

## **NEEDHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES** of the virtual meeting of the NEEDHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL held on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 7:30pm.

**Present:** Cllr S Phillips (In the Chair), Councillors: BE Annis, R Darnell, J Kett, JE Lea, I Mason, MG Norris, M O'Shea, M Ost, J Reardon, L Rix, X Stansfield and P Wright.

**Apologies for Absence:**

None.

**In Attendance:** Suffolk County Councillor Kay Oakes, Mid Suffolk District Councillors Mike Norris and Steve Phillips and the Town Clerk.

**C001/21 To confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held 21<sup>st</sup> October 2020.**

The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2020 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

**C002/21 To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interest for Matters on the Agenda.**

Cllr BE Annis – Accounts for Payment (Community Centre)

Cllr I Mason – Agenda Item 8 and Planning (DC/20/05046)

Cllr MG Norris – Planning Matters

Cllr X Stansfield – Accounts for Payment (Community Centre)

Councillors agreed to move item 8 on the agenda to last business of the meeting.

**C003/21 To receive reports from the County Councillor, District Councillors and to take questions from members of the public**

Suffolk County Councillor Kay Oakes presented her report, which had been circulated to Councillors, and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book. The report headlines were:

- As of Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January, Suffolk is in line with national Covid-19 Restrictions – Moving into a national lockdown. Testing capacity has increased in response to demand.
- Support Payments available for those told to self-isolate on low incomes.
- Suffolk 2020 fund projects to deliver over £2.5m in new community-focused initiatives across the county.
- Help shape guidance for new housing developments in Suffolk.
- Green light given for Council's new housing joint venture company.

County Councillor Oakes further reported:

- Work on converting the music room building on the former Needham Market Middle School development site has started. It is expected the conversion will be completed July this year with fitting out to allow it to become operational, as the Town Library, from September/October.
- A detailed work schedule for the repainting of Badley Bridge railings has been produced with work due to commence in April. The cost of the project is circa £21,000 and is to be paid for out of County Councillor Oakes' Locality Budget.
- The suggested extension of parking limit times in parts of the town to create consistency would create the need for a Traffic Regulation Order which would cost £5,000-£8,000. Prior to this, a town wide review would be required along with a comprehensive consultation taking around 8 to 9 months to complete. County Councillor Oakes said she would be unable to fund taking this forward.

Cllr Norris thanked County Councillor Oakes for her progress on the Badley Bridge repainting project whilst expressing concern it will cost £21,000 for the works to be undertaken.

Cllr Phillips asked County Councillor Oakes if she could forward the County Council's paperwork on the parking review item to Cllr Norris to enable the Highways, Lighting & Footpaths Section to look at the detail.

Cllr Annis asked if any progress had been possible in relation to the potential for the siting of electric car charging facilities at the Community Centre. County Councillor Oakes said she had registered the Town Council's interest within Suffolk County Council and will report back to the Town Council accordingly.

District Councillor Steve Phillips referred to the following District Councillors' report which had been circulated to Councillors, and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book:

#### **COVID-19: SUPPORT PAYMENTS AVAILABLE FOR THOSE TOLD TO SELF-ISOLATE ON LOW INCOMES.**

More residents on low incomes or benefits can now get financial help if they are told to self-isolate due to COVID-19 as Suffolk councils extend support payments to help more people. Previously Test and Trace Support payments could only be given to people meeting certain criteria, including on benefits. Now Councils across Suffolk have extended this, using their discretion, to help those on low incomes but not on benefits.

Councils across Suffolk are helping administer the Government grant scheme to help people remain at home and do their bit to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Details about the Test and Trace Support Payments can be found on District and Borough Council websites and how to apply for it. This is part of a range of measures that councils across Suffolk have introduced to support communities and businesses during the coronavirus pandemic, which includes the new Suffolk Support and Advice Service phoneline to help those facing financial difficulty. If you have been contacted by NHS Test and Trace and told to self-isolate on or after 28 September 2020, you are under a legal obligation to do so, and could be eligible for a £500 Test and Trace Support Payment.

