the fullness of time Mayor of our town.

“I therefore have great pleasure in proposing Councillor Fox as Deputy Mayor for the coming year.”

Proposed – Cllr Stacey

Seconded – Cllr Sampson

‘That Cllr Fox is elected as Deputy Mayor of Downham Market for the ensuing year.’

All in favour

There being no other nominations, Cllr Fox was duly elected.

Cllr Fox and Mrs Fox received their chains of office.

The Mayor, Cllr Doyle, adjourned the meeting. The newly elected Mayor and Mayoress and Deputy Mayor and Mayoress left the Council Chambers in order for the press to take photographs.

The Mayor and Mayoress and Deputy Mayor and Mayoress returned to the meeting room at 7.55pm.

The Mayor, Cllr Doyle, resumed the meeting.

1493. Appointment of Representatives to Outside Bodies

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

West Norfolk MIND

Mrs P A Roberts

Joint Burial Committee

Mr R J R Baker MBE, Mr M J Coles, Cllr J K Fox, Mr S W Nunn and Cllr C T Sampson

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

Norfolk Association of Parish & Town Council

Cllr J W Doyle and Cllr S C Teverson

Silverdale Centre

Cllr R Leach

Festival Committee

Cllr A D Stacey and Cllr Mrs V F Starling

Howdale Community Centre

Mr M J Coles, Cllr P E Freeman, Cllr J Groom and Cllr C Pyatt

West Norfolk Tourism Forum

Cllr Mrs S M Nunn

West Norfolk Sports Council

Cllr C Pyatt

West Norfolk Arts Forum

Cllr J Groom

Downham Market Sports Federation

Cllr C Pyatt & Cllr M G Ford

Joint Remembrance Day Committee

Mr R J R Baker MBE

Crime and Disorder Partnership (D2)

Cllr M G Ford, Cllr P E Freeman and Mrs P B Sharp

School Governors:

Hillcrest (Crimpleham, Downham Stradsett & Wereham)

Mr Moreton

Clackclose School

Cllr R Leach

Charities:

Batchcroft

Mr P Allen, Mrs J Day and Cllr C T Sampson

100 Acre

Mr P Allen, Mrs J Day and Cllr C T Sampson

Retreat Almshouses

Mr J Haylett and Mrs J Watson

1494. Appointment of Standing Committees

The Standing Committees were appointed as follows:

Finance & General Purposes	Planning & Environment	Car Parks & Highways	Development
Cllr Collins	Cllr Collins	Cllr Blyth	Cllr Blyth
Cllr Geary	Cllr Geary	Cllr Ford	Cllr Ford
Cllr Leach	Cllr Groom	Cllr Freeman	Cllr Freeman
Cllr Mrs Nunn	Cllr Reed	Cllr Pyatt	Cllr Groom
Cllr Reed	Cllr Sampson	Cllr Sharman	Cllr Leach
Cllr Sampson	Cllr Wallace	Cllr Stacey	Cllr Mrs Nunn
Cllr Stacey	<i>Vacancy</i>	Cllr Wallace	Cllr Sharman
Cllr Starling	<i>Vacancy</i>	<i>Vacancy</i>	Cllr Starling
Cllr Teverson	<i>Vacancy</i>	<i>Vacancy</i>	Cllr Teverson

The Mayor, Cllr Doyle, advised that the Chairman of each Standing Committee would be elected at the next Full Council meeting.

1495. To inspect the Deeds, Leases and Agreements held on behalf of the Council

The Clerk 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.

1496. To approve the minutes of the Town Council meetings

The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday, 14th April 2009 (pages 2761-2766) were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

1497. To receive Councillors' questions

Q: Councillors and Borough Councillors should be aware, after spending a vast amount of money on Cannon Square that it is becoming a collection point for rubbish, which is being left by shopkeepers and residents as they have been told to do so by the Borough Council. Could it be brought up with the Borough Council that this area is not a rubbish collection point? (RL).

A: Yes.

