

## **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 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2016 at 7:30pm.

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

**Apologies for Absence:**

Cllr D Campbell – Transport Delay

Cllr R Campbell – Unwell

Suffolk County Councillor Julia Truelove

**In Attendance:** Mid Suffolk District Councillor Wendy Marchant, two members of public and Town Clerk Kevin Hunter.

Cllr Stansfield proposed Council add an item to the meeting agenda, to be dealt with in Camera, that is with no press or public present, the proposal being made in accordance with the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and the Local Government Act 1972, Subsection 100 in relation to disclosure of financial information. Cllr Ward seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

**C142/16 To confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held 20<sup>th</sup> July 2016.**

The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2016 were accepted as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**C143/16 To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interest for Matters on the Agenda.**

Cllr BE Annis - Accounts for payment (Community Centre)

Cllr MG Norris – Planning Matters

Cllr KMN Oakes - Accounts for payment (Community Centre)

Cllr M Spurling - Accounts for payment (Elton House)

Cllr X Stansfield – Accounts for payment (Community Centre)

**C144/16 To receive reports from The County Councillor, District Councillors and to take questions from members of the public.**

County Councillor Julia Truelove had provided a report, which was tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book. It included reference to:

- Interim Arrangements, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils
- Flood Risk Management Project
- Footbridge between Crown Street and FP58 Creeting St Mary
- Wattisham Flying Station, Cocktail Party and Beating The Retreat Ceremony

Cllr Stansfield thanked Mr Gordon Crosby, who was present, for his interest and diligence in raising, pursuing and obtaining a successful resolution to the confirmation of the status of the footbridge between Crown Street and FP58 Creeting St Mary.

Cllr Lea said she could not agree with the reference included in County Councillor Truelove's report that Wattisham Flying Station is larger than Needham Market in terms of the number of those living and working at the base.

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:

- Office Accommodation for Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils
- Chief Executive Arrangements until a New Chief Executive is Appointed
- Swans at Needham Lake
- Food Health & Safety
- Golden Age Fair
- RBL Commemoration of the Somme Campaign
- Devolution

District Councillor Marchant added she had asked within the District Council why reports relating to the District Council's interest in the Needham Market Middle School site are confidential. The answer received is the reports contain information relating to the terms of a lease arrangement between Suffolk County Council and Mid Suffolk District Council and release of that information may have prejudiced the District Council's position.

Cllr Phillips asked whether the length of lease under negotiation is known. District Councillor Mike Norris commented, during his following up of a complaint from a resident regarding overgrowth from the Middle School grounds, he understood the District Council was negotiating a purchase of the built area of the Middle School site with the remaining playing field area being retained by Suffolk County Council.

District Councillor Marchant reported she had also enquired within Mid Suffolk District Council regarding whether there is any possibility that Council may apply its Compulsory Purchase Powers to resolve the ongoing issue of the former Car sales showroom, located in a prime position on Needham Market High Street, which has stood vacant and in disrepair for some time. The reply obtained is Mid Suffolk District Council Officers will look into the situation. Cllr Darnell said the Town Council's preference for the future of the site would be for redevelopment to provide an amenity for the town, such as a retail business, not merely further housing.

District Councillor Marchant referred to the commencement of the review of Ward Boundaries being undertaken by The Boundary Commission, the outcome of which will have no effect until the next pertinent election.

A member of the public present asked Council if it is aware of the poor condition of the vacant land parcel which sits behind residential properties in Chainhouse Road, Barking Road and School Street. There is substantial overgrowth and the pond, in particular, is stagnant and produces a foul odour. Cllr M Spurling advised that if the overgrowth and odour constituted health and safety plus environmental issues, these should be referred to Mid Suffolk District Council, as they possess the necessary powers to deal with such matters. Other Councillors empathised with the member of the public and it was recalled the parcel of land is superfluous following adjoining development, the company that owned it went into administration and, for many years it has simply been left to grow wild.

A member of public present (Mr Gordon Crosby, Member of the Needham Market Flood Risk Group) informed Council a report produced by The Environment Agency had been shared with the Needham Market Flood Risk Group (NMFRG) in October 2015 yet The Environment Agency is still months away from explaining their findings to the public. Concerns regarding content in the report had been fed back to The Environment Agency by the NMFRG but the Agency keep delaying providing information to the general public on what are critical matters. Cllr Phillips proposed Council ask The Environment Agency for a copy of their report. Cllr Lea seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

Cllr Annis referred Councillors to a report he made in the past to Council, which demonstrated the general and simplistic comments made by The Environment Agency, to date, in regard to the flood risk present in Needham Market, such as 'if the river is cleared the flow of water will improve'.

**C145/16 To receive a report of the activities of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on behalf of the Town.**

The Mayor reported attending:

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> July – Golden Age Fair held at Needham Market Community Centre

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> July – Wattisham Flying Station ‘Beating the Retreat’ Ceremony

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> July – Commemoration of the Somme Campaign event held at Needham Market Community Centre by the Royal British Legion

The Deputy Mayor was not present.

