

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 15th January 2020 at 7:30pm.

Present: Cllr S Phillips (In the Chair), Councillors; BE Annis, JE Lea, MG Norris, M O'Shea, M Ost, J Reardon, M Spurling and X Stansfield.

Apologies for Absence:

Cllr RP Darnell - Holiday

Cllr I Mason – Holiday

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

C001/20 To confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held 18th December 2019.

The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held Wednesday 18th December 2019 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

C002/20 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 M O'Shea – Planning (137 High Street)

Cllr S Phillips – Planning (137 High Street)

Cllr M Spurling – Accounts for Payment and Planning (Drift Court)

Cllr X Stansfield – Accounts for Payment (Community Centre)

C003/20 To receive reports from the County Councillor, District Councillors and to take questions from members of the public

County Councillor Kay Oakes presented her report, which was tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book. The report headlines were:

- New SEND provision identified – ready to offer 168 additional spaces from September 2020
- Suffolk Fire and Rescue Services rated “Good” in Government Inspection
- New £3m pot announced for Suffolk projects

Cllr Oakes added an update on the Gipsy Lane over-rail crossing closure following a meeting between Suffolk County Council and Network Rail, when it was confirmed a contractor has been appointed to carry out the works to reroute the footpath, a detailed design for the under the culvert part of the new footpath route has been commissioned and, the existing crossing will stay open until all the necessary footpath rerouting works are completed.

Cllr Norris said he was pleased to learn the culvert part of the footpath route was being looked into as the flood risk modelling carried out to date has been subjective and not representative of the true position, for example, reports from the public are that the culvert was recently flooded and impassable on 28 consecutive days.

Cllr Oakes also reported chasing Suffolk County Council Highways regarding the request for repainting of the Badley Bridge (B1113) roadside railings and was shocked to find the indicative cost for the work to carry out the repainting has risen to between £16,000 and £20,000. The County Council stated the railings are not in a condition that warrants them carrying out the work and therefore, the cost would have to be met from another source.

Cllr Lea commented similar roadside railing repainting has been undertaken in Stowmarket by Stowmarket Town Council and 'Friends of Stowmarket' however, the locations and environment were not the same as those on the busy B1113, Badley Bridge.

Councillors debated the Badley Bridge railing position and agreed it should be an agenda item for discussion at the next Finance & General Purposes meeting (4th February).

Cllr Oakes said she has requested better liaison take place between Suffolk County Council and its Highways contractors, to ensure timing of setting down and removal of roadwork signage is improved, and this is moving forward as a formal recommendation.

District Councillor Mike Norris presented the District Councillors' report which was tabled, and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book. The report included reference to:

Council Tax – 2020/21 Budget: The first draft of Mid Suffolk District Council's budget for 2020/21 is set to be considered by councillors later this month, including a 1.66% increase in its share of Council Tax, adding £2.76 a year to the bill of a Band D Property, equivalent to just over 5p per week. The budget was considered by Mid Suffolk cabinet members on Monday 13th January and will go to Overview and Scrutiny on Thursday 16th January. It will then go to Full Council in February and, if approved, will come into effect on 1st April 2020.

Headlines include:

- A proposed increase of 1.66% to Council Tax, equivalent to £2.76 over the course of a year for a Band D property (increases range from £1.84 per annum for the smallest Band A property to £5.54 for the largest Band H property).
- No change in the Council Tax Reduction Scheme that sees poorest residents pay just 5% of their bill.
- A change to empty property discount, reducing the period that unoccupied and unfurnished properties pay discounted Council Tax from three months to 28 days, in order to bring empty properties in the district back into use.
- After four years of government-enforced reductions, the council is also proposing putting up council house rents by 2.7% - meaning a £2.19 per week increase for tenants. Sheltered housing tenants also face an increase of £2 a week on their bills plus a 62p a week increase to their utility charges.
- A reserve of £500,000 to be set aside for 2020/21 to tackle climate change.

Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils consider moves to clamp down on Council Tax fraud – whilst helping those in need: At a Mid Suffolk Cabinet Meeting on Monday 6th January it was resolved that penalties be introduced to tackle Council Tax fraud, alongside a new protocol to help those in genuine need, and the adoption of the Citizens Advice Council Tax Protocol. Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils have a statutory duty to collect Council Tax across their districts, which is then divided between Suffolk County Council, the Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner, the districts themselves, and the local parish or town councils. The new penalties policy will give the councils the option to issue an initial penalty of £70 to anyone refusing to meet requests to supply legally required information, or failing to let the council know about changes in their circumstances which would affect their entitlement to a discount, exemption or Council Tax reduction.