1498. To receive Clerk's Report

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

1499. To approve the Payment of Bills

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

Cllr Fox, Cllr Leach and Cllr Wallace had declared a prejudicial interest in this item.

Proposed – Cllr Sampson

Seconded – Cllr Stacey

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

For – 12

Against – 0

Abstentions – 3 (Declared interests)

1500. To fix the dates and times of Standing Committee meetings for the coming year

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

1501. To confirm bank signatories – Cllrs Doyle, Ford, Fox, Pyatt, Reed, Sampson and Stacey

Proposed – Cllr Stacey

Seconded – Cllr Blyth

'That the 2009/2010 Council bank signatories are Cllr Doyle, Cllr Ford, Cllr Fox, Cllr Pyatt, Cllr Reed, Cllr Sampson and Cllr Stacey.'

All in favour

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.16pm.

Chairman

Date

DOWNHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD TUESDAY, 19TH MAY 2009 AT 7.30PM

Present:	The Mayor	Cllr J W Doyle
	The Deputy Mayor	Cllr J K Fox
	Councillors	S W Blyth
		S J Collins
		M G Ford
		P E Freeman
		S F Geary
		R Leach
		Mrs S M Nunn
		C Pyatt
		C T Sampson
		D J Sharman
		A D Stacey
		Mrs V F Starling
		S C Teverson
		W A Wallace
	County Councillor	Mrs S E L Hutson
	Borough Councillors	Mrs K Mellish
		A M Lovett
	Town Clerk	Mrs J M Markwell
	Deputy Clerk	Mrs S D Porter
	Members of Public	1

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

1502. To receive Members' Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr J J Reed (family commitment) and Insp M Bates.

The apologies were accepted.

Cllr J Groom did not attend.

1503. To receive Members' Declarations of Interest

The Mayor, Cllr Doyle declared a pecuniary interest in Item 1508, To Approve the Payment of Bills.

Adjourn meeting for public participation and reports

The Mayor, Cllr Doyle, adjourned the meeting.

Police

No representative from Norfolk Constabulary was present at the meeting.

County Councillor

Cllr Mrs Hutson had attended a formal lunch in London where Mr Boris Johnson, the Mayor of London, had been present. Cllr Mrs Hutson had liaised with him regarding the letter sent by this Council inviting him to Downham Market's St George's Day events. Cllr Mrs Hutson presented the Council with Mr Johnson's response which read, '*Congratulations to Downham Market Town Council on their celebration of St George's Day! Best wishes, Boris Johnson.*'

NCC Highways had issued an emergency closure of Clackclose Road due to a burst water main which had caused a lot of damage to the road surface. It was anticipated that the closure would not be more than six days, although Highways had sanctioned a closure of up to twenty one days.

Borough Councillors

The Borough Councillors had nothing to report to this meeting.

Public Participation

Ms Bodle reported that 'Downham and Villages in Transition' was a group which had been established during 2008. The members were people from Downham Market and the surrounding villages, and their aim was to build a strong local community. The group would be presenting a short film at the forthcoming Downham by Design meeting in the Town Hall.

The Mayor, Cllr Doyle, thanked Ms Bodle for her short report and confirmed that this matter would be discussed later in the meeting.

The Mayor, Cllr Doyle, resumed the meeting.

1504. To receive correspondence

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

The Mayor, Cllr Doyle, raised concern that the police had refused to take a statement when this Council had reported the break-in to the boiler room at the Old Fire Station site building. Cllr Ford advised the Clerk to report this to the Local Action Group.

Cllr Sampson noted that Johnston Press was still producing the Downham News, when all other similar publications in this area had folded.

1505. To receive Councillors questions

Q: Could the Mayor write a letter to the BCKL&WN advising that the United Nations Equality and Human Rights document states that all communication should be sent in paper format for those who are computer illiterate? (RL).

A: Yes.

Q: Are Members aware that the War Memorial restoration work is already decaying? The timber was not capped and is now splitting. (DJS).

A: The Mayor, Cllr Doyle, would liaise with Mrs Pat Roberts regarding this matter.