**COUNCILS LOOK TO SLASH FLEET EMISSIONS:** Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils are considering proposals to cut their fleet's carbon emissions by up to 90% – supporting the councils' carbon neutral aims, by moving their vehicle fleet to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO). The proposals form a major step in the councils' Carbon Reduction Management Plan, which sets out how net zero carbon emissions aim to be achieved by 2030. If approved, the move would see a significant reduction in pollutant emissions for the fleet, including up to a 90% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub>. It would also support a circular economy, as the HVO fuel is produced from sustainable feedstock, including waste cooking oil. Currently, the councils' vehicle fleet represents 26% of the councils' total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, approximately 880 tonnes per year. The fleet includes the councils' 35 waste lorries, as well as some vehicles used by the public realm and housing services. Moving to the new fuel will initially cost around £50k per council. An estimated further £56 - £97k per year, per council, over the next three years, will also need to be agreed to cover fuel costs. However, by using HVO, lower maintenance costs and longer engine life for the vehicles are expected.

**LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION FOR 2021!:** The new look Regal Theatre in Stowmarket is starting to take shape with the construction of two additional auditoria and a new café area in recent months. The Regal is benefiting from a £3.6m investment including a comprehensive expansion and refurbishment programme which will see it boast three modern cinema screens, improved audio-visual experience, as well as a new front of house, café and bar area. Works are also being undertaken to restore and preserve many of the original features of the existing building built in 1936. Despite the coronavirus pandemic, the project managers, Northmores, and the main contractor Mixbrow, have maintained progress on site with a significant proportion of the structures, electrics and utilities having now been installed. The final elements of the project including new seating, cinema screens and interior design features are due to be completed early in 2021. The Regal Theatre Project, being led by Stowmarket Town Council and Mid Suffolk District Council, will be a key attraction forming part of a wider vision for the development of Stowmarket. The project and the wider vision seeks to attract more visitors to Stowmarket who can enjoy the shopping, leisure activities, bars and restaurants on offer in the town.

**GREEN LIGHT FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES HUB FUNDING:** Mid Suffolk District Council recently approved £431,740 in funding from housing growth to progress plans for a shared

Emergency Services Hub in Stowmarket – paving the way for collaborative working and enhanced 999 services.

**RESIDENTS IN BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK ARE SET TO BENEFIT FOLLOWING RECENT GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS ABOUT ITS GREEN HOMES GRANTS:** The Green Homes scheme, which is designed to help make homes more energy efficient, offers vouchers to households to get energy saving work done, and also invites councils to bid for funding to run home energy efficiency projects. A Suffolk consortium bid, including Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils, has been awarded over £1 million from the Department of Business Energy and Industry for five projects to be installed by 31 March 2021.

**C004/21 To receive a report of the activities of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on behalf of the Town.**

There was no activity to report.

**C005/21 To receive a report from the Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.**

The Clerk confirmed to Council the Statutory Consultation required under Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, which commenced on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020, continues until 4pm on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

**C006/21 To confirm the Annual Budget and agree the Council Tax Precept for 2021/22.**

Cllr Annis referred Councillors to the Notes from the meeting of the Finance and Governance Section held 12<sup>th</sup> January 2021, which had been circulated. The Notes referred to Council's Annual Budget for 2021/22, which has been set at £127,200. The associated paperwork circulated included a graduated list of options varied by percentage increase on the 2020/21 Band D Council Tax amount. Option 2 on the list is a 3% increase on the 2020/21 Band D Council Tax amount which would result in an increase from £77.58 (20/21) to £79.91 (21/22). The Clerk referred Councillors to the impact of the options on the Council's reserve fund which remains in net deficit from 2015/16. There was additional advice given on the weekly cost to Band D taxpayers of each option.

Cllr Annis proposed Council approve option 2 and set a Council Tax Band D amount of £79.91 for 2021/22, resulting in a precept amount of £128,484.71 allowing a positive transfer to Council's reserve fund of £1,284.71. Cllr Lea seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

**C007/21 To consider the requirement of s.85 Local Government Act 1972 (6-month Rule for Councillors attendance at Council Meetings).**

This item was taken as the final business of the meeting prior to Questions under Standing Order 40. Cllr Mason had declared an interest in this item and left the meeting before it was addressed.

The Clerk referred Councillors to the terms of s.85 Local Government Act 1972.

Councillors acknowledged the provisions of s.85 Local Government Act 1972 and agreed the item should remain on Council's meeting agendas for the time being.

**C008/21 Clerk's Report and Correspondence to be noted.**

There was no report.

