

NEEDHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of NEEDHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL held in the Lounge, Needham Market Community Centre, School Street, Needham Market, on Wednesday 15th February 2017 at 7:30pm.

Present: Cllr X Stansfield (In the Chair), Councillors R Campbell, TS Carter, RP Darnell, A Morris, MG Norris, KMN Oakes, S Phillips, D Spurling, M Spurling and AL Ward.

Apologies for Absence:

Cllr BE Annis – Pantomime Rehearsal
Cllr D Campbell – Unwell
Cllr JE Lea – Pantomime Rehearsal
Cllr I Mason – Holiday

In Attendance: Suffolk County Councillor Julia Truelove (part), District Councillor Wendy Marchant (part), one member of public and Town Clerk Kevin Hunter.

C018/17 To confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held 1st February 2017.

The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held Wednesday 1st February 2017 were accepted as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

C019/17 To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interest for Matters on the Agenda.

Cllr MG Norris – Planning Matters
Cllr KMN Oakes - Accounts for Payment (Reimbursement of Expenses)
Cllr M Spurling - Accounts for Payment

C020/17 To receive reports from The County Councillor, District Councillors and, to take questions from members of the public.

County Councillor Julia Truelove presented her report, which was tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book. It included reference to:

- Budget Proposals 2017/18 – details of the Suffolk County Council annual budget which totals £436m, Council Tax (Band D) to be frozen at £1,126.53 with an additional 3% 'Social Care' precept (Band D) of £56.97 and a capital spend programme totalling £97.7m
- Sizewell C Proposals, Joint Response from Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Coastal District Council – joint report which offers a full response ahead of any potential development of a new nuclear power station on the Suffolk coast
- Key Points from the Police and Crime Panel Meeting 31st January – Police Council Tax precept to increase by 1.972% for 2017/18 and question raised regarding progress on tackling cybercrime

Cllr Darnell said he had previously raised a question regarding the current financial year overspend of £8.1m on the Suffolk County Council Social Care budget and asked whether any headway is being made on retrieving spend within budget. County Councillor Truelove replied the recent budget papers did not show sufficient detail for her to be able to answer that question.

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:

- Strengthening Governance Task & Finish Workshops 2 and 3 – details of how the less democratic approach being adopted by the District Council will operate

- Parking Enforcement – in response to the question whether Ipswich Borough Council has incurred a financial loss as a result of operating parking enforcement, Ipswich Borough Council had significant debts for several years and only managed to break even at the end of their ten-year agreement
- Parking Enforcement – decisions taken by Mid Suffolk’s Executive including agreement to support Suffolk County Council in seeking a transfer of Civil Parking Enforcement across the County from the Police

Cllr M Spurling said when the referendum was held which rejected the proposed merger of Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils, the decision included there would be no reduction in the number of Councillors on each Council, yet that may now take place. District Councillor Norris advised any change in the number of Councillors will result from the Ward Boundary Review currently being undertaken the outcome of which is not yet formally agreed and any proposals will have to be ratified by the Boundary Commission,

Cllr Darnell commented that the number of Councillors at each of the District Councils is really irrelevant as it is only a small core of them that exert control.

The member of public present had no question to raise.

C021/17 To receive a report of the activities of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on behalf of the Town.

The Mayor reported attending:

Saturday 4th February – Suffolk Royal British Legion Annual Meeting held at Needham Market Community Centre

Monday 6th February – Talk and Tea at Uvedale Hall

The Deputy Mayor had nothing to report.

C022/17 To receive a report from the Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan Working Group.

Cllr Norris reported on the meeting held with Mid Suffolk District Council representatives on Tuesday 7th February. It is anticipated an updated Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment document will be available late March/early April. The advice received is to continue with preparation of the Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan and to let the District Council know what the Town Council wishes to do. The District Council will then consider what they think is feasible particularly in relation to infrastructure requirements. The results from the recently completed Visitor Survey are currently being analysed by the District Council’s Economic Development Officer. A meeting of the Working Group will now take place to discuss next steps.

C023/17 To confirm the Annual Budget and agree the Council Tax Precept for 2017/18.

Councillor Stansfield quoted from the appropriate part of the Finance and General Purposes Section report (see Minute C025/17/1b below). A budget has been agreed for 2017/18 in the sum of £107,500, an increase of 1.4% on the budget for 2016/17. To meet its budget requirement, Council has three principal options: 1) to revisit and amend the budget 2) to continue to draw from reserves 3) to increase its Council Tax precept. The Clerk provided a spreadsheet setting out the impact of 7 options, ranging from freezing the Council Tax precept at the 2016/17 level (which would leave a shortfall of £8,185 to be drawn from reserves) to an increase in Council Tax precept of 8.3% (which would provide sufficient income to avoid drawing from reserves).

The Finance and General Purposes Section report provided further details, also a summary of the discussions that had taken place at the meeting held on 14th February which had been attended by 8 Councillors. The conclusion from the meeting was a recommendation to full Council to adopt

option 5. That option is for a 4.99% increase in the Council Tax precept providing income of £104,270 and the drawing of £3,230 from reserves to meet the budget requirement.

Cllr Norris commented option 5, although a 4.99% increase in percentage terms, would amount to a comparatively small cash increase of 6.3p per week for a Council Tax Band D residence and 5p per week for a Council Tax Band B residence.

Cllr Darnell said he wished to see more taken from Council's reserves leading to a reduction in the Council Tax precept. Cllr Ward replied the discussion at the Finance and General Purposes Section had acknowledged continued drawing from reserves year after year is not sustainable.

