



## DOVER TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the DOVER TOWN COUNCIL held in the Council Offices, Maison Dieu House, High Street, Dover on WEDNESDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2018 at 6pm.

### PRESENT

Town Mayor, Councillor S Jones in the chair

### Councillors

P Brivio	N Rix
L Burke	K Sansum
G Cowan	R Walkden
J Heron	C Warriner
A Jenner	M Wood
I Palmer	C Zosseder
C Precious	

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lamoon, Wallace and Ward (personal commitments) and Wanstall (ill health).

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors present made no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests as required by law.

### MINUTES

The Town Council considered the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2018 be approved and signed by the Town Mayor.

### PROGRESS SHEETS

The Town Council considered and noted outstanding resolutions made by the Town Council.

## FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

The Town Council considered the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

- RESOLVED:
- a) That minute Nos. 13 to 20 and 22 be received.
  - b) That no enhanced Chairman's allowance be adopted;
  - c) That rates of mileage and for other travel and subsistence for approved duties outside the Town boundary be HMRC approved rates, reasonable actual costs or DDC applicable rates, as appropriate;
  - d) That no travel and subsistence allowance for duties undertaken within the Dover Town area be set subject to an exception for Councillors with special circumstances such as disability;
  - e) That the time limit for the receipt of Councillor's expenses be set at two months;
  - f) That the Town Council notes that the arrangements have been made for the publication of the report of the Panel in accordance with regulation 30 of the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

## COMMUNITY & SERVICES COMMITTEE

The Town Council considered the minutes of the Community & Services Committee held on the 12<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

- RESOLVED: That minute Nos. 23 to 31 be received.

## PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Town Council considered the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

- RESOLVED: That minute Nos. 32 to 42 be received.

## CIVIC & SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE

The Town Council considered the minutes of the Civic & Special Projects Committee held on the 5<sup>th</sup> July 2018 (handed out at the meeting).

- RESOLVED: That minute Nos. 43 to 55 be received.

## COUNCILLORS GRANTS

The Town Council noted the out-turn of the 2018-19 Councillor's grants award scheme (handed out at the meeting).

## TOWN COUNCIL FINANCIAL INFORMATION

RESOLVED: That the payments made by the Town Council in May 2018 be approved and the schedules signed by the Chairman.

### TOWN COUNCIL, COMMITTEE & EXTERNAL BODY REPRESENTATION

The Town Council considered membership of Committees.

The Town Council noted the minutes of the Port & Community Forum meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

The Town Council noted Councillor Brivio's report on the Dover Fairtrade Town Network and the Dover District Dementia Alliance (handed out at the meeting).

RESOLVED: a) That Councillor Ward be appointed to all Committees for the remainder of the Municipal Year;

b) That Councillor Wallace be removed from the Planning Committee.

### QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Town Council considered questions from Mr B Philp pursuant to Standing Orders 1 (d) to (m) inclusive and 3b (v) (letter received by hand on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018).

Q1: Does that Town Council agree that the opening of privately addressed letters to members delivered by the Royal Mail is almost certainly illegal and those responsible should be reprimanded? My private and confidential letters were opened!

Q2: Does the Town Council agree that the opening of letters addressed to members and marked private and confidential, however handed in, is unacceptable by any normal standards and should be stopped permanently?

Q3: Does the Town Council understand that opening letters addressed to others, however marked, could be an unhelpful intervention, could allow possible filtering, possible misplacement or possible loss?

Q4: Does the Town Council insist that a current Certificate of Employers Liability must always be displayed in the lobby as required by law?

A1: The Town Council does not agree. On behalf of the Town Council, Councillor Precious (Mayor of Dover for the 2015/16 Municipal Year), referred to his report of 9<sup>th</sup> March 2016 which explains in detail the reasons for the DTC administrative process of opening and logging of all incoming mail received at its offices regardless of the named recipient. These administrative procedures were agreed and resolved by the Town Council at its meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2018 in minute no. 361f). According to the *"Postal Services Act 2000 Part V Section 84 (1) a person commits an offence if, without reasonable excuse, they intentionally delay or opens a postal packet in the course of its transmission by post"* and therefore no offence was being carried out.

A2 & 3: Councillor Precious made the following statement, on behalf of the Town Council, disagreeing entirely with the questions and views expressed by Mr Philp.

"When a letter arrives addressed to an elected Councillor it is indeed opened, logged and date

"As an elected Councillor your name and position are a matter of public record and sadly this can also lead to threats, attempts to influence or even defraud and other forms of what can politely be called 'crank' communications. It is therefore a matter of protecting the Councillor's safety and security that such correspondence is properly recorded and noted. Letters of an 'unpleasant' nature will often be marked as 'private and confidential' and it is in the best interests of all concerned that these are recorded for possible legal responses later."

"Should correspondence be of a more personal nature, family or friends that have lost touch and have no other address, then the office well understands the importance of confidentiality and it would be passed directly on to the Councillor concerned. Even in such cases it could still be vital that those letters have been recorded should some form of litigation follow, deaths in the family, will terms etc. In my years as a Dover Town Councillor I can honestly say that I have never had cause to doubt the professionalism and efficiency of our office staff not their understanding of the need for confidentiality in the appropriate circumstances."

"Being an elected public representative does mean that you will often receive letters, telephone calls and other communications from persons you have no prior knowledge of. Most will be helpful or asking questions that concern the council or town and as such deserve the attention of the council as a whole. The legally or personal letters that could potentially be threatening to a Councillor's reputation or person need to be recorded and noted so that any necessary action can be taken. Correspondence seeking to influence a Councillor could be contrary to the rules and laws surrounding public office and need to be properly recorded and noted. The minority of correspondence that is of a personal matter will always be handled sensitively and privately so should not be an issue to any Councillor."

"From a personal perspective I would think that any Councillor using the office address for any other purpose should raise some serious questions from those who elected them. I hope this answers your questions."

A4: The Mayor provided the following response.

*"Current Certificates of Employer's Liability Insurance are and have been at all times displayed on the noticeboard in the Town Council's offices which is the most convenient for all employees to view. (It is however noted that a copy certificate relating to a previous year had not been removed from an external notice board in the lobby of Maison Dieu House and this has now been rectified)".*

#### DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The Town Council noted that the date of the next meeting will be Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

meeting ended at 6.20pm



THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL THE TOWN MAYOR  
(Councillor Susan Jones)  
CHAIRMAN