

NEEDHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of NEEDHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL held in the Green Room, Needham Market Community Centre, School Street, Needham Market, on Wednesday 6th September 2017 at 7:30pm.

Present: Cllr X Stansfield (In the Chair), Councillors; D Campbell, R Campbell, JE Lea, I Mason, A Morris, MG Norris, S Phillips, D Spurling, M Spurling and AL Ward.

Apologies for Absence:

Cllr BE Annis – Hospital Appointment

Cllr TS Carter – Holiday

Cllr RP Darnell – Work Commitment

Cllr KMN Oakes – Work Commitment

County Councillor Anne Whybrow (Attending Somersham Parish Council)

In Attendance: District Councillor Wendy Marchant, 4 members of public and Town Clerk Kevin Hunter.

C152/17 To confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held 18th August 2017.

The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held Wednesday 18th August 2017 were accepted as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

C153/17 To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interest for Matters on the Agenda.

Cllr M Spurling – Accounts for Payment

C154/17 To receive reports from The County Councillor, District Councillors and, to take questions from members of the public.

County Councillor Whybrow had provided a report, a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book. It included reference to:

- Suffolk County Council Highways – contact telephone enquiries now to go through the customer service system (0345 606 6171) plus an update on signage to deter HGV's using residential routes to avoid the Needham Market High Street Weight Limit
- Needham Market Railway Station, Access for All – progress made on the campaign to improve access to the station
- Tour of Britain Cycle Race – details of the route
- Suffolk Students Celebrate as GCSE Results Continue to Rise – self-reported figures from schools show results moving closer towards the national average

District Councillor Wendy Marchant presented the District Councillors report, which was tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book. It included reference to:

- Planning – Mid Suffolk's land supply for housing has gone up from 3.3 years to 3.9 years which is a step in the right direction but still well short of what the District Council should have in place
- Council's Investing Billions in Commercial Property – the risks of the approach being taken are being exposed
- Utilities Face Charges for Roadworks – proposals to allow Councils to charge Utility Companies by the hour for roadworks which cause significant disruption
- Improved Access for Needham Market Railway Station – progress made on the campaign to improve access to the station

Cllr Mason commented Councils should focus on their core business of delivering services rather than borrowing money to carry out commercial business activities and, was pleased to learn our local District Councillors did not support Mid Suffolk District Council's decision to borrow £25m to create an investment fund.

A member of public asked what plans the Town Council has to improve the existing toilet facilities at Crowley Park Pavilion. Cllr Phillips advised a plan is currently being considered by the Town Council which will deliver a redesign of the interior of the Pavilion including new toilet facilities to meet current and future demands more effectively.

C155/17 To receive a report of the activities of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on behalf of the Town.

The Mayor and the Deputy Mayor had no activities to report.

C156/17 To receive a report from the Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan Working Group.

Cllr Norris presented his report, which was tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book. It included reference to:

- Southern Boundary Road Concept – awaiting confirmation of decision on application to Central Government for technical support
- Planning for Infrastructure, MSDC Member Training – to be held on 8th September and to cover various subjects including a strategic approach to infrastructure provision and funding from CIL and s106 developer contributions towards new infrastructure

C157/17 To consider a donation of up to £200 towards the post-Remembrance Service Lunch provided mainly for Service Personnel.

Cllr Philips commented the presence of the Armed Service community at the Remembrance Service is important and the lunch made available to them provides a small token of appreciation for their involvement.

Cllr Stansfield proposed a donation of up to £200 be granted to the Community Centre towards the cost of providing a basic lunch available to Armed Services personnel and their families attending the Annual Remembrance Service. Cllr Mason seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C158/17 Clerk's Report and Correspondence to be noted.

1. Actions from Town Council Meeting 16.08.17:

C149/17 – Letter sent to Needham Market Football Club 21st August. (Revised version sent 6th September, on request)

2. Issues:

- New Public Toilets – the Planning Application was submitted on 17th August and the District Council has registered the application and aims to determine it by 26th October.

