

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

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

ON MONDAY 26 JUNE 2017

Present: Councillors Gloria Martin (Town Mayor), John Kane (Deputy Town Mayor), Lisa Bird, Jessica Castle, John Chatterley, Terry Colbourne, Steve Elliott, Jeannette Freeman, Eugene Ghent, Peter Hollick, Liz Jones, Patricia Russell, Emma Simmons, Ann Sparrow, Pat Staples, 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), Michele Markus (Mayoral and Democratic Services Officer) and Revd Nina Johnson (Town Mayor's Chaplain)

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Sid Abbott, Claire Meakins, Des Moffatt and Andy Whayman

Public Attendance: 1

133 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 15 May 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

134 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor	Interest	Agenda Item
Councillor Staples	Pecuniary interest – Dunstable Market	8
Councillor Bird	Pecuniary interest – Dunstable Market	8

135 CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL - DRAFT LOCAL PLAN

The Town Mayor welcomed Connie Frost-Byrant, Local Planning Manager, Regeneration and Business, of Central Bedfordshire Council who gave a briefing on the draft Local Plan for Central Bedfordshire.

The draft Plan would be launched for public consultation on 4 July for 8 weeks, closing on 29 August. There would be a drop-in session for Town and Parish Councils on 18 July and drop in sessions for the public between 11 July and 9 August, the closest for Dunstable being at Caddington Sports and Social Club on 9 August.

A summary leaflet would be produced and made available in libraries and other public buildings and the Central Bedfordshire website would be updated with clear instructions on how to comment.

Connie outlined the strategic issues influencing the Plan and the evidence base which underpinned it. The proposed strategy was to deliver the growth in a way that respects and maintains the character of Central Bedfordshire and delivers infrastructure and services to support it by.

In answer to Members' questions she advised that Luton would not be extending its boundaries and if there was a requirement to deliver some of the housing need within Central Bedfordshire then this would be under that Council's policies. She advised that there was not much potential for growth within Dunstable. Potential sites within Central Bedfordshire were still being considered and there would be further discussions with town councils and residents.

The Town Mayor thanked Connie for her presentation. Copy of the presentation slides would be available from the Town Clerk and Chief Executive.

136 TOWN MAYOR'S REMARKS

The Town Mayor referred to the report detailing her attendances at events since the last meeting of the Council up to 19 June 2017.

She was particularly pleased to have attended the Council's first music event for the summer and the first of the Priory Pictures which had been a great afternoon and had received great media response. She also made particular reference to the recent concert by Caritas Harmony in aid of her Charities. Disappointingly she had had to cancel the planned Charity Afternoon Tea at Creasey Park Community Football on Sunday 9 July due to lack of ticket sales.

The series of Sunday Afternoon Band Concerts had started and the Mayor asked Members to let her know if they may be able to act as host on any of the dates.

137 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions put to the meeting.

138 QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 16

There were no questions put to the meeting.

139 DUNSTABLE JOINT COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting of the Dunstable Joint Committee held on 4 May 2017 be received.

140 COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

a) Band Concerts (Minute 109/2017)

In answer to a question from Councillor Hollick, Councillor Liz Jones advised that the Council's Ice-cream Concession was present in the Gardens during the Band Concerts.

b) **Minutes**

RESOLVED: that, subject to the foregoing, the Minutes of the meetings of the Community Services Committee held on 15 May and 5 June 2017 be received.

141 **GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

a) **Creasey Park Community Football Centre (Minute 117/2017)**

In answer to a question from Councillor Sparrow, the Town Clerk and Chief Executive advised that he had had a meeting with the new Chairman of Dunstable Town FC and his Committee and as far as was known, the intention was to enter the Club into the same league for 2017/18 playing season and it was therefore anticipated that DTFC will still be hosted at Creasey Park.

b) **MTRF, Splash Park and Associated Café Provision (Minute 118b/2017)**

Councillor Jones praised officers' work in successfully opening the Splashpark on Friday 23 June and gave particular thanks to David Ashlee, Town Clerk and Chief Executive, and James Slack, Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager. Councillor Colbourne, in echoing the sentiment, asked for an update on the problems encountered on the morning of the meeting and the Town Clerk and Chief Executive advised that the contractor had been on site and the Splashpark was open by 1.00 pm. There would be a review meeting later in the week to ensure that the problem with the calibration and dosing of the water system had been fully resolved.

c) **Dunstable Cemetery (Minute 119d/2017)**

Councillor Jones praised the work of the Grounds staff in preparation for the Green Flag judging at Dunstable Cemetery, acknowledging that there was still a lot of work to do as part of the 5 year plan but she was pleased with the appearance of the grounds. She would be attending the award ceremony in July with the Cemetery Manager.

