

Dorchester Town Council

Meeting of the Dorchester Town Council

24 March 2015

Present: Mayor P. Mann and Councillors V. Allan, D. Barrett, C. Biggs, R. Biggs, A. Canning, T. Harries, G. Jones, S. Jones, T. Jones, F. Kent-Ledger, T. Loakes, R. Potter, M. Rennie and D. Roberts.

Apologies: Councillors K. Armitage, S. Hosford, T. James, A. Lyall and D. Taylor.

39. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 27 January 2015 and 24 February 2015 were confirmed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

40. Communications & Questions

The Mayor offered congratulations on behalf of the Council to Miss Lucy Armstrong on her election to the UK Youth Parliament, and invited her to share her experiences of the Parliament with a future meeting of the Council.

The Chairman of the Youth Council identified their support for the position the Council had taken on the siting of the White Hart statue as an important gateway feature at the eastern end of the town (Planning Minute 79). She asked that young people be invited to help develop any plans to develop the Bowling Green site in the Borough Gardens (Management Minute 54), and commended the Electronic Cigarettes Policy to the Council (Management Minute 56).

The Mayor welcomed Mr Craig Baker, Area Manager for Dorset Fire and Rescue, to the meeting. Mr Baker explained the operations of the Dorchester Fire Station, where 30 retained staff provide 2 crewed vehicles that respond to around 400 calls a year, the busiest station in the county manned by retained staff. Crews are expected to leave the station within 5 minutes of receiving a response request, with a target of arriving at an incident within 10 minutes on 80% of calls. Generally this is achieved, with the station's location on the road network being an advantage, but traffic issues in Dorchester occasionally create problems for crew to get to the station.

The building also houses a Community Safety Centre with areas that can be used by the public, and currently acts as Head Quarters for the Service. Mr Baker also identified the shift in emphasis to preventative work, using campaigns such as "Safe Drive Stay Alive" for young people and work such as Home Safety visits as examples.

Finally Mr Baker gave details of the merger plan with Swindon and Wiltshire Fire Service, which would start with the establishment of a shadow authority in April 2015, the merger of Fire Control services in 2015, progressing through 2016 with the merger of management and specialist services.

Mr Baker responded to questions, confirming that there would still be a role for the Poundbury building in the long term and that he was confident that the Service could respond positively to major incidents, citing the February 2014 Storms as an example. He also confirmed a positive approach being taken to gender balance for retained crew and outlined the fitness and training regime for new recruits.

The Mayor thanked Mr Baker for his attendance and expressed the appreciation of the Town Council for the work that the Service does.

The Mayor thanked Members for their attendance at the funeral of Dr Peter Scott, and read some paragraphs from a letter received from Dr. Scott's widow, Inez.

Finally the Mayor reminded Members of the Easter Monday planting day for the Grass Free lawn, and advised them of his celebratory end of year event on 1 May.

41. Planning and Environment Committee – 2 February 2015

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee held on 2 February 2015 be adopted.

42. Planning and Environment Committee – 2 March 2015

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee held on 2 March 2015 be adopted.

43. Management Committee – 10 March 2015

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted.

Resolved

- (a) That the Electronic Cigarettes in Council Owned Buildings Policy (Minute 56) be adopted.
- (b) That the minutes of the meeting of the Management Committee held on 10 March 2015 be adopted.

44. Mayoral Selection Committee – 17 March 2015

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Mayoral Selection Committee held on 17 March 2015 be adopted.

45. **Policy Committee – 17 March 2015**

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes of the meeting be adopted.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting of the Policy Committee held on 17 March 2015 be adopted.

46. **Police Matters**

Inspector Steve Marsh gave an update on crime activity for the Dorchester area, noting 89 crimes over the latest six week period, 55 of which were in the town centre. In overall terms the 2014/15 crime level was almost identical to the previous year, with reduced levels of some thefts and criminal damage offset by an increase in criminal assaults, although the town had grown in the intervening period and Brewery Square was becoming a major night-time economy.

He identified that 4 new PCSO's were now in place in his team, allowing one team member to be based in Poundbury, operating from the Fire Station. He identified that following the closure of the Dorchester front office a volunteer based arrangement was being arranged at Dorchester Library.

Responses were provided to questions relating to the increase in requests for late night drinking licences, bullying in schools and traffic circulation at Queen Mother's Square.

The Council rose at 8.00 pm. The Mayor noted this would be the final meeting before the May elections, thanked Members for their attendance and support during his year as Mayor, and also thanked Members for their efforts over the last four years of the Council.

Mayor