

NEEDHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the NEEDHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL held in Needham Market Community Centre on Wednesday 18th January 2023 at 7:30pm.

Present: Cllr J Lea (In the Chair), Councillors: BE Annis, G Cave, R Darnell, T Lawrence, M Norris, M O'Shea, M Ost, A Price, A Reardon, J Reardon, and X Stansfield.

Apologies for Absence:

A Farrow – Unwell

I Mason - Away

S Phillips - Unwell

In Attendance: Suffolk County Councillor Kay Oakes, Ian Rafferty, Community Officer Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils and Kevin Hunter, Town Clerk.

C001/23 To confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held 16th November 2022.

Cllr Annis proposed the Minutes of the 16th November 2022 Town Council meeting be adopted. Cllr J Reardon seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C002/23 To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interest for Matters on the Agenda.

Cllr B Annis – Accounts for Payment (Community Centre)

Cllr X Stansfield – Accounts for Payment (Community Centre)

C003/23 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. Below are the report headlines:

- Keeping people in Suffolk warm this winter
- Solar farm proposal “not anywhere near acceptable”
- Historic half a billion-pound devolution deal hands Suffolk regeneration and skills powers to level up
- Council to protect frontline services and increase funding in budget proposal

Cllr Darnell referred to the regular flooding of the B1113 highway between the edge of Needham Market and Great Blakenham and asked if Suffolk County Council is responsible for road drainage. County Councillor Oakes agreed to raise the question within the County Council.

Cllr Lawrence asked if the County Council is responsible for maintaining the Gipping River pathway. County Councillor Oakes and Cllr Annis explained the approach being taken to try and get the current unusable length of pathway reopened. County Councillor Oakes agreed to follow the matter up within the County Council.

District Councillor Mike Norris presented the District Councillor's Report, which had been circulated to Councillors, and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book. Below are the report headlines:

- Council Leaders welcome landmark devolution deal for Suffolk
- Councils strive to keep charges fair – and help those most in need
- Revealed: winning names for Babergh and Mid Suffolk's new environmentally friendly bin lorries
- Pioneering councils complete £2.8m carbon-cutting solar investment
- Councils' new tenancy policy recognises 'a home is not just a house'
- Councils' successful bid for housing fund pot

- Stowmarket residents help shape masterplan for new services hub
- Town and Parish liaison meetings

Cllr Annis reported the car parking situation in School Street which is getting worse and worse and this is prior to the occupation of the new homes developed by the District Council.

Cllr O'Shea asked whether it would be feasible to have a centre road white line at the junction of The Causeway with the High Street. Cllr Annis said that thought had been raised before but the reality of the narrowness of The Causeway at the junction means any largish vehicle has to straddle the middle to avoid colliding with the adjacent buildings. County Councillor Oakes agreed and doubted whether Suffolk County Council Highways would support road lining at that point.

Ian Rafferty, Community Officer, Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils was welcomed and gave an introduction outlining his role and responsibilities.

The Clerk summarised the concerns the Town Council holds in relation to the allocation of social housing in the town and the impact it is having within the local community.

Mr Rafferty explained the social housing tenant case review process and confirmed there is no District Council policy that leads to placing specific types of tenants in Needham Market. District Council representatives meet regularly with the local Police and there is an online reporting system that members of public can use to raise issues. He stated 8 reports were received via the online reporting system during 2022.

Cllr Lawrence referred to the proposal to create a skatepark on Crowley Park, which has now receded. Mr Rafferty confirmed, with recent new housing development on the Crowley Park boundary, such a proposal is untenable due to the potential for noise and other complaints.

C004/23 To receive a report of the activities of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on behalf of the Town.

The Mayor reported attending:

Sunday 11th December – Christmas Carols

The Deputy Mayor had no activity to report.

C005/23 To receive a report from Council's Civic Events Working Group.

Cllr A Reardon reported the first meeting of the King's Coronation Group will be held at 7pm on Tuesday 21st February in the Community Centre.

Cllr A Reardon proposed Council set a budget of up to £1,500 for the group to fund the proposed King's Coronation event. Cllr Darnell seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C006/23 Clerk's Report and Correspondence to be noted.