3. Correspondence to be noted:

- Letter received 4th September from an organiser of the Needham Market Christmas Fair (3rd December) requesting funding towards the cost of the Fair.

Cllr Stansfield proposed the request for funding be added as an agenda item for Council's next meeting (20th September). Cllr Ward seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C159/17 SECTIONS.

C159/17/1 Finance/General Purposes

C159/17/1a Accounts for Payment and Confirmation.

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

Cllr Morris proposed the accounts for payment be adopted. Cllr Ward seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C159/17/1b To receive a report from the Section Leader.

Cllr Morris presented notes from the Finance and General Purposes Section meeting held on Tuesday 5th September, which were tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book.

Cllr Morris proposed Section Leaders, at future Finance and General Purposes Section meetings, report solely on issues affecting their Section, rather than presenting a general report. Section Leaders were happy to accept the change of approach. Cllr Phillips seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

Cllr Ward asked what will trigger the release of s106 funds (developer contributions) in relation to the current development of the former Needham Chalk Quarry. Cllr Stansfield explained the sale of the first residential unit on the site would release 50% of the s106 funding but, at present, Mid Suffolk District Council is not responding to the Town Council's request that the dialogue commenced prior to the start of the development and, at which the Town Council provided an indicative list of its priorities for s106 funding, needs to be concluded as soon as possible. District Cllr Norris is chasing the request up with the appropriate District Council Officer.

Cllr D Spurling, referring to the item in the Finance and General Purposes Section meeting notes on the establishing of an annual budget to allow the Clerk to approve payment of accounts for the purchasing of consumables and items needed for Council's staff to carry out their duties, asked what amount the budget will be. Cllr Morris explained there are many accounts/invoices received by the Town Council which are either insufficient in value, or require a prompt payment, which do not sit comfortably with the Council's current authorisation process. The change being proposed will allow the Clerk to operate the Council's day-to-day activities and demands more efficiently. The Clerk said he will be working up a draft budget figure which will be included in Council's Annual Budget Setting process. He confirmed it will require some Sections to release an element of their usual budget amounts to account for a reduced need to budget for incidental costs. The Clerk said the change will allow Sections to focus their funding on capital spending, thereby increasing emphasis on delivering projects which will benefit the community without the need to dwell on day-to-day revenue funding of regular and incidental costs.

Cllr Norris proposed Council adopt the notes from the Finance and General Purposes Section meeting held on Tuesday 5th September. Cllr Ward seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C159/17/2 Recreation & Sport

C150/17/2a To receive a report from the Section Leader.

Cllr Phillips presented notes from the Section meeting held on Wednesday 23rd August, which were tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book.

Cllr Phillips referred to the question raised earlier in the meeting by a member of public regarding toilet facilities at Crowley Park pavilion and how that accentuated the need to take the project to improve facilities at the pavilion forward, as soon as possible.

Cllr Phillips added he is aware the Committee set up by residents to explore the possibility of creating a skatepark in the town had held a second meeting which evidenced they are progressing well.

Cllr Mason asked whether it is intended the 'living hedge' alongside the Crowley Park boundary with Barretts Lane is to be removed. Cllr Phillips said the intention is the existing hedge will be removed along with the dilapidated fencing which is embedded in it, to be replaced with a new hedge, not so close to the road edge and of a lower height than the existing one, which will allow for far easier maintenance in the future, as well as continuing to provide a habitat for wildlife. Cllr Mason

suggested the existing hedge should be replaced by a wire fence which would allow any misuse of the park to be seen and subsequently reported plus, it would require no regular maintenance. Cllr Phillips said that approach had been debated at the Section meeting but members had concluded by agreeing on a replacement hedge. Whilst the new hedge is in its initial growth stage, a temporary fence will be erected along the boundary.

Cllr Phillips proposed Council adopt the Section meeting notes. Cllr M Spurling seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C159/17/3 Town Property and Services

C159/17/3a To receive a report from the Section Leader

In the absence of Cllr Oakes, Cllr D Campbell presented notes from the Section meeting held on Wednesday 30th August, which were tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book.

