

NEEDHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the NEEDHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL held in Needham Market Community Centre on Wednesday 15th March 2023 at 7:30pm.

Present: Cllr J Lea (In the Chair), Councillors: BE Annis, G Cave, R Darnell, T Lawrence, M Norris, M O'Shea, M Ost, S Phillips, A Reardon, J Reardon, and X Stansfield.

Apologies for Absence:

A Farrow – Unwell

I Mason - Away

A Price - Unwell

Suffolk County Councillor Kay Oakes

In Attendance: Kevin Hunter, Town Clerk and two members of public

C008/23 To confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held 18th January 2023.

Cllr Annis proposed the Minutes of the 18th January 2023 Town Council meeting be adopted. Cllr J Reardon seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C009/23 To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interest for Matters on the Agenda.

Cllr B Annis – Accounts for Payment (Community Centre)

Cllr X Stansfield – Accounts for Payment (Community Centre)

C010/23 To receive reports from the County Councillor, District Councillors and, to take questions from members of the public.

Suffolk County Councillor Kay Oakes had provided a report, which had been circulated to Councillors, and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book. Below are the report headlines:

- More funds confirmed for children's services, adult care and the environment.
- Your money, invested well.
- New highways services arriving in Suffolk as multi-million pound contract awarded.

District Councillor Mike Norris presented the District Councillor's Report, which had been circulated to Councillors, and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book. Below are the report headlines:

- Council tax freeze plus £2m for energy saving measures.
- Plans for Skills and Innovation Centre at Gateway 14 unveiled.
- New £12m depot would 'future-proof' services for residents.
- New service aims to turn more than 1,000 empty houses into homes.
- First look at culture, heritage and visitor economy strategy for Babergh and Mid Suffolk.
- VCFSE (Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise) Resilience Fund: Councils launch third sector funding 'lifeline'.
- Target to end rough sleeping in Suffolk.
- Suffolk councils secure £2.2m to improve tenants' quality of life.
- Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils' Land Charges team shortlisted for new national award.

C011/23 To receive a report of the activities of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on behalf of the Town.

The Mayor reported attending:

Saturday 28th January – Royal British Legion County Conference

7th, 9th, 10th and 14th February – Planning Inquiry (Land off Barking Road)
Monday 27th February – WI Centenary Afternoon Tea

The Deputy Mayor reported attending:

7th, 8th, 9th and 10th February – Planning Inquiry (Land off Barking Road)

C012/23 To receive a report from Council's Civic Events Working Group.

Cllr Lea reminded Councillors the Civic Service is forthcoming and each has been sent an invitation to it.

C013/23 Clerk's Report and Correspondence to be noted.

The Clerk reported advice received regarding the May 2023 Local Elections has been forwarded to Councillors and further information will be passed on when received.

Cllr Lea referred Councillors to the 'pre-election period' and what that implied as far as the Council and Councillors are concerned.

C014/23 Committees

Governance & Finance Committee.

C014/23/1a Accounts for Payment and Confirmation.

Cllr Annis presented the accounts for payment, which were tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book.

Cllr Phillips proposed adoption of the accounts for payment. Cllr Ost seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

Cllr Annis reported he is working with the Council's Responsible Finance Office to produce an up-to-date Council Assets Register at financial year-end. This is being undertaken as part of the ongoing preparation for the 2022/23 annual audit process.

C014/23/1b To receive a report on progress on matters raised in Council's Internal Audit Report 2021/22.

The Clerk reported the sole outstanding matter from the report, which related to Council's staff employment, has been completed.

Cllr Annis reported the remaining amount of grant income (Suffolk County Councillor Locality Funding – Mid Suffolk District Councillors' Locality Funding has been received) which will allow Council to procure and install Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) on the main routes into Needham Market is expected to be received shortly. When received, the appropriate order will be raised for the SIDs.

C014/23/2 Community & Assets Committee.

C014/23/2a To receive a report from the Committee Chairperson.

Cllr A Reardon reported on the following:

- Potential equipment supplier information regarding the proposed new younger children's play area has been passed to the Town Council Office.
- Options relating to the surfacing of the older children's play area, on Crowley Park, are being considered.

Cllr A Reardon proposed Council agree the older children's play area be resurfaced with rubber chippings, a quotation for which has been received in the sum of £4,399.87 (Net). Cllr Phillips seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

Cllr A Reardon reported a meeting of the King's Coronation Working Group had taken place at which arrangements for events were proposed and agreed.

Cllr A Reardon reported the Climate Awareness Group are taking forward arrangements for Earth Day (22nd April) events and asked if Councillors wished to volunteer to take part.

Cllr A Reardon reported Network Rail has started its installation of mature hedging at Crowley Park, which they are funding under a scheme which compensates for removal of trees and hedges alongside railway tracks. Network Rail has requested the works include an interpretation board which describes why the hedging is in place and how it may be used by wildlife. Council agreed to the request in principle, the precise size and location details of the signage to be agreed.

Cllr A Reardon commented on the draft Minutes from the Community & Assets meeting held on 22nd February which clearly state Crowley Park is an untenable location for a Skatepark.

C014/23/3 Planning Committee.

C014/23/3a To receive a report from the Committee Chairperson.

Cllr O'Shea reported on decisions made by the Planning Committee, on planning applications, at its meetings held 6th February and 6th March, several of which related to tree works. The current lack of a tree warden overseeing the welfare of trees in the town was acknowledged.

Cllr O'Shea referred to the Planning Appeal submitted to the Planning Inspectorate relating to a proposal to develop land off Barking Road for new housing. He described the good turnout by local residents at the hearing sessions, in particular the session held in Needham Market, which had been arranged at very short notice. The outcome of the Appeal is awaited. The Clerk suggested the involvement of claims for costs could be delaying the Planning Inspector's notice of her decision.

Cllr O'Shea reported he had attended the handover of the new properties off School Street from the constructor to the developer (Mid Suffolk District Council) and described the properties as being of a high standard of construction.

C014/23/3b To receive a report on the review of the Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan.

Cllr O'Shea reported the newly established Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan Review Group (NMNPRG) is looking into points raised at its first meeting.

The Meeting closed at 8.37pm.

Chairperson Date