



Oundle Town Council

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Minutes of the Town Council held on Tuesday 16th February 2016 at 7.30pm in The Oundle Suite, Fletton House, Fletton Way, Oundle.

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

Minutes: Hanneke Soans

15.192. Apologies for Absence

- 15.192.01. To receive apologies for absence.
To accept the resignation of Cllr Menck
- 15.192.02. To accept apologies for absence.

15.193. 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.)

- 15.193.01. To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.
None
- 15.193.02. To declare any Other Interests.
None
- 15.193.03. To consider any requests for Dispensation.
None
- 15.193.04. To report any gifts or hospitality accepted over the value of £50.00.
None
- 15.193.05. To report any inappropriate gifts or hospitality offered.
None

15.194. Minutes of Previous Meetings – Full Council

- 15.194.01. PROPOSITION: *'To approve and sign the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 27th January 2016 as an accurate record.'* (*Standing Order 10c*)

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

15.195. Representations from Interested Parties

Questions to Danny Moody, Chief Executive of NCALC, on the issue of Level 3/Level 4 status

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 paper submitted in December and the subsequent meetings. He suspended the meeting and introduced Danny Moody from NCALC to answer any questions from Council.

15.196. Consideration of Requests from Interested Parties

Danny Moody initially gave some background to his attendance. He had been asked on 8th December 2015 to assess what profile level Oundle Town Council should be and had produced a report indicating that based on the information given to him he had assessed Oundle as a Level 4 council.

The final paragraph of his report said “I have known Oundle Town Council for nine years and during that time it has been forward thinking and progressive. My perception is that Oundle Town Council is aspirational and forward thinking. I assessed that Oundle Town Council was a Level 4 Council based on the information I was given.”

Prior to the meeting Cllr Chapple had submitted a number of questions to Mr Moody and Cllr Chapple followed these up with oral questions on the following issues:

Oundle being categorised as a large town
Oundle Town Council’s expenditure budget
Oundle Town Council Staffing
Oundle Town Council’s meeting structure

Cllr King then proposed that Oundle Town Council should reaffirm its status as a level 4 council.

Cllr King closed the meeting to vote on the proposition.

Proposed: Cllr King **Seconded:** Cllr Murphy

In Favour: Cllrs Murphy, Grove, Stagg, S. Oakes, Talbot, King and Fitzgerald

Against: Cllr Sparkes, Chesser, Piercy - Hughes

Abstention: Cllr Chapple and Cllr N. Oakes

Cllr Chapple indicated that he had abstained as the agenda had not provided for there to be a vote on this issue and he had not had time to fully consider the matter in light of Mr Moody’s answers.

15.197. Reports

15.197.01. Mayors Report
None

15.197.02. Police Report
Crime figures given out:

5 burglaries, 3 criminal damages, 3 motor vehicle thefts, 1 theft from a dwelling. A shop lifting operation has one person in custody.

An update was requested on the status of the missing person, this is still investigated.

Cllr S. Oakes. Raised the question about speeding? This is one of the Police priorities.

15.197.03. District Councillors Report

Cllr Reichhold gave apologies from Cllrs Stern and Vowles and also gave a financial update. The Secretary of State has given a rural services grant to ENC. In future, Councils will be allowed to keep more of the business rates. Cllr Grove asked about the January Policy Meeting and Oundle's representation on both the Cotterstock Road Field and Fletton Field. She asked Cllr Reichhold "Do you feel confident about the green space in the town?"

Cllr Reichhold advised that he did. It was noted that Cllr Heather Smith has put in an objection to the Councils application for village green status on Fletton Field.

Cllr Grove advised that "East Northants Council's response of 389 words was not sufficient. Without those fields we lose 60% of the available green space in Oundle."

15.198. 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 King **Seconded:** Cllr N. Oakes **Resolved Unanimously**

15.199. Town Matters

15.199.01. To receive the report from the Events Officer and to consider and approve any recommendations.

Cllr King gave an update on events in the town and noted that The Hub is proving to be a success.

15.200. Operations Management Matters

15.200.01. To approve the Balance Sheet and Budget Report – January 2016

15.200.02. Payments for January 2016

PROPOSITION: *'That the schedule of payments for January 2016 as presented at this item are paid in the amount of £99,625.60 and that all related documentation and cheques are signed.'*

Proposed: Cllr N. Oakes **Seconded:** Cllr Piercy - Hughes **Resolved Unanimously**

15.201. Estate Matters

15.201.01. To receive the minutes of the Estate Management Committee meeting held on 2nd January 2016.

15.201.02. **PROPOSITION** *'To proceed with quote for a new council van from TC Harrison for £13,811.85 on road price incl VAT'*

Proposed: Cllr Fitzgerald **Seconded:** Cllr Chesser **Resolved Unanimously**

Cllr Fitzgerald also advised that thanks to the Clerk there are five new defibrillators being placed at various locations in the town and urged everyone to attend the Heart start courses.

15.202. Communications Working Party Matters

15.202.01 To receive the minutes of the Communications Working Party held on 5th January 2016.

Noted.

15.203. Neighbourhood Plan Policy Scrutiny Committee

15.203.01 To receive the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 26th January 2016.

Cllr King gave an update on this committee.