The Clerk provided an update on various items included in the Council's Business Scoping document including the ongoing dialogue with Needham Market Scouts regarding their Scout Hut replacement project, the proposal to create a new toilet facility within the Boxing Club premises at Crowley Park, and the ongoing occupation by Cadent of the compound area on Crowley Park car park.

The Clerk suggested Monday 22nd May as a suitable date for holding the Annual Town Meeting 2023. Council agreed.

The Clerk referred to an incident reported via email to the Town Council from a local resident who had suffered a fall when a large dog bounded on them as they walked on Crowley Park.

Subsequently, notices are now displayed at all the park's entrances making it clear dogs must be kept on a lead when on the park.

The Clerk read out a letter received from St Elizabeth Hospice thanking Council for its recent £250 donation.

C007/23 Committees

Governance & Finance Committee.

C007/23/1a 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 Ost proposed adoption of the accounts for payment. Cllr Cave seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

Cllr Annis referred Council to the Income & Expenditure Statement, to 31st December 2022, which had been provided to Councillors prior to the meeting. The Clerk advised the Mid Suffolk District Council payment of £8,405.66, shown as awaiting receipt in the statement, had been received during the first week of the new year.

C007/23/1b To receive a report on progress on matters raised in Council's Internal Audit Report 2021/22.

The Clerk gave an update on progress on the sole remaining matter from the report to be resolved.

C007/23/1c To confirm the Annual Budget and agree the Council Tax Precept for 2023/24.

Cllr Annis proposed Council confirm a budget of £150,000 for 2023/24.

Cllr Annis referred Councillors to the report provided by the Clerk that set out options for setting the Council Tax Precept for 2023/24.

Cllr Lawrence proposed Council increase the annual precept by 4%. There was no seconder.

Cllr Annis proposed Council adopt the 3% increase option that would cover the Council's budget for the year and allow a small amount in excess towards Council's reserves, the Precept amount being £150,811.35 and a resultant Council Tax Band D of £84.78. Cllr Norris seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C007/23/2 Community & Assets Committee.

C007/23/2a To receive a report from the Committee Chairperson.

Cllr A Reardon reported on the following:

- The proposed new younger children's play area on Crowley Park is insufficiently advanced to be included in the current tranche of CIL funding applications being considered by Mid Suffolk District Council. The District Council is to arrange the next application process as soon as possible following the forthcoming May Council elections.
- Space is to be made available in the container storage facility at Crowley Park to house the Council's Christmas trees.

Cllr A Reardon proposed the Council make a statement regarding the demise of the Crowley Park Skatepark proposal. Cllr J Reardon seconded the proposal. On being put to the vote, the proposal was not agreed.

Cllr A Reardon proposed the Community & Assets Committee meeting, due to be held on Wednesday 15th February, be postponed until Wednesday 22nd February. Cllr Darnell seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

Cllr A Reardon reported on progress made by the Climate Awareness Group including the creation of a logo, the Community Thermal Imaging Project, and its assessment of areas of land within Needham Market identified as potentially suitable for meadow management.

C007/23/3 Planning Committee.

C007/23/3a To receive a report from the Committee Chairperson.

Cllr O'Shea reported on decisions made by the Planning Committee, on planning applications, at its meetings held 12th December and 9th January.

Cllr O'Shea referred to the Planning Appeal submitted to the Planning Inspectorate relating to a proposal to develop land off Barking Road for new housing. Members of the Planning Committee are collating comments and other material to add to the statement received from Council's Planning Consultant, in preparation for presenting to the Planning Appeal Public Inquiry.

Cllr O'Shea proposed a challenge be made to Mid Suffolk District Council in view of its decision to host the Public Inquiry in an inaccessible location, Offton and Willisham Village Hall. Cllr Darnell seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

Cllr O'Shea reported Tree Preservation Orders are to be sought to protect the iconic Lebanon Cedar Trees (*Cedrus Libani*) located within farmland at the top of Barretts Lane.

C007/23/3b To receive a report on the review of the Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan.

Cllr O'Shea reported the newly established Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan Review Group (NMNPRG) is looking into points raised at its first meeting.

The Meeting closed at 9.27pm.

Chairperson Date