

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 21st March 2018 at 7:30pm.

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

Apologies for Absence:

Cllr BE Annis – Work Commitment
Cllr I Mason – Holiday
Cllr A Morris - Work Commitment

District Councillor Wendy Marchant

In Attendance: County Councillor Anne Whybrow, two members of public and the Town Clerk.

C041/18 To confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held 7th March 2018.

The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held Wednesday 7th March 2018 were accepted, with a minor non-material amendment, as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

C042/18 To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interest for Matters on the Agenda.

Cllr R Campbell - Planning (Planning Application DC/17/05549)
Cllr MG Norris – Accounts for Payment (Travelling Expenses)
Cllr KMN Oakes - Accounts for Payment (Community Centre Payment)
Cllr M Spurling - Accounts for Payment (Community Centre Payment)
Cllr X Stansfield - Accounts for Payment and Planning (Community Centre Payment and Planning Application DC/17/05549)

C043/18 To receive reports from The County Councillor, District Councillors and, to take questions from members of the public.

County Councillor Whybrow gave a brief verbal report, which referred to the need for parents to apply for free school meals (as part of the roll out of Universal Credit), the deadline for which is the end of March. If an application is successful, the pupil's school will receive additional funding, called Pupil Premium, which can be used to support activities at the school. Under Pupil Premium rules a school continues to receive the funding for six years after the pupil ceases to be eligible or has changed school.

Cllr Lea commented the deadline for parents to act is ridiculously close and asked, is the County Council not under an obligation to ensure adequate information and time is provided? Cllr Phillips said he is aware no prior notice of the need for parents to act has been provided and he added it begs belief schools continue to receive Pupil Premium funding for many years after eligible pupils have long departed.

Cllr Carter agreed to update the Town Council's website and social media platforms, with relevant information for parents, as quickly as possible.

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

- Improved Access to Needham Market Railway Station – information on the visit to meet the Minister for Transport and the work involved in taking forward the campaign
- Planning Application for 64 Houses off Stowmarket Road – details from the Mid Suffolk District Council Planning Committee meeting that resolved to unanimously approve the application

Cllr Phillips commented he is aware Babergh District Council tenants receive what they view as a 'two-week rent-free period' annually although this makes no difference to the actual total annual rent

amount they pay. Should Babergh District Council and Mid Suffolk District Council merge, the annual Council property rents would be payable by both Council's tenants over the full 52-week cycle and he suggested this may be dissuading Babergh Council tenants from supporting the merger.

Cllr Ward asked whether the cost of the Mid Suffolk District Council move from its former office headquarters in Needham Market to Endeavour House, Ipswich is known? District Councillor Norris said the cost should be shown within the District Council's end of year outturn accounts and he will confirm when they are available. Cllr Lea said in any normal circumstances when a property move is undertaken, the cost of the exercise would be known in advance.

Cllr M Spurling said he felt it would be entirely inappropriate should funding from S106 Developer Contributions be allocated to improving access to Needham Market Railway Station as Network Rail should pay for any necessary alteration/adaption to their property.

A member of public present, referring to the Gipsy Lane railway crossing closure project, reported nothing Network Rail is currently focussed on is compatible with the outcomes from the public consultations they held. Suffolk County Council has coerced Network Rail, who propose a straightforward footpath diversion solution, into potentially funding a cycle path. He added, a recent Freedom of Information enquiry has revealed, before any work has commenced on the ground, the cost of consultants engaged in the project is, so far, £1.3m.

Cllr Stansfield summarised the Town Council's support for the project which has been throughout to achieve a re-routing of the Gipsy Lane footpath, allowing the existing over-rail crossing to be closed, thus avoiding the possibility of further tragic incidents happening on the crossing. There has been no consultation on the part of Suffolk County Council, either with the Town Council or the public, regarding the creation of a cycle path which will intrude further on private property. A straight forward footpath re-routing solution has received planning permission and should be implemented immediately.

Cllr Darnell asked where Suffolk County Council wanted the cycle path route to run to/from. Cllr Stansfield said the County Council proposal is to connect Stowmarket Road with Jacks Green, Creeting St Mary, along an existing footpath route which will require considerable investment to upgrade. There is no local evidence to suggest a cycle path is needed or desirable.

The other member of the public present, as a local representative on the Gipsy Lane Crossing Closure Design Panel, reported the footpath re-routing that has planning permission includes passing under a railway culvert which does not meet Suffolk County Council's footpath standards. Suffolk County Council has agreed a payoff with Network Rail which will result in the footpath standards being set aside so long as Network Rail funds the upgrade of the footpath to a cycle path. He added that at Design Panel meetings, Suffolk County Council had introduced the proposal for upgrading the footpath to a cycle path as a future ambition but it is now clear they are aiming to have it in place straight away.

Cllr Stansfield proposed a letter be sent to the appropriate Suffolk County Council Service Portfolio Holder expressing the Town Council's utter dismay and frustration at the approach currently being taken by the County Council. Cllr Lea seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C044/18 To receive a report of the activities of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on behalf of the Town.

The Mayor reported attending:

Sunday 18th March – Choral Evensong for the Suffolk Justice Service at St Edmundsbury Cathedral.

The Deputy Mayor reported attending:

Sunday 18th March – Choral Evensong for the Suffolk Justice Service at St Edmundsbury Cathedral.

C045/18 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 referred to a change of date for the meeting of the Working Group that will discuss the initial output received from AECOM on the concept of the relief road for Needham Market. The Working Group meeting will now take place on Thursday 29th March at 10am in the Town Council Office. All Councillors are welcome to attend.

C046/18 To receive a report on the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation

The Clerk presented his report, which was tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book.