Next phase in development of Needham Lake visitor centre and café: As was reported previously, 127 Trading Limited, a trading entity of The Mix, Stowmarket, has been selected as preferred tenants of the centre. They will manage the day to day running of the centre and café/restaurant on a ten-year lease. Working in partnership with the community they will offer a variety of refreshments, a seasonal menu and a range of events and activities including evening events. The next phase of the development will be the selection and appointment of a contractor. Following the tender process construction works are proposed to start in the Spring.

Improved access to Needham Market railway station: Meetings are continuing to be held involving Network Rail, MSDC and SCC officers, with the aim of improving the access to and from the Ipswich bound platform. Mid Suffolk and Network Rail are currently jointly funding a feasibility study.

C004/20 To receive a report of the activities of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on behalf of the Town.

Cllr Phillips reported, in the lead up to Christmas Day, he had carried out the assessment, judging and presentation of awards for the 'Best Dressed' properties in the town under categories for: High Street Business; Residential Care/Sheltered Housing; High Street residential property and residential property not on the High Street.

Cllr Phillips and Cllr Lea had both been part of the group of Councillors, who sang Christmas Carols around the local hostelrys on the night of 20th December, raising £174 for the Mayor's Charities in the process. Cllr Phillips thanks everyone who participated, hosted and contributed during that evening.

C005/20 To receive a report from the Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

Cllr Stansfield reminded Councillors a Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan Public Consultation Event will take place on Friday 17th January, 6pm to 9pm and Saturday 18th January, 10am to 3pm in Needham Market Community Centre and asked for Councillor availability to help manage the event over the two days.

The Clerk confirmed Council's Neighbourhood Plan Consultant will attend the event for the Saturday session and catering arrangements would be undertaken by the Community Centre.

C006/20 To consider a request from Mid Suffolk District Council for a financial contribution towards the provision of a 'Changing Places' toilet upgrade to be included in the proposed Needham Lake Visitor Centre.

Cllr Phillips referred to the request and accompanying information received from Mid Suffolk District Council, which described the circumstances that prompted their request, plus details of the 'Changing Places' toilet facility and the benefits such a facility provides for users. The request quoted a shortfall of £4,000 in the District Council's budget required to include a 'Changing Places' toilet at their proposed Needham Lake Visitor Centre.

Cllr Lea proposed the Town Council contribute the full amount, £4,000, towards ensuring the proposed Needham Lake Visitor Centre includes a 'Changing Places' toilet. Cllr Spurling seconded the proposal. Council unanimously agreed the proposal.

C007/20 Clerk's Report and Correspondence to be noted.

1. Actions from Town Council Meeting 18.12.19

- C223/19/5a – Email to Mid Suffolk District Council 19th December (reply received 9th January)

2. Issues:

- Buckingham Palace Garden Party 27th May 2020 – nomination requested

Council agreed the usual approach be taken and therefore Cllr Phillips should be nominated

- Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' Town and Parish Council Liaison Meeting – 4th February 10.00 – 12.00 at The Mix, Stowmarket

3. Correspondence to be noted:

- Email dated 9th January from Suffolk Neighbourhood Watch Association requesting a donation towards their general operating costs

Council agreed the Mayor donate £50 from the Mayor's Discretionary fund.

- Letter received 13th January from Plug-N-Go.com regarding electric vehicle charging stations

Council agreed information in the letter should be an agenda item for discussion at the next Finance & General Purposes meeting (4th February).

- Email dated 14th January from Suffolk Local History Council extending an invitation to its Societies Day, March 7th at Blackbourne Hall, Elmswell

C008/20 SECTIONS

C008/20/1 Finance/General Purposes

C008/20/1a 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 Phillips proposed adoption of the accounts. Cllr Ost seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C008/20/1b To receive a report from the Section Leader

Cllr Annis reported a meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Section will take place at 10am, on Tuesday 4th February 2020, in the Town Council Office.

C008/20/2 Recreation & Sport

C008/20/2a To receive a report from the Section Leader.

Cllr Phillips reported he is in discussion with Mid Suffolk District Council regarding the release of s.106 (Developer Contributions) funding for installing a secure and permanent fence along the boundary of Crowley Park with Barretts Lane.

