

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 18th January 2017 at 7:30pm.

Present: Cllr X Stansfield (In the Chair), Councillors, BE Annis, TS Carter, RP Darnell, JE Lea, A Morris, MG Norris, D Spurling and AL Ward.

Apologies for Absence:

Cllr D Campbell - Holiday
Cllr R Campbell – Unwell
Cllr I Mason – Holiday
Cllr KMN Oakes – Unwell
Cllr S Phillips - Unwell
Cllr M Spurling – Work Commitment

Suffolk County Councillor Julia Truelove

In Attendance: District Councillor Wendy Marchant and Town Clerk Kevin Hunter.

C001/17 To confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held 21st December 2016.

The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held Wednesday 21st December 2016 were accepted as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

C002/17 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 X Stansfield - Accounts for Payment (Community Centre)

C003/17 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:

- Suffolk Trading Standards – four of the consignments of unsafe goods intercepted by the Suffolk TS Team in the last three months were being imported by Suffolk based traders
- Highways Matters – details of the Winter Service Plan including the approach to surface dressing which involves preventative maintenance to prepare roads for winter
- Connecting Communities – the scheme has been running four months with the five lead operators managing the changes extremely well
- Power Cuts, Priority Service Register – the register enables UK Power Networks to identify vulnerable people quickly in the event of a power cut

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:

- Fitness Suite at Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre Refurbished – the suite has reopened following a £100,000 upgrade
- Items on Mid Suffolk's Executive Agenda (9th January) – details of financial items including Council Tax, Council rents and contribution by Stowmarket High School for Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre facilities plus items on the Mendlesham Neighbourhood Plan and placement of asylum seekers

Cllr Darnell asked if the reduced contribution (from £82,000 to £35,000 p.a.) by Stowmarket High School to Mid Suffolk District Council towards leisure centre facilities was a permanent arrangement. District Councillor Marchant agreed to find the answer and report back to the Town Council.

Cllr Lea asked if the District Council could increase its level of Council Tax towards providing for the escalating costs of social care. District Councillor Marchant confirmed the Government is allowing County Councils to add 2% to their Council Tax levy in respect of increases in the cost of social care provision but this does not apply to District Councils.

Cllr Darnell asked what progress the District Council is making in identifying land suitable for building new (social) housing including, where appropriate, demolishing existing houses to free up land for building more space efficient housing, such as flats. District Councillor Marchant said the District Council continues to seek out and consider a range of potential options including procurement of redundant Middle School sites.

The Clerk asked if there had been any further indications from the District Council in regard to continued presence within the Mid Suffolk area once the administrative headquarters are moved from Needham Market to Ipswich, later this year. District Councillor Marchant said her understanding is the joint Babergh/Mid Suffolk District Council intention is to maintain two customer access points, one in Sudbury and one in Stowmarket but, she is hopeful a presence will be retained in Needham Market, perhaps in the proposed new Community Hub facility which will be created as part of the Needham Market Middle School site re-development.

Cllr Lea commented it is important people who are used to coming to Needham Market to engage with the District Council are given the opportunity to continue. District Councillor Norris said a survey carried out by the District Council showed people from Stowmarket currently come to Needham Market to gain access to District Council services.

C004/17 To receive a report of the activities of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on behalf of the Town.

The Mayor had nothing to report.

The Deputy Mayor was not present.

C005/17 To receive a report from the Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan Working Group.

Cllr Norris reported he is awaiting a response from Mid Suffolk District Council regarding setting a date, time and venue for the next meeting to discuss taking the Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan forward.

C006/17 Clerk's Report and Correspondence to be noted.

1. Actions from Town Council Meetings 7.12.16 and 21.12.16:

C224/16 – Email sent 9th January to SCC regarding proposed cut to libraries Budget

C227/16 – Communication to Environment Agency regarding lead paint dropping into watercourse at Badley Bridge railings (not actioned)

C228/16 – Agenda item regarding Policing Consultation to be added to Feb/Mar 2017 meeting agenda

C230/16 – Item regarding Speeding in the High Street to be added to a future agenda

C231/16 – Dependents Carers Allowance Survey completed 6th January

C232/16/5b – Communication to be sent to MSDC and other bodies regarding the SnOasis application for Reserved Matters (drafted 11th January)

C233/16 – Email sent 6th January to SCC Highways regarding reinstatement of Stowmarket Road verges including flower bulbs

C239/16 – Email sent 4th January to MSDC with suggested street names for future housing developments

2. *Issues:*

- Needham Market Visitor Survey – now closed. Mid Suffolk District Council will collate/analyse responses received
- Mid Suffolk South Safer Neighbourhood Team – January report is copied in the miscellaneous folder. Further Parish/Town Council liaison meetings to be held in February/March to include local Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators
- Tree Works – large tree very close to entrance to Cattle Tunnel being taken down this week (see photo in the miscellaneous folder)

3. *Correspondence to be noted:*

- Suffolk Preservation Society email 16th January giving notice of Heritage Training for Town and Parish Councils – free for SPS members and to be held at Haughley Barn on Tuesday 14th March from 9:45am to 1pm
- Mid Suffolk District Council email 18th January giving notice of Change of Governance (forwarded to Councillors)

Cllr Annis, referring to the notification of the application for Reserved Matters (planning), in respect of the SnOasis proposal, Great Blakenham, recently received from Mid Suffolk District Council, said he had been the Town Council's representative on the group of local councils which had come together to create the original 'SnOasis Parish Alliance'. He said he believed the Alliance, if reformed, should now not simply resurrect its opposition to the proposal as it had, as far back as 2008, been granted outline planning approval. The issue now is about the detail of the proposal. He added the Clerk has drafted a summary of the debate which had taken place at the Town Council's 7th December meeting, which set out Councillors concerns, particularly the District Council's role in determining the application when it has no up-to-date Local Plan. He endorsed the content of summary document and recommended the Town Council should reserve its position on joining a reformed 'SnOasis Parish Alliance' until its concerns are discussed with other potential Alliance members.

