

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 7th February 2018 at 7:30pm.

Present: Cllr X Stansfield (In the Chair), Councillors; BE Annis, TS Carter, RP Darnell, JE Lea, A Morris, MG Norris, KMN Oakes, S Phillips, D Spurling, M Spurling and AL Ward.

Apologies for Absence:

Cllr D Campbell - Holiday

Cllr R Campbell – Work Commitment

Cllr I Mason - Holiday

In Attendance: County Councillor Anne Whybrow, District Councillor Wendy Marchant, one member of public and the Town Clerk.

C010/18 To confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held 17th January 2018.

The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held Wednesday 17th January 2018 were accepted as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

C011/18 To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interest for Matters on the Agenda.

Cllr BE Annis – Accounts for Payment

Cllr RP Darnell – Repairs to Church Clock

Cllr JE Lea – Purchase of Planters

Cllr MG Norris - Purchase of Planters

Cllr KMN Oakes - Accounts for Payment and Grants and Donations (both Community Centre)

Cllr D Spurling – Finance & General Purposes

Cllr M Spurling – Finance & General Purposes

Cllr X Stansfield - Accounts for Payment (Community Centre)

C012/18 To receive reports from The County Councillor, District Councillors and, to take questions from members of the public.

County Councillor Whybrow gave a verbal report. It included reference to:

- Suffolk School Travel Consultation – encouraged people to respond to the consultation and whilst County Councillor Whybrow's initial favoured option was phasing in of the changes, this would still impact on parents/carers who have younger children progressing through the education system
- Suffolk County Council Highways Service – County Councillors had not been made aware of the notification sent to Town/Parish Councils (the Clerk confirmed notice had been received) which sets out plans to seek volunteers to undertake some of the work and activities which should be carried out by the Highways Service and which they are unable to continue
- 'Stowmarket Vision for Prosperity' – a simple but highly relevant comment on this latest Mid Suffolk District Council initiative, focussed yet again on Stowmarket which is, "what about Needham Market?"

Cllr Darnell said he understood Suffolk County Council is receiving additional funding from Central Government towards its Highways responsibilities. County Councillor Whybrow confirmed additional funding is being received in phases but this is for works which would not be in scope of that for which volunteer support is being sought.

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:

- MSDC's HQ Building, Needham Market – Town Councillors received an update on the District Council's proposals for redevelopment of the site on Wednesday 31st January and the proposals will now go out for public consultation. The building is in temporary use by the Suffolk Police Dog Training Section.

- Skate Board Park for Needham Market – summary of the Skate Park Group's view of the suggested location on the Needham Lake area, close to Needham Market Railway Station.
- Access for all Campaign, Needham Market Railway Station – it is hoped the petition, with a thousand plus signatures, can be taken up to the Ministry of Transport in London.
- Mid Suffolk District Council's Budget 2018/19 – the suggested Council Tax increase for 2018/19 is 0.5% plus various suggestions put forward to the District Council's Cabinet

District Councillor Marchant added the District Council's proposals for the Stowmarket Regal Cinema had been trimmed back to a £2.5m project which will add two further screens. The inclusion of a fully functional restaurant has been dropped. The extension to the existing building will result in the loss of 6 spaces on the adjoining public car park.

Cllr Darnell commented, it would be better for public funds to be spent on improvement to basic services such as public transport, that would provide opportunity for increased access to cinemas and other facilities. Cllr Lea added, whilst she enjoys going to the Regal Cinema, the proposal by Mid Suffolk District Council is another example of that Council's approach whereby everything is focussed on Stowmarket.

Cllr Phillips said he felt the Skate Park Group are making a pretty weak case in opposing the suggested locating of a facility close to Needham Market Station, as the area in question benefitted from ambient lighting plus, there is an access for emergency services should they be needed.

The member of public present said that as a member of the Needham Market Access for All Campaign, she thanked the Town Council for hosting the campaign petition on its website and further support given and, followed with a helpful update on progress of the campaign plus a brief explanation of the next stage of the process, which is seeking the funding required to improve access to the station.

C013/18 To receive a report of the activities of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on behalf of the Town.

The Mayor had nothing to report.

The Deputy Mayor was not present.

C014/18 To receive a report from the Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan Working Group.

Cllr Norris presented his reported, which was tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book.

The report included a copy of an update, received from AECOM, on their progress on work being undertaken on the feasibility of a new town boundary relief road. Dates are suggested for representatives from the Town Council to attend the AECOM London office to see and discuss the latest position. The Clerk will make the necessary arrangements to take the project to this next stage.

C015/18 To confirm the Annual Budget and agree the Council Tax Precept for 2018/19.

Cllr Morris referred to the report, provided by the Clerk and tabled, which set out a number of options explaining the relationship between the Council Tax precept and the impact in each case on the Council's finances, plus other relevant factors.

