

DOWNHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD TUESDAY 13th MARCH, 2018 AT 7:00PM

Present:	The Mayor	Cllr F E Daymond
	Deputy Mayor	Cllr Mrs Y A Thompson
	Councillors	J W Doyle
		J K Fox
		R A C Hepworth
		B Hobbs
		R Horne
		D Lawson
		R A Pegg
		A Pickering
		C Pyatt
		M Ross
		D J Sharman
		A D Stacey
		M Starreveld
		R Turner
	Town Clerk	Mrs J M Markwell
	Deputy Town Clerk	Mr R A Davidson
	Assistant to the Clerk	Mrs N Westwood
	Public	2

Those in attendance at the meeting were notified of the emergency evacuation procedure from the Town Council offices. Those in attendance at the meeting were notified that mobile telephones should be turned off or switched to silent mode for the duration of the meeting.

3554. To receive Members' Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from the Cllrs' J Groom (work commitment), R Hayes (business commitment), J Lofthouse (family commitment), J Reed (ill-health).

The apologies were accepted.

3555. To receive Members' Declarations of Interest

There were no such declarations.

3556. To approve the minutes of the Extraordinary Town Council meeting held on Wednesday 31st January 2018 and Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 13th February 2018

Cllr Starreveld wished to exercise his right of reply about statements made at the Full Council meeting of the 13th February 2018.

Firstly, he apologised for not being at the meeting but due to both business and family commitments he was unable to attend.

Cllr Starreveld then advised that within the meeting there were several points made which he believed to be completely inappropriate.

He had asked the Clerk if these points could be amended but was advised the minutes are a record of what was said and therefore cannot be amended.

Reviewing the minutes Cllr Starreveld highlighted that Cllr Doyle had stated that Chairs of Sub Committees knew that reports were needed for Full Council meetings and if they are not in attendance a written report should be given and that Cllr Pyatt had agreed with this statement.

Cllr Starreveld noted that the Burial Board representative gave no report as there was nothing to report. Does the above statement by Cllr Doyle mean that written reports should be given even when there is nothing to say? He suggested no.

In respect of agenda item 11 for the meeting of the 13th February: *'To review the Chairs' Meeting procedures in respect of agendas and minutes'*.

Cllr Starreveld reported Cllr Sharman had opened the discussion and stated that it was important for the Chair of Standing Committees to meet and discuss without agendas.

Cllr Starreveld stated that when he asked for this agenda item he clearly asked for it to be a review of the chairs meetings and the management arrangement. He did not comment on agendas or minutes.

Cllr Starreveld reported that Cllr Sharman went on to say that he was affronted that a councillor that is not a Chair of a Committee should dictate the way the meeting is managed. Cllr Starreveld was appalled by this statement.

Cllr Starreveld asked if councillors who are not Chairs are lesser mortals; and do not all councillors have a right as to how the meeting is managed. He believed they do.

Everything the Council does must be accountable and transparent to the public.

Cllr Starreveld stated 'If Cllr Sharman was affronted isn't that pompous and is that not extremely arrogant and would not the public think so as well'

He stated this is bullying practise in trying to stop a debate on a question which he had every right to ask and councillors have every right to discuss.

Cllr Starreveld then quoted from the Members Code of Conduct about valuing colleagues and staff and treating people with respect.

It should be noted that the Localism Act does not have a set of regulations attached to it but states that in absence of regulations the regulation of the appropriate authority should be used. In our case this means the Council Standing Orders.

Cllr Starreveld then read out paragraphs from the Model Code of Conduct of which every member has a copy.

Cllr Starreveld stated that as all this is in the public domain this was why he had exercised a right of reply.

Cllr Starreveld felt he had been personally attacked on this issue as he been quoted personally on this. He contended councillors are disdainful of standing orders and the code of conduct and do not give these documents the respect they deserve. There should be zero tolerance to this sort of behaviour and it should be cut out immediately. These are our rules and the Council should ignore them at its peril. They are there to protect us all.

