

**Minutes of the meeting of Desborough Town Council
held on Thursday 21 March 2019**

Councillors present: G Holmes (Chairman), C Archer, L Burnham, S Draycott, I James, B Keys, B McElhinney, J Read, P Sawford, and J Taylor.

Also present: G Thomson (Town Clerk), and 14 members of the community.

259./18 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting and reported that the closing date for applications for Community Grants was 31 March 2019. He stated that the PCSO would be holding surgeries on the library and the dates were on the Council's website, and referred to the imminent whole Council training session. He added that Montsaye spring fair would be held from 12 - 4 o'clock at the school on 30 March 2019, and that a litter pick would take place on the same day meeting at the big Co-op from 9 o'clock (pickers provided). He concluded by reporting that the library would be opening on a volunteer-run basis from ten o'clock to four o'clock on Wednesdays with effect from Wednesday 27 March 2019.

260./18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Stroud.

**RESOLVED that:-
the apologies be noted.**

261./18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

262./18 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

No requests for dispensation were made.

263./18 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 FEBRUARY 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2019 had been previously circulated and it was

**RESOLVED that:-
the minutes be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.**

264./18 TO HEAR REPRESENTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No members of the public requested to speak.

265./18 TO DISCUSS ITEMS OF CONCERN WITH BOROUGH COUNCILLORS AND THE COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Extracted from the report of the Town Clerk:

Comment has been made at a number of Council meetings about the brevity or absence of information from the Borough Councillors and County Councillor elected from Desborough. The four Borough Councillors and the County Councillor have been invited to the meeting to discuss items of concern including:

- *blocked drains in and around Desborough*
- *Improving leisure facilities*
- *development of the town centre*
- *Play areas and ball spaces within housing areas*
- *Improved design and care of main traffic roads*
- *Communications*
- *Local government reorganisation*

The Chair noted the absence of Borough Councillors and County Councillor from the meeting. He stated that one of the items he had wished to raise was access for Desborough to Government funds for which only the Borough Council could apply. He explained that the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) had urged Communities and Local Government Secretary to change the rules for several recent key Government funding initiatives from which town councils were excluded explaining that a small change to the legal definition of "local authorities" in the initiatives mentioned would enable the Town Council to apply. He referred specifically to The Future High Street Fund, the Parks Funding, and the Stronger Towns Fund. He added that in the event of local government reorganisation it was not at all clear where any funds accessed by KBC would be directed.

Chair: _____

It was noted that the Council had other questions for the elected representatives such as those relating to fly tipping, children's services and funding, social care and health, and care homes, housing and waiting lists, education, jobs, and health. In connection with housing and health, the definitions used for and requirements in relation to affordable housing, and the proportions of affordable housing and accessible housing on developments were questioned. With regard to regeneration it was noted that Borough Councillor Dearing was Kettering Borough Council's Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and would have useful information.

Comment was made about the lack of detailed information about Desborough in the reports presented.

RESOLVED that:-

the Town Clerk be requested to establish the definitions used for and requirements in relation to affordable housing, and the proportions of affordable housing and accessible housing on developments.

266./18 TO CONSIDER AND IF SO RESOLVED TO ADOPT THE OTHER RISKS RISK ASSESSMENT

Extracted from the report of the Town Clerk:

An assessment of other risks, not included in the Governance Risk Assessment has been carried out as attached at Appendix A. The Council is REQUESTED to consider the matter and to approve the Other Risks Risk Assessment.

RESOLVED that:-

the Risk Assessment be accepted and adopted.

267./18 TO CONSIDER AND ADOPT REVISIONS TO FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Extracted from the report of the Town Clerk:

The Financial Regulations have been reviewed in line with the recommendations of the Internal Auditor's report. New Regulations relating explicitly to tenders have been proposed, together with Regulations relating to payments, and minor textual corrections. The Council is RECOMMENDED to adopt the revised Financial Regulations set out at Appendix B.

RESOLVED that:-

the revised Financial Regulations be adopted.