Cllr Stansfield proposed Council accept the recommendation of the Finance and General Purposes Section and agree a Council Tax precept for 2017/18 of £104,270.22. Cllr Oakes seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal. The precept form was duly completed and signed by the Chairman, two further Councillors and the Clerk as Proper Officer to the Council.

Cllr Phillips referred to the length and breadth of debate that had taken place at the Finance and General Purposes Section meeting and which had taken full account of the potential impact of the various options being considered including for people on low incomes.

C024/17 Clerk's Report and Correspondence to be noted.

1. Actions from Town Council Meetings 01.02.17:

C016/17/6a – item on dog waste disposal will be in the March edition of the Town Council Newsletter

2. Issues:

- Operation London Bridge – meeting held with Mid Suffolk District Council on Friday 10th February and necessary protocol and equipment obtained

3. Correspondence to be noted:

- Letter received from UK Power Networks 13th February regarding help for vulnerable people during a power cut.

Councillors agreed that firstly, UK Power Networks should be contacted to find out how many households in Needham Market are already registered to receive extra help in the event of a power cut and secondly, the Clerk to liaise with local organisations with a direct interest in identifying and helping vulnerable people e.g. the Needham Market Dementia Action Alliance, to consider how best to get the UK Power Networks message to appropriate households.

C025/17 SECTIONS.

C025/17/1 Finance/General Purposes

C025/17/1a Accounts for Payment and Confirmation.

Cllr Stansfield 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 Darnell seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C025/17/1b To receive a report from the Section Leader.

Cllr Stansfield presented the report from the Finance and General Purposes Section meeting held on Tuesday 14th February, which was tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book. The meeting included:

- Consideration of the Council Tax Precept and Council Tax Setting for the Financial Year 2017/18
- Grants and Donations 2017/18
- Review of Council's Financial Management including the Trial Balance of Accounts for the 9-month period to 31st December 2016
- Employment Committee Report
- Section Leaders Reports

Under Grants and Donations for 2017/18, the Section recommended the following grants/donations be made:

- St John the Baptist Parochial Church Council (for upkeep of the Burial Ground) £900
- Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice Bureau £1,000
- Community Centre Minibus (towards driver wages) £850
- Internet Café £1,000

Cllr Ward proposed Council adopt the Section report inclusive of its recommendations. Cllr Oakes seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C025/17/2 Recreation & Sport

C025/17/2a To receive a report from the Section Leader.

Cllr Phillips presented Notes from the Recreation and Sport Section meeting held on Tuesday 14th February, which were tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book.

Cllr Phillips confirmed he will shortly be stepping down as Leader of the Section and therefore a new Leader will need to be appointed for 2017/18.

Cllr Phillips reported he is continuing to investigate options for providing outdoor gym equipment and safety matting for installing at Crowley Park.

C025/17/3 Town Property and Services

C025/17/3a To receive a report from the Section Leader

Cllr Oakes had nothing to report.

C025/17/4 Newsletter and Communications

C025/17/4a To receive a report from the Section Leader

There was no report.

C025/17/5 Planning.

Cllr R Campbell reported no Planning Section meeting had been convened on Monday 13th February due to insufficient business.

C025/17/5a To receive Planning Decisions.

Cllr R Campbell reported no planning decisions had been received:

C025/17/5b To consider Planning Applications

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

0240/17 – 133 High Street – Installation of handrails to front entrance

Cllr R Campbell proposed Council recommend approval of the application. Cllr Ward seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

0499/17 – 73 Hargrave Avenue – Erection of white UPVC conservatory onto brick base

Cllr R Campbell proposed Council recommend approval of the application. Cllr Ward seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

Cllr Darnell asked whether planning permission is generally required for the addition of a conservatory. Numerous Councillors gave examples of when planning permission may, or may not, be necessary, including the effect of permitted development rights.

C025/17/5c To receive a report from the Section Leader.

Cllr R Campbell reported the Planning Section will next meet on Monday 27th February 2017 in the Town Council Office at 7pm. Unless Section Members are informed by email of a cancellation.

C025/17/6 Highways, Lighting and Footpaths

C025/17/6a To receive a report from the Section Leader

Cllr Norris presented a verbal report. It included reference to:

- Temporary Road Closure, Barretts Lane 20th March to 7th April – to allow for drainage improvements
- Fence, Barking Road – delay in Suffolk County Council Rights of Way progressing the case of the fence erected across a public footpath
- Badley Bridge Railings – alternative means for improving the appearance of the railings being investigated

Cllr Darnell said he has noticed many occasions on which road closed signage is left in place after works have been completed causing drivers to continue to use diversions unnecessarily.

Cllr R Campbell referred to the potholes under Coddendam Road railway bridge which are in a dreadful state and should be reclassified by Suffolk County Council as more immediately necessary of repair than in a period of up to 14 weeks which is the present classification. Cllr Phillips said, with the lack of width of road to avoid the potholes under the railway bridge, his vehicle had suffered the full impact of them. Councillors were encouraged to continue to report the potholes in the Coddendam Road railway bridge area as this may prompt the County Council to act sooner rather than later.

C026/17 Questions under Standing Order 40.

Cllr Phillips asked whether it was known if former Town Councillor Ted Nash had yet been able to return home from hospital following his recent operation.

The Meeting closed at 8:42pm.

Chairman **Date**