

HARWICH TOWN COUNCIL
Clerk: Susan Anderson
Guildhall, Church Street, Harwich CO12 3DS
Telephone: 01255 507211 email: harwichtown_co@btconnect.com

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF
HARWICH TOWN COUNCIL
HELD AT LONG MEADOWS COMMUNITY CENTRE, DOVERCOURT
ON
TUESDAY 20th APRIL 2010 at 7.00pm**

**Present: The Mayor, Councillor J Wares, in the Chair
Councillors B Brown, G Calver, L Double, D McLeod, A Morrison from
7.10pm and L Payne**

Clerk to the Council, Mrs S Anderson

Also present: One member of the press and forty members of the public

.....

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Brown, P Burke,
R Callender, A Colbourne, S Henderson, B Howlett, M Gardner, D Rutson and
S Tyrer.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on Tuesday
21st April 2009 (previously circulated) be approved by the Chairman and signed as a
true record.

**ASSET SALE OF BRITISH LEGION, UNITED SERVICES, COMMUNITY
ASSOCIATION, NAVIGATOR, GIRL GUIDES**

Mrs B Holbrook asked councillors to stop the asset sale of community buildings off
Barrack Lane.

Councillor Payne gave assurance that the subject would be discussed at the Cabinet
Meeting to be held tomorrow, Wednesday 21st April 2010 and would call in the
decision to stop it if there was a change in Administration at Tendring District
Council.

Mrs D Cheeseman stated that the Park Pavilion site was for the community and
mentioned concerns regarding talks between TDC and a Harwich Town councillor
regarding lease renewal but no representative for the Park Pavilion was present.
Mrs Cheeseman asked councillors to work together for the sake of the town as this
would be such a loss to the town.

Councillor Calver gave his support to Councillor Payne along with other councillors
who have already indicated to work together to bring this about but stated that all
Harwich Town Council can do is to lobby as TDC cannot be prevented from selling
off assets in Harwich.

Councillor Double stated that although the whole site is in need of renewal and
Harwich does deserve better, we must continue to use these facilities because they are
the only ones available.

Councillor McLeod confirmed that after a period of two years, TDC has agreed to resurface the access roadway that leads to the community buildings at the rear of the Park Pavilion.

Councillor Tyrer stated that the Community Centre is of paramount importance to our town and the council must support the fight to save this site and to initially take it off the asset sale.

Councillor Double confirmed that in last years Annual Parish minutes, he stated his belief that wealth is being distributed more evenly throughout Tendring and hoped that after 4th May proceeds would be properly shared.

Maureen Fowler, Mayes Lane stated that the over 55's, 60's, 70's, 80's and 90's held meetings in the Community Centre also the Fuchsia and Chrysanthemum Flower Shows were held there and asked where else could they go in the town?

Councillor Calver responded that no-one can answer that question as no councillors around the table had been part of the process.

DAYS OF ACTION – 30th APRIL 2010

Mr Salter asked the council about the Police Action Day to be held on 30th April 2010. Councillor McLeod explained that the Days of Action is an initiative to communicate with the public to cover topics like grot spots, litter picking, police asking questions, door knocking as the objective is to all get together to help ourselves. Councillor McLeod confirmed that this was a community exercise and everyone can join in.

Mrs D Rotchell confirmed that the Community Action Day would be held at the Park Pavilion on 30th April 2010.

CONDITION OF WOODEN BENCHES

Mr Abbott asked that with the forthcoming powerboat race arranged in July this year, could all the benches in Harwich and Dovercourt be cleaned up and varnished. Councillor Payne confirmed that he would make sure attention is drawn to the condition of the benches on a future walk around Harwich with the Head of Environment Services at TDC.

MILTON ROAD CAR PARK

Mrs B Holloway passed comment on the lack of councillors in attendance at the Annual Parish meeting and thanked all councillors present for turning up.

Mrs Holloway asked why the first hour parking at Milton Road car park had been increased from 10p to 80p.

Councillor McLeod stated that it had taken two years for the scheme to be introduced and gave his assurance that he would ask for this to be reviewed at TDC.

Mrs Holloway asked what could be done.

Maria Fowler, Mayes Lane stated that 300 people were prepared to protest and sign petitions regarding the increase in the car parking fee at Milton Road and also the asset sale of community buildings in Barrack Lane.

Councillor Payne advised that the Annual Meeting of TDC was scheduled for 4th May and with a change of administration would mean that within a week the 10p parking fee would be reintroduced at Milton Road.

