

DOWNHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES OF EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD IN THE TOWN HALL
ON THURSDAY 06th SEPTEMBER 2018 AT 7:00PM

Present:	The Mayor	Cllr D J Sharman
	The Deputy Mayor	Cllr J W Doyle
	Councillors	F E Daymond
		J K Fox
		J Groom
		R L Hayes
		D Lawson
		A Pickering
		C Pyatt
		M D Starreveld
		R Turner
		J Woodmin
	County Cllr	A White
	Deputy Town Clerk	Mr R A Davidson
	Public	27
	Press	1

Those in attendance at the meeting were notified of the emergency evacuation procedure from the Town Hall. Those in attendance at the meeting were notified that mobile telephones should be turned off or switched to silent mode for the duration of the meeting.

3672. To receive Members' Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs' R Hepworth (holiday), B Hobbs (holiday), R Horne (holiday), R Pegg (ill-health), J Reed (ill-health) and A Stacey (family circumstances). The Deputy Clerk advised that in respect of the holiday apologies; all of these were long standing commitments. The apologies were accepted.

Prior to the next agenda item, the Deputy Clerk advised he had received written notification from Cllr R Hayes requesting a dispensation be granted to all councillors in advance of the business to be conducted at this meeting due to her belief all councillors had a disclosable pecuniary interest as either resident and/or business owner and/or user of the car parks.

The Deputy Clerk advised, that as the Proper Officer, in accordance with Standing Orders 13e, he was persuaded of the need and therefore granted a dispensation on the following grounds:

Without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the particular business would be so great a proportion of the meeting transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business; and
Granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area.

3673. To receive Members' Declarations of Interest

Accordingly, the following declarations were made:

Cllr D Lawson – Resident of Downham Market
Cllr R Turner – Resident of Downham Market

Cllr J Woodmin – Resident of Downham Market
Cllr M Starreveld – Resident of Downham Market
The Deputy Mayor Cllr J Doyle – Resident of Downham Market
Cllr R Hayes – Residential Property Owner/Business Owner Downham Market
Cllr C Pyatt – Resident of Downham Market
Cllr A Pickering – Resident of Downham Market
Cllr F Daymond – Resident of Downham Market
Cllr J Fox – Resident of Downham Market
Cllr J Groom – Resident of Downham Market (no parking space)
The Mayor Cllr D Sharman – Resident of Downham Market

Adjourn meeting for public participation and reports

The Mayor, Cllr Sharman, adjourned the meeting.

Acknowledging the postponement of the previously arranged Extraordinary Full Council meeting due to be held on 23rd July 2018 and subsequent passage of time; the Mayor Cllr D Sharman firstly permitted Cllr R Hayes, Chairman of the Car Park Management Strategy Sub Committee, to give a condensed version of the previously delivered Car Park Management Strategy Sub Committee public presentation (Appendix 1).

Following this, the following members of the public addressed the meeting:

Doctor R Scott

Bridge Street Surgery

Has a staff of 24 and 7 doctors and sees, on average, 300 - 400 patients per day

Staff must be able to come and go/Staff start at a variety of different times

What provision are the Town Council going to make to facilitate this?

Enough of a staff recruitment problem without car park charging

Patients, if they need to see a doctor will manage, primary concern is regarding doctors and staff

Mr P Martin

Local retail owner

Previously adamantly against charging but something has to be done regarding turnover of spaces

Someone who both lives and works in the town

Study shows the precept payers are paying £80,000 per year and the asset isn't generating any money

Town Council owns an asset its not making any money on – the situation is nuts!

Monies freed up could be spent on other demands

CCTV possibilities – good idea

Hollies car parks full usually by 09:30am daily

When raining, car parks are all full but shops will be empty

Charging will generate turnover of spaces and people will want to come into town

Why should Bridge Street surgery be a special case?

Unknown member of public

Why didn't the Town Council stop Napier Parking (Wales Court provider) from operating?

