

POCKLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES

Meeting of the Town Council
Meeting Room Old Courthouse George Street Pocklington
Wednesday 17th June 2009 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Sykes (Chairman), Bryon, Cooper, Dexter, Elliott, Held, Marron, Petrie, Scaife, Shepherd, & Wilkinson.

In attendance: Clerk one member of the press and two members of the public.

1. The notice of the meeting was accepted.
2. Apologies for absence: Cllrs Blake-James (another commitment), Perry (business)
3. Declarations of Interest: There were no declarations of interest.
4. Consider the various letters from Mr Hawley and Buck Inn Yard residents.

A comprehensive discussion took place during which councillors expressed their concerns about the tirade of abuse in both letters and verbally at last weeks meeting. To be called liars, stalkers, spineless and spiteful is very hurtful and should not have to be tolerated by those serving the community. The letter from Dawn Argyle dated 22nd May was read in its entirety. Councillors said they were alarmed and distressed at the ferocity and tone. Councillors are elected to represent the people which they did by giving their time and expertise free of charge so it was particularly hurtful to read and hear that this person felt they had achieved more for the community than the council. The allegation that the council had spent money unnecessarily on solicitors' costs was refuted – it is normal for such expenses to be incurred when dealing with legal matters. Mr Hawley alleged that the cost of running the Arts Centre was camouflaged in our precept notice. The points raised will be taken into account when producing next years leaflet. The benefit of the Arts Centre can be seen in increased trade for local businesses who employ more staff. A varied programme sees visitors coming into the town who also use local facilities. In relation to the tarmac of the side entrance this was a matter between English's and ourselves. In relation to the purchase of the roadway at the back of the Arts Centre the fact that the roadway was not owned by anyone was of concern to the council as they had a right of way over it. The proposed purchase was done purely to safeguard the Arts Centre – it was never the intention to adversely affect the Buck Inn Yard residents' rights.

The following press release was agreed:

'In recent weeks the council have received numerous letters from two residents from Buck Inn Yard in which they allege councillors are variously liars, stalkers, spineless, spiteful and conducted the council in an illegal way. Councillors met last night to discuss the allegations which they strongly deny. The allegations have been looked at by the East Riding Standards Committee who concluded no further action was to be taken. The letters and verbal attacks are both distasteful and hurtful to councillors who undertake their work without charge on behalf of the community. Councillors are to seek a public retraction of the allegations made against them'.

Replies to the letters are to be sent to the individuals involved including the above information.

Costings were to be obtained to convert the rearmost set of double fire doors at the Arts Centre to two way doors whilst retaining their emergency designation.

At the conclusion of the meeting Councillor Sykes praised his fellow councillors for their restraint in face of severe provocation.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.