

DOWNHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING HELD TUESDAY, 11TH MAY 2010 AT 7.30PM

Present:	The Mayor	Cllr J W Doyle
	The Deputy Mayor	Cllr J K Fox
	Councillors	Mrs V I Botham
		H M Cross
		F E Daymond
		J Groom
		R Leach
		Mrs K Mellish
		Mrs S M Nunn
		C Pyatt
		J J Reed
		C T Sampson
		D J Sharman
		A D Stacey
		V F Starling
		S C Teverson
		W A Wallace
	County Councillor	Mrs S E L Hutson
	Borough Councillors	J R Legg
		A M Lovett
	Deputy Clerk	Mrs S D Porter
	Administrator	Mrs L F Bayliss
	Press Correspondent	Ms R M Bodle
	Members of Public	15

Those in attendance at the meeting were notified of the emergency evacuation procedure from the Town Council offices.

1735. Election of Mayor

The Mayor, Cllr Doyle, read a letter received from RAF Marham which expressed their gratitude for the support received from Downham Market in raising over £9,400 for their recent charity event, 'Help The Heroes'.

The Mayor, Cllr Doyle, addressed the Council:

"Now is my chance to say thank you to all those people who have supported me throughout the past year. Audrey has been instrumental in getting me to where I should be and has, I believe, been a wonderful Mayoress to me and the Town over the year and I thank her for that.

"John and Margaret have also been great supports to us and I wish them well for the coming year. I would also like to thank the office staff for all their hard work and the support they have given us. Also you, my fellow Councillors, have allowed me to fulfil the role without too many hassles and I thank you for that.

“The new Council structure agreed by Council is about to be implemented and should make our efforts more efficient as well as placing more Councillors into positions of responsibility. There may well be, as there always is, some issues to sort out but I am sure once the new structure is bedded in, it will benefit us all.

“The highlight of this year I am sure for all of us was the XI Squadron Medal Ceremony; what a red letter day for the Town it was. I am sure all of us who were there will remember it for the rest of our lives.

“The severe weather damaged the façade of our Town Hall although in many ways this was a good thing because we engaged a local builder to put the matter right, and while the scaffolding was up, renovate the cupola. The team did a marvellous job and their work has been passed and praised by the BCKL&WN Conservation Officer. Because we insisted on a contingency fund to be set up when we took over the Town Hall none of the cost of the work will fall on our residents.

“This year, thanks to the Joint Burial Board, we have found a site to set up allotments in the Town. They are now up and running and people have the chance to ‘grow their own’ locally. There have been a few teething problems caused mainly by our efforts to get them on the site as early as possible in the growing season, but once these are resolved I am sure the allotments will be an asset to the Town for many years to come.

“Over the years the one thing our young people have consistently asked for is a venue, a meeting place, they can use as their own. This year we got the chance to take over the former ATC Hut when they vacated it. We have agreed for it to be used primarily for the youth of our Town and I am sure it will suit their purpose perfectly.

“We have agreed this year to consult residents on car park charging. This has become necessary primarily because of the situation in our car parks, at the moment it is first come takes all. Our car parks need throughput to give people the chance to park and take advantage of what the Town has to offer. We have spent a lot of money over the past few years to provide parking and the issue is, ‘do only the residents pay or those who use the car parks?’

“During the last Full Council meeting I omitted an item, realising this I apologised and put the matter right. In an attempt to lighten the mood I then joked that I must be getting ‘demob happy’ which the Lynn News chose to headline as a statement of fact. I wish to put this matter right by stating that my commitment to the Mayoralty from the moment I was elected has been total and will remain total until I pass on the chain and beyond.

“We have a wonderful Town here full of clubs and organisations mainly staffed by volunteers that make the quality of life here what it is and I would like to pay tribute to those in our Town who give their time so generously. As I have visited other towns in the area in my Mayoral capacity I do genuinely get the feeling that they look upon Downham Market with envy for our businesses, our community spirit and our events, and long may that remain.

“Thank you for giving me the opportunity of serving our Town as its Mayor. Once again I have strived, as my predecessor has, to be a Mayor of the people and to bring the role of Mayor into the twenty first century – this as always will be for the people to judge.”