268./18 TO RECEIVE THE FINANCE REPORT

Extracted from the report of the Town Clerk:

The Council is RECOMMENDED to approve the report (Appendix C).

RESOLVED that:-

the recommendation be accepted.

269./18 TO CONSIDER AND IF SO RESOLVED TO APPROVE ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Extracted from the report of the Town Clerk:

The report set out at Appendix D details those invoices and payments for payment, those authorised in accordance with the scheme of delegation, and those where payment is by continuous authority; and the Council is RECOMMENDED to approve payment. Details in the report will be updated before the meeting as information is received.

RESOLVED that:-

the payments listed in the report be approved.

270./18 THE CONSIDER, AND IF SO RESOLVED, TO APPROVE A REPORT FROM THE RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER ON THE COUNCIL'S BANKING AND INVESTMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Extracted from the report of the Town Clerk:

The Council has operated a current and a deposit account with Barclays Bank for some time. The Town Clerk and Councillors have noted the amount of time taken dealing with changes to the mandate (those approved by the Council and those enacted by the bank), access to accounts, and other difficulties and delays encountered with Barclays and a review has been carried out in accordance with the Financial and Treasury Management Strategy and Reserves Policy, and Financial Regulations.

Investigations into the products and services on offer from the various banks have taken place with a focus on knowledge of the local government sector, acceptance and facilitation of local government processes and procedures, and online functionality. Unity Trust Bank offers a current account and a savings account (currently paying 0.4% AER). The monthly charge for the current

Initialled by Chair: _____

account would be £6 plus 15 pence per transaction. Notwithstanding the charges, it is considered to be value for money in time saved. The deposit account at Barclays currently pays 0.3% and the current account bears no charges.

Spreading the Council's reserves amongst High Street banks which comply with the Council's requirements has proven difficult and time consuming.

The RFO is currently investigating the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund. CCLA (Churches, Charities & Local Authorities) is a mutually owned firm of investment managers, owned by LAMIT (Local Authorities Mutual Investment Trust), the Church of England (Central Board of Finance) Investment Fund and the Charities (COIF) Investment Fund. The Fund is managed on a conservative basis (beyond the requirements of AAA-rating), only using plain cash products with well-rated banks: call; notice; term and certificates of deposit - the type of products that Councils will usually use. There is no exposure to the stock market, derivatives, other funds or asset backed securities. It is a UK FCA Qualifying Money Market Fund managed by CCLA that offers the substantial benefits of cooperation between public sector bodies. It is a cash management solution designed by the sector, for the sector. The rate of interest fluctuates but is around 0.7%.

The Council is **RECOMMENDED** to:-

- i) authorise the establishment of a current account and deposit account with Unity Trust Bank;
- ii) authorise the RFO to transfer day to day banking to the Unity Trust Bank, and to retain the accounts with Barclays in accordance with the Financial and Treasury Management Strategy and Reserves Policy;
- iii) request the RFO to present a report to a future meeting on transferring the bulk of the reserves to the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund.

The Chair reported that previously the Council had been receiving under £10 per quarter in interest but that the Council was now receiving appropriate interest. The Town Clerk reported on some of the current difficulties with Barclays Bank and outlined the benefits and costs involved in the proposed accounts with Unity Trust Bank. He explained that proposals relating to the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund would be brought to a future meeting.

RESOLVED that:-

- i) **the establishment of a current account and deposit account with Unity Trust Bank be authorised;**
- ii) **the RFO be authorised to transfer day to day banking to the Unity Trust Bank, and to retain the accounts with Barclays in accordance with the Financial and Treasury Management Strategy and Reserves Policy;**
- iii) **the signatories on all accounts remain as: Councillors Draycott, Holmes, McElhinney, and the Town Clerk; and,**
- iv) **the RFO be requested to present a report to a future meeting on transferring the bulk of the reserves to the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund.**

271./18 TO RECONSIDER THE REPORT OF THE INTERNAL AUDITOR

Extracted from the report of the Town Clerk:

The Council's internal audit service is currently provided through Northants CALC. The interim internal audit report was considered at the last meeting. The auditor drew the Council's attention to the following matters (the Town Clerk's comments are in brackets):-