Councillor Calver stated that Councillor McLeod had requested the 10p car parking fee to help regeneration of the Dovercourt town centre back in 2007 as one of the items on the list to be achieved by the labour group which has proved to be successful.

Councillor Payne confirmed that the 10p parking fee frees up streets, encourages use of the town centre and it is only common sense that nobody will use the car park if the fee remains at 80p.

MEETING VENUES

Mr Abbott stated that he thought the Long Meadows Community Centre venue was much better than the 1912 Centre which is normally used for Planning and Harwich Town Council meetings as he was able to see everyone and there appeared to be a much friendlier atmosphere this evening.

Mrs B Holbrook suggested that future meetings of the council be set up in a horse-shoe shape.

Councillor Double explained that there were more obstructions within the 1912 Centre and lack of space but would look at reshaping the tables.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Mrs M Fowler expressed her concerns as she has been unable to contact Councillor R Callender, her Essex County Councillor representative, regarding several urgent issues such as increased parking fee at Milton Road and the asset sale of community properties in Barrack Lane. Mrs Fowler asked if a message could be sent to ask him to contact her regarding her queries.

SQUIRRELS BUILDING

Mr Malcolm Nicholson, St Georges Avenue asked what was going to happen with the Squirrels building.

Councillor Calver confirmed that the Squirrels site is owned by TDC, under TDC control and is becoming little more than a ruin and confirmed that he would oppose a potential sale if it was for the wrong use but must not lose the opportunity to sell if it benefits the community.

MAGISTRATES COURT

Mr Malcolm Nicholson asked if there was any further development regarding the possibility of Harwich Town Council purchasing the Magistrates Courts in Main Road, Dovercourt.

The Mayor, Councillor Wares stated that nothing had happened at the moment.

Councillor Double stated that the building was owned by the National Court Services funded by central government.

Mr Nicholson asked if it would be possible to go back to the old Borough days.

Councillor Double confirmed that Harwich was a very proud Borough but would not be able to support the staffing levels but government were looking at paving the way for opportunities to localise more decisions and restructuring existing councils.

SEAFRONT FACILITIES

Councillor McLeod confirmed that hopefully the administration will be reversed which will result in a programme of improvements to the seafront facilities, cover for the skating rink, and improvement to the boating lake building and investment into the whole area.

CLEARANCE OF DOCK RIVER

Mr G Mortimer, Ramsey Road asked if shopping trolleys and rubbish in Dock River could be removed and stated that he had been in touch with the Environment Agency, who confirmed that it was not down to Ramsey councillors to clear shopping trolleys?

Councillor Calver suggested that a letter be sent to the Environment Agency drawing attention that this matter was brought up at the Annual Parish meeting of Harwich Town Council.

Councillor Double confirmed that it was the responsibility of the shop owner to clear or retrieve trolleys and stated that he was prepared to give a small grant towards the clean up and suggested the hire cost of a skip.

Councillor Payne suggested asking the Community Service to clear it and asked the Clerk to contact the Community Service to request a clean up of river and for a copy of the letter to be sent to Head of Environmental Services at TDC.

Mr Martin Donn, Councillor of Parkeston and Ramsey stated that half the river was in Parkeston and half in Dovercourt and proposed that the letter be written via the Clerk but working with Parkeston and Ramsey council. Mr Donn confirmed that the Probation Service only allowed to work six hours a week Wednesday or Sundays.

Councillor Payne stated that this was an opportunity to request the Probation Service to provide a force to clear the river and requested the Clerk to make contact.

REFURBISHMENT OF BOATING LAKE

Mr Derek Osborne asked why the refurbishment work had stopped around the Boating Lake.

Councillor Wares confirmed that the work was scheduled to take a few weeks.

Mr Osborne stated that no-one had been working there for the last six weeks.

JET SKIS

Colin Kingsbury, Fronks Avenue asked why no-one is monitoring the jet skis petrol fumes that contaminate the Blue Beach at Dovercourt. Mr Kingsbury confirmed that a notice requesting no parking on promenade was being ignored.

Councillor Tyrer had already spoken to TDC who confirmed that they can deal with the matter if the car and Jet Ski registration number is reported directly to them.

The Chairman thanked all residents of Harwich and Dovercourt for attending and closed the meeting at 7.55pm.

TOWN MAYOR AND CHAIRMAN

DATE