

**DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

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

**ON MONDAY 3 DECEMBER 2018**

Present: Councillors John Kane (Town Mayor), Nigel Warren (Deputy Town Mayor), Sid Abbott, Lisa Bird, John Chatterley, Terry Colbourne, Philip Crawley, Jeannette Freeman, Eugene Ghent, Peter Hollick, Gloria Martin, Mike Mullany, Patricia Russell, Gladys Sanders, Ann Sparrow, Pat Staples and Johnson Tamara

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 Liz Jones, Claire Meakins and J Woodward

Public Attendance: 2

Before the commencement of the meeting, the Town Mayor's Chaplain, Dr Johan Schoeman, led the Council in prayer

**203 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held 1 October 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

**204 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Interest</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>
Councillor Pat Staples	Personal interest – Dunstable Market	As may arise

**205 TOWN MAYOR'S REMARKS**

The Town Mayor referred to the report detailing his attendances at a variety of events since the last meeting of the Council, up to 22 November 2018. There had been many memorable events, particularly the Remembrance Day Parade and Service and the lighting of the Beacon on Dunstable Downs commemorating the 100th anniversary of the end of World War 1.

The Town Mayor was grateful to the Little Theatre for their offer of holding a fundraising evening on behalf of his charities at their January production of 'Glorious' on 22 January 2019. Full details would be sent in due course and he hoped members would be able to support the event.

**206 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions put to the meeting.

## **207 QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 16**

There were no questions put to the meeting.

## **208 COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE**

### **Town Centre Services (Minute 181/2018)**

Councillor Abbott referred to a recent approach made by a street trader regarding the previous provision of free market stalls. The trader was seeking a second free stall and had previously approached other members, including Councillor Ghent who had clarified the position with the Town Clerk and Chief Executive, and the trader's request had been declined.

Members gave consideration to the further request and were reminded that when the Town Council ceased the management of the general market in February 2018, it was agreed that the Council would give the regular traders who became licensed street traders one free market stall, whether it be single or double being dependent on their pitch at the time. This had been adhered to.

Councillor Hollick advised that this issue had also been discussed at a recent Group meeting and it was considered that the Council had met its obligation to the former general market traders and the street trader would again be advised accordingly.

**RESOLVED:** i) that the request for an additional free stall be refused

ii) that Councillors Hollick and Ghent send a formal response to the trader accordingly.

### **b) Reports from Outside Organisations (Minute 182/2018)**

Councillor Sparrow advised that she had submitted a report for Committee in respect of the Town Band but this had been omitted from the Agenda.

Councillor Staples advised that the Town Band had reported on a good summer with concerts in June, July, August and September and were now looking forward to the Christmas Concert on the Square. Planning for next summer's concerts would start in the next few weeks.

### **c) Minutes**

**RESOLVED:** that, subject to the foregoing, the Minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 29 October 2018 be received.

## **209 GROUNDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

### **a) Recreation Grounds (Minute 188a/2018)**

The Head of Grounds and Environmental Services confirmed that the report of the Institute of Groundsmanship on the grass pitches at Creasey Park had been received and was currently being analysed.

**b) Dunstable War Memorial (Minute 188b/2018)**

In answer to a question from Councillor Hollick, the Head of Grounds and Environmental Services clarified that the full cost of the refurbishment works to the War Memorial was in the region of £60,000 and funding contributions to date amounted to approximately £12,000. The total cost to the Council was therefore in the region of £48,000, slightly less than the agreed Council commitment of £50,000.

**c) Allotments**

In answer to a question from Councillor Mullany, the Head of Grounds and Environmental Services advised that, of the 50 people currently on the waiting list for an allotment, 27 were non-residents of Dunstable. It had previously been agreed that non-residents would be permitted onto the waiting list to avoid vacant plots but they would only be offered allotment plots when all resident requirements had been satisfied. Of the 23 residents on the waiting list, most of these wanted specific sites.

**d) Bennett's Adventure Play Area (Minute 189/2018)**

Councillors Hollick and Bird were both looking forward to receiving the designs for the new Adventure Play Area.

**e) Minutes**

**RESOLVED:** that, subject to the foregoing, the Minutes of the meeting of the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee held on 12 November 2018 be received.

**210 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**a) Downside Community Centre – Disposal of a Community Asset (Minute 202/2018) (Minute 160/2018)**

In answer to a question from Councillor Russell, the Town Clerk and Chief Executive confirmed that a revised offer had been sought but no formal response had yet been received.

**b) Minutes**

**RESOLVED:** that, subject to the foregoing, the Minutes of the meeting of Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 19 November 2018 be received.

**211 DUNSTABLE JOINT COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Dunstable Joint Committee held 20 September 2018 be received.

**212 MEMBERS ALLOWANCE SCHEME (Minute 160/2018)**

Councillor Hollick presented the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel's consideration of establishing an allowance scheme for members of Dunstable Town Council, which had previously been discussed amongst members at their Group Meeting when it was felt that the recommendation was not a reflection of what this Council does and was considered to be derisory. The general consensus was not to adopt an allowance

scheme at this time but this would not preclude a new Council from reconsidering the matter.

**RESOLVED:** i) that the Council do not adopt a Members Allowance Scheme at this time

ii) that the Town Clerk and Chief Executive seek clarification from the Remuneration Panel on their recommendation.

## **213 DRAFT BUDGET 2019/2020 AND ASSOCIATED CONSIDERATIONS**

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented a draft budget summary for 2019/2020, which had been prepared following the annual budget setting process undertaken with all service managers and the senior management team. It was noted that a budget briefing meeting had also been held with the Council's Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen on 21 November to go through the draft budget proposals in detail.

Members were mindful that the proposed budget was only draft at this stage as there were a number of issues still to be considered and decisions to be made by Committees. The draft budget identified increased revenue expenditure on the existing budget and identified revenue savings and additional income from improved income targets. The main increases to the revenue budget were set out in the report, with the largest impact on the year on year budget being the overall increase in staffing costs, due to the nationally agreed pay award.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive reported that the Dunstable tax base had increased from 12,665 to 12,812 (an increase of 147) securing additional income through the council tax charge of £25,756 assuming the Band D council tax charge remained at £175.21. That being so, the draft budget summary presented indicated there would be a revenue budget deficit of £102,920 which would require an increase of £8.03 on the current Band D council tax charge in order to balance the budget.

Members gave consideration to potential further savings that could be included in the budget which would reduce the deficit to £53,060 requiring an increase of £4.14 on the current Band D council tax charge, 2.4%

**RESOLVED:** i) that the options for reducing the revenue budget deficit as set out in the report be agreed

ii) that the Council work towards a maximum of a 2.4% increase on the 2019/20 council tax charge.

## **214 RE-ORGANISATION OF COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE ORDER 2018 (Minute 25/2018)**

Members noted the final outcome of the Governance Review which changed Dunstable Town Councillors numbers from 21 to 18. The Review did not accord with the Council's proposals for boundary changes, although minor changes to the parish boundary had been made to the north and south of Dunstable.

The outcome from the Review required the Council to adopt a change to the Constitution and Standing Orders, to be effective from the elections due to be held in May 2019.

**RESOLVED:** that the Council's Constitution and Standing Orders be amended to reflect Council membership of 18 with effect from the elections in May 2019, divided into five wards as follows:

Central Ward	3 Members
Icknield Ward	4 Members
Manshead Ward	3 Members
Northfields Ward	4 Members
Watling Ward	4 Members