The six options shown ranged from freezing the Band D Council Tax amount at the 2017/18 level up to an increase of 6.49%. The relevant factors included an amount of £11,421, drawn from reserves over the past three financial years, to meet the shortfall between Council Tax income and Council's annual budgets. The cause of the shortfall is mainly due to Mid Suffolk District Council withholding Council Tax Compensatory Grant.

Town Councillors acknowledged the positive impact of the increase in Council Tax Base as a result of new housing development in the town.

Cllr Morris reported (Notes from the Finance and General Purposes Section meeting held 6th February – see below), the Finance and General Purposes Section recommended option 3 shown in the Clerk's report, which is a 2.99% increase in the 2017/18 Council Tax Band D amount. Cllr Morris proposed the adoption of the recommendation. Cllr Phillips seconded the proposal.

Cllr Ward said he felt the Council should consider stabilising its reserves as a priority, following several years of having to draw from reserves plus as a necessary future defence in relation to the fact Suffolk County Council and Mid Suffolk District Council, year on year, deliver less and less services some of which the Town has and, will inevitably continue, to take on.

Cllr Annis agreed with Cllr Ward and proposed, as an amendment to the original proposal, option 4 in the Clerk's report for adoption, an increase of 3.99%. Cllr Carter seconded the proposal. On being put to the vote, the amendment proposal was carried by 8 votes for, to 4 votes against.

Cllr Norris commented the Clerk's report shows the difference in cost, to a Band D property, between having no increase and the adopted 3.99% increase, amounts to 5p per week.

C016/18 To receive an update on the disposal of the Needham Market Institute building.

Cllr Phillips, the Town Council's nominated Needham Market Institute Trustee, reported meetings of the trustees were sparse and therefore he has gained little information on how the disposal was progressing. He said he understands there is a delay in the disposal due to Barclay's Bank losing the property deeds and the Trustee's solicitor has nevertheless granted access to the property to the prospective purchasers to enable them to commence work.

Cllr Phillips proposed a letter be sent to the Chairman of the Trustees seeking clarification of the position regarding the disposal of the property plus, reminding the Trustees of the terms under which the Town Council agreed a loan allowing the Trustees to meet liabilities whilst the property remains empty and unsold. Cllr Carter seconded the proposal. Council unanimously agreed the proposal.

Cllr D Spurling asked what the terms of the loan provided by the Town Council meant in practice. Cllr Phillips said the terms set out in the loan agreement ensure allocation of funds resulting from the disposal of the Institute building is undertaken in an open and transparent process.

C017/18 To consider a quotation for maintenance of St John's Church Clock (Town Council property).

Cllr Annis referred to the quotation received from a local horologist, who is familiar with the mechanisms of the Church Clock, which set out a schedule of works which would be carried out for the sum of £2,350. He added the works set out in the schedule had not been undertaken for many years and, whilst there is scaffolding attached to the clock tower, this provides an ideal opportunity for a horologist to gain relatively easy access to the mechanisms of the clock. Cllr Annis said, as a point of interest, the mechanisms of the clock i.e. the quarter hour, half hour and hour striking, has taken place approximately 1.7 million times since the works now being quoted for were last undertaken.

Cllr Phillips said the works quoted for are largely preventative maintenance which is necessary to stop damage being caused to the mechanism by worn parts etc. He proposed Council accept the quotation. Cllr Lea seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C018/18 To confirm the purchase of new planters and associated materials for the High Street floral displays.

The Clerk reported cost information had been received from the Group Secretary of Needham in Bloom for the supply of planters and compost totalling £1,280 plus there will be an additional charge for delivery. This amount is within scope of the estimate already approved by Council.

Cllr Phillips commented on the poor condition of the existing planters due to their age and proposed the cost information received from Needham in Bloom be approved. Cllr Ward seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C019/18 To receive an update on Mid Suffolk District Council's 'Stowmarket Vision for Prosperity' project.

The Clerk read out an email received from the Economic Development Officer – Open for Business, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils – Working Together, which set out the next stage of the 'Stowmarket Vision for Prosperity' project. It also sought the involvement of organisations in Stowmarket and the surrounding area to engender elements of the project being joint (as opposed to solely District Council).

Cllr Annis asked if the District Council's approach might in part reflect questions he raised with the District Council, at its public consultation event in Stowmarket, to which he has received no reply.

Cllr Lea commented she has actually heard Stowmarket being referred to by Mid Suffolk District Council representatives as "the centre of the universe". Cllr Phillips endorsed that comment by referring to the District Council's proposal to spend millions on the Regal Cinema when, in Needham Market, they cannot provide and will not support the provision of a much needed public toilet.

Councillors agreed the Clerk to respond to the email stating their strong objections to the District Council's continuing Stowmarket-Centric approach.

C020/18 Clerk's Report and Correspondence to be noted.