- a. *the Council needs to formally appoint the Town Clerk and RFO (this has now been done);*
- b. *the need to review the Financial Regulations to ensure all relevant statutory requirements are covered (draft revised Financial Regulations are elsewhere on the agenda);*
- c. *Bank reconciliations not being demonstrable (notwithstanding that bank reconciliations were already being carried out and were shown to the internal Auditor and recorded in Council minutes, the Town Clerk has now completed the set of reconciliations as required by the internal auditor on the date of each bank statement. The migration to the new finance software is now complete and future reconciliations will be carried out on the bank statement dates);*
- d. *Internal controls not being carried out (this refers largely to Councillor oversight. The Town Clerk demonstrated that this was carried out. Since the last meeting a comprehensive verification and checking process has been carried out and is demonstrable;*
- e. *the level of the Council's reserves is "significantly higher than the annual precept, I would expect to see an explanation provided to me at the year-end audit and shown as a resolution on the Town Council's minutes" (the external auditor, PKF Littlejohn LLP, has recently stated that reserves of twice precept would be acceptable. On that basis, the Council could carry over £280,000 (the 2018/19 precept) times two, or £560,000 without attracting the Auditor's interest. However, another agenda item deals with this.);*

Initialed by Chair: _____

- f. *financial risk assessments need to be adopted in each financial year (the Governance Risk Assessment was approved at the last meeting and the Other Risks Risk Assessment is elsewhere on the agenda).*

Since the last meeting, the internal auditor has failed to respond to a request for further clarification and guidance from the Town Clerk. The Council is REQUESTED to consider the report of the internal auditor and determine if any further action is necessary.

**RESOLVED that:-
the information contained in the report be noted.**

272./18 TO CONSIDER AND EARMARK RESERVES INTO 2019/20

Extracted from the report of the Town Clerk:

Further to the report at the last meeting relating to “earmarking” reserves, clarification has been received from the Council’s external advisers. The term “earmarked” is not enshrined in law in this context but relates to the “Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England” issued by the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG). This guidance states that: “As authorities have no legal powers to hold revenue reserves other than those for reasonable working capital needs, or for specifically earmarked purposes, whenever an authority’s year-end general reserve is significantly higher than the annual precept or rates and special levies, an explanation should be provided to the auditor.”

As Members will recall, the Council is required to maintain adequate financial reserves (Sections 32 and 43 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992), however, there is no specified minimum level of reserves that an authority should hold, and it is the responsibility of the Responsible Financial Officer to advise the Council about the level of reserves and to ensure that there are procedures for their establishment and use. The External Auditor has indicated that reserves of more than twice precept would be considered “high” and require explanation.

When the Council set its budget for 2019/20 it determined that £75,016 should come from the Council tax precept and that £283,229 should come from reserves. The latter amount is therefore “earmarked” in accordance with JPAG’s “Practitioners’ Guide to Proper Practices to be applied in the preparation of statutory annual accounts and governance statements, March 2018”.

For absolute clarity, it is RECOMMENDED that the Council formally “earmarks” £283,229 from reserves for the items in the 2019/20 budget as set out in Appendix E as previously approved.

**RESOLVED that:-
the recommendation be accepted.**

273./18 TO CONSIDER THE PLANNING AND LICENSING REPORT

Extracted from the report of the Town Clerk:

In accordance with the views expressed by Councillors, any comments which were uncontentious and uncontested were submitted to the relevant authority as set out in the report attached at Appendix F. The Council is REQUESTED to consider any comment on any of the applications listed.

**RESOLVED that:-
the Town Clerk be authorised to object following consultation with Councillors, to matters DA/2017/0442 (on the grounds of overdevelopment in the countryside and other material matters); and application KET/2018/0950 (including the grounds of safety, layout, and other material matters).**

274./18 TO CONSIDER ATTENDANCE AT THE NORTHANTS CALC LARGER COUNCILS’ FOCUS MEETING

Extracted from the report of the Town Clerk:

Northants CALC is convening a focus meeting for larger councils in North Northamptonshire to talk about asset and service devolution / transfer. The purpose of the meeting is to explore: What parish and town councils want to see on the devolution list; Opportunities for devolution pre-Unitary and post-Unitary; Lessons learnt from Cornwall and Milton Keynes; Devolution policies and frameworks.

