

DOWNTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting held on Monday 28th April 2014 at Downton Library, High Street, Downton at 7.30 pm.

Present: Cllr Mace (Chairman) and Cllrs Barnhurst-Davies, Brown, Chandler, Cordell, Dean, Ford, Harrison, Quarmby, Ross, Sutcliffe, Whitmarsh and Yeates.
Unitary Cllr Julian Johnson and Bev Cornish, Parish Clerk.

Six members of the public were present.

13/240: Apologies: Cllrs Lacey and Watts.

13/241: Public Statement/Question Time:

Mr Chris Hall thanked the Chairman for taking account of the concern he raised at the last meeting by allowing the debate on the governance of the Parish Council to be held in public. He said that proceeding with the abandonment of all of the committees was a retrograde step and the public should be consulted.

Ms Jane Launchbury said she was not opposed to change but asked that any discussion on the radical changes to the governance of the Parish Council be done in a much more open and democratic arena and in line with the pledges made by some members at last year's election. They should not be combined with the terms and conditions of the Clerk. She said she understood from speaking to some councillors that there had been communication difficulties between some councillors and the Clerk. She said in her former capacity as both a Parish and District Councillor, the Clerk was the finest Clerk she had ever come across.

13/242: To receive Declarations of Interest from Councillors in respect of matters contained in this agenda in accordance with the Localism Act 2011: No declarations were received.

13/243: To consider and agree on any changes to be made to pages 8 to 13 of the draft consultation document, "Report on the Clerk's Role & Hours", produced by Cllrs Mace and Chandler and to determine the Parish Council's appetite for adopting its recommendations to make radical changes to the governance of the Parish Council:

Following a lengthy discussion, Cllr Chandler proposed, Cllr Sutcliffe seconded and it was agreed by the meeting, with one abstention from Cllr Yeates, that a proposal document of around one page in length be written to reflect the consensus view which was as follows:

1. To subsume the Finance & General Purposes Committee into the main Parish Council meeting.
2. To consider planning applications in the main Parish Council meeting and, if required, to hold a separate meeting of a Planning Committee at the end of each month.
3. To subsume the Rights of Way and Moot Lane Pavilion Committees into the Amenities Committee.
4. To retain the New Housing Development Committee for the time being.

It was also suggested by Cllr Quarmby that the proposed changes be made widely known to the parish, perhaps by an article in the Baptist Church Newsletter.

Part 2 – CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION – EXEMPT MATTERS - STAFFING

13/244: The Chairman proposed the following resolution – 'That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted on a personal employee matter, it is advisable in the public interest, that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they be instructed to withdraw': Cllr Sutcliffe seconded at it was agreed by the meeting.

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It was unanimously agreed that the scheduled additional Extraordinary Meeting for Tuesday 29th April 2014 was unnecessary and accordingly cancelled.

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Monday 12th May 2014 at 7.30 pm at the Band Hall, Gravel Close, Downton.

With no further business the meeting concluded at 10.12pm.