

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

HELD ON MONDAY 7 FEBRUARY 2022 COMMENCING AT 7.00 P.M.

Present: Councillor Gloria Martin (Town Mayor); Councillor Liz Jones (Deputy Town Mayor); Councillors Sid Abbott, Lisa Bird, Matt Brennan, Philip Crawley, Alan Corkhill, Greg George, Pamela Ghent, John Gurney, Kenson Gurney, Peter Hollick, and Gladys Sanders with Councillor Johnson Tamara (remotely), David Ashlee (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), John Crawley (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services - remotely), Becky Wisbey (Head of Community Services – remotely), Lisa Scheder (Finance and Procurement Manager - remotely) and Ian Reed (Democratic Services Manager).

Apologies; Councillors Wendy Bater, Mark Cant, Cameron Restall and Johnson Tamara

Members of the public; One

27 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 6 December 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

28 DECLARATIONS

There were no specific declarations of interest.

29 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Town Mayor spoke in support of a report relating to her activities up to the beginning of January 2021.

The meeting was advised the Mayor had undertaken the following;

- visited the Salvation Army relating to the Christmas hamper service
- launched the Dunstable Consortium Winter Art Trail
- attended the Twilight Christmas Market
- attended the Leighton Linlade carol concert
- the deputy Mayor had attended the Houghton Regis Town Council carol concert
- attended the Special Needs Out of School Club - celebrating the fourth birthday of Minds2gether
- the Town Mayor and her Consort had attended a Burns Night hosted by the Mayor of Harpenden
- The Mayor was pleased to attend the Cultural Art Trail awards. It was gratifying the Consortium had received over 500 online votes

30 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions put to the meeting

31 TO ANSWER QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 16

There were no questions put to the meeting.

32 COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 10 January 2022 be received.

33 GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee held on 17 January 2022 be received.

34 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**Budget Proposals 2022/23 and Town Council Precept 2022/23 (Minute 23/2022)**

Councillor Sid Abbott, Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee was pleased to move that the budget recommendations be adopted. In proposing F&GP minute 23, Councillor Abbott made the following remarks.

In what he described as an extraordinary year he thanked all Council Committee Chairmen, the Mayor and all Councillors for their support and commitment shown to the Town Council over the past 12 months. He also thanked all officers of the Council for their endurance that had resulted in the Council ending the year in good shape despite all the issues faced as a result of the pandemic. He also reported that the Councils' finances, considering all the uncertainties still to be faced, were in good shape and the budget being recommended reflected a sensible approach and he was pleased to present a budget that meant the Council would be able to accommodate the potential for a larger than normal expected pay award for Council staff as well as recognising that income generation at Priory House was likely to be affected by the proposed refurbishment works.

The Band D council tax increase proposed of just eleven pence a week would ensure a full programme of services could be delivered in line with all Councillor expectations and those of the residents. This feat had been achieved as a result of the Councils' finances continuing to be well managed which was testament to the hard work and creativity of the Senior Management Team and finance team for their ongoing work in making sure that the Council continued to deliver high quality, value for money services for the residents of Dunstable. The Chairman in particular gave thanks to David Ashlee, Lisa Scheder, John Crawley, and Becky Wisbey for their contributions.

The Chairman further reported that despite the challenges posed during the past year, he was pleased to report that the Council had still achieved a great deal for Dunstable. Trading had recovered very well since the first quarter of the year; efficiency savings had been made from restructuring in the Town Clerk's Department and Community Services department; new rental agreements for the Grove House offices and Downside Community Centre had been negotiated; new broadcasting equipment had been installed in the Council Chamber; the Christmas programme of events and activities was very well received assisted by securing additional external funding through the Welcome Back Fund.

Although the Town Council had not been able to offer a full events programme, officers still delivered some very well attended events that received considerable praise on social media. The Chairman was particularly pleased to be at the opening of the new landscaped gardens at the Methodist Church and was equally pleased that the Cultural Consortium, through the HAZ programme, received nearly £100,000 worth of funding. He was looking forward to more success through the HAZ scheme, for the High Street improvements to be completed and he was hopeful that our recent IIP assessment will be successful.

The Meeting was reminded the Town Council cost most Dunstable ratepayers less than £3.60 a week and he believed that this demonstrated tremendous value for this charge. He was therefore pleased to recommend a precept to Central Bedfordshire Council of £2,480,490.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 24 January 2022 be received.

RESOLVED: (1) that the proposed budget for 2022/23 presented to Council be approved:
(2) that the Town Clerk and Chief Executive be authorised to incur the various items of expenditure detailed in the budget, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations:
(3) that the revised scale of fees and charges, set out in the report be approved with effect from 1 April 2022 or the start of the 2022/23 winter playing season, as appropriate;
(4) that, in consequence of the foregoing recommendations, the Town Council issue a precept upon Central Bedfordshire Council in the sum of £2,480,490 resulting in a Dunstable Town Council (Band D) council tax at the rate of £187.66 per annum.

Councillor Matt Brennan requested that his vote against agreeing to the proposed budget be recorded.

35 DUNSTABLE JOINT COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Dunstable Joint Committee held on 9 December 2021 be received.

36 APPEALS AND APPOINTMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the recommendations of the Sub-Committee be approved as follows
i) the job title of 'Town Clerk and Chief Executive' be retained
ii) the job description as submitted at appendix 1 be agreed
iii) the salary for the post be advertised at £75,296 - £81,066¹
iv) the post be designated as politically restricted under the *Local Government Officers (Political Restrictions) Regulations 1990* which will be referenced in the Contract of Employment.

¹ This salary range includes the 1.75% pay award currently being negotiated for 2021/22. The job will be advertised as pay award pending for 2022/23

v) the salary package for the job be advertised as including a relocation allowance of up to £5,000

vi) the Council appoints recruitment consultants to support the recruitment process to a cost not exceeding £16,000

vii) the contract of employment for the role be prepared in accordance with all other normal Council conditions of employment

37 REPORTS/UPDATES BY MEMBERS OF CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL ON MATTERS OF INTEREST TO THE TOWN COUNCIL

No report received

The meeting closed at 7.35 p.m.