The meeting will take place on 28 March 2019 from 10 o’clock to noon in Raunds. Councils have been invited to send up to three delegates (e.g. Clerk, Chairman/Mayor, Deputy Mayor/Leader). No decisions will be taken. The Council is REQUESTED to consider whether attendance is deemed appropriate and if so to determine representation.

**RESOLVED that:-
the Council be represented by Councillor Sawford and the Town Clerk.**

Initialed by Chair: _____

275./18 TO NOTE ITEMS OF INFORMATION

Extracted from the report of the Town Clerk:

The report of the Town Clerk (Report No 1) contains information on the following matters and the Council is recommended to note the information contained in the report. No decisions of a financial nature will be made in relation to this item.

275.1./18 To note any report received from the County Councillor

It was noted that the County Councillor had submitted a report after the publication of the agenda.

In connection with the report relating to the fish farm it was noted that allegations of the site operator burning plastic and other rubbish had been made and photographs passed to enforcement agencies.

275.2./18 To note any report received from Kettering Borough Councillors

It was noted that the Borough Councillors (except Borough Cllr Derbyshire) had submitted reports after the publication of the agenda.

275.3./18 To receive any report on Vehicle Speeds, Traffic, and CCTV

275.4./18 To receive and note updates from Desborough community groups and representatives

It was reported that there was a new newsletter from the Desborough & District Twinning Association. IT was also noted that the Rothwell North Working Party had created a Facebook page and that the netting over the hedges on the B576 had been removed.

275.5./18 To note any report received from the Police

It was noted that the Neighbourhood Watch had recorded three crimes in Desborough in the preceding month: the theft of a bicycle and two thefts from motor vehicles (number plates).

275.6./18 Town Council membership

The Town Clerk reported that absolutely no requests for a poll had been submitted to either the Electoral Services Officer at Kettering Borough Council or to Desborough Town Council. He confirmed that Desborough Town Council could proceed to co-opt in accordance with the law and the Council's policy. He stated that adverts would be posted on 22 March 2019 with a closing date of 5pm on 3 April 2019, and that consideration of filling the vacancy would be an item on the agenda of the April meeting.

275.7./18 Footpath from BP garage to Desborough Road

275.8./18 New Clerk Event, SLCC

275.9./18 Social Media Policy

**RESOLVED that:-
the information contained in the report be noted.**

The meeting closed at 20:02

Signed by the Chair: _____

Date: _____

Initialed by Chair: _____

DESBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL
21 MARCH 2019

APPENDIX A

Other Risks Risk Assessment

See attached.

DESBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL
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APPENDIX B

Financial Regulations

See attached.

DESBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL
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APPENDIX C

FINANCE REPORT Monthly Bank Reconciliation

	Bank Statement date
Bank reconciliation	27/02/2019
Barclays Current	£14,903.93
Barclays Business Saver	£515,522.27
Unpresented payments	£4,121.97
Payments made but not on bank statement	£0.00
Reconciled Balance	£526,304.23

Unpresented payments previously authorised

Cost centre	Code	Description	Total	Comment
Administration	Community Grant	Desborough Town Junior FC	£500.00	Cheque not presented. Minute 084/18 refers
Administration	MS Office	MS Office Business for Mac	£113.76	Purchase not yet made. Minute 126.3.1/18 refers
Democratic Services	Employment Costs	HMRC	£2,358.21	Cheque to be issued 21/03/19
Administration	Community Grant	Desborough District Guiding	£150.00	Cheque to be issued 21/03/19. Minute 163./18 refers
Administration	Community Grant	Vine Community Trust	£500.00	Cheque to be issued 21/03/19. Minute 163./18 refers
Administration	Community Grant	Desborough Youth Club	£500.00	Invoice referred to in Appendix D. Minute 084/18 refers
Balance			£4,121.97	

Initialed by Chair: _____

DESBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL
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APPENDIX D

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Further items will be added as received.

