

NEEDHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Annual Meeting of NEEDHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL held in the Green Room, Needham Market Community Centre, School Street, Needham Market, on Wednesday 17th May 2023 at 7:30pm.

Present: Cllr J Lea (In the Chair), Councillors: BE Annis, G Cave, R Darnell, T Lawrence, I Mason, MG Norris, S Phillips, A Reardon, J Reardon and X Stansfield.

In Attendance: Suffolk County Councillor Kay Oakes, Mid Suffolk District Councillor Ross Piper, Mid Suffolk District Councillor Terry Lawrence, Town Clerk Kevin Hunter and two members of public.

C015/23 To elect the Town Mayor/Chairperson of Council for 2023/2024.

Cllr Stansfield proposed Cllr J Reardon as Town Mayor/Chairperson for 2023/24. Cllr Mason seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

Cllr J Reardon took the Chair, thanking Councillors for electing him.

C016/23 To witness the Town Mayor/Chairperson's Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Cllr J Reardon made his Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Town Mayor and Chairperson of Council and signed it, the Declaration being witnessed by the Town Clerk, as the Proper Officer.

C017/23 To receive Councillor's Apologies for Absence:

Cllr M O'Shea - Unavailable

C018/23 To witness Councillors Acceptance of Office

Each Councillor present read out their Acceptance of Office Statement. Each Councillor signed their statement, which were then countersigned by the Town Clerk, as the Proper Officer.

C019/23 To elect the Deputy Town Mayor/Deputy Chairperson of Council for 2022/2023.

Cllr Stansfield proposed Cllr Phillips. Cllr Annis seconded the proposal.

Cllr Darnell proposed Cllr Lawrence. Cllr Mason seconded the proposal.

On being put to the vote, the proposal for Cllr Lawrence gained the majority support.

C020/23 To witness The Deputy Town Mayor/Deputy Chairperson's Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Cllr Lawrence made his Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Deputy Town Mayor/Deputy Chairperson of Council and signed it. The Declaration was countersigned by the Town Clerk, as the Proper Officer.

Note: Minutes C021 to C023 are unused.

C024/23 To confirm the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 15th March 2023.

The Minutes of the meeting of 15th March 2023 were accepted as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

C025/23 To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interest for matters on the Agenda.

The following Declarations of Interest were received and recorded in the Declaration of Interest Register:

Cllr A Reardon – Expenses re: King's Coronation

Cllr J Reardon – Expenses re: King's Coronation

C026/23 To receive reports from The County Councillor, District Councillors and to take any questions from members of the public present.

County Councillor's Report.

County Councillor Oakes presented her report, which was tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book.

Matters were raised relating to: flooding on the B1113 near the Sackers waste site; the suggested application of a 20mph speed limit in Suffolk, the Creting footbridge replacement on the River Gipping and the Speed Indicator Devices, which are awaited.

District Councillors' Report.

District Councillor Ross Piper presented his report, a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book.

C027/23 To receive a report of the activities of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on behalf of the Town and, if applicable, the final report from the outgoing Mayor.

The Mayor reported attending:

Friday 24 th March:	Attended AGM of the Soldiers, Sailors and Air Force Association, SSAFA, at the Community Centre
Friday 24 th March	Charity Quiz
Sunday 26 th March	Opened the Nature Trail at Needham Lake, initiative of The Rangers
Sunday 16 th April	Needham Market Civic Service
Saturday 22 nd April	Earth Day Celebration
Sunday 23 rd April	Sudbury Civic Service
Thursday 4 th May	Coffee with residents of Drift Court
Sunday 7 th May	Coronation Family Party in the Community Centre
Monday 8 th May	Unveiling of the Coronation Plaque in Jubilee Crescent
Monday 8 th May	Coronation Band Concert and afternoon tea in the Community Centre
Saturday 13 th May	Coronation Party at Drift Court

The Deputy Mayor reported:

Preparation for and installing the High Street decorations in the lead up to the Coronation and attending:

Sunday 7 th May	Coronation Family Party in the Community Centre
Monday 8 th May	Unveiling of the Coronation Plaque in Jubilee Crescent
Monday 8 th May	Coronation Band Concert and afternoon tea in the Community Centre

The outgoing Mayor, Cllr Lea, delivered the following report:

I have very little to report having reported in every newsletter throughout the past two years as well as reporting to each Town Council meeting. I would, however, like to take this opportunity to thank the Town Clerk, Kevin, and the RFO, Louise for their support during the last few months following Frank's untimely death. I would also like to thank those Councillors who have also supported me and my activities throughout my two years as your chairman.

