

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 20th July 2016 at 7:30pm.

Present: Cllr X Stansfield (In the Chair), Councillors, BE Annis, D Campbell, R Campbell, RP Darnell, JE Lea, I Mason, A Morris, MG Norris and AL Ward.

Apologies for Absence:

Cllr TS Carter – Family Commitment
Cllr KMN Oakes – Family Commitment
Cllr S Phillips – Family Celebration
Cllr D Spurling – Family Commitment
Cllr M Spurling – Family Commitment

Suffolk County Councillor Julia Truelove

In Attendance: Mid Suffolk District Councillor Wendy Marchant, two members of public and Town Clerk Kevin Hunter.

C133/16 To confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held 6th July 2016.

The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held Wednesday 6th July 2016 were accepted as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

C134/16 To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interest for Matters on the Agenda.

Cllr BE Annis - Accounts for payment (Community Centre)
Cllr MG Norris – Planning Matters and Accounts for Payment (Community Centre)
Cllr X Stansfield – Accounts for payment (Community Centre)

C135/16 To receive reports from The County Councillor, District Councillors and to take questions from members of the public

Due to IT issues receipt of County Councillor Julia Truelove's report was delayed.

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:

- Regal Theatre Stowmarket, Regeneration Project – joint (MSDC/Stowmarket Town Council) feasibility study to cost an estimated £400,000 to £500,000 in relation to final modernisation work in the region of £4million
- MSDC's Own Staff to Do Council Housing Repairs and Maintenance – in-house integrated repairs team to serve both Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils
- Chief Executive Farewell – Charlie Adan leaving

Cllr Lea commented large sums of money are to be committed to a Stowmarket regeneration project when experience tells us this has happened several times in the past with little to show in tangible results. The District Council should be spreading any funds available for this type of project more broadly across the District. Ultimately, past and this projected expenditure aimed at regenerating Stowmarket has, and will continue, to deliver disproportionately low benefit and none at all if, as has happened previously, feasibility studies end up confined to a shelf.

Cllr Ward said he was shocked to learn a feasibility study relating to a single building will entail expenditure estimated at £400,000 to £500,000. District Councillor Marchant said District Council Members had been presented only the single option as included in her report and there was no visibility of alternative ways forward.

Cllr Mason said he understood the Regal Cinema is ostensibly a Stowmarket Town Council facility and questioned the need for Mid Suffolk District Council's involvement.

Cllr Ward proposed Council object against the proposed expenditure by Mid Suffolk District Council on the feasibility study. Cllr Darnell seconded the proposal which, on being put to the vote, was carried.

District Councillor Mike Norris referred to a media release from Mid Suffolk District Council which was the 'final call' for Town and Parish Council's to propose land which may have potential for development.

The July edition of the Suffolk Constabulary, Stowmarket Safer Neighbourhood Team, Newsletter was tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book.

Cllr Lea expressed her disappointment the Police report, compared to the original format reports, is now so general it does not indicate what is happening in Needham Market. The Clerk said he is aware more localised and up-to-date information on, for example, crimes reported in the town, is available via the Suffolk Constabulary website.

The members of public present confirmed they were observing only.

C136/16 To receive a report of the activities of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on behalf of the Town.

The Mayor reported attending:

Friday 15th July – Ipswich 'Mayor's at Home' event

The Deputy Mayor had nothing to report.

C137/16 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 included confirmation a meeting of the Group had been deferred pending clarification from Mid Suffolk District Council on the outcome of the discussion which took place when representatives from the Town Council and Officers from the District Council met on 16th June.

Cllr Norris suggested the Working Group nevertheless meets at the earliest opportunity to consider papers recently received from a District Council Economic Development Officer, which comprised an updated version of the Needham Market Retail Analysis and also a proposal for a Needham Market Visitor Survey.

C138/16 To consider road names for the Needham Chalk Quarry development.

Cllr Annis had prepared a list of suggested road names, all allied to the Needham Chalk Quarry, which was copied to all Councillors. Cllr D Campbell also provided two lists of suggested names relating to the town's historical connections with the wool industry. Both Councillors and others who had thought of other options were thanked by Council for their prior attention to the issue.

Council debated the options and resolved:

1. The list of suggested road names produced by Cllr Annis to form the basis for discussion at Council's next Planning Section meeting (Monday 1st August) with the Section then making a final proposal to Council's next full meeting (Wednesday 3rd August)
2. The lists of road names suggested by Cllr D Campbell to be held in reserve for consideration for use in relation to future residential developments in the town (e.g. the anticipated development of 150 plus dwellings off Barking Road).

C139/16 Clerk's Report and Correspondence to be noted.

1. Actions from Town Council Meeting 06.07.16:

C129/16 – Email sent to Mid Suffolk District Council 8th July regarding street names proposed for the Needham Chalk Quarry development

C130/16 – Email sent to Suffolk County Council 15th July regarding the footpaths accessed via the Gipsy Lane rail crossing

C131/16/6a – Email sent to Mid Suffolk District Council (Planning) 8th July regarding the decision on the request for a Screening Opinion relating to the proposed development off Barking Road

Cllr Stansfield said he had been copied into a reply received by The Clerk from the Mid Suffolk District Council Planning Officer dealing with the above matter. He reported the reply email had been difficult to open as it required registration on a commercial software security system, which he questioned the necessity for. It had also become apparent District Councillor Marchant, who was also copied in, could not readily open the email.

Cllr Ward commented the lack of consultation and responsiveness by Mid Suffolk District Council on the Screening Opinion issue represented yet another situation which raises serious questions on that Council's commitment to be as open and transparent as possible.