Cllr Stansfield proposed Council adopt the report. Cllr Darnell seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C047/18 To receive a report from the meeting of the Needham Market Institute Trustees held 13th March

Cllr Phillips tabled Minutes from the meeting of the Needham Market Institute Trustees held on 13th March. Cllr Phillips is the Town Council's representative Trustee and he had produced the Minutes.

The Minutes confirmed the Institute building is close to the point of sale.

The Trustees had referred in the meeting to the letter sent to them, by the Town Council, on 8th March. The Chairman of the Trustees has instructed the Solicitor acting in relation to the sale of the Institute building, to reply to the Town Council's letter.

The Clerk reminded Councillors of the terms put to the Trustees when the Town Council loaned funds with which the Trustees paid for inescapable costs on and following closure of the Needham Market Institute. Councillors concurred there is no indication given by the Trustees the terms of the loan are going to be abided by.

The Clerk recommended Council, in the absence of a reply to the letter sent to the Trustees on 13th March, withdraw its representation on the Trustees of the Institute, in view of the current and continuing obligations and liabilities attached to the role of each Trustee.

The Clerk further advised it may be necessary, in the public interest, for there to be a challenge to the process the Trustees appear to be putting in place for dispersal of funds being realised from the sale of a substantial community asset.

Cllr Stansfield proposed Council adopt the recommendation and advice of the Clerk and for the Clerk to make further enquiries into the situation, as felt necessary. Cllr Carter seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

Cllr Phillips reported that no meeting of the Trustees had taken place for some considerable time prior to him prompting the 13th March meeting and, he had, as in the past, taken notes and produced Minutes of the meeting.

Councillors thanked Cllr Phillips for his effort whilst a Trustee.

C048/18 Clerk's Report and Correspondence to be noted.

1. Actions from Town Council Meeting 07.02.18 and 07.03.18:

C016/18 – Letter sent to Chairman of NM Institute Trustees

C020/18 – Email sent to Mid Suffolk District Council on 7th March regarding Quinton Road incidents and raising questions on the approach to housing allocation in the town

2. Issues:

- Mid Suffolk District Council's Proposals for its Former Office Headquarters Site – Public engagement events arranged for 4th and 10th April.
- Quinton Road and other Housing Issues – Update

Cllr Phillips reported on a discussion he had held with the Mid Suffolk District Council Housing Officer and felt he had not received a full and/or satisfactory response to questions relating to the upset and anger Needham Market residents have expressed in relation to the Quinton Road and other Council Housing issues which had occurred in the town.

- Mobile Skatepark – request to site a mobile skatepark on Crowley Park during the Easter school holiday

Cllr Lea said, whilst not objecting to the setting up of a temporary skate park, as requested, Council should remain mindful of a survey of residents conducted some years ago that had received an almost unanimous rejection of the idea of locating a skate park on Crowley Park.

Cllr Phillips proposed the request be acceded to. Cllr Carter seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

- Electoral Review of Mid Suffolk – The Local Government Boundary Commission has published and is consulting on new draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Mid Suffolk District Council. The recommendations can be viewed at www.lgbce.org.uk. The consultation closes on 30th April 2018.

Cllr Carter agreed to publicise the consultation on the Town Council's website and social media platforms.

- Remembrance Service 2018 – Meeting with Reverends and RBL scheduled for 16th April

3. Correspondence to be noted:

- Letter received 5th March 2018 from The Fire Fighters Charity requesting financial support, either directly or via a fundraising event
- Email 13th March from PCSO Karen Murton introducing herself as being recently assigned to a geographical area which includes Needham Market (rural East of the Mid Suffolk Sector – based at Stowmarket)
- Letter received 16th March from the Ashburnham Over-60's Club requesting they be considered for a funding donation
- Letter received 19th March from the East Anglia Children's Hospices requesting support, both financial and in raising awareness of the need for new volunteers

C049/18 SECTIONS.

C049/18/1 Finance/General Purposes

C049/18/1a Accounts for Payment and Confirmation.

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

Cllr Lea proposed the accounts for payment be adopted. Cllr Darnell seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C049/18/1b To receive a report from the Section Leader.

There was no report.

C049/18/2 Recreation & Sport

C049/18/2a To receive a report from the Section Leader.

There was no report.

C049/18/3 Town Property and Services

C049/18/3a To receive a report from the Section Leader

There was no report.

C049/18/4 Newsletter and Communications

C049/18/4a To receive a report from the Section Leader

Cllr M Spurling reported a Section meeting will be held on Tuesday 3rd April, in the Town Council Office, immediately following on from the Planning Section meeting scheduled that evening.

C049/18/5 Planning.

Cllr M Spurling reported a Planning Section meeting had not been held on Monday 19th March due to lack of business.

C049/18/5a To receive Planning Decisions.

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

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

Planning Permission has been granted.

C049/18/5b To consider Planning Applications

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

DC/18/01079 - Hallgarth House 137 High Street - Application for Listed Building Consent. New hand rails to front terrace.

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

C049/18/5c To receive a report from the Section Leader.

Cllr M Spurling reported the Section will next meet on Tuesday 3rd April in the Town Council Office at 7pm. Unless Section Members are informed by email of a cancellation.

C049/18/6 Highways, Lighting and Footpaths

C049/18/6a 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 referred to:

Fence, Barking Road.

It has been confirmed by the SCC Rights of Way Officer dealing with this case that a Public Inquiry will be held on 18th and 19th September at the Needham Market Internet Café, the Community Centre not being available on those dates. The Rights of Way Officer will write to all those who completed user evidence forms relating to the route from Barking Road to Hargrave Avenue, urging them to attend and speak at the Public Inquiry.

Consultation on Suffolk Parking Management Strategy.