Supplier	Reason	VAT	Total Amount	Notes
Graham Thomson	Salary (March 25 hours / week) Overtime (February hours)	£0.00	£1,926.14	
HMRC	PAYE / NI (employee's and employer's contributions) February	£0.00	£786.07	To be paid in March with previous months.
LGSS Pensions	Pension (employee's and employer's contributions) February	£0.00	£884.93	To be paid in March with previous months.
Graham Thomson	Toilet paper	£0.00	£6.00	Approved in accordance with delegated powers
Graham Thomson	New Clerk Event: rail fare	£0.00	£56.56	
Graham Thomson	New Clerk Event: underground fare	£0.00	£4.00	
SLCC	New Clerk Event: Registration fee	£2.00	£12.00	
SurveyMonkey	February	£5.83	£35.00	Subscription now cancelled
Talk Talk Business	Internet and telephone	£9.59	£57.67	Continuous authority for payments (amount may vary slightly month to month)
Bill McElhinney	Tysew Limited, two sewing machines. Refund of Community Grant payment for Desborough Youth Club for sewing machines (minute 084/18 refers)	£66.33	£397.99	Paid personally by Cllr McElhinney before the Town Clerk was in post.
Arien Designs Limited	Deep water signs for pocket park	£42.60	£255.60	H&S requirement
Desborough Pocket Park	Footpath maintenance - refund of expenditure	£0.00	£369.86	VAT not refundable

Initialed by Chair: _____

Extracted from the 2019/20 Approved Budget
Budget summary

Expenditure	Additional items ("Earmarked" reserves)
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES	
Salaries & all Employment Costs	£14,229
Training and Development	£500
Local Government Reorganisation	£2,000
Newsletter / publicity / surveys	£1,000
Election / Parish Poll provision	£8,000
SUB TOTAL: DEMOCRATIC SERVICES	£25,729
TOWN COUNCIL OFFICE	
Rates	£3,500
SUB TOTAL: TOWN COUNCIL OFFICE	£3,500
ADMINISTRATION	
General office and sundry expenses	£1,000
Website, domain, email	£2,500
Neighbourhood Plan	£10,000
Community Grant Scheme	£15,000
Premises - Equipment	£3,000
SUB TOTAL: ADMINISTRATION	£31,500
PROJECTS	
Preservation of Library services	£210,000
General town improvements	£5,000
Additional Police or PCSOs, or crime detection by CCTV	£5,000
Portable hearing loop	£2,500
SUB TOTAL: PROJECTS	£222,500
TOTAL EARMARKED	£283,229

Initialed by Chair: _____

Planning and Licensing Matters

[KET/2019/0119](#)

8 Matlock Way, Desborough

Full Application: Change of use of amenity land to garden land and erection of a 2m fence

[KET/2019/0137](#)

Non-Material Amendment: KET/2011/0235 (Residential development of up to 700 dwellings including provision of a local centre, primary school, green infrastructure and creation of accesses): Vary conditions 11, 12, 13, 14, 25, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 35 & 37

[KET/2019/0139](#)

Non-Material Amendment: (Variation of conditions 19 & 20 (Energy Strategy), 21 (Code for Sustainable Homes), 22 (Lifetime Homes), 24 (Sustainability Report) and 25 (Interim Design Stage Assessment Certificate) of KET/2011/0235): Vary conditions 11, 12, 13, 14, 25, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 35 & 37

[KET/2019/0070](#)

Stoke Albany Road (Former Poultry Unit), Desborough

B8 storage unit with ancillary B1 office with erection of entrance gates and security fencing

[KET/2019/0102](#)

8 Westmorland Drive, Desborough

Certificate of Lawfulness for Proposed Operations: Single storey rear extension

[KET/2019/0072](#)

The Kings Arms, 111 High Street, Desborough

S19 Application for Variation of Listed Building Conditions: Variation of condition 2 of KET/2018/0157 in respect of insertion of exterior door and retention of existing wall to form power supply room

[KET/2019/0074](#)

134 Ironwood Avenue, Desborough

Full Application: Garage to side

Information Items

275.1/18 To note any report from the County Councillor

As promised the attached Word Document covers a brief description of the NCC's Budget for 2019/20 and my observations on the possible outcomes of the reform of local government in this county. Clearly much of the work, towards amalgamating the current 8 councils into 2 new unitary councils, is still in its infancy so many details could still change before the elections in May 2020.