Q: Could Cllr Mrs Mellish report to the BCKL&WN that the no smoking sign in the disabled toilet on the Town Hall car park has been removed? (SWB).

A: Yes.

Q: Clackclose Road has been closed by NCC Highways due to a burst water main creating a large pot hole, and diversions have been put in place. Could a letter be sent to NCC (with a copy to BCKL&WN Planning Department) advising that hundreds of residents' lives will be put at risk as there is only one access/egress for emergency vehicles? (JKF).

A: Yes.

1506. To Adopt the Standing Committee Minutes

Planning and Environmental Committee

Proposed – Cllr Geary

Seconded – Cllr Sampson

‘That the minutes of the Planning and Environmental Committee meetings of Wednesday, 18th March 2009 (pages 2734-2738), Tuesday, 31st March 2009 (pages 2747-2750) and Tuesday, 21st April 2009 (pages 2767-2772) be adopted.’

All in favour

Finance and General Purposes Committee

Proposed – Cllr Teverson

Seconded – Cllr Stacey

‘That the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting of Tuesday, 7th April 2009 (pages 2756-2760) be adopted.’

All in favour

Development Committee

Proposed – Cllr Ford

Seconded – Cllr Mrs Starling

‘That the minutes of the Development Committee meeting of Tuesday, 24th March 2009 (pages 2739-2742) be adopted.’

All in favour

Car Parks and Highways Committee

Proposed – Cllr Fox

Seconded – Cllr Blyth

‘That the minutes of the Car Parks and Highways Committee meeting of Wednesday, 17th March 2009 (pages 2729-2733) be adopted.’

All in favour

1507. To receive the Clerk’s Report

The Clerk had nothing to report to this meeting.

1508. To approve the Payment of Bills

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

The Mayor, Cllr Doyle, had declared a pecuniary interest in this item.

Proposed – Cllr Sampson

Seconded – Cllr Stacey

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

For – 15

Against – 0

Abstentions – 1 (Declared Interest)

1509. To elect members of the Human Resources Sub Committee (5 members)

All members had received a list of Councillors who had asked to be considered for the Human Resources Sub Committee (HR). Copies of the said Councillors’ letters detailing their experience and training commitment had also been circulated.

The Mayor, Cllr Doyle, advised Members to mark their list with the five Councillors they would wish to see stand on HR.

Councillors completed an open ballot. The Clerk and Deputy Clerk counted the votes and the Mayor, Cllr Doyle, confirmed that a majority vote had been received for Cllr Collins, Cllr Sampson, Cllr Mrs Starling, Cllr Teverson and Cllr Wallace. The HR Members elected Cllr Sampson as the Chairman.

1510. To appoint the Chairs of the Standing Committees and Sub Committee:

- i. Finance and General Purposes
- ii. Development
- iii. Car Parks and Highways
- iv. Planning and Environmental
- v. Human Resources – this matter had been dealt with under Item 1509.

Members agreed that the election of Chairman for each Committee should be dealt with at the forthcoming Committee meetings.

1511. Town Hall Interim Management Team

- i. To appoint Members
- ii. To appoint Chair

The Mayor, Cllr Doyle, Cllr Blyth, Cllr Fox, Cllr Leach, Cllr Stacey and Cllr Teverson volunteered to stand on the Town Hall Interim Management Team. The Town Hall Members elected Cllr Leach as the Chairman.

The Mayor, Cllr Doyle, thanked Cllr Ford for his Chairmanship of the Town Hall and for making it a very successful venture over the past two years.

1512. To appoint members to the following Working Parties

- i. Local Development Framework
- ii. Old Fire Station Site – Heritage Centre
- iii. Thurlow Nunn Site

Local Development Framework – the members were confirmed as being the Vice Chairmen of the Standing Committees.

Old Fire Station Site – the members were confirmed as being Cllr Blyth, Cllr Doyle and Cllr Fox (as Chairman).

Thurlow Nunn Site – it was agreed to refer this matter to the Development Committee.

1513. To discuss the review of the Town Council Structure

Cllr Teverson had met with the Standing Orders Working Party (Cllr Fox and Cllr Stacey) to consider the Town Council structure. It was agreed that a report would be submitted to Full Council in June or July 2009 and referred to the September or October Full Council meeting for approval, with an aim to reconstituting the Council in January 2010 or, if preferred, in May 2010 at the Annual meeting.

Cllr Teverson and the Standing Orders Working Party would be meeting regularly to discuss the financial implications and staff resourcing issues regarding the proposed restructure.

1514. To receive reports from representatives of Outside Bodies

- i. Joint Burial Committee
- ii. West Norfolk Sports Forum

Joint Burial Committee – there was nothing to report to this meeting.

West Norfolk Sports Forum – there was nothing to report to this meeting.

1515. Town Hall

i) Report from Town Hall Interim Management Team

Cllr Ford reported that a three-year development plan had been written and would be discussed at the Town Hall meeting on Monday, 8th June 2009.

A recommendation to Full Council would be made when the terms had been agreed.

Cllr Fox reported that the next cinema showings would be held on Saturday, 23rd May 2009. The films, Beverly Hills Chihuahua, and Slumdog Millionaire, would be shown at 11.30am and 7.30pm respectively. Cllr Fox asked Members to help as volunteers on the day.

1516. Report on the Howdale Community Centre

There was nothing to report to this meeting.

1517. Report on the Old Fire Station building – Cllr Fox to report

Cllr Fox reported that he, the Mayor, Cllr Doyle, and the Clerk had today held a meeting with the Solicitor who had drawn up the lease between the Town Council and the Heritage Society for the use of the Old Fire Station Site building. It was anticipated that the lease would be signed in two or three months and until such time, the Heritage Society would not be able to use the building for insurance reasons.

1518. Car Park Charging

This item would be discussed at the Car Parks and Highways Committee meeting on Wednesday, 20th May 2009 and a recommendation would be made to Full Council on Tuesday, 9th June 2009.

1519. To discuss taking back the Town's remaining assets held by the BCKL&WN

Cllr Teverson reported that the Working Party had met with BCKL&WN officers to discuss the transfer of the War Memorial Playing Field, The Howdale and The Willows Nature Reserve. The BCKL&WN officers confirmed that the revenue costs would be transferred to the Town Council, but not the capital costs. They would distribute a management report regarding the sites and costings to the Town Council.

It was suggested that if the Town Council did acquire these sites, the BCKL&WN teams could be contracted to continue the maintenance. The Town Council had also suggested that the public toilets remain under ownership of the BCKL&WN.

The Howdale could be a more complex area to manage owing to the proximity of residential properties and with regard to health and safety issues associated with the play equipment and toilets.

The Mayor, Cllr Doyle, advised that he and the Clerk had attended a NALC seminar on Friday, 15th May 2009, in Norwich which indicated that this Council was way ahead of other Parish and Town Councils in its forward thinking. Cllr Teverson had also attended the meeting and discovered that when other Councils had taken over the responsibility for certain assets, including public toilets, they had received large amounts of money from their principal authorities to manage and maintain them. Cllr Teverson noted that a Larger Councils meeting was being held in June 2009 in Attleborough regarding assets and public toilets; all Councillors were welcome to attend.

1520. To discuss 'Downham & Villages in Transition'

This item would be referred to the Development Committee.

1521. To discuss any urgent items as agreed by the Mayor

There were no urgent items to discuss at this meeting.

1522. Mayors Announcements

- Festival Week – Sunday, 24th May 2009-Sunday, 31st May 2009.
- Anglia in Bloom judging day – Tuesday, 21st July 2009. The judging will take place at 2.30pm and the reception will be held at 4.30pm.

- Water Festival – Sunday, 9th August 2009. Further team members are still required to fill the two Town Council dragon boats – volunteers should contact the Deputy Clerk.

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.17pm.

Chairman

Date