

NEEDHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the virtual meeting of the NEEDHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL held on Wednesday 17th February 2021 at 7:30pm.

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

Apologies for Absence:

Cllr I Mason – COVID-19 Precaution

Cllr J Reardon – Work Commitment

Suffolk County Councillor Kay Oakes (attending Somersham PC)

In Attendance: Mid Suffolk District Councillors Mike Norris and Steve Phillips, the Town Clerk.

C011/21 To confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held 20th January 2021.

The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held Wednesday 20th January 2021 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

C012/21 To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interest for Matters on the Agenda.

Cllr BE Annis – Accounts for Payment (Community Centre & Reimbursement)

Cllr MG Norris – Planning Matters

Cllr X Stansfield – Accounts for Payment (Community Centre)

C013/21 To receive reports from the County Councillor, District Councillors and to take questions from members of the public

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

- Coronavirus rapid testing centre opens at University of Suffolk
- New vehicle banners encourage Suffolk to be food and freezer savvy
- On January 20, as part of the Suffolk 2020 fund, the Discovering Suffolk project was launched.
- New recycling campaign aims to get Suffolk's recycling right

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:

An update on Covid-19 in Suffolk: Regular bulletins are being produced to give a snapshot of the current Covid-19 situation in Suffolk - along with updates on the work being carried out as part of Suffolk's Local Outbreak Control Plan. You can find the bulletins via the Suffolk County Council website under Suffolk CoronaWatch Bulletin. An update on the vaccine rollout can be found on the SNEE NHS COVID-19 Vaccination Service website.

Additional Restrictions Grant reopens for businesses in Mid Suffolk: Business owners in Mid Suffolk are being urged to explore the range of Covid-19 support grants open to support them through the current national lockdown. Further details are available on the Mid Suffolk District Council website. New Year, New Homes: Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils have invested more than £40m buying 250 new homes for low-income house-hunters. This multi-million-pound investment in social housing will see new properties added to their existing council house stock of more than 6,000 homes, or made available to buy as shared ownership homes – helping low-income families onto the first rung of the property ladder. Stowmarket Arts Centre gets major boost: Ambitions for Stowmarket to become a hub for arts and culture took a major step forward recently, following Councillors unanimously giving the go-ahead to lease the former Natwest Bank building at 11 Market Place, Stowmarket, to the John Peel Centre.

Garden waste collections suspended until further notice: Garden waste (brown bin) collections have been suspended from Monday 11 January 2021 until further notice. This is to enable the crews to prioritise essential waste collections, such as the collection of refuse, recycling and clinical waste. Future invoices will be adjusted to compensate for this period of non-collection.

New service to support residents to live independently and safely in their homes: Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils' 'Independent Living Service' has been developed to help improve the quality of life of the districts' most vulnerable adults, young people and children. Further details are available on the Mid Suffolk District Council website.

Pledge to tackle anti-semitism: The nation recently marked Holocaust Memorial Day – and both Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils have strengthened their commitment to tackling anti-semitism by agreeing to support the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) guidelines, providing reassurance to the districts' Jewish community that this form of crime is taken very seriously, and that they will do everything in their power to tackle it.

Census 2021 will provide a snapshot of modern society: Households across both districts will soon be asked to take part in Census 2021. The census is a once-in-a-decade survey that gives the Office for National Statistics the most accurate estimate of all the people and households in England and Wales. It has been carried out every decade since 1801 (except for 1941).

New recycling campaign aims to get Suffolk's recycling right: Every year, more than 10,000 tonnes (1 in 5 lorries worth) of recycling from Suffolk homes is rejected. This is due to residents placing the wrong items in their recycling bins. A new campaign 'Together we can get our recycling right' has been launched by the Suffolk Waste Partnership to tackle the problem. Vehicle banners encourage Suffolk to be food and freezer savvy: Waste and recycling vehicles in Suffolk are now displaying new artwork to help deliver the food savvy message and cut food waste across the county. Over 50,000 tonnes of food, the equivalent of around £730 per household on average, gets thrown away in Suffolk every year.

C014/21 To receive a report of the activities of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on behalf of the Town.

There was no activity to report.