Cllr Leach addressed the Council:

“Mr Mayor, fellow Councillors, members of the public and the press, I am nominating for the position of Mayor for 2010/2011 Cllr John Fox. Cllr Fox is a local man born and bred, educated firstly at lower school Clackclose and returned years later as a qualified teacher in the same classroom. He has probably taught most of Downham Market at some stage. Now if you know what the education standards are in Downham Market you can be your own judges! It is a sad fact that during the next year Clackclose lower school will close forever.

“He first attended Council meetings as a reporter for the Lynn News but nobody, and that includes John, can come up with an actual date when he became a Councillor, but it is an awful long time ago, long before computers became the controlling machines of Council rather than people. How he has evaded high office for so long nobody knows.

“He is probably in the Guinness Book of Records for more points of order being called at Council meetings than any other Councillor in the Fens, but whilst he is Mayor I will try to keep up the momentum for him including a tally of how many I do. I will start later tonight!

“Later in life he gave up teaching and became an undertaker. Now some may say this is a change of direction, others may not! Some Councils have nurses and other means of support for Councillors but bearing in mind the age of quite a few of us, having an undertaker on the premises could be useful.

“John has served this Council long and steadfastly and I ask Councillors to support this nomination for Mayor for the coming year.”

Cllr Stacey addressed the Council:

“Mr Mayor, guests and Councillors, may I heartily endorse the proposal made by Cllr Leach. I have known John Fox and worked with him for many years both on this Council and as part of the Festival Committee. He has always been a pleasure to work with, he has been conscientious, loyal and a mine of innovative ideas. I look forward to his year as Mayor with renewed enthusiasm and recommend that all Councillors should follow his example.

“I therefore have great pleasure in seconding the proposal.”

Proposed – Cllr Leach

Seconded – Cllr Stacey

‘That Cllr Fox is elected as Mayor of Downham Market for the ensuing year.’

All in favour

There being no other nominations, Cllr Fox was duly elected.

1736. Mayor Making and Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Cllr Fox and Mrs Fox received their chains of office.

Cllr Fox made his Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Mayor.

The Mayor, Cllr Fox, addressed the Council:

“It would appear that we are coming to the end of an era. Soon people will have to start thinking about what the Mayor’s name is. For the past three years it has been easy, ‘Mayor John’, and now for a fourth, perhaps this will be the last of this line but who can tell what will happen after the Town Council elections next year?”

“I would like to thank the Past Mayor John Doyle for his work over the past year, or four! He has taken part in a number of interesting projects culminating in involvement in the preparations for the Parade of RAF personnel which took place just before he became St George again. Some of the projects have been over and above the call of duty such as building a storage shed out of a flat pack kit, with a little help from his friends, and checking on the renovation work on the Town Hall, with his hard hat and camera! His experience in the building trade has been invaluable and I hope he will continue to keep us on the straight and narrow in such matters. His work with the Allotments Association, the Howdale Community Centre, Downham in Bloom and the Water Festival, to name but a few, have really helped to keep the Town alive.

“It is with much pleasure that I present John with this token in acknowledgement of his second term as Mayor of Downham Market.”

Cllr Fox presented Cllr Doyle with a plaque commemorating his past year as Mayor.

“I also have great pleasure in presenting these flowers to Audrey in recognition of the hours of waiting, helping, diary keeping and all the other things that come as Mayoress. And finally, in the presentation line, these flowers to Margaret in anticipation that I shall muck up her carefully made arrangements at least once in the next week, never mind year!”

Cllr Fox presented Mrs Doyle and Mrs Fox with a bouquet of flowers.

“I must also thank Councillors for their support in electing me as Mayor for the coming year. With your support and the ongoing support of the Council staff I will do my best.