**C009/21 SECTIONS**

**C009/21/1 Finance and Governance**

**C009/21/1a 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 Norris proposed adoption of the accounts. Cllr O'Shea seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

**C009/21/1b To receive a report from the Section Leader**

Cllr Annis referred Councillors to the Notes from the Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> January meeting of the Finance & Governance Section, which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Cllr Annis proposed Council adopt the Notes. Cllr Mason seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

### **C009/21/2 Recreation & Sport**

#### **C009/21/2a To receive a report from the Section Leader**

There was no report.

Cllr Stansfield thanked Cllr Phillips for pursuing the outstanding s.106 funding issues with Mid Suffolk District Council and at long last getting a positive response.

### **C009/21/3 Town Property and Services**

#### **C009/21/3a To receive a report from the Section Leader**

Cllr Lea presented her following report, which had been circulated prior to the meeting:

It has not been possible for a meeting to be held during the past months, but there has been some activity.

- 1) Christmas Trees: My thanks to the Clerk and those Councillors who assisted with the erection of the trees. The lights were turned off at the appropriate time, but the trees will remain in situ and will be removed at a date yet to be arranged. At some time during the next few months the lights will be removed from the trees, checked and put back on the trees in a more appropriate way.
- 2) Toilets: The Town Clerk has ensured that the car park was rearranged to allow full parking facilities. A contractor has been employed to fence off the rear of the building with an access gate.
- 3) Public Realm area – Jubilee Crescent: Some work, originally on the Town Warden's list, has been carried out by a local contractor. The car park area has been tidied up and further work will be carried out in the area at the rear of the site in the Spring.
- 4) Community Caretakers: Both are continuing their work around the town and are doing an excellent job keeping the town tidy and in good order.
- 5) Vandalism: There was some vandalism in the Public Realm area during the Christmas period. Both litter bins beside the monolith were tipped over and litter thrown about. Both black outers were initially missing, but one was subsequently recovered from the building site. The other bin was uprooted entirely, and the inner bin and base have now been moved to the compound in Crowley Park. The flag was pulled from the flagpole and the attachments vandalized. The flag itself has been recovered and is now clean and safe in the Town Council office.
- 6) Town Signs: It is good news that the contractor employed to complete the refurbishment of the signs delivered them to the Crowley Park container on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> January and put all the parts together. They are now ready for installation by Suffolk County Council. The signs look really excellent.

I am grateful to our Clerk for ensuring that work around the town is still being carried out.

Cllr Lea added the public seat on Barking Road, which has had to be dismantled due to its poor condition, is to be replaced with one made from recycled material.

Cllr Lea expressed thanks to the Council's Community Caretakers who have continued with their duties throughout the COVID-19 period.

### **C009/21/4 Newsletter and Communications**

#### **C009/21/4a To receive a report from the Section Leader**

Cllr Reardon reported he is having difficulty moving forward with the redesign of the current Town Council website and he will be calling a Section meeting to discuss the issues involved and potential options.

Cllr Annis asked if there was any prospect of a Newsletter being produced for March. The Clerk said the restarting of Newsletter production will depend on the COVID-19 situation.

#### **C009/21/5 Planning**

Cllr O'Shea confirmed he continues to manage, in consultation with Planning Section Members, planning notices received. He presented his report that had been circulated prior to the meeting.

#### **C009/21/5a Planning Decisions and other Notices received**

Cllr O'Shea reported the following Decision Notices had been received:

##### **DC/20/04643 - Scout Hut end of Crown Street - Replacement and enlarged building.**

Planning Permission Granted

##### **DC/20/04745 - 7 Foxglove Avenue – Single storey rear extension and cladding of first floor to existing house.**

Planning Permission Granted

##### **DC/20/05054 - Old Schoolhouse, 2 High Street - Formation of internal partition.**

Listed Building Consent granted.

##### **DC/20/04130 - MSDC Former Offices, Car Park south of Hurstlea Road - Site Remediation.**

Application Withdrawn.

##### **DC/20/05181 - Poppy House, 30 High Street - Amendments to DC/20/01181.**

Details as noted on Decision Notice:

For the addition of a window on the south elevation at first floor in lieu of the current approved 'false window', two velux roof lights on the north elevation, addition of a door on the north elevation.

Alterations to the roof of the main dwelling by omitting the flat roof and adding a ridge (resultant in a reduced ridge height) together with the alteration of the roof lights on the flat roof single storey element as shown on Drawing Number 01 Rev K and 16 Rev B received on 17 November 2020.

