

Dorchester Town Council

Meeting of the Dorchester Town Council

28 March 2017

Present: Mayor T. Harries and Councillors C. Biggs, A. Canning, A. Chisholm, G. Duke, J. Hewitt, G. Jones, S. Jones, T. Jones, T. Loakes, R. Potter, M. Rennie and D. Taylor.

Also: Members of the Youth Council

Apologies: Councillors B. Armstrong-Marshall, R. Biggs, S. Hosford, K. Rice and P. Stein.

The meeting was opened with a one minute silence in memory of the victims of the Westminster Bridge and Houses of Parliament attack on 22 March 2017.

50. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 24 January 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

51. Communications and Questions

The Chairman of the Youth Council expressed support for locating "The Hug" statue at the junction of Prince of Wales Road and South Walks Road and also expressed the view that the current availability of 4G and shop-based wi-fi reduced the need for a public wi-fi in the town.

The Mayor highlighted the achievements of three groups of young people from the town; the Thomas Hardy u15 Rugby Team who were to play in the National Schools final at Twickenham; the Dorchester Town FC Ability Counts u16 team who reached the semi-finals of the Peoples Cup; and the Thomas Hardy School Panthers team who were competing in the finals of a national Future Engineers competition.

The Mayor thanked Council for supporting a number of events including Holocaust Day, a fundraiser at the United Church and the Marie Curie Pancake Race, and highlighted his attendance at International Women's Day in Chickerell and a presentation by Durnovaria Silver Band. He recommended the hard hat tour of Shire Hall.

He identified future events including an Egg rolling competition, the May Day event in the Borough Gardens and the opening of the new board walk at the Millstream Reserve. Finally he announced the visit to Dorchester by The Rifles on St Georges Day and read out a letter of thanks from the Devonshire and Dorset Regimental Charities for the donation made towards the memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum.

52. Updates from Partner Authorities

Councillor T. Jones provided an update of recent work at Dorset County Council, including the opening of the new Damers School after the Easter holiday and the withdrawal of funding for bus services across the county. He sought support from the Town Council, and received it for letters to be written to Network Rail about ongoing delays to the access ramp at Dorchester West Railway Station and to Mildren Homes regarding delays in opening up the access from Lubbecke Way to St Georges Road. Councillor Canning provided a further update on the loss of bus service 101, which is to be replaced with a new commercial service in summer 2017.

In providing a verbal update regarding the work of West Dorset District Council Councillor S. Jones highlighted that the new constitution, to be implemented as a result of the district referendum in May 2016, would be in place from May 2017. Work was continuing on the Local Plan Review, and while there was a gradual improvement in the backlog for determining Development Control applications there were still significant delays processing Land Charge searches. She also identified initiatives to accelerate the pace of housing delivery and research into retail in Dorchester which covered the Charles St site but also Trinity Street and Fairfield. Finally she sought, and received, the Council's support in emphasising the need for improved signage to the newly opened TIC in the Dorchester Library and for updated town maps.

53. Planning and Environment Committee – 6 February 2017

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 2017 be adopted.

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Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee held on 6 March 2017 be adopted.

55. Management Committee – 14 March 2017

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted. The Chairman corrected minute 64(5) to allocate a grant of £344.

A councillor asked that regular updates be provided to the Committee on items identified during the Site Visit meetings. Members asked for a report on the siting of the Tirah Memorial information board and that problems associated with the extractor fan system in the Municipal Buildings bar be investigated.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Management Committee held on 14 March 2017 be adopted.

56. Mayoral Selection Committee – 21 March 2017

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

Resolved

- a) That Councillor S. Hosford be invited to fill the office of Town Mayor and Councillor T. Harries be invited to fill the office of Deputy Mayor for the 2017-18 Council year
- b) That the minutes of the meeting of the Mayoral Selection Committee held on 21 March 2017 be adopted.

57. Policy Committee – 21 March 2017

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

A councillor requested that discussions with Dorset County Council's Transport team regarding alternative bus service provision are not confined to the options in minute 27 at this stage; the Town Clerk agreed to explore all options.

Members expressed opposing views regarding minute 31, Town Centre wi-fi. The Chairman confirmed that no decision had yet been made, but any decision for support would be dependent on a well-argued business case which demonstrated benefits to town residents and heritage tourism.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Policy Committee held on 21 March 2017 be adopted.

The Council rose at 7.50 pm.

Mayor