**C146/16 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. The report included notes from the meeting of the Group held on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> July. Those Councillors present had considered the updated Review of Retail Analysis of Needham Market, provided by Mid Suffolk District Council. Several items were subsequently identified to be taken forward, for example, issues such as the lack of local bed and breakfast style accommodation and, whether rents in the High Street are too high compared to other local areas.

Cllr Norris’s report also referred to a draft, again received from Mid Suffolk District Council, of a document for use as a ‘Needham Market Visitor Survey’. The content was discussed and it was agreed the Group would fully support the District Council in its endeavours to carry out the survey. A meeting has been arranged with a District Council Officer, for that purpose and also to discuss the updated Review of Retail Analysis document, to be held on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> August at 8:30am in the Town Council Office.

**C147/16 - To consider Mid Suffolk District Council’s lack of openness and transparency.**

Cllr Stansfield outlined some of the examples which have led to a need for Council to consider this escalating problem in its relationship with Mid Suffolk District Council. The examples highlighted the lack of consultation, openness and transparency which has become a regular feature attached to some significant issues affecting Needham Market, its residents and businesses. The most significant currently being the future of the Needham Market Middle School site.

Cllr Lea referred to the newspaper article which appeared in the 13<sup>th</sup> July edition of the East Anglian Daily Times, in which the new Leader of Mid Suffolk District Council is quoted as having said “we keep talking with people and we want to take them with us”.

Councillors made various comments on the catalogue of issues which directly contradicted the statement of ambition made by the new Leader of the District Council. Cllr Stansfield summarised by describing the District Council as, at best opaque and, hoped the statement from the new Leader would quickly translate into reality. If that were not to be the case, Cllr Stansfield suggested the Town Council should consider mobilising the local community, on the basis of its clear mistrust and frustration at not being provided with information on important matters, to formally challenge the District Council’s approach.

**C148/16 - To receive a report on the Needham Market Institute and Club.**

Cllr Phillips, in his capacity as the Town Council’s nominated Trustee of the Needham Market Institute and Club, presented Minutes from the meeting of Trustees held 19<sup>th</sup> July, a copy of which was tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book.

The Minutes included an update on the Trustees management of accounts, sale of the Institute building and various matters relating to the disposal of peripheral goods that remain in the Institute building.

**C149/16 - To agree road names for the Needham Chalk Quarry development.**

In the absence of Cllr R Campbell, Cllr Stansfield referred Councillors to the Minutes from the Planning Section meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> August. The Section had, as requested by Council, considered the opportunity to submit suggested road names to Mid Suffolk District Council. The Section concluded the list of names associated with the historical operation of the site as a Chalk Quarry, provided by Cllr Annis, should be submitted and, a plaque or similar be installed on the development site when building works are finished, to carry a summary of the history of the site such that site residents will be aware of the significance of their road names.

Cllr Stansfield thanked Councillors who had made other suggestions, in particular Cllr D Campbell who had drawn up a list of road names concomitant with the history of Needham Market as a 'Wool Town'. Councillors agreed Cllr D Campbell's list should be retained for a future road naming opportunity.

Cllr Stansfield proposed the list submitted by Cllr Annis, as endorsed by the Planning Section, be submitted to Mid Suffolk District Council. Cllr Phillips seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

### **C150/16 - To receive a report from the 2<sup>nd</sup> August Suffolk Association of Local Councils meeting.**

Cllr Lea presented Notes from the meeting, a copy of which was tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book. The meeting had focussed on a presentation on the Norfolk/Suffolk Devolution Deal which was delivered by the Leader of Babergh District Council, the Chief Executive of Ipswich Borough Council and an officer from Suffolk County Council.

Cllr Lea said she had detected a high level of cynicism amongst the local council representatives present that, with 12 out of the relevant 16 Principal Authorities across Norfolk and Suffolk supporting the proposal, despite current consultation the 'Deal' was effectively done.

Cllr Phillips asked, if the 'Deal' results in the investiture of a new mayor, would each mayoral term be 4 years. Cllr Lea confirmed that would be the case.

Cllr Ward expressed his concern that a new higher tier of Local Government would enhance the status of cities and larger towns at the expense of Local Council's which would be listened to even less than they are now.

Cllr Annis commented, whilst he agreed in principle with what the 'Deal' sought to achieve, surely the role of the lower tier of the Principal Authorities should be challenged to establish whether continuation of District and Borough Councils is really necessary or desirable.

Cllr Lea encouraged Councillors to access information posted on the Norfolk/Suffolk Devolution website in preparation for the debate on Council's formal response to consultation, which will take place at Council's 17<sup>th</sup> August meeting.