15.204. Planning Matters

15.204.01 To receive the minutes from the Planning Committee meeting held on 2nd February 2016.

Cllr Chapple talked about Oundle Town Council's response to the consultation which is item 15.207.01 on the agenda. He gave an overview on the application and the objection submitted by Oundle Town Council. Cllr Stagg mentioned Cllr Heather Smiths letter referred to Cllr Grove personally, which was noted.

15.205. Meeting Reports

None

15.206. Council Matters

15.206.01 *PROPOSITION 'That the Council recognizes its current dysfunctional state and all Councillors resign in order to trigger an election.'*

Cllr Grove advised the details of her paper. Only 3 of the 14 Councillors have been elected since 2007. The council is broken. Councillors have accused other councillors of dishonesty without offering explanation or reason as a foundation. We have a Council lacking in trust and respect. We cannot continue this way. We have lost the respect of our staff, the town and each other. Let's give the council a fighting chance to redeem itself.

Cllr King went around the table to each councillor so they could express a view.

Cllr Murphy agrees with the proposition.

Cllr Talbot fully supports the proposition.

Cllr Stagg will be resigning

Cllr Fitzgerald has already resigned with effect from the end of February and has put in a monitoring officer complaint to East Northants Council.

Cllr Chesser has nothing to say.

Cllr Sparkes requested a governance review at the last meeting.

Cllr S. Oakes said it is very sad.

Cllr N. Oakes - I have tried to serve the town, I had expected a certain person to contact me in December and they did not make any contact at the time.

Cllr Chapple - I circulated an open letter to all councillors with my reasons. I accept on the night I went along with it and had concerns afterwards. At no point was any member of staff in danger of losing their position and current

staff would not be affected. We have a process to re-visit a decision within 6 months. I am grateful to Danny for coming along we wanted to make sure we got it right. At the moment we are dysfunctional. We have managed to set a budget and we have been put things in place to allow the staff to function. There is nothing wrong with clearing the decks and starting again.

Cllr Grove - The Clerk sent you a letter and you choose not to respond. It has gone beyond the level 3 or level 4 question.

Danny Moody clarified the legal decision, if this motion is approved then each individual councillor can decide to resign.

Proposed: Cllr Grove **Seconded:** Cllr King

In Favour: Cllrs King, Murphy, Talbot, Fitzgerald, Stagg, Grove

Against: Cllrs Chapple, N. Oakes, S.Oakes, Piercy Hughes, Chesser, Sparkes

The Mayor exercised his casting vote in favour of the proposition. It is now up to individuals to make their own decision.

15.206.02 **PROPOSITION** *‘That Oundle Town Council should strive for a culture of openness and transparency and adopt a policy of Public Engagement with immediate effect by taking the following actions:*

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

To record and transmit all Council meetings: Full Council, Estates, Planning and Communications and to make these recordings available on the OTC website and OTC social media outlets;

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

*To record by name voting on propositions at Full Council;
To publish Councillors’ meeting attendance records within the quarterly edition of the Oundle Oracle;*

Proposed: Cllr King **Seconded:** Cllr N. Oakes

In Favour: Cllrs King, Fitzgerald, Grove, S. Oakes, Chesser, Talbot, Stagg, Chapple

Abstentions: Cllrs N. Oakes and Cllr Piercy-Hughes

To include a Public Participation section for a minimum of 15 minutes in every Full Council Meeting:

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

To create a Facebook Oundle Town Council page with immediate effect for the purpose of the publication of agendas and minutes of Full Council, Estates, Planning and Communication meetings.'

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

15.206.03 *PROPOSITION 'That the Council declares the current Standing Orders as not fit for purpose, and engages an independent third party to assist and advise on the creation of a new set of Standing Orders'*

Proposed: Cllr Talbot **Seconded:** Cllr Grove
In Favour: Cllrs Murphy, Grove, Stagg, King, Chesser, S. Oakes, N. Oakes, Fitzgerald, Chapple, Talbot, and Sparkes
Abstention Cllr Piercy–Hughes

15.207. Consultations, Conferences and Training

15.207.01 To consider and approve Oundle Town Council's response to the applications for the consent of the secretary of state for the disposal of playing field land.
This was discussed earlier in the meeting.

15.208. Correspondence for Action

15.208.01 Letter from the Rotary Club of Oundle inviting the Town Council to reconsider its policy on charges for charities on the Farmers Market.
The pitch fee for a charity pitch will remain.

15.208.02 Letter from resident about the volume of traffic on West Street between the hours of 6pm until 6am.
Cllr King has massive sympathy for the resident concerned, however the traffic does drop after 11pm. Acknowledge fears however no reasons to pedestrianise the area.

15.209. Correspondence for Information

15.209.01 Letter from Environmental Health at ENC confirming The Hub has achieved a five rating for food safety under the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.
Noted.

15.209.02 Commons Registration Act 2006. Application for Town or Village Green under Section 15 (3). Land at Fletton Field, Glapthorn Road, Oundle has been accepted and consultation will run until 24 March 2016.
Noted previously in the minutes.

15.209.03 Confirmation of the Traffic Regulation Order for proposed – No waiting at any time on Fletton Way, Oundle.
Noted.

15.210. Any Other Relevant Matters for Report

Cllrs Stagg, Fitzgerald, Talbot, Grove, Murphy and King all indicated their intention to resign from the council.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.45pm

Signed:.....

Dated:.....