

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

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

ON MONDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 2024 FROM 7 pm

Present: Councillors Louise O’Riordan (Town Mayor), Sally Kimondo (Deputy Town Mayor), Nicholas Kotarski (Vice-Chair), Wendy Bater, Matthew Brennan, Philip Crawley, John Gurney, Michelle Henderson, Peter Hollick, Liz Jones, and Johnson Tamara.

In Attendance: Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), Georgia Pearson (Democratic Services Manager), Lisa Scheder (Head of Corporate Services) James Slack (Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager) and Rachel Connor (Marketing and Communications Officer).

Apologies: Councillors Gregory Alderman (Chair), Richard Attwell and Kenson Gurney.

Public: Nil

189/24 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 17 June 2024 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

Councillors Brennan and O’Riordan entered the chamber at 7:02 pm.

190/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Jones declared an interest in item 11 due to being a member of the Dunstable Rotary Club.

191/24 FINANCE

The Head of Corporate Services summarised the report to members.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED:

- i. To note the revenue budgetary position for the period from 1 April 2024 to 31 July 2024
- ii. To note the current balance of the Council’s earmarked reserves as of 31 July 2024
- iii. To note the current investments

- iv. To confirm the current Direct Debits as of August 2024

192/24 COMPLIANCE AND FACILITIES

The Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager summarised the report to Members.

Councillor Jones enquired if all Councillors should sign in on the new tablets at each location, each time they come into the building. It was advised that Councillors should start to sign in each time they come into the building and the Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager will send out an email to confirm this.

ACTION - The Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager

193/24 MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications and Marketing Officer summarised the report provided to members.

Councillor Brennan asked if adding old pictures of Dunstable into Talk of The Town could be considered.

ACTION - The Communications and Marketing Officer

Councillors asked if the What's on Window and the West Street Window can be used to advertise the council meetings more often to engage the public in what the Council are doing.

ACTION - The Communications and Marketing Officer

194/24 40th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

The Head of Corporate Services summarised the report provided.

Councillor Hollick updated members on the book he is writing for the 40th Anniversary. A quote has been obtained of roughly £358 for 100 copies.

Councillor Jones put forward the idea for an exhibition in Grove House with the History Society to allow residents to visit and look through the 40 years of Dunstable.

ACTION - The Town Clerk and Chief Executive

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: to approve all options detailed within the report to mark the Town Council's 40th anniversary year.

195/24 HONORARY FREEMAN AND FREEWOMEN

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive summarised the report to members.

Councillors discuss the recommendations in detail.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: to begin awarding the honour of Honorary Freeman or Freewoman of Dunstable during the Town Council's 40th year in 2025 /26.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: to purchase of an Honour Board to commemorate past and future Freemen and Freewomen of the town.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: to adopt the proposed approach in considering future Freemen or Freewomen of Dunstable, except not with a limit of four.

196/24 FLAG FLYING

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive summarised the report to members.

Councillor Jones asked the quality of our flags used to be checked and replacements made if necessary. .

ACTION: Democratic Services Manager

Members requested that information about each flag flying be placed near to the flag as appropriate.

ACTION: Democratic Services Manager

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: to approve the proposed revised flag flying schedule with the addition of Merchant Navy Day on 3 September and Emergency Services Day on 9 September.

197/24 TO CONSIDER THE TOWN COUNCIL BECOMING A CORPORATE MEMBER OF ROTARY DUNSTABLE AT A COST OF £180 PER YEAR

Following a discussion this item was deferred to the next meeting pending a report outlining the process and benefits to the Town Council.

ACTION - The Town Clerk and Chief Executive

198/24 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive gave a verbal update from the working group meeting held on 12 September 2024 and informed Members that a further report would be provided to Full Council on 18 November 2024.

199/24 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

- Citizen's Advice Management Committee – Councillor Richard Attwell

Councillor Henderson left the chamber at 9:04 pm

Councillor Brennan updated members in Councillor Attwell's absence.

Since the last meeting there have been two further meetings, one in August and the AGM in September.

- Dunstable International Town Twinning Association – Councillors Louise O'Riordan, Peter Hollick and Kenson Gurney

No Updated

- Hospice at Home Management Committee - Councillor Wendy Bater

Councillor Bater updated members that she attended her first meeting back in July 2024, which was the AGM. It was advised that Councillor Jones was made Chair of the committee. A further update will be provided at the next meeting.

- Ashton Almshouses Charity – Councillors Louise O'Riordan and Gregory Alderman

No Update

- Ashton Schools Foundation - Councillors Peter Hollick and Gregory Alderman

No Update

- Chew's Foundation - Councillors Matthew Brennan and Kenson Gurney

No Update

- Poor's Land Charity - Councillors Kenson Gurney and Liz Jones

No Update

- Lockington Charity and Marshe Charity - Councillors Kenson Gurney and Liz Jones

Inspections have been carried out on some of the properties. There are couple of properties within the block on Church Street which are being looked at under

health and safety. Some of the residents are collecting rather a lot of items and storing them in their properties, which is being dealt with sensitively.

One property is being refurbished and will be out to let as soon as possible.

- Dunstable and District Scout Council Executive - Councillor Nicholas Kotarski

Councillor Kotarski advised that the AGM was back in June 2024. Roger Pepworth has stepped down as Chair and the new Chair is Philip Spicer.

200/24 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: in terms of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, the following items will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and therefore, pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

201/24 NEW WEBSITE

The Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager summarised the report provided. Members discussed and considered the recommendations within the report.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: that the new Website Development, Hosting and Support contract be awarded to Bidder D for the amount proposed, at a cost of £900.00 per year for hosting, maintenance and support.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: The approval to release £5,000 from the Corporate Plan Development reserve for the one-off capital contribution for the development of a new website.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: Members approved the recommendation that any website budget year end surplus is allocated to a new earmarked website reserve for future website development.

202/24 NEW TOWN COUNCIL BRANDING

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive summarised the report to members.

Members discussed the new branding proposed in detail and indicated that the preferred approach would be to retain the main elements of the current crest in some form.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive advised Members that the new website tender included a significant element of work to clarify user needs and develop electronic content which may help to clarify what changes are possible and needed from the current crest to enable changes to be made which met Members' preferences and the requirements of current websites and social media.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: For officers to explore further options and defer the decision on branding to the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 9:52 pm.

Draft