

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, GROVE HOUSE, HIGH STREET NORTH, DUNSTABLE

ON MONDAY 12TH FEBRUARY 2007

Present: Councillor Mrs C M Gresham (Town Mayor); Councillor Mrs B M Boatwright (Deputy Town Mayor); Councillors R R Anklesaria, P J Boatwright, T C Colbourne, A J Fairbairn, Mrs J K Fairbairn, J Freeman, A E Green, J Harnett, M J Hearty, Mrs S Littlechild, M J P Mullany, Mrs S A Newton, B Ralley, P E Russell, Mrs A Stock, T A W Stock and M Tilley

In Attendance: District Councillors D J McVicar and J D Murray; Mr R Walden (Town Clerk), Mrs R G Smith (Administration and Finance Manager), Mrs M Markus (Civic Administration Officer), Mr M Navi (Transport Officer, South Bedfordshire District Council) and Mr A Shilliday (Highways Agency)

Apologies for Absence: Councillors M Jones and C E Meakins-Jell

At the commencement of the meeting the Town Clerk led the Council in prayer.

67 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 4th December 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

68 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Members declared their interest in the items indicated:

Councillor Mrs B Boatwright	DITA	Personal Interest (Council Representative on the Association)
	Cordova	Prejudicial Interest (Member of Management Committee)
Councillor P Boatwright	DITA	Prejudicial Interest (Member of the Association Executive)
Councillor A Fairbairn	Proposals for Unitary Councils	Personal Interest (Member of South Bedfordshire District Council)
	DITA	Personal Interest (Council Representative on the Association)
Councillor Mrs J Fairbairn	Proposals for Unitary Councils	Personal Interest (Member of Bedfordshire County Council)
	DITA	Personal Interest (Council Representative on the Association)

Councillor A Green	Proposals for Unitary Councils	Personal Interest (Member of South Bedfordshire District Council)
Councillor Mrs C Gresham	Cordova	Personal Interest (Council Representative on Management Committee)
Councillor M Mullany	DITA	Prejudicial Interest (Member of Club in receipt of grant from DITA)
Councillor Mrs S Newton	Peter Newton Pavilion	Personal Interest (Centre named after family member)

There was no discussion on those matters in which Members had declared a prejudicial interest.

69 REPLACEMENT OF GAS MAIN HIGH STREET NORTH

The Council received representatives of the National Grid and their main contractors who gave a presentation on a major scheme for replacing the Gas Main in High Street North and some adjoining roads. Preliminary works had already started and the project would be completed in about 14 month's time.

Whilst accepting the necessity for the project, several Members were concerned at the traffic implications of the proposals, particularly those relating to eastbound traffic in West Street. Mr Ed Johnson of National Grid advised that the traffic management proposals were only in draft form at this stage and they had appointed traffic consultants to prepare a final scheme. Councillors asked that there be direct consultation with the Town Council on the final proposals before they are implemented.

70 TOWN MAYORS REMARKS

The Town Mayor reported on the many and varied events at which she had represented the Council since its last meeting.

The Town Mayor also reported that this would be the last Council Meeting at which Mr Richard Walden would be advising the Council as Town Clerk. On behalf of the Council she thanked him for all his help and guidance over the years.

71 LIBRARY AND PROMOTIONS COMMITTEE

a) Priory House Capital Works (Minute 404/06)

In answer to a question from Councillor P Boatwright, the Town Clerk advised that, following approval by the Special Sub-Committee, all building works relating to the Priory House Project had been completed and the final account approved for payment. There was one small remaining claim to be agreed with the Heritage Lottery Fund.

b) Minutes

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting of Library and Promotions Committee held on 15th January 2007 be received.

72 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting of Community Development Committee held on 22nd January 2007 be received.

73 HIGHWAYS, PARKS AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

a) Dunstable Cemetery

The Town Clerk reported that the Secretary of State had accepted the recommendations of the Inspector concerning the public inquiry into objections to the proposed compulsory purchase of part of the former Victoria Allotments for an extension to Dunstable Cemetery and had confirmed the Order without modification.

In his report the Inspector had concluded that none of the alternatives proposed by the objectors were viable at the present time. In these circumstances he was satisfied that there was a compelling case in the public interest for confirming the CPO. The land appeared to be the minimum necessary to secure a small but reasonable extension to the existing Cemetery. Although the objectors were unwilling to sell by agreement, this was a case where the private loss, which was capable of being appropriately mitigated by compensation, was outweighed by the public interest.

The District Council would shortly be publishing notice of the confirmation of the Order.

b) Land at Frenchs Avenue

The Town Clerk recalled that the proposed transfer of new open space in Frenchs Avenue to the Town Council had been delayed due to the need for the current owners to obtain approval from the Environment Agency to the proposed re-grading of the site as public open space. He advised that all approvals had now been received and the owners expected to have completed the works by the end of March.

c) Minutes

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting of Highways, Parks and Planning Committee held on 29th January 2007 be received.

74 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

a) Town Council Precept 2007/2008

Councillor Mrs Boatwright reported in detail on the precept recommendations of Finance and General Purposes Committee.

RESOLVED: i) that the 5 year financial plan be approved

ii) that the revised Estimates of income and expenditure for the financial year 2006/2007 and the draft Estimates of income and expenditure for the financial year 2007/2008, as set out in the report to be presented to Council be approved

iii) that the Town Clerk be authorised to incur the various items of expenditure detailed in the Estimates, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Council's Standing Orders

iv) that the revised scale of charges, set out in the report, be approved with effect from 1st April 2007 or the start of the 2007/2008 winter playing season, as appropriate

v) that, in consequence of the foregoing, the Town Council issue a precept upon South Bedfordshire District Council in the sum of £1,486,712

vi) that the expenditure proposals funded from reserve funds as set out in the report be approved.

b) Minutes

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting of Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 5th February 2007 be received and the recommendations contained there in be adopted.

75 NORTHFIELDS WARD BY-ELECTION

The Town Clerk submitted the report of the Returning Officer on the results of the By-Election for a Town Councillor for Northfields Ward held on 7th December 2006 at which Michael Joseph Hearty had been the successful candidate. He reported that Councillor Hearty had made the Statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office and had submitted the appropriate Declarations in accordance with the Code of Conduct. The Town Mayor had earlier welcomed Councillor Hearty to his first meeting of the Council.