Regarding blocked drains – inspections are carried out on a regular basis and an annual jetting programme is in place for the whole county. Of course there will always be emergencies that need urgent attention and there are most certainly some “problem drainage issues” known to NCC & Kier Wsp which have proved difficult to resolve.

A particular problem is the [newish] drain adjacent to the [developer financed] kerbing running alongside the fishing lakes on Rushton Road. The drain there is [allegedly] positioned in the wrong position on the carriageway and does not drain all the surface water efficiently, causing much frustration for all road users and pedestrians after significant downpours. I understand that there is a dispute, between the developer and NCC, about who is at fault for allowing this drain to be positioned as it is.

There are many other examples of poor drainage throughout Desborough. The drain on Station Road, close to the old Council Offices, looks as though it is blocked on a regular basis but I have been assured over a number of years that it is operating correctly despite visual signs that would suggest otherwise?

I am not aware of any major road improvements for Desborough in the NCC's Capital Programme, but the installation of a roundabout linking the proposed 304 houses off Rothwell Road was always an expectation of DTC's previous administration – subject to a change in the development plans and approval by the highways authority. A roundabout at that point on the B576 would resolve some of the speeding issues of traffic entering Desborough from Rothwell.

258.2/18 To note any report from the Kettering Borough Councillors

Cllr Mark Dearing:

A Task & Finish group is being set up to discuss the future of our Towns. When the members have their first meeting they will decide who they will be calling to discuss the Towns. I have requested that all A6 towns be included in their deliberations. This will give the Town Councillors a chance to discuss their own views of the Town they serve.

Drainage strategies and traffic scoping studies around the development of the Lawrence site have been commissioned and we await their responses. Talks with Historic England and Architects continue.

An agreement to work with Corby on street cleaning was passed and we will begin to see a change in the wording on our fleet of vehicles and colour scheme.

Cllr June Derbyshire:

Cllr David Soans:

Thank you for your kind invitation to attend Desborough Town Council meeting on 21st March 2019 however I must offer my apologies as I am still on sick leave.

With regard to your listed items, as I am sure you are aware, Phase 2 of the Leisure Centre is on stream with the building of Grange 2. The Kettering Borough Council has taken steps to bring this forward to an early date by the provision of a loan to the developers.

There is an S106 agreement with the developer of Grange 2 to provide £380,000 for Town Centre improvements which are, as yet, unspecified.

Cllr Mike Tebbutt:

Initialed by Chair: _____

As promised I am able to give you an update on the Status of the Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan-Draft Plan Consultation, The Natural Environmental and Heritage section comments were discussed and the Next Steps approved, this included that the ridge and furrow land on the West Edge of Desborough can be progressed as a Historically and Visually Important Open Space.

A detailed report identifying development sites with the Borough concluded that Deliverable Housing Land Supply 2019-24 gave the satisfactory result of 6.98 years.

Consultation specifically on Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities has begun and Desborough Town Council are requested to fully engage with this and the consultants undertaking the study.

275.2/18 To receive any report on Vehicle Speeds, Traffic, and CCTV

The current reporting period is between 28 February and 7 March 2019 (inclusive). A table detailing the number of vehicles travelling at speeds in excess of 40 mph, in integers of 10, is below.

SPEED	ROTHWELL ROAD	HARBOROUGH ROAD	BRAYBROOKE ROAD
40 mph & Over	20,610	881	227
50 mph & Over	3933	15	21
60 mph & Over	445	0	1
70 mph & Over	37	0	0
80 mph & Over	1	0	0
90 mph & Over	0	0	0
100 mph & Over	0	0	0

275.4/18 To receive updates from Desborough community groups and representatives

275.6/18 To note any report from the Police

275.6/18 Town Council membership

The closing date for electors to request a poll to fill the vacant seat on the Council was 20 March 2019. The Town Clerk will present information to the meeting on whether or not a poll was requested in accordance with the Law or not, and if not, the steps and timetable for the co-option process.