1. Actions from Town Council Meeting 17.01.18:

C009/18 – Issues relating to the Old Town Hall included below

2. Issues:

- Incidents and Vandalism in the town – report

The Clerk referred Councillors to a number of incidents that had occurred recently in the town. Councillors were provided with photographs of damage to play equipment on Crowley Park and extremely offensive graffiti that had been sprayed on play equipment. This has been reported to the Police. In addition, older people residing in the town have been subject to incidents which have left them severely distressed and wanting to know if steps will be taken to prevent such incidents in the future. In relation to all the incidents there is an underlying feeling Needham Market is being used as a 'dumping ground' for people with drug/mental health issues. The situation coincides with the removal of a Police presence in the town.

Cllr Phillips referring to one of the incidents, reported the circumstances which led to it taking place was predicted and, as a member of Mid Suffolk District Council's Joint Housing Board he remembered a categorical assurance being given by the District Council that the housing in question would not be allocated to inappropriate tenants. He added it is outrageous elderly people are put at risk and have to endure the consequences. He had also witnessed one of the other incidents and felt the response by the Police appeared disproportionate although, in view of the threat the Police faced, he understood how the situation escalated.

Cllr Darnell commented he is aware overt drug dealing is taking place in the town.

Cllr Lea said, with the town on the verge of a significant increase in population as a result of new housing development, if residents' current experiences reflect a trend, it needs to be stopped before the situation becomes irretrievable.

Cllr Stansfield proposed the Clerk present the concerns of the Town Council and the local community to the relevant authorities, seek clarification on the allocation of local authority

and housing association housing in sensitive locations and, ask what the authorities intend to do to mitigate the problem before it becomes irretrievable. Cllr Lea seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

- Community Payback Scheme – A team from CPS will be working to clear the overgrowth/pathway along The Drift on 15th/16th February
- Old Town Hall – deteriorating condition and reinstated road closure
- Future of the MSDC HQ Building Site – rationale for dismissing the Community Hub business case/use of the business case to support adequate provision in the redevelopment

Cllr Phillips said he is aware the Community Hub is not in scope of the contract Mid Suffolk District Council is working to. Cllr Stansfield confirmed the lead District Council Officer managing the future of the District Council's redevelopment sites in the town has simply said the Community Hub business case will not count now.

Cllr Stansfield said it is yet to be seen to what extent community facilities will be included in the District Council's redevelopment proposals but the business case for the Community Hub remains relevant and its reasoning and conclusions should be used by the community to lever the full scope of amenities into the District Council's proposals. He added many local people had worked long and hard in putting the Business Case together and the District Council should not be allowed to simply dismiss it.

Cllr Stansfield proposed the Clerk write to the District Council to request clarification of their position and also, to remind them of the significance of the business case for the community hub. Cllr Ward seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

- The Limes Hotel – Amendment to Licence

Cllr Carter reported, as he understood it, the business operating the Limes Hotel is in a delicate balance. He proposed Council support the licensees in their endeavour to amend their premises licence and send a representative to attend the Hearing on the amendment which due to take place towards the end of February.

The Clerk referred Councillors to guidance posted on the Home Office website relating to licensed premises. Understanding the process and implications of licensing of premises is complex and involves a number of public authorities. The Clerk advised Council that if it was concerned regarding the future viability of the Limes Hotel, that could be expressed to Mid Suffolk District Council's Licensing Officer as natural unease regarding an important building and business in the town, without expressing any potentially unfounded opinion on the application to amend the license.

Councillor Stansfield proposed Council follow the Clerk's advice. Cllr Lea seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

3. Correspondence to be noted:

- Email dated 30th January from Mid Suffolk District Council regarding the Councillors Register of Interests – all declarations will require a review
- Letter dated 1st February from the Professional Lead, Key Sites and Infrastructure, Mid Suffolk District Council regarding forthcoming Expenditure Policy meetings.

C021/18 SECTIONS.

C021/18/1 Finance/General Purposes

C021/18/1a 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.

C021/18/1b To receive a report from the Section Leader.

Cllr Morris presented Notes from the Finance & General Purposes Section meeting held on 6th February, which were tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book.

Cllr Morris referred Councillors to item 4 on the Notes, Consideration of the allocation of Grants and Donations.

Having declared an interest Cllrs Annis, Oakes, D Spurling, M Spurling and Stansfield temporarily withdrew from the meeting. Cllr Morris took the Chair.

Cllr Phillips proposed the adoption of allocation of Grants and Donations as recommended under item 4:

Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice Bureau	£1000
Needham Market Community Centre Mini Bus	£900
Needham Market Internet Café	£1000
Age UK	£100
Total	£3000

Cllr Lea seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

Cllr Lea proposed the adoption of a 'Town Mayor's Fund' as recommended under item 4. Cllr Phillips seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

Cllrs Annis, Oakes, D Spurling, M Spurling and Stansfield returned to the meeting. Cllr Stansfield resumed the Chair.