C008/20/3 Town Property and Services

C008/20/3a To receive a report from the Section Leader

Cllr Lea reported the new temporary public toilet building is now on site at Barretts Lane and the Christmas trees and lighting has all been demounted from the High Street.

Cllr Lea reported a Section meeting is to be held on Tuesday 4th February at 7:30pm in the Town Council Office.

C008/20/4 Newsletter and Communications

C008/20/4a To receive a report from the Section Leader

Cllr Phillips presented Notes from the Newsletter and Communications Section meeting held 13th January 2020, which were tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book. The notes were:

The first item to be discussed was the Section leadership, Cllr Phillips was confirmed as Section Leader with Cllr Reardon as Deputy.

Newsletter The Section was informed that the Newsletter was now back to a stable condition following the resignation of the previous Newsletter Editor and was being Edited and monitored by Gipping press and the Deputy Town Clerk. There was a proposal that the previous Gipping Press employee that administrated the Newsletter alongside the Deputy Clerk could be re-employed and the introduction of some Black and white page in contrast to the full colour pages would fund the cost, this was agreed.

Website The Section was informed that the Original website is working well and is being monitored by the Clerk and Deputy Clerk, Cllr Reardon agreed to meet with the Clerk and Deputy Clerk and discuss the way forward including the possible use of social media and will report back to the Section with the recommendations.

Cllr Annis, referring to discussion at the meeting, said Councillors are wary of extending the Town Council website to include more information and details of charities/groups/organisations in the town beyond that currently included. To do so would require considerable attention to updating content and charities/groups/organisations in the town are capable of continuing to do that, in their own way.

C008/20/5 Planning

Cllr Stansfield presented Notes from the Planning Section meeting held on Monday 13th January, which were tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book.

C008/20/5a Planning Decisions and other Notices received

Cllr Stansfield reported the following Planning Decisions or Notices had been received.

Planning Applications Approved

DC/19/05179 - Householder Planning Application - Erection of side/rear extension (following demolition of existing single storey extension and part of outbuilding). 29 Park Road.

Planning Permission has been Granted.

DC/19/05261 - Householder Planning Application - Two storey side extension of dwelling (following demolition of existing detached garage), single storey front extension for porch. Formation of parking areas and all associated works. 34 Steggall Close.

Planning Permission has been Granted.

DC/19/05346 - Householder Planning Application - Conversion of outbuilding to annex with mezzanine storage level, addition of windows and doors to side elevation following removal of carport, replace roof light. 17 Hawks Mill Street.

Planning Permission has been Granted.

DC/19/05353 - Householder Planning Application - Erection of two storey rear extension with juliet balcony (following demolition of conservatory). Creation of new access and driveway. 1 Brick Kiln Cottage, Barretts Lane.

Planning Permission has been Granted.

C008/20/5b Planning Applications Received

Cllr Stansfield reported the following Planning Applications had been received.

DC/19/04690 - Construction of four new parking bays. Drift Court, School Street.

The Section considered this application appropriate and recommends Approval.

Cllr Stansfield proposed Council support approval of the application. Cllr Annis seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

Application for Listed Building Consent.

DC/19/05869 - Listed Building Consent - New Scalloped Edged Bargeboard. 137 High Street.

The Section discussed the written and photographic information, concluded the application appropriate and recommended support for approval of consent.

Cllr Stansfield proposed Council support approval of the application. Cllr Annis seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

Discharge of Conditions.

Dc/19/05721 – Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/19/03729 – Condition 3 (External Facing and Roofing Materials) and Condition 5 (Secure Parking Court).

The Conditions have been Discharged.

C008/20/5c Planning Report

The Clerk referred Council to a Notification of Listing Assessment and Invitation to Comment Notice dated 8th January 2020, from Historic England, relating to Needham Market War Memorial and Lych Gate, Municipal Cemetery, Barretts Lane, Needham Market.

Councillors debated the merits and contrary issues that come with Listing of property and agreed to let the Listed Assessment take its course with no comment required.

Cllr Stansfield reported the Planning Section will next meet on Monday 3rd February 2020 in the Town Council Office at 7pm. Unless Section Members are informed by email of a cancellation.

C008/20/6 Highways, Lighting and Footpaths

C008/20/6a To receive a report from the Section Leader

Cllr Norris reported he had been made aware of the “Lorry Watch” scheme and, potential for the Town Council’s involvement would be considered by his Section.

C009/20 Questions under Standing Order 40.

There were no questions.

The Meeting closed at 8:35pm.

Chairman **Date**