Cllr Stansfield agreed with Cllr Annis's endorsement and recommendation and, proposed the summary document be presented to the initial meeting (24th January at Claydon Village Hall) arranged to re-establish the 'SnOasis Parish Alliance'. Cllr Lea seconded the proposal. On being

put to the vote, the proposal was carried. Cllr Darnell said he voted against the proposal as he fully supported the SnOasis concept.

Cllr Annis concluded by likening SnOasis to Brexit in that the principal decision is made and it is now vital all parties are adequately prepared and work together to secure the best outcome.

C007/17 SECTIONS.

C007/17/1 Finance/General Purposes

C007/17/1a 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 Ward proposed the accounts for payment be adopted. Cllr Darnell seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C007/17/1b To receive a report from the Section Leader.

Cllr Annis reminded Councillors a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Section is to be held on Tuesday 14th February when the main item will be the setting of the Council Tax precept for 2017/18. Under consideration will be whether; Council's proposed budget for 2017/18 should be revisited; an increase in the level of Council Tax precept be applied and/or, a further use of Council's reserve funds be used to make up the gap between the budget and precept amount.

The Clerk described various provisional scenarios relating to each of the three options shown above and suggested Council adopt, in conjunction with Mid Suffolk District Council's continued withholding of funds due to Parish/Town Councils, a long-term view of its financial requirements beyond 2017/18.

Cllr Darnell commented on the withholding by Mid Suffolk District Council of Council Tax Compensatory Funding Central Government confirm should be passed on to Parish/Town Councils and asked what steps District Councillors are taking to try and rectify that situation. District Councillor Norris replied District Councillors have raised the discrepancy but it has not been taken forward by the District Council and there is unfortunately, no scope to mount a legal challenge. Cllr Lea added both the National and Suffolk Associations of Local Councils worked hard to try and redress the position where District Councils had not acted in accordance with Central Government intentions but Mid Suffolk District Council remained one of the Councils which had taken the decision to not pass the appropriate funding to its Parish/Town Councils.

Cllr Norris said he agreed with the Clerk's suggestion that a long-term view on Council's financial management be taken as various potential contingencies could be brought into the equation and Council Tax payers would be able to understand more readily the approach being taken.

Cllr Annis concluded by encouraging as many Councillors as possible to come to the 14th February Section meeting.

C007/17/2 Recreation & Sport

C007/17/2a To receive a report from the Section Leader.

There was no report.

C007/17/3 Town Property and Services

C007/17/3a To receive a report from the Section Leader

There was no report.

C007/17/4 Newsletter and Communications

C007/17/4a To receive a report from the Section Leader

Cllr Lea reported a Section meeting will be held on Tuesday 7th February at 10:30am in the Town Council Office to which all Councillors are invited to attend.

C007/17/5 Planning.

In the absence of Cllrs R Campbell and M Spurling, Cllr Stansfield reported no Planning Section meeting had been convened on Monday 16th January due to insufficient business.

C007/17/5a To receive Planning Decisions.

Cllr Stansfield reported the following planning decision had been received:

4763/17 – Unit 2a Maitland Road, Lion Barn Industrial Estate – Change of use from B2 to Sui Generis. Erection of a 5ft fence in courtyard

Planning permission has been granted

C007/17/5b To consider Planning Applications

Cllr Stansfield reported two notifications (SCC\0002\17 and SCC\0004\17) received from Suffolk Council both of which seek to vary/remove conditions attached to the waste processing facility located at the Debrac Centre, Ipswich Road, Needham Market and operated by Sackers Recycling Ltd.

Cllr Stansfield described, from the documents received with the notifications, the variations/removal of conditions being sought. These follow on from previous applications based on the same purpose which has resulted in considerable growth of the waste processing facility since its inception in 2006/7. Cllr Stansfield recalled that previous applications for variation of conditions had been robustly objected to by the Town Council, as the original use of the location was meant to be temporary and due to its proximity and impact on nearby residential and business properties. The operation continues and it is clear from the documentation the intention is to grow it even more significantly in the future.

Cllr Darnell suggested no variation of conditions attached to the waste processing operation should be granted until the adjoining Needham Chalk Quarry redevelopment (266 dwellings) is completed and a subsequent environmental impact assessment has taken place.

Cllr Lea said she remembered the original intention for use of the site was considered and granted on a temporary basis and, over time, its continued use and growth has resulted in an increasing impact on the locality. She added she feared the local area is fast becoming the waste capital of East Anglia.

Cllr Stansfield proposed Council object to the two applications for variation of conditions on the same basis as previous objections. Cllr Darnell seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C007/17/5c To receive a report from the Section Leader.

Cllr Stansfield reported the Planning Section will next meet on Monday 30th January 2017 in the Town Council Office at 7pm. Unless Section Members are informed by email of a cancellation.

C007/17/6 Highways, Lighting and Footpaths

C007/17/6a 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 included reference to:

