

Dorchester Town Council

Meeting of the Dorchester Town Council held in the Council Chamber

27 March 2023

Council commenced at 7.00pm

Present: The Mayor (Councillor J. Hewitt) and Councillors B. Armstrong-Marshall, R. Biggs, S. Biles, A. Canning, A. Chisholm, L. Fry, F. Hogwood, S. Hosford, G. Jones, D. Leaper, A. Lyall, R. Major, R. Potter, M. Rennie and R. Ricardo.

Apologies: Councillors T. Harries, S. Jones, F. Kent-Ledger and D. Taylor.

In Attendance

Four representatives from the Dorchester Youth Council.

Tristan Chapman and Rosie Dilke, Strategic Estate Programme Managers, Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

55. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 30 January 2023 were confirmed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

56. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest reported.

57. Police Matters

The Council was circulated with a report setting out the crime statistics for Dorchester during February 2023.

58. Presentations, Communications, Questions and Motions

The Council welcomed representatives from the Dorchester Youth Council who informed Members that the Youth Council was looking to twin two toilets in the Borough Gardens. These 'twinning' would help the town achieve 'Toilet Twinned Town' status. This was because St Osmund's School had recently twinned a large number of its toilets. Members supported the project.

Members received a presentation from Tristan Chapman and Rosie Dilke Strategic Estate Managers, Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, who updated the Council on the building plans for Dorset County Hospital and responded to Members detailed questions.

The Mayor reported on the death of Honorary Citizen Roger Peers and the Town Clerk reported on the sudden death of Geoff Trim who had managed the Council's ICT systems for over twenty years.

The Mayor also updated the Council on the events she had attended since the last meeting which included Beerex, a one minute silence in respect of the anniversary of the Ukraine conflict and the Commonwealth flag raising ceremony at Dorset Council.

There were no Questions or Motions.

59. **Planning and Environment Committee – 6 February 2023**

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee held on 6 February 2023 be adopted.

60. **Planning and Environment Committee – 6 March 2023**

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted.

Minute No. 72 – Members discussed the benefits of developing a Dorchester Neighbourhood Plan and agreed that more information was required prior to making a decision on this matter.

Resolved

(1) That further research be undertaken into the development of a Neighbourhood Plan with a report on its advantages and disadvantages being presented to a future Council meeting.

(2) That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee held on 6 March 2023 be adopted.

61. **Management Committee – 13 March 2023**

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Management Committee held on 13 March 2023 be adopted.

62. **Mayoral Selection Committee – 20 March 2023**

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted.

Resolved

(1) That Councillor Alistair Chisholm be invited to prepare to fill the office of Town Mayor, and Councillor Janet Hewitt the office of Deputy Town Mayor, of Dorchester during the 2023-24 council year.

(2) That the minutes of the meeting of the Mayoral Selection Committee held on 20 March 2023 be adopted.

63. Policy Committee – 20 March 2023

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted.

Minute No. 35 – Due to the confidential nature of the discussion it was

Resolved

That in view of the fact that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the following matters the public and press representatives be excluded from this meeting during their discussion.

The Council discussed the background to the recommendation to delay the disposal of the Council Offices at 19 North Square.

The Council then resumed in open session.

Resolved

(1) That Councillors A. Chisholm, L. Fry, S. Hosford, S. Jones and F. Kent-Ledger be appointed to the Council Chamber / Town Hall Refurbishment Task and Finish Group.

(2) That Councillors F. Kent-Ledger, D. Leaper and R. Ricardo be appointed to the New Council Website Task and Finish Group.

(3) That the minutes of the meeting of the Policy Committee held on 20 March 2023 be adopted.

64. Dorchester Markets Informal Joint Panel – 25 January 2023

The minutes of the Joint Panel meeting were noted.

The Chairman of the Panel updated Members on some research being undertaken into the market by a student of Exeter University and the Town Clerk reported on a project in respect of the South Linneys being funded and undertaken by Southampton University.

65. Update from the Dorset Council

Dorset Councillors updated the Council on the following matters:-

- Section 106 monies from the 'recreation' pot had now been spent.
- There was to be a peer review of Dorset Council's scrutiny process.
- The proposed Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill would not receive Royal Assent by 1 April 2023. This meant that Dorset Council would be unable to vote on its proposals for council tax premiums on second homes and empty properties so as to enable the proposals to be implemented from April 2024.
- The Police and Crime Panel would soon be having a change in membership.
- A group had been established to look at the start time of Dorset Council meetings.
- There was a delay in the Audit due to a technical issue related to property assets.
- Members were encouraged to report potholes online through the Dorset Council website.
- There was to be a consultation in respect of the location of stroke units.

Council rose at 9.06pm.

Mayor