“This year promises to be a little different as we are going into it with a change in the structure of the Town Council. There are a few changes to the way we have been working and, whilst we have had some time to work out the new system, there are no promises that it is faultless. Theory is OK but practice is a different matter all together. We need to work together as a team to iron out any glitches and then move forward through the coming year to build on what has proved to be a hard working and forward looking Council. As a point of information please remember that any Councillor can raise a ‘Point of Order’ it is not a restricted domain. My hope for the year is that we can improve our communications with each other, the people of Downham Market and also the people upon whom Downham Market also relies – those from the surrounding parishes.

“There is plenty of room, if not a great deal of time, for discussion and debate. Let us remember that the old fashioned telephone or even older face to face communication is just as good, and in some ways better, than the modern email and texting styles. It is difficult to show emotion in electronically controlled communication, which of course, not everyone is enamoured with anyway.

“As a start of widening our communication I have, with the past Mayor’s permission, arranged for the invitations to some of the local parish chairmen to join us this evening. Those invited fell within a circle drawn on a map – the diameter of the circle was restricted only by the number of people we are allowed into this room. I welcome those who could make it. It is my hope that these Chairmen and perhaps a few more, will be able to meet together to our joint benefit throughout the coming year.

“I have decided not to nominate a Mayor’s Charity this year. I am aware that a group of friends of this Council, including some Councillors, are proposing to work towards raising funds to help improve some of the facilities available in the Town Hall and it would seem somewhat unhelpful to compete with this group. It is not appropriate to say more at this time but, as they say, watch this space. If, however, a situation arises to raise some funds for charitable concerns then that chance will be taken and a suitable recipient will be found.

“That is enough from me for now so let’s get on with the business of the meeting so that we can have a drink, chat and some nibbles.”

1737. To receive Members’ Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

1738. To receive Members’ Declarations of Interest

The Mayor, Cllr Fox and Cllr Daymond declared a pecuniary interest in Item 1746, to Approve the Payment of Bills (Town Council bills) and Cllr Wallace declared a pecuniary interest in Item 1746, to Approve the Payment of Bills (Howdale Community Centre bills).

Public Participation

The Mayor, Cllr Fox, adjourned the meeting for public participation.

Members of the public and Councillors did not wish to address the Council at this time.

The Mayor, Cllr Fox, resumed the meeting.

1739. Election of Deputy Mayor

Cllr Groom addressed the Council:

“Mr Mayor, Councillors and guests. The Councillors we select as Mayor and Deputy Mayor for Downham Market are our voice and our Public face. They are our ears and eyes, they listen and speak for us in the wider community, and I feel privileged today to propose as Deputy Mayor someone who I believe will be an excellent ambassador for us.

“Val Starling joined the Town Council some five and a half years ago and has been extremely busy working on behalf of the Council and the Town ever since. At this time amongst other Council duties she represents the Council at Chamber of Trade meetings, is an active member of the Festival Committee, is Chairman of the Development Committee, and heads up the Working Party for the youth in the Town.

“Val is a Downham girl, she has lived and worked in Downham Market all her life and her children have attended our local schools. She knows from first hand experiences the advantages and disadvantages of living in Downham Market and it’s probably because of this that she has played such an active role in the Town Council, particularly in developing the youth work programs and representing the Town Council on the Festival Committee. We on the Town Council all know that Cllr Starling is not afraid to speak her mind and will pursue relentlessly issues that need to be clarified or search for information that needs to be found out. Along with this determination to be well informed and to fulfil her Council obligations, Cllr Starling is also someone who will listen to others, who will seek advice and sound out others’ opinions; thus her opinions are always well informed and arrived at after careful consideration. Cllr Starling, Val, once said to me in conversation, ‘I’d fight tooth and claw for our Town’.

“Some time ago I suggested to Cllr Starling that she should consider standing as Deputy Mayor but at that time she was reluctant to do so. Today however I am privileged to propose someone who will fight tooth and claw for our Town. Councillors, Downham Market is Val Starling’s Town – we could not wish for a better ambassador.”

Cllr Teverson addressed the Council:

“Mr Mayor. I have spent today in Gloucester with two representatives from the Parish Council’s movement in each of the thirty Councils throughout Great Britain discussing what makes good Councillors, what the way forward is, and how this sector will eventually be taken notice of, properly represented in Parliament and all other areas that are sometimes ignored. Several issues came up and one was that Councils are regarded generally as being made up of members who are male, pale and stale. They may do a very good job but it doesn’t reflect the communities they live in and there is concern on this point.

“I am delighted that Val is patently not male, she isn’t stale, she’s less than fifty years of age, just, and is reasonably new to the Council and hasn’t had decades to get into bad habits. So firstly she is just what the doctor ordered for the first tier movement! Secondly, there’s one self evident truth in Parish Councils and procedure; it is that anybody who doesn’t like being asked questions invariably has something to hide and if they do not know they have something to hide they are just out their depth. Conversely, being asked a question gives everybody the chance to show why they are doing, what they are doing and how they are doing. There is no better question asker than Val. As Jenny said, Val will ask questions in polite and measured terms seeking to understand exactly what’s happening, why and who’s paying for it.

“Parish Councils have moved immeasurably in many peoples’ eyes from being concerned with dog mess, toilets and streetlights, etc, to being corporate businesses. As you know only too well this Council is a half a million turnover corporate business governed by every kinds of governance you can imagine and rafts of legislations. Val comes of that generation geared to tackle everything in the new corporate climate.

“I will conclude by saying she’s been on what the talent shows would call, an incredible journey from Miss Downham Market to Deputy Mayor of the Town, and when earlier today I spoke to an elector long in the tooth in Downham Market I mentioned how delighted I was that Val had given her time, attentions and efforts to come to this post in Council. His response was, ‘coo she were a lovely Miss Downham Market’! I am sure she will be a lovely Deputy Mayor in every respect.”

Proposed – Cllr Groom

Seconded – Cllr Teverson

‘That Cllr Starling is elected as Deputy Mayor of Downham Market for the ensuing year.’

All in favour

There being no other nominations, Cllr Starling was duly elected.

Cllr Starling and Mr Starling received their chains of office.

The Mayor, Cllr Fox, adjourned the meeting. The newly elected Mayor and Mayoress and Deputy Mayor and Consort left the Council Chambers in order for the press to take photographs at 8.01pm.

The Mayor and Mayoress and Deputy Mayor and Consort returned to the Council Chambers at 8.05pm.

The Mayor, Cllr Fox, resumed the meeting.

1740. Appointment of Representatives to Outside Bodies

The representatives to the various outside bodies were appointed as follows:

West Norfolk MIND

Mrs P A Roberts

Joint Burial Committee

Mr R J R Baker MBE, Mr M J Coles, Cllr J K Fox, Mr S W Nunn and Cllr C T Sampson

Southern Area Road Safety Committee

Cllr J W Doyle, Cllr Mrs S M Nunn, Cllr C Pyatt, Cllr C T Sampson and Cllr A D Stacey

Norfolk Association of Parish & Town Council

Cllr J W Doyle and Cllr S C Teverson

Silverdale Centre

Cllr J Groom and Cllr R Leach

Festival Committee

Cllr A D Stacey and Cllr Mrs V F Starling

Howdale Community Centre

Mr M J Coles, Cllr J W Doyle, Cllr J Groom, Cllr C Pyatt, Cllr R Leach, Cllr Sharman and Cllr W A Wallace

West Norfolk Tourism Forum

Cllr F E Daymond and Cllr Mrs S M Nunn

West Norfolk Sports Forum

Cllr C Pyatt

West Norfolk Arts Forum

Cllr J Groom

Downham Market Sports Federation

Cllr C Pyatt

Joint Remembrance Day Committee

Mr R J R Baker MBE and Cllr J W Doyle

Safer Neighbourhood Area Partnership

Cllr Mrs K Mellish, Cllr D J Sharman and Mrs P B Sharp

School Governors:

Hillcrest (Crimpleham, Downham Stradsett & Wereham)

Mr Moreton

Clackclose School

Cllr R Leach

Charities:

Batchcroft

Mr P Allen, Mrs J Day and Cllr C T Sampson

100 Acre

Mr P Allen, Mrs J Day and Cllr C T Sampson

Retreat Almshouses

Mr J Haylett and Mrs J Watson

1741. Appointment of Standing Committees

The Standing Committees were appointed as follows:

Finance	Planning	Property	Community Development	Town Hall
Cllr Mellish Cllr Nunn Cllr Pyatt Cllr Sampson Cllr Stacey Cllr Starling Cllr Teverson	Cllr Daymond Cllr Fox Cllr Groom Cllr Reed Cllr Sampson Cllr Wallace	Cllr Cross Cllr Daymond Cllr Doyle Cllr Mrs Mellish Cllr Pyatt Cllr Reed Cllr Sharman Cllr Wallace	Cllr Mrs Botham Cllr Groom Cllr Leach Cllr Mrs Nunn Cllr Starling Cllr Teverson	Cllr Mrs Botham Cllr Cross Cllr Doyle Cllr Fox Cllr Leach Cllr Sharman Cllr Stacey
<i>1 vacancy</i>	<i>2 vacancies</i>		<i>2 vacancies</i>	<i>1 vacancy</i>

The Mayor, Cllr Fox, advised that the Chairman of each Standing Committee would be elected at the next Full Council meeting.

1742. To inspect the Deeds, Leases and Agreements held on behalf of the Council

The Mayor, Cllr Fox, advised that a folder was available in the office for all Members to inspect which held copies of all deeds, leases and agreements for the properties and agreements that the Council has.

1743. To approve the minutes of the Town Council meetings

The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday, 13th April 2010 (pages 3085-3093) were approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

1744. To receive Councillors' questions

Q: Are Councillors in agreement that as Mr & Mrs Sadler will be standing down from the Twinning Club that they should receive recognition from this Council for their longstanding service? (JG).

A: The Mayor, Cllr Fox, would read the letter received from the Twinning Club and report back at the next Full Council meeting.

Mayor

Q: Are Councillors aware that the AGM of the Twinning Club will be held on Friday, 14th May 2010? (SELH).

A: This was noted.

1745. To receive Clerk's Report

The Clerk's report had been circulated (Appendix 1).

Register of Members' Financial and Other Interests Form

A Register of Members' Financial and Other Interests form had been circulated to all Councillors. The Mayor, Cllr Fox, advised that if Members' financial and other interests had not changed within the past year it was not necessary to complete the form.

1746. To approve the Payment of Bills

A list of bills had been circulated (Appendix 2).

Downham Market Town Council bills

The Mayor, Cllr Fox and Cllr Daymond had declared a pecuniary interest in this item.

Proposed – Cllr Sampson

Seconded – Cllr Stacey

‘That the Town Council bills be paid as per the attached schedule.’

For – 15

Against – 0

Abstentions – 2 (Declared Interests)

Town Hall bills

Proposed – Cllr Leach

Seconded – Cllr Doyle

‘That the Town Hall bills be paid as per the attached schedule.’

All in favour

Howdale Community Centre bills

Cllr Wallace had declared a pecuniary interest in this item.

Proposed – Cllr Pyatt

Seconded – Cllr Doyle

‘That the Howdale Community Centre bills be paid as per the attached schedule.’

For – 16

Against – 0

Abstentions – 1 (Declared Interest)

1747. To fix the dates and times of Standing Committee meetings for the coming year

A list of the Standing Committee meeting dates had been circulated (Appendix 3).

It was noted that a Full Council meeting would not be held in August in accordance with the Standing Orders.

A short discussion took place on the start times of meetings.

The Mayor, Cllr Fox, asked Councillors to consider whether all Standing Committee and Full Council meetings should commence at 7.00pm, with the exception of the Town Hall Committee meetings to commence at 3.00pm. This matter would be deferred until the next Full Council meeting.

Mayor

1748. To confirm bank signatories – Cllrs Doyle, Fox, Pyatt, Reed, Sampson, Stacey and Starling

Proposed – Cllr Sampson

Seconded – Cllr Stacey

‘That the 2010/2011 Council bank signatories are Cllr Doyle, Cllr Fox, Cllr Pyatt, Cllr Reed, Cllr Sampson, Cllr Stacey and Cllr Starling.’

All in favour

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.35pm.

Chairman

Date