This change will not materially affect any neighbouring amenity, or the use or scale of the proposal. As a result, the non-material amendment is considered acceptable.

It is noted that MSDC consults the Town Council on full applications for Planning Permission or Listed Building Consent but when it comes to revisions to the approved design, they make an officer decision without any external consultation. Matters like addition of a window opening and an external door could affect neighbouring amenities, but it seems left to the Planning Officer to make their own decision.

Cllr Phillips reported the District Council is reviewing its policy on those consultations which are currently not sent to towns/parishes.

#### **C009/21/5b Planning Applications Received**

Cllr O'Shea reported the following Planning Applications and Planning Notices had been received:

##### **SN/20/00533. New Street Naming Request. The former MSDC site S.W. Hurstlea Road.**

Following debate Councillors agreed the following street names should be submitted:

The Dip, Horsepond (plus road/close etc. as appropriate), the name of the last horse to sue the horsepond facility that was present on the development site.

##### **Sunnica Energy Farm: Cambridge. Statutory Consultation Notice.**

Cllr Ost suggested the following response: Although this application is outside the Town Council's area, my comment would be to welcome it as a way to reduce our energy dependency on Fossil Fuels.

Cllr O'Shea proposed the sending of the suggested comment in response to the consultation. Cllr Stansfield seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

##### **DC/20/05084 Lodge at Getford Barn.**

Needham Market Town Council has objected to the application on the grounds that the building was originally permitted as temporary accommodation only whilst constructing the main barn, full permission was then granted as a small holiday house and now permission is sought for a larger permanent residence. If permission is granted it may well form a precedence for other similar applications and permissions to be granted.

**DC/20/05629 Gateway House, Ipswich Road - Erection of high-level container with stairs and 2 portacabins.**

The Section had raised no objection to the application and a response had been submitted accordingly.

**SN/20/00549 New Street Naming Request. Former Needham Market Middle School site.**

Council agreed street name nominations are to be sent to Cllr O'Shea and final choice and submission would be managed prior to the 10<sup>th</sup> February deadline.

**DC/21/00023 74A High Street - Change of Use from Commercial A3 to Residential C3.**

The Section considered the application would lead to a loss of an amenity to the town and once used as residential it will likely never revert to a shop/commercial use and that is one more loss of High Street business activity.

Cllr O'Shea proposed Council object to the application on the above grounds. Cllr Stansfield seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal. Cllr Lea abstained from the vote.

**DC/21/00190 The Granary Barn, High Street - Works to Trees in a Conservation Area, crown reduction of beech tree.**

Cllr O'Shea proposed Council support approval of the application on condition the Mid Suffolk District Council Tree Officer is satisfied with the proposed works. Cllr Darnell seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

Cllr Mason left the meeting.

**DC/20/05046 - Land On The North West Side Of Barking Road Needham Market - Application for Outline Planning Permission (some matters reserved, access to be considered). Town and Country Planning Act 1990. - Erection of 279 No. dwellings (including 100 affordable dwellings) and access.**

A planning consultant has been engaged to draw up a draft submission document. The document has been received and modified to final submission format. The final format document had been circulated to Councillors.

Cllr O'Shea proposed Council object to the application and submit the final submission document (with minor amendment) to Mid Suffolk District Council. Cllr Lea seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

**C009/21/5c Planning Report**

Cllr O'Shea reported the Planning Section will continue to manage its consideration of planning matters, as it has done during the COVID-19 period, until further notice.

**C009/21/6 Highways, Lighting and Footpaths**

**C009/21/6a To receive a report from the Section Leader**

Cllr Norris referred to the inconsistencies in the parking regulations and signage currently in place in the centre of the town and he is to liaise with County Councillor Oakes with the aim of tidying up the issues this presents.

Cllr Lea raised the frequency of short-term road closures that happen in the town without formal notice. Cllr Norris explained immediate closures are available to authorities such as Anglian Water when circumstances demand it.

Cllr Norris reported Gipping Construction, who are undertaking the former Needham Market Middle School redevelopment, had helpfully agreed to set up a warning system which will notify residents in the vicinity when construction vehicle movements render roads impassable.

**C010/21 Questions under Standing Order 40.**

There were no questions.

**The Meeting closed at 8:47pm.**

**Chairman .....**      **Date .....**