

DOWNHAM MARKET FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD TUESDAY 30 MARCH 2021 AT 7:00PM

This meeting was held over zoom due to Covid precautions.

| | Present | ACTION |
|---|--|---------------|
| 1 | <p>Committee Chair - Cllr Pickering The Mayor – Cllr Hayes Committee Members - Cllrs Hendry, Hepworth, Lawson, Pyatt, J Woodmin & Westrop Non-Committee Members - Deputy Mayor Cllr Groom & Cllr Daymond Town Clerk – Mrs E Oliver</p> <p>There were 0 members of public present.</p> | |
| 2 | <p><u>To receive Members’ Apologies for Absence</u></p> <p>Apologies were given by Cllr Molyneux-Hetherington (work commitments) These were accepted.</p> | |
| 3 | <p><u>To receive Members’ Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>Cllrs Daymond and Hendry declared an interest in item 9 – Payment of Bills</p> | |
| 4 | <p><u>To approve the Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Tuesday 23 February 2021.</u></p> <p>Cllr Woodmin wished for the minutes to be adjusted to reflect that Cllr Lawson’s accusations under Bills for Payment were also directed at the Clerk.</p> <p>Proposed – Cllr Pickering Seconded –Cllr Hendry</p> <p>‘That the minutes for the meeting held on Tuesday 23 February 2021 be approved with the addition requested by Cllr Woodmin.’</p> <p>Agreed with one abstention.</p> | |
| 5 | <p><u>Public participation – 15 minutes allowed.</u></p> <p>No members of the public were present, and no Cllr wished to speak in that capacity.</p> | |
| | <p><u>To agree Terms of Reference</u></p> <p>Cllr Pickering said that these have been previously circulated.</p> <p>Cllr Lawson made derogatory comments directed at the Clerk and suggested that the Terms of Reference were not in a format he had seen before, were not</p> | |

proper Terms of Reference, were not used by other Councils and were not fit for purpose.

Following derogatory interventions by Cllr Lawson, Cllr Hayes proposed under Section 2 of Standing Orders to remove Cllr Lawson from the meeting.

Proposed: Cllr Hayes

Seconded: Cllr Woodmin

Cllr Lawson was then removed to the zoom waiting room.

All agreed

The Clerk expressed her frustration at having her work criticised in a public meeting and requested that an apology from Cllr Lawson be forthcoming. Cllr Groom recommended that a formal letter be issued to Cllr Lawson to this effect, stating that his behaviour has been unacceptable.

Cllr Daymond was given assurance that the Terms of Reference would be circulated with at least 3 days' notice when they are taken to Full Council for ratification.

Cllr Hayes commended the Terms of Reference for their clarity, based on those adopted by other Councils. She thanked the Chair and Clerk for their work on this.

Cllr Pyatt said it is unacceptable that the Council is tolerating Cllr Lawson's behaviour. Cllr Pickering said it would be helpful if each member of the Council takes the same stand to defend the Clerk against constant criticism.

Cllr Hepworth commented that the sanctions the Council can impose are very limited, and without the Monitoring Officer publishing their findings and recommending sanctions there is very little we can do. She did recommend the creation of a paper trail for use when and if necessary.

Cllr Hayes said she has chased the Monitoring Officer and is exploring other courses of action. She encouraged Cllrs to send her any examples of derogatory social media posts which she can refer to the Police.

Cllr Westrop suggested that the committee consider whether Cllr Lawson is a fit and proper person to sit on this committee given his current and deliberately confrontational behaviour.

Returning to the Terms of Reference, Cllr Pyatt suggested due to its importance that membership should be more than 7 and a quorum of more than 3. After discussion Cllrs agreed to retain the numbers as stated, with the normal review after the formation of the new Council in May.

Cllr Pyatt requested that no 16 be worded 'review and approve' – all agreed.