District Councillor Wendy Marchant said she shared the concerns of the Town Council and has questioned Mid Suffolk District Council's Legal Officer regarding the use of confidentiality within the Council to prevent reports going to other than a limited group of Councillors and/or to prevent information being made accessible beyond the confines of a restricted audience.

Cllr Stansfield proposed, in view of the extremely unsatisfactory relationship which exists between the Town Council and Mid Suffolk District Council on key matters affecting Needham Market, the Town Council's next meeting should include an agenda item to discuss what action might be possible to challenge the District Council's position. Cllr Ward seconded the proposal and, on being put to the vote, was carried.

Cllr Darnell commented his impression is Mid Suffolk District Council and Babergh District Council are both entirely focussed and intent, to the detriment of other activity, on the merging of the two Councils, which is an objective specifically rejected by public referendum.

Cllr Mason asked if the town's two District Councillors were being given the run around by those in control at Mid Suffolk District Council. District Councillor Mike Norris refuted the implication and added, as substantiation, he is clear Mid Suffolk District Council has gone ahead with the purchase of the redundant Needham Market Middle School premises and he had subsequently raised questions regarding the proposal to create a 'Community Hub' as part of redevelopment of the site.

Cllr Darnell commented it did not appear compatible Mid Suffolk District Council should be committing money to procure property when, at the same time, it continues to fail to transmit funding from Central Government which should, in accordance with Council Tax Compensatory Fund legislation, be passed to Town and Parish Councils.

2. *Issues:*

- Devolution Consultation and Presentations – Advice included in the Town Council News item in the August Newsletter plus Suffolk County Council presentation to be held at SALC on Tuesday 2nd August, 7pm to 9pm and, will be the agenda item for the Mid Suffolk District Council Parish Liaison meeting to be held on 4th August at The Chamberlin Hall, Bildeston at 10am

Cllr Annis reminded Councillors there is information about the Suffolk/Norfolk devolution deal and an opportunity to respond to the consultation on the Suffolk County Council website.

Cllr Stansfield proposed Council revisit its discussion on the proposed Suffolk/Norfolk devolution deal by inclusion of an appropriate agenda item at its 17th August meeting. Council agreed.

Cllr Lea said she will attend the SALC meeting on 2nd August and report back to Council on the Suffolk County Council presentation.

- Gipsy Lane Rail Crossing – Reply received from Suffolk County Council (and GC)

C140/16 SECTIONS.

C140/16/1 Finance/General Purposes

C140/16/1a 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 Stansfield proposed the accounts for payment be adopted. Cllr Morris seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C140/16/1b To receive a report from the Section Leader

There was no report.

C140/16/2 Recreation & Sport

C140/16/2a To receive a report from the Section Leader.

There was no report.

Cllr Mason asked whether Crowley Park had been weed control sprayed. The Clerk said he is aware some weed control activity had taken place and would pass the question to the Leader of the Recreation & Sport Section, Cllr Phillips, for confirmation.

C140/16/3 Town Property and Services

C140/16/3a To receive a report from the Section Leader

There was no report.

C140/16/4 Newsletter and Communications

C140/16/4a To receive a report from the Section Leader

Cllr Lea reported Cllr Carter has started his role as 'webmaster' and IT equipment was being procured to allow him to access and maintain Council's website and social media presence.

Cllr Lea proposed the cost of purchase of the necessary IT equipment, which is around £450, be split between the Newsletter and Communications budget and Council's General Administration budget. Cllr Ward seconded the proposal which Council agreed.

C140/16/5 Planning.

Cllr R Campbell reported, due to lack of relevant business, the Planning Section meeting scheduled to take place on Monday 18th July had been cancelled.

C140/16/5a To receive Planning Decisions.

Cllr R Campbell reported the following planning decision had been received:

2331/16 – 8 Lilac Walk – Alterations and single storey rear extension

Planning Permission has been Granted

C140/16/5b To consider Planning Applications

Cllr R Campbell reported the following planning application had been received:

2736/16 – 35 Ipswich Road – Erection of two storey pitched roof extension to side (following demolition of existing single storey additions) and insert of sun tunnel to roof of rear slope.

Cllr R Campbell confirmed pre-application advice had been sought by the applicant and proposed Council support approval of the application. Cllr Annis seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C140/16/5c To receive a report from the Section Leader.

Cllr R Campbell reported the Planning Section will next meet on Monday 1st August in the Town Council Office at 7pm.

C140/16/6 Highways, Lighting and Footpaths

C140/16/6a To receive a report from the Section Leader

Cllr Norris reported he had contacted Suffolk County Council to clarify what is needed in relation to road signage relocation and additional signage on Barking Road and is awaiting a revised quotation.

Cllr Mason commented overgrowth from hedges etc. across the town is impeding pedestrians on many pavements/pathways and asked who is responsible for cutting it back. Cllr Norris replied it is Suffolk County Council's responsibility to either ensure the owner of the hedge etc. cuts it back or, in some circumstances, be directly responsible for carrying out the necessary work. In extreme cases the County Council will carry out the work and invoice the owner of the hedge etc.

Cllr Ward suggested an item referring to the overgrowth problem be included in the Town Council's News article in next month's edition of the Town Council's Newsletter. Council agreed.

Cllr Lea expressed her concern that vehicles are still parking regularly opposite the Town Hall and adjacent to the access to Fox Maltings, despite the measures prompted by the Town Council and implemented by the Highways Authority.

C141/16 Questions under Standing Order 40.

Cllr Annis asked if Councillors were aware the recent and first audit carried out by the newly appointed internal auditor (Suffolk Association of Local Councils) had identified only a small number of items for clarification and suggested amendments within Council's accounts.

The Meeting closed at 8:39 p.m.

Chairman **Date**