Cllr Phillips added the Section meeting had agreed, in view of the tight timescale remaining, the artificial Christmas trees which will adorn the High Street, should be purchased without further delay.

Cllr D Campbell proposed Council adopt the notes from the Section meeting held on Wednesday 30th August, inclusive of Cllr Phillips reference to the purchase of the artificial Christmas trees. Cllr Lea seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C159/17/4 Newsletter and Communications

C159/17/4a To receive a report from the Section Leader

Cllr M Spurling had nothing to report.

C159/17/5 Planning.

Cllr R Campbell reported no Planning Section meeting had been convened on Monday 4th September due to insufficient business.

C159/17/5a To receive Planning Decisions.

Cllr R Campbell reported the following planning decisions had been received:

DC/17/03408 - 61 High Street - Application for Listed Building Consent - Replacement of rear single storey roof with leaded flat roof, retiling and strengthening of rear 2 storey catslide roof, internal alterations and associated works.

Planning permission has been granted.

DC/17/03411 - 3 Foxglove Avenue - Erection of single storey rear extension and single storey front extension to garage. Partial conversion of existing garage and associated works.

Planning permission has been granted.

C159/17/5b To consider Planning Applications

Cllr R Campbell reported the following planning application had been received:

DC/17/04416 - Under The Railway Culvert Over The River Gipping West Of Gipsy Lane 360M Nw From 78 Stowmarket Road Needham Market - Construction of a pedestrian walkway within an existing culvert, the construction of a footpath to the culvert walkway from Stowmarket Road, and the construction of a ramped footpath that will connect an existing farm track, leading from the culvert to the north, that will connect it to Gipsy Lane's existing public footpath.

Cllr R Campbell proposed, in view of the complexity of the planning application, an extension to the period allowed for submission of comments to Mid Suffolk District Council, to 5th October, be requested. Cllr D Campbell seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

Cllr Stansfield commented on the disparity between the detail of the Suffolk County Council proposal on the rerouting of the existing Gipsy Lane footpath and that included in the Planning Application submitted by Network Rail.

A member of the public, on whose property a substantial part of the existing Gipsy Lane footpath runs, said the Network Rail planning application includes an immediately identifiable flaw in that it refers to The River Gipping when, in fact, the relevant watercourse is The River Bat.

C159/17/5c To receive a report from the Section Leader.

Cllr R Campbell reported the Section will next meet on Monday 18th September 2017 in the Town Council Office at 7.00pm. Unless Section Members are informed by email of a cancellation.

C159/17/6 Highways, Lighting and Footpaths

C159/17/6a To receive a report from the Section Leader

Cllr Norris presented his report, which was tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book. It included reference to:

- Use of the B1113 through Needham Market as a diversion route when planned works are being carried out on the A14 – a response has been received from an enquiry made to Highways England which exposed the recent use of the B1113 was a decision taken by the service provider (contractor) carrying out works on the A14, which wasn't communicated to Highways England. The response explained the approach which is taken to choice of diversion routes, which is somewhat ambiguous, but it appears the issues caused by the regular use of the B1113 diversion route through Needham Market have been recognised.
- Forthcoming Road Closures – Barretts Lane to be closed from 2nd October for 5 days to allow for further drainage improvements and kerbing works to take place.
- Suffolk County Council Highways Service Restructuring – the outcome has resulted in the loss of direct contact being available to a local Highways Engineer and now all future contact has to take place via the general Suffolk County Council Customer Service access arrangements.

C160/17 Questions under Standing Order 40.

Cllr M Spurling asked if Councillors were aware it appears Mid Suffolk District Council intend to board up the windows of its Needham Market Headquarters following the imminent relocating of staff to Endeavour House, Ipswich. District Councillor Norris said he would make enquiries to clarify the situation. Cllr Lea commented boarding up of the historic building element of the District Council's Headquarters (Hurstlea) would be an absolute travesty.

The Meeting closed at 8:23pm.

Chairman Date