I do wish to make a couple of observations. I am sure that you are all aware that there are two main civic functions throughout the year, namely the Civic Service and Remembrance, and the support of Councillors is important if the purpose of these activities is to be achieved.

The Civic Service is the one occasion when Council invites representatives of the Charities and Voluntary organisations in the town to take part and be thanked for their support of the community and to enjoy afternoon tea. It also gives Councillors the opportunity to meet these important people in our town. These are the people that are the glue that holds our town together. It is not the Town Council that does this. During the Civic Service Councillors are also invited to renew their dedication to the people of the town. In July last year I advised Councillors that the Civic Service would be held on Sunday 16th April and I reminded Councillors at subsequent meetings until the stated date. The Clerk sent out an email nearer the date asking Councillors of their intentions. He received one reply, this from Cllr Norris who had very good reason for being unable to attend. In my naivety I therefore assumed that the remainder of our Councillors would be attending. Attendance was extremely poor so I would ask our new Council to make a real effort to attend those two functions, at the very least, in future years.

The incoming Mayor, Cllr J Reardon, responded:

Whilst the last two years may have raced past, with the strong leadership of Cllr Lea it's been full of great successes and some difficult times. In that time, I hope Cllr Lea feels on the whole she had

the necessary support from the Town Council and Councillors. I also hope the Town Council and community recognise the support Cllr Lea has given them. I am especially thankful for her support during my year of Deputy Mayor. I would still welcome her advice and support in any form and hope to continue the good work and more great success moving forward.

Cllr Phillips added:

Councillor Lea has had a very busy two years as Mayor/Chair of Council and has had a very emotional time whilst committing herself to the Chairmanship of Needham Market Town Council.

Jo has had the death of the Duke of Edinburgh (April 2021) and all the extra work that entailed followed by the Platinum Jubilee celebrations (February 2022) then sadly the death of Her Majesty the Queen (September 2022) and if that wasn't enough sadly Jo lost her beloved Frank (December 2022) who we will all miss.

Many would not have continued with the Chairmanship under these circumstances but with the support of family and friends Jo has continued as Chairman. I am sure that Jo would like to thank Councillor John Reardon (Deputy Mayor) for stepping in where needed at this sad time.

We have just celebrated the Coronation of King Charles the third and Jo has been very busy with the extra functions that that entails, supported of course by John.

Thank you, Jo, for your solid Chairmanship over the past two years and your fortitude when others might have given up. Needham Market owes you a debt of gratitude and Frank who was also a stalwart for Needham Market and more importantly always by your side when needed.

C028/23 To consider requests for co-option to vacant seats on the Town Council.

Councillors considered requests for co-option received from; Chris Goodchild, Andrew Farrow and Martin Ost.

Cllr Lawrence proposed all three requests be acceded to. Cllr Lea seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C029/23 To receive a petition regarding children's play facilities.

The Council was presented with a petition from members of the local community expressing concern regarding the lack of younger children's play equipment in Needham Market.

The Clerk reported he had acknowledged the petition and confirmed it would be presented to the Town Council at the first opportunity. Further, there are two projects relating to the provision of younger children's play equipment which the Town Council is taking forward. The first is the reinstatement of a younger children's play area off School Street which should be complete by mid-June. The second is the replacement of younger children's play equipment at Crowley Park, the original equipment having been removed to accommodate a new multi-use games area. There is a grant application in with Mid Suffolk District Council to provide the bulk of the funding required for the new play equipment. A decision on the grant application is expected early September and should it be successful, the project will move forward as quickly as possible.

Councillors acknowledged the petition and were satisfied all that is possible is being done to remedy the situation.

C030/23 To consider a request for grant/donation.

The Clerk referred Councillors to a request received from a representative of Needham Market Football Club for a grant/donation of £200 towards the establishment of a Sporting Memories Centre at the football club premises. The aim is to create the Centre to support a wide range of people aged 50+ including those living with dementia, depression or facing isolation and loneliness by improving their mental and physical wellbeing.

Cllr Lea proposed Council agree the request for the £200 grant/donation. Cllr Darnell seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C031/23 To appoint Chairpersons of the Council Committees for 2023/2024.

Cllr J Reardon referred Councillors to the Council's Committees that focus on different aspects of Council business. The following Committee Chairperson appointments were agreed by Council:

Governance & Finance Committee: Cllr Annis. Proposed by Cllr Phillips and seconded by Cllr Stansfield.

Community & Assets Committee: Cllr A Reardon. Proposed by Cllr Mason and seconded by Cllr Darnell.

Planning Committee: Cllr O'Shea. Proposed by Cllr Lea and seconded by Cllr Cave.

C032/23 To agree Members of the Employment Committee for 2023/2024.