### **C151/16 Clerk's Report and Correspondence to be noted.**

#### *1. Actions from Town Council Meeting 20.07.16:*

#### **C135/16 – Correspondence to MSDC regarding the Regal Theatre, Stowmarket Regeneration Project not yet actioned**

The Clerk reported, following Council's 20<sup>th</sup> July meeting, he did not feel sufficiently briefed to submit a view from Council, to Mid Suffolk District Council, on the District Council's decision to fund 50% of the cost of a feasibility exercise on the Regeneration Project. The Clerk advised Councillors the report to the District Council's Executive Committee meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2016, at which the decision was taken, raised a number of questions, for

example, why were the full range of options not included in the report, which included, supported and proposed only a single option. In the context of the percentage contribution and substantial amount of funding involved (50% of an estimated £400,000 to £480,000) it appears incongruous the purpose of an options appraisal, having been considered by Stowmarket Town Council, was not subsequently fully considered by the District Council's Executive. Whilst the report purported the Regeneration Project (estimated cost £4m) would increase investment confidence and therefore likely to attract further investment in Stowmarket, the evidence as to why such a conclusion should be drawn was entirely lacking. The report also made it clear the Project will have to rely on public funding which in itself suggests there is an informed lack of appetite from the private sector for this type of highly speculative investment. Council endorsed the Clerk's assessment of the report (Cllr Norris abstained from giving a view).

**C135/16** – The Suffolk Constabulary website (under the areas covered by individual Safer Neighbourhood Teams) includes access to maps which identify the locations of reported crime and associated details

**C138/16** – Item regarding road names for the Needham Chalk Quarry development is on the meeting agenda

**C139/16** - Item regarding MSDC's openness and transparency is on the meeting agenda

**C139/16** - Item regarding the Suffolk/Norfolk Devolution Deal will be on Council's 17<sup>th</sup> August meeting agenda

## 2. *Issues:*

- Drug Misuse – this is now an issue in the town. One of the locations this takes place is around the Pavilion at Crowley Park. The Police are aware and working on information received.

Cllr Annis said he was pleased to have seen PSCO Matt Brown in the town recently and this had reminded him of the potential for communities to fund 'their own' Police presence. The Clerk was requested to look into the latest position on that issue.

- Suffolk Year of Walking, May 2016 to April 2019 – details received from Communities and Public Access, Mid Suffolk District Council regarding its offer for parishes to apply for a trained walk leader to lead a walk in their local area (free of charge but limited to one walk per Ward and also requires a commitment to provide at least two people who are willing to help out with the walk on the day)

## 3. *Correspondence to be noted:*

- Email dated 26<sup>th</sup> July giving notice nominations are now open for the Community Action Suffolk Awards 2016 which recognise the volunteers, communities and young people making an impact on the lives of people in Suffolk (closing date Friday 12<sup>th</sup> August)

- Letter dated 28<sup>th</sup> July received from Buckingham Palace regarding the Town Council's correspondence to HM The Queen on the occasion of her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday (see Correspondence Folder)
- Email dated 3<sup>rd</sup> August received from SALC providing information on public meetings arranged by the Suffolk PCC and Suffolk's Chief Constable to provide an update on local policing including an opportunity for Q&A (see details in Correspondence Folder)

## **C152/16 SECTIONS.**

### **C152/16/1 Finance/General Purposes**

#### **C152/16/1a 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 the accounts for payment be adopted. Cllr Ward seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

#### **C152/16/1b To receive a report from the Section Leader**

Cllr Annis presented his report, which was tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book. It included details of an opportunity to provide a further defibrillator in the town which he has pursued. The defibrillator would be installed, in a secure box, on the front wall of the Community Centre. The defibrillator can be obtained free of charge and installation will cost around £1,000. He suggested the Town Council may wish to fund the one-off installation charge and budget for £1,200 accordingly. Cllr Annis suggested Council make a decision on the one-off installation cost at its next meeting (17<sup>th</sup> August). Council agreed.

### **C152/16/2 Recreation & Sport**

#### **C152/16/2a To receive a report from the Section Leader.**

There was no report.

### **C152/16/3 Town Property and Services**

#### **C152/16/3a To receive a report from the Section Leader**

Cllr Oakes reported she is due to meet with Christchurch Elders to discuss and agree the approach to the lighting of the holly tree at the front of the church over the coming Christmas period.

Cllr Oakes reported she has received two quotations for the supply of Christmas Trees/Lights and is pursuing a third quotation. Once received the Section will meet to discuss the options available.

### **C152/16/4 Newsletter and Communications**

#### **C152/16/4a To receive a report from the Section Leader**

There was no report.

### **C152/16/5 Planning.**

In the absence of Cllr R Campbell, Cllr Stansfield presented Minutes from the Planning Section meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> August, which were tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book.

#### **C152/16/5a To receive Planning Decisions.**

Cllr Stansfield reported no following planning decisions had been received.

#### **C152/16/5b To consider Planning Applications**

Cllr Stansfield reported the following planning application had been received:

