

DOWNTON PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of the Virtual¹ Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council held on Monday 7th September 2020 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Cllr Cornell (Chair) and Cllrs Brentor, Hall, Mace, Pearce, Randall and Watts.

Also present: Five members of the public.

Part 1

123.20 To resolve to appoint a Parish Councillor to act as Clerk for this meeting, for which they will not be paid, in the absence of the Clerk and Administrative Officer: Cllr Brentor proposed, Cllr Hall seconded and it was RESOLVED that Cllr Mace be appointed as Clerk for this meeting and for which he will not be paid.

124.20 Public Question Time:

A member of the public suggested that, due to the significance of the item being discussed in the exempt part of the meeting, that the meeting be recorded and that other councillors also take notes.

125.20 To receive apologies from Councillors: The Chairman advised that apologies had been received from Cllr Roberts due to work commitments. Cllr Cornell proposed from the Chair and it was RESOLVED that the apology and the reason for it be noted.

126.20 Declarations of Interest:

a. To receive Declarations of Interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda, in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of members and in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of officers:

No declarations of interest were received.

b. To consider any Dispensation Requests received by the Parish Clerk and not previously considered:

The Chairman advised that no dispensation requests had been received.

¹ In accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020

127.20 To resolve to refer any business raised by the public in public discussion, and any other matters or items of information from councillors, to the appropriate committee or to resolve to agree on any other action:

Cllr Mace confirmed that, in accordance with its recently approved policy, the meeting would not be recorded on Zoom but he encouraged members to take their own notes during the meeting.

128.20 Date of next meeting: Cllr Cornell confirmed the date of the next meeting as Monday 14th September 2020 at 7.30 pm. This meeting was to be a virtual meeting to be held on Zoom.

Part 2 – EXEMPT MATTERS – EMPLOYMENT & STAFFING

129.20 The Chair to propose the following resolution – ‘That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they be instructed to withdraw in view of the confidential nature of the business on staffing about to be transacted’: Cllr Pearce proposed, Cllr Watts seconded and it was RESOLVED that the meeting be closed to members of the public and press.

130.20 To review the Pensions Report and decide on the actions to be taken.: The Chairman introduced the report, which had been produced in response to the Parish Council’s request for the legal position to be investigated.

Cllr Watts proposed, Cllr Pearce seconded and it was unanimously RESOLVED to record the Parish Council’s thanks for the work that had been done by members of the staffing committee in producing the report.

The Chairman went on to remind members of the Rules of Debate, as defined in the Parish Council’s Standing Orders.

The Pensions Report was then discussed and debated, at some length, taking into consideration the emails received from the Clerk since the publication of the Pensions Report.

At the end of the debate a consensus emerged which was to immediately proceed with either options a and b (put forward by Cllrs Watts and Randall), or options a and g, (put forward by Cllrs Mace and Brentor) from p11 of the Pensions Report and to give more time for the Clerk to provide supporting evidence before the Parish Council makes a final decision on the back-dating of employer’s contributions to the Local Government Pensions Scheme.

Cllr Mace proposed, and Cllr Brentor seconded, to amend the motion, which thus became the substantive motion, that the Parish Council, after having reviewed the Pensions Report, resolved to take the following actions, and without prejudice to any future claim by the Clerk:

- a. to authorise the members of the Staffing Committee to immediately implement options a and g from p11 of the Pensions Report; and
- b. to ask the Clerk to bring forward any supporting documentary evidence that she has, issuing it with her statement, by 5th October 2020, so that it may be investigated by the authors of the Pensions Report prior to it being considered at a future Parish Council meeting.

The voting then took place on each of the two parts of the amended motion:

- a. it was RESOLVED to approve part a. of the motion and with the following votes being recorded: 4 in favour (Cllrs Brentor, Cornell, Mace and Pearce), 2 against (Cllrs Randall and Watts) and 1 abstention (Cllr Hall); and
- b. it was RESOLVED to approve part b. of the motion.

With no further business, the meeting closed at 9:43pm.

Members of the Council considered the foregoing in the matters in consideration of their duties: Equal Opportunities, (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status and any disability); Crime & Disorder, Health & Safety, and Human Rights.