

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

**HELD VIRTUALLY ON MICROSOFT TEAMS AS A RESULT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC
AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND POLICE AND CRIME PANELS
(CORONAVIRUS) (FLEXIBILITY OF LOCAL AUTHORITY AND POLICE AND CRIME PANEL
MEETINGS) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2020**

ON MONDAY 19 APRIL 2021 COMMENCING AT 19.00 P.M.

Present: Councillor Peter Hollick (Town Mayor); Councillor Gloria Martin (Deputy Town Mayor); Councillors, Wendy Bater, Lisa Bird, Matthew Brennan, Philip Crawley, Alan Corkhill, Pam Ghent, Kenson Gurney, Liz Jones, Cameron Restall, Lee Roberts and Johnson Tamara with David Ashlee (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), John Crawley (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services), Becky Wisbey (Head of Community Services) and Ian Reed (Democratic Services Manager).

Members of the public; Councillor John Chatterley (Central Bedfordshire Council) (1)

Before the commencement of the meeting, Revd Rachel Phillips led the Council in prayer.

60. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sid Abbott, Mark Cant, Greg George, John Gurney and Gladys Sanders

61. DEATH OF HRH, THE PRINCE PHILIP, DUKE OF EDINBURGH

The Mayor reported that on Friday 16 April he had attended two services of thanksgiving for the life of Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh. He wanted to thank the officers of the Town Council for arranging the Town Council's tributes to the life of Prince Philip. Although the official period of mourning had ended on Sunday 18 April he invited the Members of the Town Council to participate in a one minute silence as a tribute to the life of the Duke of Edinburgh.

62. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 1 February 2021 were approved as a correct record and arrangements would be made for the Town Mayor to sign them.

63. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no specific declarations of interest declared at the meeting.

64. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Town Mayor spoke in support of a report that had been circulated with the agenda. He summarised his activities since the last meeting of the Council in February 2021. He particularly highlighted his attendance at two church services on Friday 16 April celebrating the life of the Duke of Edinburgh. He had accepted the invitation from the Lord Lieutenant of

Bedfordshire and the Bishop of Bedford to attend a service of thanksgiving at the Church of St Paul, Bedford. He also reported that he had worked with the reverend Rachel Phillips to hold a service of thanksgiving for the life of Prince Philip at the Priory Church, Dunstable. He was pleased to report he had invited thirty representatives of the communities and organisations of Dunstable to attend the church service on Friday evening.

He also advised the meeting he was continuing with his weekly diary which was published on the Town Councils' website. The meeting was advised the Mayor had;

(a) undertaken the following;

- Visited Town Council staff members to thank them for their service and left some Christmas gifts
- Attended a virtual catch-up meeting with Mayors from Central Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes, and Luton
- Presented a Commonwealth Day message
- Attended the virtual Lord Lieutenants commissioning ceremony for five new Deputy Lord Lieutenants
- Attended Ashton Schools Foundation virtual meetings
- Attended virtual planning training for Town Councillors
- Presented employee long service awards
- Issued a video message to mark the first anniversary of the first lockdown and to remember those who had passed away
- Chaired the Annual Town Meeting on 29 March 2021 – draft minutes were on the agenda for this meeting to review
- Attended a virtual meeting of the Friends of Priory House and Gardens
- Represented the Town at the funeral of Joan Curran, a well-known local historian
- Issued a statement following the death of HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh and signed the book of condolence at Grove House
- Attended the Dunstable Market on 17 April – this was well attended and had been welcomed back by members of the public and market traders alike

(b) Commented on the following;

- He could not visit the majority of Town Council employees at Christmas because of the Covid - 19 lock down
- The Town Mayors' raffle tickets were still on sale. He thanked Members who had purchased tickets. He reminded the meeting that the draw would take place on Tuesday 4 May at 5 pm at Grove House
- This Thursday 21 April the Governments' decision not to continue the regulations to allow virtual meetings to continue was being considered by the High Court in an action brought by the Local Government Association, NALC, and the National Association of Civic Officers. A decision by the High Court was not expected until the end of the month
- Arrangements had been made to hold the Annual Council meeting on Monday 17 May at 7.30 p.m. at Creasey Park Community Football Centre where it was possible to adhere to Covid-19 distance regulations. It was noted the arrangements made might be altered following the determination of the High Court of the action referred to above.
- On the invitation of the Chairman of the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service the Mayor had attended Dunstable Fire Station on Saturday 17 April to observe the national one minute silence to mark the funeral of the Duke of Edinburgh. The

Mayor had met the Area Commander for the Fire and Rescue Service. He had received an invitation for all Town Councillors to visit the Fire Station. Also, the Service was keen to send a representative to meet Members at a Council Meeting to make a presentation about its services.

65. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions put to the meeting

66. TO ANSWER QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 16

There were no questions put to the meeting.

67. DUNSTABLE JOINT COMMITTEE

Councillors Jones and Martin reported they had contacted the Chairman of the Committee and Secretariat after the meeting to report their unhappiness that the Dunstable Town Council update Report had not been discussed due to the meeting running late. The Members had sought assurances that this would not happen again. The appropriate assurances had been received. Councillor Jones, as Vice - Chairman of the Committee, received an early copy of the agenda and would report to the Town Council if she felt there was a danger of items not being given appropriate discussion time.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Dunstable Joint Committee held on 11 March 2021 be received.

68. COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

In reply to a question from Councillor Matt Brennan about minute 35, the Council Meeting was advised that in relation to the three organisations that had not met the Service Level Agreement criteria the situation had not yet changed.

In relation to minute 39 Councillor Liz Jones thanked all those involved in holding the first Middle Row Market of the year. The meeting was reminded that there were markets on the second and third Saturday of May. In regard to minute 37, Councillor Liz Jones reported that the Council had purchased an electronic highways sign and it was put into operation for the market on Saturday.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 1 March 2021 be received.

69. GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

In relation to Minute 46, Councillor Liz Jones reported that all Members had received an email from the Head of Grounds and Environmental Services covering all the steps asked of him.

In relation to minute 45 (a) Dunstable Cemetery, it was reported that at the weekend some graves had been subject to vandalism and some memorial goods had been disturbed. The Cemetery Manager was thanked for the kind and sensitive way she had treated the relatives of the loved ones whose memorial goods had been disrupted. The Mayor also commented on the work put in by Officers because of the large funeral that had been held that week.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee held on 8 March 2021 be received.

70. FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 15 March 2021 be received.

71. DUNSTABLE TOWN MEETING – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 MARCH 2021

The minutes of the Dunstable Town Meeting 2021 had been circulated with the agenda for information.

RESOLVED: that the draft minutes of the Town Meeting 2021 held on 29 March 2021 be noted.

72. AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNCIL’S CONSTITUTION AND STANDING ORDERS

The Council was asked to agree to amend the Constitution and Standing Orders by increasing the membership of the Appeals and Appointments Sub-Committee from five to six members. It was explained at the meeting that this change was sought to allow more flexibility in securing good attendances at the Appeals and Appointment Sub-Committee that, by its nature, might well meet during the working day.

RESOLVED: that the Council’s Constitution and Standing Orders be amended by increasing the membership of the Appeals and Appointments Sub-Committee from five to six members to include the Deputy Mayor.

73. REPORTS/UPDATES BY MEMBERS OF CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL (CBC) ON MATTERS OF INTEREST TO THE TOWN COUNCIL

The meeting was advised that this was a new item on Council agendas to allow those Councillors that were Members of both Central Bedfordshire Council and the Town Council to update the Town Council on any town wide issues they thought appropriate to be raised. Councillor Phillip Crawley addressed the following issues;

- CBC Ward Councillors every year had over £2,000 to provide assistance to local projects that demonstrated a community benefit. Applications must be submitted to the CBC local ward councillor
- Community Asset Grant Scheme – was available to help local voluntary and community organisations access grant funding to support community infrastructure improvements or secure investment in community assets such as community buildings/community facilities/community infrastructure. The individual maximum grant was £25,000. Organisations were encouraged to speak to their local CBC Ward Councillor before applying
- Hillside Road – Councillor Crawley commented on the CBC consultation to close the road to stop vehicles ‘rat running’ in Downside and in the rest of the town

The meeting closed at 19.42 p.m.