Cllr Phillips proposed Cllr Annis remain as Chairperson of the Committee alongside Cllr Lea, Cllr J Reardon and Cllr Lawrence. Cllr Cave seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C033/23 To appoint SALC representatives for 2023/2024.

This item was deferred.

C034/23 To confirm the appointment of the Internal Auditor.

Cllr Lea proposed the continued engagement of Suffolk Association of Local Councils for internal audit purposes. Cllr Annis seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C035/23 To nominate a Trustee to be a member of the Theobalds Foundation.

A letter received from the Clerk to the Trustees of the Theobald's Foundation requested Mrs Kay Oakes continue as a Town Council nominative Trustee to sit as a member of the Theobald's Foundation.

Cllr Lea proposed Council nominate Mrs Kay Oakes to continue to sit as its nominative Trustee. Cllr Cave seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C036/23 To appoint representatives on the Community Centre Management Committee for 2023/24.

This item was deferred.

C037/23 To appoint representatives on the Needham Market Neighbourhood Watch Committee for 2023/24.

It was reported the Needham Market Neighbourhood Watch Committee had not held a meeting for more than 3 years. Council consequently agreed to make no appointment.

C038/23 To appoint Emergency Contacts for 2023/24.

Cllr Stansfield proposed the appointment of Cllrs J Reardon, Annis and Phillips. Cllr Lawrence seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C039/23 To appoint to the Civic Events Management Group 2023/24.

Cllr Mason proposed Cllrs A Reardon, Lea and Phillips be members of the Civic Events Management Committee the auspices of which fall within the remit of the Community & Assets Committee. Cllr Cave seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C040/23 To confirm arrangements for Council's insurance cover for all insurable risks.

The Clerk explained how insurance cover was arranged, with whom and when. A meeting with the Council's Insurance Broker had taken place earlier in the day to initiate the process for renewal of the Council's policy from mid-July.

C041/23 To review Council's subscriptions to other bodies.

The Clerk confirmed annual subscriptions are paid to the Information Commissioners Office, Suffolk Association of Local Councils, Suffolk Local History Council and The River Gipping Trust. Cllr Phillips proposed those annual subscriptions be maintained. Cllr Mason seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal. Cllr Annis abstained from the vote.

C042/23 To review Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Clerk confirmed Council's expenditure incurred under s.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 falls well within the limits of the amount permitted (approx. £24,000 p.a.). Council acknowledged the explanation and position.

C043/23 To determine the time and place of Council and Council Committee Meetings up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.

The Clerk had prepared a schedule of meetings for 2023/24 inclusive of the 2024 Annual Town Council Meeting, which had been provided to Councillors.

Cllr Lea proposed the schedule be adopted. Cllr Stansfield seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C044/23 To consider a Flood Barrier Proposal (information received from M Hoy).

Councillors requested their thanks be conveyed to Mr Hoy for preparing and submitting his report on a Needham Market Flood Barrier Proposal to the Town Council.

Following debate, Cllr J Reardon proposed the proposal become an agenda item for a future Town Council meeting. Cllr Lawrence seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C045/23 Clerk's Report.

There was no report.

C046/23 Committees

C046/23/a Governance and Finance.

C046/23/a/i Accounts for Payment and Confirmation.

Cllr Annis presented the Accounts for Payment and Confirmation which were tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book. Cllr Phillips proposed Council adopt the accounts for payment and Confirmation. Cllr Cave seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C046/23/a/ii To adopt the accounts for the year ending 31st March 2023.

Cllr Phillips proposed Council adopt the accounts for the year ending 31st March 2023. Cllr Lea seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C046/23/a/iii Confirmation and signing of the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) for year ending 31st March 2023.

Cllr J Reardon introduced the Annual Governance Statement, which was tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book and put the relevant questions to Councillors and completed the Statement accordingly.

Cllr Darnell proposed Council adopt the completed Statement. Cllr Annis seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

Cllr J Reardon signed the Statement. The Clerk, as Proper Officer, also signed the Statement.

C046/23/a/iv Confirmation and signing of the Annual Accounting Statements (Section 2) for year ending 31st March 2023.

Cllr J Reardon introduced the Annual Accounting Statements, which were tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book. Cllr Phillips proposed Council adopt the completed Statement. Cllr Annis seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

Cllr J Reardon signed the Statement.

C046/23/a/v To adopt the Town Council Asset Register (31st March 2023).

Cllr Annis proposed Council adopt the Asset Register, which was tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book. Cllr Phillips seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C046/23/a/vi To adopt an Internal Control Statement for the period to 31st March 2024.

Cllr Annis proposed Council adopt the Internal Control Statement for the period to 31st March 2024. Cllr Lea seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

