

**DOWNHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF EXTRAORDINARY FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD**

**Wednesday 06<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at 6.00pm at the Town Council Offices**

	<p><b>Present</b></p> <p>Mayor / Chair – Cllr Doyle</p> <p>Cllrs Daymond, Hobbs, Incorvaia, Jordan, Leach, Leivers, Lewis, Charlie Pyatt, Julie Pyatt, Sharman, Westrop &amp; Wiles (13)</p> <p>Town Clerk – Claire Dornan</p> <p>County Councillor White                      Borough Councillor Ratcliffe</p> <p>3 Members of the Public were present</p>
<b>No.</b>	<b>Item</b>
1	<p><b><u>To receive Members’ Apologies for Absence</u></b></p> <p>Apologies were received from:</p> <p>Cllr Brewer – Council Planning Training with Norfolk Parish Training &amp; Support Cllr Buxton – Work Commitment Cllr Lane – Holiday</p> <p>Cllr Wiles gave the apologies of Cllr B Moyses &amp; Cllr S Moyses who were unable to make the meeting.</p> <p>These apologies were accepted.</p> <p>Borough Cllr Osbourne had also given apologies.</p>
2	<p><b><u>To receive Members’ Declarations of Interest</u></b></p> <p>No declarations of interest were made.</p>
3	<p><b><u>Public participation – 15 minutes allowed</u></b></p> <p>Cllr Ratcliffe raised some questions about whether 3 quotes were sought and whether it was necessary to call an extraordinary meeting to discuss the feasibility study. The Town</p>

	<p>Clerk confirmed that 3 consultants had been spoken to and gave an explanation on the methodology for the meeting. There was no further challenge made.</p> <p>Cllr Ratcliffe felt that the funding application would not look good to other sports users in town as it was solely football focused.</p> <p>A member of the public, who identified himself as George Dickson of Downham Market Football Club, stated that he would love a 3G pitch in the town but the Football Club would not support a pitch funded by the Football Association. The Football Club would like to work alongside the Council as other facilities would be required such as a Club House, if they were to use the facility. Mr Dickson stated that the club could not afford to hire the 3G pitch based on the hire rates at King's Lynn. He stated that it would cost the club in the region of £80,000 annually for the hours that the club would require. Concern was also raised over the use of a consultant. It was felt that they would add very little to an application as all information is available on the internet. Mr Dickson also noted that Football Association funding can only be used for football and not infrastructure such as changing rooms.</p> <p>An email from Cllr Brewer was read to the members. The email covered concerns relating to the financial constraints a 3G pitch would have on future projects, the loss of amenity ground, the loss of control over the site as the Football Association would decide the type of pitch, that there are limitations on availability when the use by the school is taken into account, concerns relating to future revenue streams to fund maintenance and future expectations by sports enthusiasts. A question was raised - Will the Council be expected to fund tennis courts and netball courts because it funded a football pitch?</p>
4	<p><b><u>To approve the minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 21 November 2023</u></b></p> <p><b>Proposed Cllr Westrop    Seconder Cllr Daymond</b></p> <p><b>'To approve the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 21 November 2023.'</b></p> <p><b>All In Favour</b></p>
5	<p><b><u>To approve the payment of £1,500 for a feasibility study to be completed by Tim Wall Leisure to support the 3G Pitch proposal</u></b></p> <p>Cllrs Sharman &amp; Doyle advised members that Tim Wall Leisure had previously worked with the Council and historic funding applications had been unsuccessful. They were concerned about the success rate with 3G pitch applications and did not want the Council to lose money chasing a dream.</p> <p>Cllr Leivers expressed her concern regarding the fact that the 3G pitch work is unbudgeted and also that it was purely football focussed. She would like consideration to be given to other sports, such as tennis.</p>

Cllr Westrop stated that the 3G project was a good project in theory but following further research wished to express her concern relating to the cost of the project. Although the 3G pitch may be fully funded, the changing room work would require funding and even if a grant was secured through Levelling Up funding, this only covers 75% of the cost. The Council would need to fund 25% of the cost of the project and this was not possible in the next financial year.

Cllr Westrop also raised the Community Right To Buy project for the Ryston End site. The outcome is due on 08 December 2023. If the Council is successful, the Council may wish to look at a project on this land instead of focusing purely on a football pitch. Cllr Westrop advised that it wasn't the right time to commit to such a project.

Cllr Daymond asked for clarification of the position of current Public Work Board Loans. The Town Clerk confirmed she could provide this information if she were given a few minutes but Cllr Daymond said that this could be provided after the meeting. The Town Clerk agreed to provide the information the following day.

Cllr Incorvaia raised concerns regarding the budget, match funding requirements and the level of Council Reserves. She also raised concerns about possible loss of ownership over the land to a leisure management company despite the Council being responsible for the sink fund of circa £100K.

It was noted that the requirement for the school to have use 9am – 3pm would mean daytime use would be restricted to weekends.

Cllr Incorvaia reminded Cllrs that Downham Market Football Club had indicated at the last meeting with Council that they were unlikely to support the project as they could not afford the cost of hiring the pitch, plus raised the loss of grass space which is used by existing teams. Mr Dickson had once again raised the concern within Public Participation.

Concerns were raised regarding the cost of car park work and changing room provision which would be mandatory works to secure funding. It would also need likely need planning permission changes to meet the Football Association requirements.

Cllr Incorvaia also expressed a worry that this project could be construed as biased towards football at the deficit of other sports.

It was also noted that the Council have a legal obligation to seek allotment land following the notice provided on the land at Rouses Lane. It was felt the Council should focus on this rather than a 3G pitch.

	<p><b>Proposed Cllr Westrop    Seconder Cllr Pyatt</b></p> <p><b>‘That the Council do not agree to the instruction of a feasibility study as the work is unbudgeted. That the Council do not have sufficient information relating to project costs for budget consideration at the meeting on 12 December 2023 and therefore it was too early to consider a feasibility study on the project. That the Council request that the working party use 2024/2025 to research the project in more depth and look at multi-sport use and explore budget needs before the 2025/2026 budget meeting in December 2024 for further consideration.’</b></p> <p><b>All In Favour</b></p> <p><b>Cllr Lewis left the meeting at 18:30pm due to work commitments.</b></p>
6	<p><b><u>To discuss the West Norfolk Rural Community Capital Grants 2024/2025 scheme</u></b></p> <p>Members discussed the recent release of information relating to the West Norfolk Rural Community Capital Grants 2024/2025 scheme which has an initial expression of interest deadline of 31 January 2024.</p> <p>Cllr Westrop reminded Cllrs that any application is only funded up to 75% of the project cost. It would not cover the remaining 25% and any overspend costs.</p> <p>Cllrs felt that without a fully debated project, any work by the Town Clerk attempting to obtain a grant would not be in the public interest.</p> <p><b>Proposed Cllr Leivers    Seconder Cllr Incorvaia</b></p> <p><b>‘That the Council will not make an application under the West Norfolk Rural Community Capital Grant 2024/2025 scheme as any match-funding requirement would be unbudgeted. That there would also be insufficient time to complete capital and revenue projections for any suggested project. Without a fully funded proposal, the Council cannot justify any employee time on the grant application.’</b></p> <p><b>All In Favour</b></p>
	Meeting closed: 6:35pm
	<b>SIGNED</b>
	<b>DATE</b>