He stated behaviour of this magnitude, he believed, deserved an apology, not for himself but Cllr Sharman should apologise to this Council and consider his position on this Council.

Only one councillor (Cllr Hayes) had asked for this to be kept on agenda, but the Mayor stated it would be removed from the agenda for the next meeting.

Cllr Starreveld advised that the Mayor should be an 'impartial arbiter' and did not feel it was within his power to remove this item from the agenda; it should be referred to next meeting.

Cllr Starreveld asked for it to be put back on the agenda.

The Mayor agreed to put this item back on the agenda for the meeting on the 10th April 2018.

Following this statement, the minutes of the Extraordinary Town Council meeting held on Wednesday 31st January 2018 and Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 13th February 2018 were approved.

Adjourn meeting for public participation and reports

The Mayor, Cllr Daymond, adjourned the meeting.

County Councillor report

There was no County Councillor report.

Borough Councillor report

There was no Borough Councillor in attendance.

Public Participation

Cllr Lawson queried the difference in the Band D Council Tax rate in the King's Lynn & West Norfolk and Breckland District area.

Cllr Doyle queried that with special expenses having gone up 23%; with more houses in the town should this expense not be less? The Clerk reported that this would probably be due to the inclusion of additional expenses being charged to the town for the public WC's.

The Mayor Cllr Daymond resumed the meeting.

3557. To receive Councillors' Questions

Cllr Turner: The recent Craft Fairs in the Town Hall have not been well attended and it is felt that this is due to the large white van which is parked immediately in front of the door and therefore blocks at least half the length of the steps. Does this van have permission to park there?

A: Yes, the trader does have permission

Cllr Turner: Can there be a clear definition of who is responsible for the running of the Craft Fairs?

A: Yes

Cllr Mrs Thompson: As there has not been any attendance of borough councillors at this meeting for many months now, should 'Borough Councillor reports' be removed from the agenda?

A: This would be considered

Cllr Starreveld: Asked for Chairs selection arrangements to be on the next agenda. It should be discussed how we manage chairs and put forward a number of ideas; perhaps they could be on a rotation basis and be changed every year? How do we encourage different councillors? Perhaps we could have ‘younger’ councillors being encouraged to stand as Chair/Vice Chair as it seems that it is the same councillors chairing the various standing committees. Cllr Starreveld then paused and qualified this and stated ‘I do not mean to offend anyone’ but this could invigorate the Council and give new members an opportunity which can only be a good thing.

A: The reason it works is that (experienced) councillors are voted as Chairs by members of the Committee. (Cllr Starreveld responded that this gives no opportunity for newer members to gain any experience and reiterated that he wished for this to be on the next agenda).

Cllr Starreveld: There have been contentious issues which could be seen to be bringing this Council into disrepute. I afforded Cllr Sharman the opportunity to think about his position and to consider that but am aware that many councillors would have liked to have said something but are not allowed to do, so I would like that this is on the agenda for the next meeting. I would also ask that at the next meeting there is a vote of no confidence in Cllr Sharman for inappropriate behaviour and that this be a named vote. The public have a right to know who condones this sort of behaviour and the only way to stop it is to stamp it out.

A: There was no response to this question

Cllr Doyle: Do we impose Chairs on the Council or does not each committee vote them on?

A: All Chairs and Vice Chairs are voted on by members of that committee.

3558. To adopt the Standing Committee Minutes of:

Community Development Committee

Proposed – Cllr Hobbs

Seconded – Cllr Pickering

‘That the minutes of the Community Development Committee meeting of Wednesday 3rd January 2018 (pages 5935 - 5939) as approved be adopted’

All in favour

Planning & Environment Committee

Proposed – Cllr Fox

Seconded – Cllr Turner

‘That the minutes of the Planning and Environmental Committee meetings of Tuesday 6th February 2018 and Wednesday 21st February 2018 as approved be adopted’

All in favour

Finance & General Purposes Committee

Proposed – Cllr Mrs Thompson

Seconded – Cllr Pickering

‘That the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meetings of Tuesday 28th November 2017 (pages 5908 - 5910), Tuesday 12th December 2017 (pages 5846 - 5847) and Tuesday 23rd January 2018 (pages 5952 - 5954) as approved be adopted’

All in favour

Property Committee

Proposed – Cllr Pegg

Seconded – Cllr Turner

‘That the minutes of the Property Committee meetings of Tuesday 19th December 2017 (pages 5926 - 5929) and Tuesday 16th January 2018 (pages 5945 - 5948) as approved be adopted’

All in favour

3559. Payment of Bills

There were no bills for payment.