Mr R Walden

The car parks need enforcement

Supportive of charging

Town Council has dallied too long and should make a decision

Mr A Davy

With the projected growth of the town and as many as 4000 extra vehicles in next 20 years, Town Council needs to think long term
Charging necessary to develop funds for additional capacity
Payment for parking is inevitable

Mrs M Eales

Is there any suggestion there should be an initial free period?

The Mayor ascertained no other members of the public wished to address Council. Accordingly, the Mayor resumed the meeting.

3674. To discuss and decide upon Downham Market Town Council's Car Park Management Strategy Sub-Committee recommendation:

'Based on the evidence available the Car Park Management Strategy Sub-Committee recommends for the health and growth of the town that a partner strategy is required to manage the parking in town and this includes the application of Pay and Display parking for Downham Market Town Council Car Parks'

The Mayor invited councillors to debate the recommendation.

Cllr Starreveld

Lived in this bustling town for 30+ years
Been part of this process since Car Park Management Strategy Sub Committee formed
Concerned that sub committee now focused on charging versus non-charging
Focus should be centred around misuse of car parks
Believed that up to half of the sub committee including himself, were absent in June when recommendation made
Less inclined to think charging appropriate against a backdrop of Brexit and austerity

The Deputy Mayor Cllr Doyle

Refute Cllr Starreveld's suggestion recommendation was made when half the sub committee were absent
Everyone entitled to own view – that's the nature of democracy
Chair and sub committee done a fantastic and professional job making the proposal
Process stands up to scrutiny
Very proud the town has free parking, but Town Council simply can't afford to monitor and enforce without charging
Town needs turnover of spaces
Could be claimed the Town Council car parks are a 'Park & Ride' facility for other destinations, such as rail commuters/coach holidays etc
Urge councillors to make a decision this evening, either one way or the other

Cllr Groom

Lived in town 30+ years
Due to her own circumstances has to park either on car park or on road
Free car parking – one of the things that defines a market town, is a particular strength of the town
Downham Market is a hub to the wider hinterland
Not in favour of charging

Cllr Hayes

Existing Car Park Orders no longer enforceable regardless of outcome

Car Parks need monitoring and enforcing – this comes at a cost

Car parking situation getting worse

Town Council cannot maintain the status quo, one quarter of precept taken up with car park expenditure

Only real alternative is to raise the precept – is that fair?

Future proofing the vitality of the town

Everyone agrees there's a problem (business/residents/users) - need a solution that addresses the issue and doesn't just meet the needs of one particular stakeholder

Cllr Starreveld

Town council hasn't put in place a strategic plan

Need a full discussion.

Councillors were promised a full discussion, this hasn't happened this evening

Wish to register my disgust

The Mayor Cllr Sharman

Discussion is now taking place. Members cannot be forced to make a comment.

Does any other councillor wish to address Council?

Councillor Woodmin

New to Council.

Does not see tonight's vote as the definitive vote

Councillor Hayes

Vote is saying we will commit to Pay & Display, if voted for

Much of the matter i.e. operating costs is business sensitive.

If costs necessitated ridiculous charges – clearly Council would not proceed.

Vote needed to fully understand the costs

Councillor Fox

The proposal includes the phrase 'Pay & Display' – I for one, therefore, will be voting against the proposal

Councillor Pickering

Don't agree with Cllr Starreveld regarding a lack of discussion. I don't agree I have to speak to have an opinion

I have attended the presentations, conducted my own research, listened and will cast my own vote accordingly.

The Mayor Cllr Sharman ascertained no other councillor wished to speak and moved to take the recommendation.

Councillor Hayes, in advance of the proposal, requested a named vote.

Proposed – Cllr Hayes

Seconded – Cllr Pyatt

‘Based on the evidence available the Car Park Management Strategy Sub-Committee recommends for the health and growth of the town that a partner strategy is required to manage the parking in town and this includes the application of Pay and Display parking for Downham Market Town Council Car Parks’

For – Cllrs’ Doyle, Hayes, Lawson, Pickering, Pyatt, Sharman, Turner and Woodmin

Against – Cllrs’ Daymond, Fox, Groom and Starreveld

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8:17pm.

Chairman

Date