



Oundle Town Council

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Minutes of the Town Council held on Tuesday 19th January 2016 at 7.30pm in The Oundle Suite, Fletton House, Fletton Way, Oundle.

Present: Cllrs Chesser, Chapple, Davis, Fitzgerald, Grove, King, Menck, Murphy, N Oakes, S Oakes, Piercy-Hughes, Sparkes, Stagg and Talbot.

Minutes: Hanneke Soans/Trish Baker

15.171. Apologies for Absence

15.171.01. To receive apologies for absence.

None

15.171.02. To accept apologies for absence.

None

15.172. Declarations of Interests

To receive and consider any declarations of interest from Members and Officers under Section 50 of the Local Government Act 2000 (*Standing Order 35*)

(This requirement applies only in respect of matters, which are to be considered by the Council at this meeting.)

15.172.01. To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

None

15.172.02. To declare any Other Interests.

None

15.172.03. To consider any requests for Dispensation.

None

15.172.04. To report any gifts or hospitality accepted over the value of £50.00.

None

15.172.05. To report any inappropriate gifts or hospitality offered.

15.173. Minutes of Previous Meetings – Full Council

15.173.01 PROPOSITION: *'To approve and sign the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 15 December 2015 as an accurate record.'* (*Standing Order 10c*)

Cllr Chapple requested an amendment on the previous minutes on item 15.160.02

That in relation to the proposition for the Clerk's role was considered with two propositions put forward, a misunderstanding occurred and Cllr Stagg did not vote (For 7 Against 4 Abstentions 2) a second vote was then taken (For 7 Against 7) the final casting vote was given to the Chair and the meeting then resolved to accept Option 2 and that this was minute correctly.

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It was agreed that the minutes be amended.

Proposed: Cllr Chapple Seconded: Cllr Davis For 8 Against 5 Abstentions 1

15.174. Review of Actions of the Previous Meetings – 15.12.15

15.175. Representations from Interested Parties

None

15.176. Consideration of Requests from Interested Parties

None

15.177. Signing & Sealing

RESOLUTION: *‘that any two Councillors and the Proper Officer may seal any document required by law to be issued under seal on behalf of the Council.’ (Standing Order 14b.)*

Proposed: Cllr S. Oakes Seconded: Cllr Chesser Resolved Unanimously

15.178. Council Matters

15.178.01. To discuss the process and actions taken to lead to the proposition contained within Item 15.178.02.

Cllr.Chapple advised that there was no need for a debate on this matter and that it should go straight to vote.

Proposed Cllr. Chapple Seconded Cllr. Chesser

In favour Cllrs. Chapple ,Chesser, S Oakes, N Oakes, Davis, Menck, Sparkes, Piercy – Hughes. Against Cllrs. Murphy, Fitzgerald, Grove, Talbot, King, Stagg

15.178.02. **PROPOSITION:** *‘That the decision taken at the December Full Council Meeting to accept that Oundle Town Council is a Level 4 Council is rescinded and that the issue is further considered’.*

We hereby further require that if the previous proposition is adopted that the following further proposition be placed on the agenda for the next full council meeting:

PROPOSITION: *‘That all written material provided by the Town Council to those persons originally asked to advise the Council on the issue as to whether it is a Level 3 or a Level 4 Council be copied to each Oundle Town Councillor together with their previous written advice to the Council and that those persons who have previously advised the Council on this issue be asked to attend a meeting so that they can answer any questions put to them by Councillors and thereafter provide further oral advice to the Council on the issue of Oundle Town Council’s Level 3 status’.*

Cllr King gave an overview of the December meeting and gave the background behind the lead up to the point where eight councillors have since asked to rescind this decision.

Cllr King then went on to ask the room “I would like to understand as Chair how we came to this point?” As we need to sort out the budget in the next week and set a precept.

Cllr Chapple felt it would not be helpful to have a debate at this stage of the process and according to Standing Orders 6g a vote should be taken on this proposition to enable the meeting to move forward.

Cllr Chapple asked for a vote on the original proposition.

Proposed: Cllr Chapple Seconded: Cllr Chesser

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In Favor Cllr Chapple, S.Oakes, Menck, N. Oakes, Chesser, Piercy-Hughes, Davis and Cllr Sparkes **Against** Cllr King, Stagg, Talbot, Grove, Fitzgerald and Murphy.

The decision taken at the December Full Council Meeting has been rescinded.

Cllr Chapple wished to move to the next proposition which was to ask Chris Moses and Danny Moody from NCALC to come back and discuss their original reports and answer the Council's questions. Cllr King requested that no matter what happens that council accept the review of these two independent parties and that a meeting should be arranged as soon as possible.

Cllr Chapple understands it has immediate implications for staff and therefore felt personally that he would find it morally wrong that staff who have been spoken to regarding changes to pay and hours should not be affected and that their Level 4 status should be upheld.

Cllr Grove asked "why if seven of the eight were not happy on the night why did they not question the decision at the previous meeting?" and asked why they took the action they did in the manner they did? By choosing to form a group of eight and not including the other six councillors you have created an intolerable situation for staff and councillors alike, undermining the position of the Town Clerk and neglected a duty of care to staff. Faith in the council has been eroded and broken and they have lost her respect.

Cllr Fitzgerald wished to complain under the member's code of conduct that they have failed to adhere to it and failed to be objective.

Cllr Murphy "we debated long and hard in December in order to fully understand why we were moving into a level 4 council, and this decision has undermined the whole process."