3560. To discuss and adopt Annex E – Structure of Downham Market Town Council Committees

Proposed – Cllr Stacey

Seconded – Cllr Fox

‘That Annexe E is adopted’

All in favour

3561. To receive information on the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679)

The Clerk had distributed to all members a policy document on the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679) emphasising the main point is making movement towards compliance with effect from 25th May 2018.

It was essential that all members read this and give feedback on its contents. This will be on the agenda for the next two meetings.

3562. To discuss Town Council Project Priorities

Cllr Starreveld reminded members about the meeting in the Town Hall to discuss future priorities. It had a been a very successful meeting and formed the basis of a Strategic Plan. The priority now is the Neighbourhood Plan, but it was felt that some of the ideas from the Project Priorities meeting could be fed into this document.

3563. To receive report from the Neighbourhood Plan Sub-Committee

Cllr Hobbs reported the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) is now moving forward. There will be a meeting with consultants on the 22nd March to see how they will be able to help take the plan through to adoption. He advised there are grants available of £9000 to cover costs of consultants and administration and the Council has earmarked reserves of £6000 plus a sum of £3000 in the budget for 2018/19 (total £9,000.00). The Deputy Mayor Cllr Mrs Thompson suggested the consultants could, where possible, incorporate the Project priorities into the NP , thus reducing overall costs for two studies. Cllr Hobbs advised that the anticipated cost to produce the NP will be £20,000.00 and therefore asked that the Council underwrite the cost of the Neighbourhood Plan up to a value of £11,000.00.

Proposed – Cllr Hobbs

Seconded – Cllr Starreveld

‘That the set aside a sum of £20,000.00 (including £9,000.00 earmarked) and agree to underwrite up to £11,000.00 of the cost of the Neighbourhood Plan’

All in favour

3564. To receive report on the Downham Market Festival

Cllr Pickering gave an update on the Festival. Your Local Paper would be producing the programme and the deadline for copy would be the 31st March 2018. The Town Hall programme is virtually full. The main attractions were all booked and there would be a pet show. The theme of the Festival is ‘Around the World’

3565. To receive report on the Downham Market and Downham West Joint Burial Board

Cllr Fox reported that the next meeting will be on the 14th March 2018.

3566. To receive report on the Twinning Club

Cllr Ross advised that the visit to Civray would take place between the 30th July and 6th August 2018. The next meeting of the Twinning Club was a French evening on the 16th March 2018

3567. To receive report on the Jubilee Community Centre

The next meeting of the Management Committee was on the 14th March 2018. Consideration is being given towards a phased building approach.

3568. To receive verbal report from the Human Resources Committee

Members were advised that there would be a new member of staff starting on Monday 26th March and his job title is General Duties Officer.

3569. Mayor’s Announcements

The Mayor reminded all members that the St Winnold Parade will take place on Friday 16th March 2018 and that councillors’ availability was sought for the forthcoming round of Councillors’ Surgeries.

To receive confidential reports

3570. To receive confidential report from the Human Resources Committee

There was no report

3571. To discuss sale of Council owned property

Proposed – Cllr Daymond

Seconded Cllr Turner

“To invoke Standing Order 6a, that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest, that the public and/or the press be temporarily excluded, and they are instructed to withdraw.”

All in favour

The meeting came out of confidentiality.

Proposed – Cllr Sharman

Seconded – Cllr Lawson

‘That the Council agrees in principle to the sale of the land subject to the purchase price being agreed’

All in favour

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8:43pm.

Chairman

Date