C015/21 To receive a report from the Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

Cllr O'Shea reported the Statutory Consultation required under Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 was complete and Mid Suffolk District Council has collated responses received. It is hoped the process will move to independent examination, under Regulation 17 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, as quickly as possible.

C016/21 To receive an update on Council's proposed restructure.

The Clerk referred Councillors to documentation circulated prior to the meeting, that set out a structure for Council Committees to replace existing Council Sections, in order all Council meetings are open to access by members of public (excepting those that are appropriate to be held "in Camera").

Various questions were raised and debated regarding selection of Committee Members, decision making processes and the inclusion of scrutiny.

Councillors supported the recommended way forward and endorsed the Clerk continue with the restructuring proposal.

C017/21 To consider making a grant to Stowmarket Citizen's Advice Bureau.

The Clerk reported a request received from the Bureau for financial support. The Bureau is also in discussion regarding the re-establishment of a presence in the town (a virtual contact link initially).

Cllr Phillips advised no decisions had yet been made on Council's distribution of grants/donations for 2021/22. He also confirmed Mid Suffolk District Council is due to debate its support for Stowmarket CAB.

Cllr Phillips proposed Council immediately grant the remaining balance held in its 2020/21 grant/donation budget of £1,350 to the Stowmarket CAB as an interim measure plus, firstly decide its annual grant to the Stowmarket CAB for 2021/22 at its 17th March meeting and secondly, commit to paying the cost of the CAB re-establishing a presence in Needham Market as described by the Clerk. Cllr Ost seconded the proposal. The proposal was unanimously agreed.

C018/21 To consider the requirement of s.85 Local Government Act 1972 (6-month Rule for Councillors attendance at Council Meetings).

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.

C019/21 Clerk's Report and Correspondence to be noted.

There was no report.

C020/21 SECTIONS

C020/21/1 Finance and Governance

C020/21/1a 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 Ost proposed adoption of the accounts. Cllr Rix seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C020/21/1b To receive a report from the Section Leader

Cllr Annis notified Councillors of a meeting of the Employment Committee which had discussed issues raised following the effect of COVID-19 and other circumstances on the Council's staff resources. The situation is being kept under review.

C020/21/2 Recreation & Sport

C020/21/2a To receive a report from the Section Leader.

Cllr Phillips gave a brief update on progress being made by the Needham Market Skatepark Committee.

Cllr Darnell asked when the new outdoor gym equipment due at Crowley Park will materialise. Cllr Phillips reiterated the proposed new equipment is included in scope of the Skatepark Project.

C020/21/3 Town Property and Services

C020/21/3a To receive a report from the Section Leader

Cllr Lea reported questions have been raised locally regarding the High Street Christmas Trees remaining in situ. Cllr Phillips said he had posted a brief note on social media explaining they will be taken down at an appropriate time.

Cllr Annis reported a replacement bench has been purchased and it will be located on Barking Road as soon as is practical.

C020/21/4 Newsletter and Communications

C020/21/4a To receive a report from the Section Leader

Cllr Phillips reported the position regarding restarting production of the monthly Town Council Newsletter was being kept under review and the anticipated 'roadmap' out of COVID-19 restrictions announcement from Central Government, due on Monday 22nd February, should provide a better guide to when that might happen.

Cllr Phillips proposed, if conditions allow, Council restarts the Newsletter with an April edition, either in hardcopy or just as an online e-copy, whichever is appropriate Cllr Lea seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C020/21/5 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.

C020/21/5a Planning Decisions and other Notices received

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

DC/21/00394- Current work at Hurstlea Road. Change of specification of roof tile. Granted.

DC/21/00063- Current work at Hurstlea Road. Change of contaminated land condition. Granted.

DC/20/05631 - Rear of 68-70 High Street. Construction of 2 single storey one bed houses with 2 parking spaces. Granted with conditions including Details of Parking and Vehicle Manoeuvring to be provided and when approved forever retained for sole use of the approved houses.

DC/20/05629 - Gateway House, Ipswich Road. Construction at high level of 1 container and 2 Portacabins. Granted.

DC/21/00190 - Granary Barn, High Street. Crown reduction of beech tree. No objection to the application.

SN/20/00549/SN - Former Middle School site. Street naming. Name nominated: Middle School...Close/Crescent/etc.