Cllr Morris proposed adoption of the Notes from the Finance & General Purposes Section meeting held on 6th February. Cllr Phillips seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

Cllr Darnell proposed, if necessary, the meeting be extended for 10 minutes after the normal 9:30pm finish time. Council agreed.

C021/18/2 Recreation & Sport

C021/18/2a To receive a report from the Section Leader.

Cllr Phillips had nothing to report

C021/18/3 Town Property and Services

C021/18/3a To receive a report from the Section Leader

Cllr Oakes had nothing to report.

C021/18/4 Newsletter and Communications

C021/18/4a To receive a report from the Section Leader

Cllr M Spurling had nothing to report.

C021/18/5 Planning.

Cllr M Spurling presented his report from the Planning Section meeting held on Monday 5th February. A copy of the report will be appended to the Minute Book.

C021/18/5a To receive Planning Decisions.

Cllr M Spurling reported the following planning decision 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.

Planning Permission has been Granted.

DC/17/03201 - Land Adjacent 96 Stowmarket Road - Outline Planning Application - All matters apart from access are reserved - Erection of 9 dwellings with garages. Construction of vehicular access; Provision of pedestrian link to rail underpass.

Planning Permission has been Granted.

C021/18/5b To consider Planning Applications

Cllr M Spurling reported the following planning applications had been received:

DC/18/00304 - 58 Stowmarket Road - Tree Preservation Order MS83 - Fell and removal of Cedar

Cllr M Spurling proposed support for approval of the application subject to the Mid Suffolk District Council Tree Officer agreeing with the work to be undertaken. Cllr Lea seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

DC/18/00293 - The Lion Inn 44 Ipswich Road - Notification of works to trees protected under TPO 242 – Trim 1no. Horse Chestnut at rear of the pub

Cllr M Spurling proposed support for approval of the application subject to the Mid Suffolk District Council Tree Officer agreeing with the work to be undertaken. Cllr Ward seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

DC/18/00230 - 21 Barretts Lane - Erection of single storey rear and two storey side extensions to include integral garage (following demolition of existing garage)

Cllr M Spurling proposed support for approval of the application. Cllr Phillips seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

DC/18/00256 – Bloomfields, Quinton Road - Amended design for changing room (previously approved within Planning Permission 0326/17) to incorporate the erection of a two storey detaching building incorporating changing rooms and spectator toilets at ground floor level and multi-use rooms at first floor level

Cllr M Spurling advised the Planning Section recommends refusal on the ground there is no Disability Access to most of the building. He referred to the following:

Planning and access for disabled people: a good practice guide

Sports facilities, arts and leisure buildings, hotel and tourist facilities

When considering proposals for sports facilities, arts and leisure buildings, hotel and tourist facilities, the Council will require that inclusive access is provided to all sections of the community, regardless of disability, age or gender. Further details can be found in the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on an Accessible and Inclusive Environment and in Sport England's design guidance, the

Arts Councils access standards, and in standards produced by the Holiday Care Service and the English Tourism Council.

Wheelchair access regulations UK have been put in place to stop discrimination against the disabled and the physically impaired. Since the [Disability discrimination act of 1995](#) many steps have been taken to ensure that wheelchair users can access all public buildings in the same way as the average person who doesn't suffer from mobility issues. Since 1999 all businesses in the UK have been told that they must make the necessary changes to their buildings to ensure that wheelchair users can access them without difficulty and since 2004 to adapt physical features. The changes that you must make to your building depend on the design of your building, on the amount of disruption it will cause to install ramps and access doors, and on many other factors. **All new public buildings in the UK must have [wheelchair access](#) in line with wheelchair access regulations UK**; owners of existing buildings can be fined.

Cllr M Spurling proposed Council object to the application. Cllr Phillips seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

DC/17/06166/68 - 60 High Street - Erection of a breeze block skin over existing extension. Removal of modern fencing and replacement with vertical boarded fencing with side hung doors. Creation of pedestrian opening in boundary flint wall and fit vertical weather boarded gate

Cllr M Spurling proposed support for approval of the application. Cllr Ward seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C021/18/5c To receive a report from the Section Leader.

Cllr M Spurling reported the Section will next meet on Monday 19th February 2018 in the Town Council Office at 7pm. Unless Section Members are informed by email of a cancellation.

C021/18/6 Highways, Lighting and Footpaths

C021/18/6a 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:

- Road Closure, The Causeway – update on the re-instated road closure which is likely to remain in place until 23rd February
- Fence, Barking Road – update on the progress of this Public Right of Way issue which will now be the subject of a formal Public Inquiry

C022/18 Questions under Standing Order 40.

There were no questions.

The Meeting closed at 9:40pm.

Chairman **Date**