Cllr Chesser advised that the council don't have to adhere in any way to NJC pay scales. Cllr King felt that this was new information, which had not been mentioned previously.

The Chair on advice from Cllr Chapple closed the meeting in order to allow questions from the public under Standing Order 3g and 3h.

Standing Order 3g

"A question asked by a member of the public during a public participation session at a meeting shall not require a response or debate. The chairman of the meeting may, however, direct that response to a question posed by a member of the public be referred to a councillor for an oral response or to an employee for a written or an oral response;

A record of a public participation session at a meeting shall be included in the minutes of the meeting;"

Proposed: Cllr N. Oakes **Seconded:** Cllr S. Oakes **Resolved Unanimously**

The meeting was adjourned at 8.20pm

Questions were now taken from the public

"Why did you not question the report at the original meeting?"

The report was sent out by Cllr King on Saturday lunchtime and there were issues with the size of the report being compatible with some systems, however all councillors had received the report by Sunday.

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Public question.

"Why did the eight not contact the remaining six with your concerns? What's with the secrecy?"

Cllr N. Oakes advised that all six had a copy of the proposal and that none of the eight received any communication from the Mayor or Deputy Mayor following its delivery.

Cllr Stagg advised he sent a personal e-mail to all eight requesting new information to be debated and had no reply from four of the eight. Four replied that they had no new information.

Furthermore he had met with Cllr Oakes between December and January Councils regarding a financial Council matter. Cllr Oakes reservations on the matter in item 15.178.02 were not raised.

Cllr Sparkes said that he had expressed his concerns during or after December Council to two other Councillors. When pressed to give names he identified Cllrs Fitzgerald and Murphy. The two Councillors in question admitted that whilst conversations may well have taken place they were certainly not about the level of Council. Cllrs Fitzgerald and Murphy vigorously refuted Cllr Sparkes assertion. Pressed again Cllr Sparkes was not sure what had been spoken about.

Cllr Sparkes questioned the number of staff the council now employed, which he advised is now twenty five on various types of contracts. One criteria to determine a Level 4 council is the number of full time staff employed and he checked and we don't have this number. Cllr King accepted this as new information but required verification from Cllr Sparkes source.

Public question

"What are your plans to heal the chasm created by this Council?"

Cllr King advised that following this meeting some sort of mediation would be required to bring the council back together, as there was potential for things to be great.

Cllr N. Oakes Advised there was no conspiracy between us and them it just happened as there was no opportunity to think through on the night and it was an afterthought.

Cllr Davis I did not wish to make any more financial decisions before queries were answered. We did not discuss the budget at the previous meeting, and I thought the Ops meeting would answer the budget questions. I felt the Town Clerk would have designated powers and did not feel this would be appropriate as it would put the Town Council outside of the new structure, and I am not sure everyone trusted your word Terry, Paul or the document".

Cllr Stagg said "if you have problems with malfeasance on my part there is a process for this and I will take you to Thrapston to ENC to sort it out properly."

Cllr King advised that" the provenance of the document is genuine and right and totally transparent".

Cllr Murphy responded to Cllr Davis and said we had enough in the budget to implement this from January.

Following questions from the public the meeting was re-opened at 20.57pm

PROPOSITION as on agenda: *"That all written material provided by the Town Council to those persons originally asked to advise the Council on the issue as to whether it is a Level 3 or a Level 4 Council be copied to each Oundle Town*

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Councillor together with their previous written advice to the Council and that those persons who have previously advised the Council on this issue be asked to attend a meeting so that they can answer any questions put to them by Councillors and thereafter provide further oral advice to the Council on the issue of Oundle Town Council's Level 3 status'.

Proposed: Cllr Chapple **Seconded:** Cllr Piercy - Hughes

In Favour Cllrs Chapple, S. Oakes, Menck, Davis, Sparkes, N Oakes and Chesser

Against Cllrs Murphy, Grove, King, Stagg, Talbot

Abstention Cllr Fitzgerald

15.179. Planning Matters

15.179.01. To consider Planning Application 15/02174/OUT – Proposal: Up to thirteen dwellings and associated infrastructure (all matters reserved except for access) at Land Rear of Abbott House and 1-3 Glaphorn Road Oundle.

Cllr Chapple gave an overview of the planning issue. The planning committee recommendation was to object to the planning application.

In the RNOTP this is not part of that 2021 allocation.

Inspector rejected a previous site that was not in the RNOTP and he feels this site would fall within the same criteria.

Cllr Chapple read out the existing objection that was logged by Planning Committee. And advised that the seven councillors who had not had a chance to object previously could now speak if they wished.

Cllr Grove advised that land was discussed at an ENC meeting the previous evening and that district Cllr Reichhold seems to be unaware of the lack of public green space in the town. It was agreed to inform the three district councillors directly that the town objects to the sale of this land.

It was agreed that with a slight amendment, of the impact upon Magdalena House and the School Chapel Gardens that this would be submitted.

Proposed: Cllr King **Seconded:** Cllr Chapple **Resolved Unanimously**

15.180. Any Other Relevant Matters for Report

It was agreed that another Full Council meeting needs to be set for Wednesday 27th January to finalise the budget ready to submit the precept request. The full budget paper will be circulated to all councilors.

Cllr Grove again approached the eight councilors and asked why they did not contact any of the other six. Cllr Piercy-Hughes said there had been no transparency over the Commercial Manager role. He was advised that at a previous meeting delegated powers to replace the previous employee was given to The Clerk to manage the Hub staff.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.05pm

Signed:.....

Dated:.....19/1/16.....