DC/20/05859- Housing Development, Luff Meadow. Condition 6 of Application DC/18/02050 relating to Contaminated Land. Discharged.

DC/21/00196 - Current Work at Hurstlea Road. Application for a Non Material Amendment relating to DC/18/05104 - Provision of ramp from Hurstlea Road and revised FFL / elevations and drainage layout to the Retail Unit.

To account for levels on site and the drop from Hurstlea Road, allowing level access into the retail unit. Revised roof plan to Retail Unit to introduce a mansard roof to central well. Revised front elevation to the Apartment Block, omitting render and adding brickwork, to assist with future maintenance. Simplified path configuration from plot 7.0.6, to omit the steps and allow level access to rear garden for bins etc. Reduce ridge heights to the 2 and 3 bedroom houses. Plots 7.0.1 to 8.0.8.

Amendments Approved. I would comment that there are a number of revisions to the approved scheme which will considerably alter the appearance of the buildings; these changes include, introduction of a mansard roof, alteration from render to fair-face brickwork and change in roof height.

C020/21/5b Planning Applications Received

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

DC/20/05046- New Housing development west of Barking Road. Currently with LPA and decision to be made today. The LPA Committee unanimously refused the application.

DC/21/00598- 40 Ipswich Road. Formation of dropped kerb for vehicle access. There appears to be reasonable visibility therefore 'No objection'

SCC/0003/21MS/VOC- Debtrac Centre, Ipswich Road. Change in operational hours.

The proposals are to extend the working hours or a specific operation, that of stripping plastic coated copper wire, grading the wire and packing it and moving it around on a forklift. The operation takes place internally within the existing building and there will be no additional external part of the operation nor any delivery/collection, there will inevitably be staff arriving and leaving but this is not mentioned. The current permission is from 07.00 to 17.00h Mon-Fri and they want to extend this part of the business from 17.00 to 23.00h Mon-Fri. this will involve taking on 4 additional employees. They have had a firm of Acoustic Consultants carry out a report which analyses the existing noise from the process and concludes that this work at the extended hours would have 'no adverse impact': but then that is what one would expect it to say.

Clearly it is good news that business and recycling are going well and that they want to increase production. It will however be quite close to the new housing development to the east and one wonders how much noise this actually does generate. Bearing in mind that no additional plant will likely be needed and it is simply extending hours, would it be unreasonable to ask that a short temporary permission be granted for say 3 or 6 months to see just how much disturbance it makes and then to either grant full approval or not?

There is the likelihood that the noise created by the proposal is comparatively quiet, due to the background noise created by other parts of the business. When the general business closes at 5pm, it is likely that the noise will be much more obvious. If the LPA are not willing to grant a temporary permission to allow monitoring of the sound, we believe that the application should be refused.

Cllr O'Shea proposed Council submit an objection with comment as outlined above. Cllr Ost seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

DC/21/00487 - at A14 Slip Off. The site is outside Needham Market but will likely have more impact upon NM than upon any other town/village.

Cllr Phillips proposed Council submit an objection on the grounds: the location is inappropriate, road egress is dangerous, the site is a sensitive location in relation to its tranquillity and its ecological value, the site is adjacent to the River Gipping and its well-used public pathway, there is considerable risk of noise, light and other environmental pollution from the proposed use of the site, its approval would set a precedent. Cllr Annis seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C020/21/5c Planning Report

Cllr O'Shea reported the local flood risk assessment work was continuing and the aim is to conclude the initial stage of information gathering by the end of March. So far 10 locations have been identified locally where the flood risk appears to have increased.

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.

C020/21/6 Highways, Lighting and Footpaths

C020/21/6a To receive a report from the Section Leader

Cllr Norris referred to a number of short-term road closures in the town, details of which he had forwarded to Councillors.

Cllr Lea referred to the condition of the road surface in Station Yard which has serious pot-holes particularly at the entrance off Coddenham Road. Cllr Norris undertook to have a look at the situation.

Cllr Lea reported the erection of scaffolding attached to the remaining building on the former Needham Market Middle School site, which extended over the single pavement on a narrow street, causing a very dangerous situation for pedestrians especially when they are elderly or children.

C021/21 Questions under Standing Order 40.

There were no questions.

The Meeting closed at 8:36pm.

Chairman **Date**