In response to a question from Councillor Sparrow regarding the noise nuisance from the Cemetery, the Head of Grounds and Environmental Services, advised that he had been in discussion with the Anti-Social Behaviour Team of Central Bedfordshire Council and the Police and a problem solving group had been formed to do all it could to help the residents of Meadway.

d) **Dunstable War Memorial**

In answer to a question from Councillor Russell, the Chairman, Councillor Jones, advised that the working group would be meeting that week and would approve the brief for the refurbishment and improvement of the war memorial, when consideration would be given to the inscriptions on any plaques.

e) **Dukeminster Estate (Minute 121/2017)**

Councillor Hollick advised that he and Councillor Chatterley had attended the meeting of the CBC Development Management Committee which had considered the planning application for the Dukeminster Estate and following consideration of the concerns raised, including from residents of Priory View, new plans would be put forward in August.

f) **Minutes**

RESOLVED: that, subject to the foregoing, the Minutes of the meetings of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee held on 15 May and 12 June 2017 be received.

142 **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

a) **MTRF, High Street Improvement Scheme (Minute 130d/2017)**

As requested by Councillor Sparrow, the Town Clerk and Chief Executive would send to all Members a list of all those who were actively engaged in this scheme.

b) **Minutes**

RESOLVED: that, subject to the foregoing, the Minutes of the meetings of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 15 May and 19 June be received.

143 **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT AND ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS 2016/2017**

The Council considered the Annual Governance Statement and Accounting Statements included within the Annual Return.

The Annual Governance Statement acknowledged the Council's responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including the preparation of the accounting statements.

The Annual Governance Statement was evidenced by the Internal Audit Programme, the Internal Audit Reports throughout the year and the final Internal Audit Report, together with the Corporate Risk Log.

The Council's statutory accounts had now been prepared by the Council's Consultant Accountant in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 on the basis of an income and expenditure account and a statement of balances in accordance with, and in the form specified in the Annual Return required by proper practices as a "smaller relevant body".

The accounts had been prepared in the form of the Annual Return, a copy of which had been received by Members, together with supporting financial statements, which were not subject to audit but provided background information to the figures declared in the Annual Return.

Members also received additional explanatory notes on the information contained within the financial statements and noted that the Council's Internal Auditor had completed the final internal audit report and had assigned positive assurances in each area of the Internal Audit Report at Section 4 of the year's Return.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented a summary of the Council's financial performance for the year, with particular reference to the contribution to the General Reserve, which had been achieved by revenue budget savings. He outlined the most significant variances against budget as included in the report provided. Details of the Council's Earmarked Reserves had been reported to Finance and General Purposes

Committee on 19 June 2017 and these were also included in the financial statements and reproduced in the separate Annual Report.

In answer to a question from Councillor Chatterley, the Head of Finance and Support Services reiterated that the Council was not required to prepare Financial Statements under the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Enterprises and that document had been provided for information only and was not subject to audit. The format for preparation of the Annual Return had been the same since 2011.

Members were reminded that in accordance with the Issues Arising Report at the conclusion of the previous year's audit, the Auditor's name had been removed from the Financial Statements prepared under the Financial Reporting Standards for Smaller Enterprises as these were not required under the Regulations and were not subject to audit.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive offered to run a workshop on the Council's financial regime if it helped Members' understanding and also invited any Member who wanted further detail of the Council's finances to arrange a meeting with himself and the Head of Finance and Support Services.

- RESOLVED:**
- i) that the Annual Governance statement at Section 1 of the Annual Return be completed in the affirmative and the Town Mayor and Town Clerk and Chief Executive be authorised to sign accordingly
 - ii) that the Accounting Statements 2016/2017 at Section 2 of the Annual Return be approved and the Town Mayor be authorised to sign accordingly
 - iii) that the Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2017 be approved for submission to the auditor.

Action: Head of Finance and Support Services

144 ANNUAL REPORT 2016/2017 AND REVIEW OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented the Annual Report for 2016/17 which would be published on the Council's website and made available at other usual public distribution outlets. The document provided an evidence source to residents as to the quality of services provided by the Council, as well as being an important planning tool for the organisation to ensure it could demonstrate continuous service improvement.

The format for the Annual Report was the same as agreed for last year's report and included a summary of the Council's activities and achievements over the last year, illustrated as "A Year in Dunstable". Section 4 set out how the Council is performing in relation to its stated aims contained within the Corporate Plan, the objectives for which are from the Corporate Plan adopted in December 2016. Also included was a report on the annual outturn for the Council's newly adopted performance indicators.

The Town Clerk reported on progress made regarding improvements to the Council's Corporate Governance arrangements which had included an update of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. He also reported on actions implemented in response to the Council's newly adopted Environment and Sustainability Policy.

The Corporate Risk Log had been updated and Members noted that the main identified areas of strategic risk remained as income generation and property management. Income generation had been identified as high risk because of the current economic downturn and property management arrangements had been identified as high risk due to the high cost of maintaining Council property which included listed buildings.

Members also noted the review of the Council's Health and Safety Policy and had received an updated copy.

A suggestion that the Annual Report should include reports from the Heads of Service was not supported.

It was agreed that the format and cost of producing the Annual Report would be reviewed for future years.

RESOLVED: i) that the Annual Report 2016/2017 be approved

iii) that the improvements to the Council's governance arrangements be noted

iv) that the Corporate Risk Log be noted

v) that the Council's Health and Safety Policy be approved.

Action: Town Clerk and Chief Executive