275.6/18 Footpath from BP garage to Desborough Road

The Council has been informed that the Section 278 agreement is now in place. The works should take about a week and an application has been made for them to commence on 1 April 2019.

275.6/18 New Clerk Event, SLCC

The Town Clerk attended a training event for new clerks organised by the Society of Local Council Clerks. The event covered rôles and responsibilities, lawful agenda and minutes, key dates, the learning pathway, and support offered.

258.6/18 Social Media Policy

The arena of social media is an emerging and developing area of law for Councils. Although Desborough Town Council does not use social media (other than its own website), members of the community and some of those directly connected with the Council do. Following the whole Council training session a draft social media policy will be produced for consideration.

Graham Thomson
Town Clerk

Initialled by Chair: _____

 DESBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL MEETING ON 21st MARCH 2019

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

As promised on the February 21st note to the Clerk, I am reporting on the County Council's Budget for 2019/20 together with some observations on the progress towards the formation of the two Unitary Councils for this County.

NCC Budget 2019/20
 Annual Expenditure [excluding schools] £617 million [net £441 million]

By department the big spending [care] budgets are:

Adult Social Care	£239.4 million [net £159.7 million]
Children First	£139.6 million [net £116.8 million]
Public Health & Wellbeing	£45.1 million [net £4.1 million]
NCC Council tax increase for 2019/20	4.99%

Notes:

The Fire Service has been transferred to the Police & Crime Commissioner

The Schools Budget is not included as the money comes in and out straight away

The county has been awarded the business rates pilot scheme, which should be worth circa £17 million across the county. As there is no clarity on the County Council's share of this bonus [income], it is not included in the budget.

During the last 12 months the County Council struggled to maintain its spending at approved levels. Commissioners were appointed in May 2018 and a second 114 notice was issued as an initial forecast indicated a deficit of £64.1 million for 2018/19.

A new Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer were appointed and the Cabinet was revamped, which resulted [essentially] in a new top team.

The new administration, working with the hard working staff at NCC, has worked through a number of options including a stabilisation plan, to reduce the culture of overspending and look at new ways of using NCC assets more effectively, while also reducing the reliance on agency staff.

This concentrated activity should result in the deficit [noted above] being extinguished by the end of this month. It will be a remarkable achievement and allows the County Council to return the winter gritting programme to previous levels and to continue the free use of schools by uniformed and community groups, both issues which were originally being considered for cuts in 2019/20.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE 2020

Subject to HM Government's Final Approval, the County's eight first and second tier councils will be "merged" into two new councils by May 2020.

The new Unitary Authorities will probably be called North Northants Unitary [NNU] and West Northants Unitary [WNU].

NNU will incorporate the current councils of Kettering, Corby, Wellingborough, East Northants and NCC services. WNU will incorporate the current councils of Northampton, Daventry, South Northants and NCC services. There are massive decisions ahead for the two steering groups, and the Shadow Authorities, leading up to the abolition of all of the eight current councils before the local elections in May 2020.

Current thinking is that the County's residents will then be represented by new councillors working within the current geographic areas of the County Council Divisions. Putting this into perspective, the current Desborough Division includes Desborough and eight Welland Valley parishes. Currently this division is served by 1 County Councillor, 4 Borough Councillors [for Desborough] and 1 Borough Councillor for the Welland Valley parishes. The initial plan is to elect 3 councillors for each NCC Division throughout the county.

Clearly there is much "work in progress" and the new unitary councils' relationship with Town and Parish Councils is far from certain. There are expectations that some local service deliveries will be offered to Town and Parish Councils in due course, but it seems unlikely that any agreements will be formalised before May 2020.

Cllr Allan Matthews
 Desborough Division CC

Initialled by Chair: _____