

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

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

ON MONDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2018

Present: Councillors Gloria Martin (Town Mayor), John Kane (Deputy Town Mayor), John Chatterley, Terry Colbourne, Jeannette Freeman, Anne Kennedy, Liz Jones, Claire Meakins, Patricia Russell, Ann Sparrow, Pat Staples and Nigel Warren

In Attendance: David Ashlee (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), Rosemary O'Sullivan (Head of Finance and Support Services), John Crawley (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services), Becky Wisbey, Head of Community Services and Michele Markus (Mayoral and Democratic Services Officer)

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Sid Abbot, Lisa Bird, Eugene Ghent, Peter Hollick and Emma Simmons

Public Attendance: 0

40 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 4 December 2017 and 22 January 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

41 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor	Interest	Agenda Item
Councillor Staples	Pecuniary interest – Dunstable Market	7
Councillor Bird	Pecuniary interest – Dunstable Market	7

42 TOWN MAYOR'S REMARKS

The Town Mayor referred to the report detailing her attendances at events since the last meeting of the Council.

43 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions put to the meeting.

44 QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 16

There were no questions put to the meeting.

45 **COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE**

a) **South Bedfordshire Dial-A-Ride (Minute 11/2018)**

The Town Mayor advised that South Bedfordshire Dial-A-Ride had moved to new premises and invitations to the official opening would be sent in due course for a possible date in April.

b) **Minutes**

RESOLVED: that, subject to the foregoing, the Minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 8 January 2018 be received

46 **GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

a) **Town Centre Area (Minute 22b/2018)**

In answer to a question from Councillor Colbourne, it was confirmed that the crowd funding campaign by the Friends of Priory House was for the Dunstable War Memorial refurbishment.

b) **Minutes**

RESOLVED: that, subject to the foregoing, the Minutes of the meeting of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee held on 15 January 2017 be received.

47 **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

a) **Budget Proposals 2018/19 and Town Council Precept 2018/19 (Minute 29/2018)**

The Vice-Chairman of Finance and General Purposes Committee, Councillor John Chatterley, was pleased to move on behalf of the Chairman, that the budget recommended be adopted.

He thanked his fellow Chairmen, the Mayor and all Councillors for their support and commitment over the past 12 months and also thanked all officers of the Council for their continued hard work which had resulted in the success achieved over the last 12 months.

The Vice-Chairman advised that the budget being recommended had been difficult to prepare since the cost of providing services to the Dunstable council taxpayer continues to increase. Whilst it was recognised that the services provided were for all intents and purposes, discretionary, they provided added value for Dunstable residents, for example: for the young – the play schemes during the holidays; for the older youths – Grove Corner; for the senior citizens – the lunch clubs; for all – the varied events programme. It was recognised that there needed to be a balance between providing all these discretionary services and the overall call made on Dunstable residents for council tax. However, he was pleased to be able to present a budget that meant the Council would be doing even more for the residents of Dunstable at a nil percent increase in the council tax charge. This had been made possible, not just as a result of the increase in Dunstable's tax base, but also because the Council's finances continued to be well

managed, which was a testament to the hard work and creativity of the senior management team and others. He thanked them all for their ongoing work in making sure that the Council continues to deliver high quality, value for money services for the residents of Dunstable.

2017/18 had been an excellent year for the Council, largely defined by the implementation of schemes part funded by the Market Town Regeneration Fund and in partnership with Central Bedfordshire Council. These projects would continue through 2018/19. Members had seen the good news that there was a further £6.3m from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, which would help to revitalise the town centre and enable significant additional housing delivery in the region of 400 homes. This was on top of the £1.5m from Highways England.

Over the past 12 months the Council had not only continued to secure Green Flags for Priory Gardens and Grove House Gardens and gold medals for the Dunstable Anglian in Bloom entry, it had also secured its third Green Flag for Dunstable Cemetery. In addition, the Council had launched the Men-in-Sheds scheme, the Tea Exhibition at Priory House, which had been attended by the Sri Lankan High Commissioner, and delivered another highly successful events programme which had witnessed the biggest ever crowd for the fireworks display, due to good weather and no doubt that it had been a free event. It had also been great fun having Toyah Wilcox to headline Party in the Park. The first 'Big Lunch' for the town's older residents, held in Grove House Gardens, had been a great success in spite of the weather.

Perhaps the highlight of the year for many was welcoming a visit by Her Majesty the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh to open Priory View. It had been a great honour for the Chairman to meet them both and was surely a day that would stay with residents for some time to come.

Opening of the new Bennett's Splash and Splashside Café on time and within budget was a great success for the Council. Despite one of the wettest summers on record, the new facility was a great success and it was hoped this summer would see even more people enjoying this excellent new service.

The Vice-Chairman also had no doubt that Dunstable is prospering. Many jobs had been created, there were fewer empty shops, and changes were happening in the High Street, not least of all the reduction in the number of lorries trundling through the town centre as a result of the opening of the new A5-M1 Link Road and the Woodside Connection. He believed that with the implementation of the High Street Improvement Scheme, the de-trunking of the High Street and the opening of the refurbished leisure centre and relocated library, Dunstable would continue to regenerate in the years to come.

In reflecting on achievements, the Vice-Chairman thought it worth remembering that the Town Council costs the Dunstable ratepayer £3.37 a week and he believed the Council could demonstrate tremendous value for this charge. He was therefore pleased to recommend a precept to Central Bedfordshire Council of £2,219,034.

The Vice-Chairman hoped that the new Councillors soon to be elected would enjoy being on the Council and knew that everyone involved in the Town Council would continue making what the Council does a success and helping to make Dunstable a better place.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: i) that the budget for 2018/19, as recommended by Finance and General Purposes Committee, be approved

ii) 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

iii) that the revised scale of charges, set out in the report, be approved with effect from 1st April 2018 or the start of the 2018/19 winter playing season, as appropriate

iv) that the Town Council issue a precept upon Central Bedfordshire Council in the sum of £2,219,034 resulting in a Band D Dunstable Town Council Tax at the existing rate of £175.21

Action: Town Clerk and Chief Executive

b) Financial Monitoring Report (Minute 31/2018)

Councillor Colbourne noted that the reported projected overspend at the end of the financial year 2017/18 was solely due to the cost of the forthcoming by-elections. He thanked the Senior Management Team for their hard work in keeping the Council within budget constraints.

c) CAB Management Committee (Minute 35a/2018)

Councillor Meakins provided an update following the meeting held on 1 February. She advised that the CAB were expecting their new premises to be completed in January 2019.

d) Ashton Schools Foundation (Minute 35d/2018)

Councillors Sparrow and Russell praised the high specification and tasteful design implemented by the developers of the former Ashton School site, particularly with regard to the memorial plaques which were open for anyone to see. Councillor Sparrow advised that consideration was being given by the In Bloom Group to include the site in this year's entry for Anglia in Bloom.

e) Appeals and Appointments Committee (Minute 39/2018)

Councillor Colbourne was glad to see that this issue had been referred and, having had two nationally recognised HR companies look at it, suggested it be treated as a true HR problem with clear recommendations made to resolve the matter as it had been going on too long.

f) Minutes

RESOLVED: that, subject to the foregoing, the Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held 22 January 2018 be received and the recommendations contained therein be adopted.

48 **DUNSTABLE JOINT COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting of the Dunstable Joint Committee held 23 November 2017 be received.