

NEEDHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of NEEDHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL held in the Burton Room, Needham Market Community Centre, School Street, Needham Market, on Wednesday 15th July 2020 at 7:30pm.

Present: Cllr S Phillips (In the Chair), Councillors: BE Annis, JE Lea, MG Norris, M O'Shea and P Wright.

Apologies for Absence:

Cllr R Darnell - Incapacitated
Cllr I Mason – COVID-19 Precaution
Cllr M Ost - COVID-19 Precaution
Cllr J Reardon – Work Commitment
Cllr X Stansfield - COVID-19 Precaution

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

At the request of the Chairman, the meeting stood in silence for a minute to remember those in the local community who had passed, suffered bereavement or otherwise resulting from the COVID-19 situation.

C040/20 Confirmation of the Chairman/Town Mayor and Deputy Chairman/Town Mayor positions for 2020/21.

Cllr Norris proposed Cllr Phillips be confirmed as Chairman/Town Mayor for 2020/21. Cllr Wright seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.
Cllr Phillips proposed Cllr Lea be confirmed as Deputy Chairman/Mayor for 2020/21. Cllr Wright seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C041/20 To receive a Notice of Resignation from a Town Councillor.

The Clerk reported receipt of a Notice of Resignation from Cllr Martin Spurling.

Councillors expressed their best wishes to Martin and paid tribute to the time and effort he had applied in his term as a Town Councillor.

C042/20 To confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held 4th March 2020.

The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held Wednesday 4th March 2020 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

C043/20 To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interest for Matters on the Agenda.

Cllr MG Norris – Planning Matters

C044/20 To receive reports from the County Councillor, District Councillors and to take questions from members of the public

Suffolk 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:

- COVID-19 related news
- First business benefits from Suffolk County Council's free solar panel scheme
- Better Broadband for Suffolk reaches 100,000th customer as third phase contract is agreed.

County Councillor Oakes added news of the intention of Network Rail to install steel beams directly under the Coddendam Road railway bridge structure to protect it from the regular occasions on which it is struck by vehicles. There will also be new signage which it was agreed should be consulted on with the Town Council.

Cllr Lea referred to the current diversion of traffic off the A14 onto the B1113, including Needham Market High Street, during night-time hours and which is causing buildings to shake as heavy goods

vehicles pass through the town. She asked if a contraflow was considered as an alternative to rerouting. County Councillor Oakes replied that a contraflow was not possible due to the lack of width of a14 road lanes which would make recovery of any broken-down vehicle impossible, within a contraflow.

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

Discretionary Grant expands to reach more businesses.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have reopened applications for the Discretionary Grant with expanded criteria to support businesses who have not been able to claim any other grants during the Coronavirus crisis. The expanded scheme which now includes retail, hospitality, and leisure businesses with a rateable value between £51-71K, Ofsted registered Early Years providers and other small businesses, opened for applications on Friday 3rd July and they have to be submitted by Friday 24th July. To access a Discretionary Grant of between £2,500 and £10,000, eligible businesses, who have not claimed any other grants (excluding the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme) must complete an online application form with their relevant supporting documents. The grant allowance has been set individually by each local authority depending on the level of funding they have received from Government while also aiming to support as many small businesses as possible. The Small Business Grant and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Funds are both still open for new applications. For more information about the Discretionary Grant including criteria and application requirements, or for any queries, please contact: discretionarybusinessgrant@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

Councils' blueprint for the future gets green light.

On 6th July Cabinets at Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils approved a raft of environmental measures to help the councils achieve their ambition of becoming carbon neutral by 2030. The proposals, approved at the two councils' simultaneous cabinet meetings, were developed by a cross-party Environment and Climate Change Task Force. This decision will now form the councils' first Carbon Reduction Management Plan, setting out how they aim to fulfil their ambitions of becoming carbon neutral within the next ten years. These are the first steps in achieving the long-term objective to reduce the councils' current emissions of approximately 5,452 metric tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) per year, looking into how best to invest in order to reduce this to net zero. The plan follows the climate emergency motions passed by both councils in 2019 and the creation of the Joint Environment and Climate Change Task Force. A subgroup of the task force has also been created to look at how the councils can strengthen biodiversity in the districts – with work now underway following an initial delay, due to the emergency response required by the councils to support communities through the immediate impact of COVID-19.

Updated position on the collection of CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy)

Mid Suffolk District Council is now returning to normal arrangements for the collection of CIL, following the deferred payment scheme offered to housebuilders in the district between April and June 2020.

Needham Lake Visitor Centre.

As a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, work on the visitor centre design details and construction has inevitably been put back. It is now very unlikely that the visitor centre will be in operation this year, the anticipated revised target date being for Easter next year.

A member of public asked what the latest position is regarding the Crowley Park Refurbishment Project. Cllr Phillips replied that drawings had been commissioned and provided by an architect and these had been consulted on with pavilion users. The current stage is the obtaining of quotations for the refurbishment work. Section 106 (developer contributions) funds are available to finance the project.

C045/20 To receive a report of the activities of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on behalf of the Town.

Cllr Phillips reported attending the wake of former Town Council Warden Bill Chilvers, held at Needham Market Community Centre, on Thursday 19th March.

Cllr Phillips reported attending a meeting with the Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk and representatives from other Town Councils on 6th July. The meeting took place via video conferencing.

C046/20 To consider the impact of COVID-19 on the town and Council's operation and processes.

The Clerk reported an overview of Council operations in the period from the start of the COVID-19 lockdown during which basic functionality has been maintained. The Council's resources have been subject to the impact of COVID-19 including that on individual staff, which has followed the sudden and sad loss of the Town Warden in February. The Council now needed to take stock of its current position and consideration needs to be given to numerous projects, which have been stalled by COVID-19, as to how and when they may be restarted.

The Clerk recommended, in view of the continuing COVID-19 restrictions, current staff resource and availability of Councillors, Council consider moving to one meeting each month (third Wednesday) until current year end.

Cllr Phillips proposed Council adopt the Clerk's recommendation. Cllr Wright seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

Cllr Annis asked whether the Planning Section would continue its current approach, consulting with all Councillors, as appropriate. Cllr O'Shea confirmed the approach would continue and, if necessary, an extension of the Planning Authority's consultation period would be sought should that be required for any planning matter.

Councillors thanked the Council's staff for continuing to keep the Council's operations and processes active during the COVID-19 period.

C047/20 To receive a report from the Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

The Clerk reported despite the impact of COVID-19, good progress on the Neighbourhood Plan has been achieved, including with the welcome support from Council's Neighbourhood Planning Consultants. The REG14 Draft Neighbourhood Plan has been updated with responses received resulting from statutory and local community consultation and is now being readied for the next REG16 stage which entails submission of the plan to Mid Suffolk District Council who are then bound to carry out further consultation. In the meantime, AECOM has completed and provided the Draft Design Guidelines report, which supplements the Feasibility Study completed in June 2018.

Cllr O'Shea agreed to stand in and lead the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group whilst Cllr Stansfield remains temporarily unable to undertake that responsibility. Cllrs Phillips and Ost will be key Group members supporting Cllr O'Shea.

C048/20 To consider the content of a letter received from the Trustees of Needham Market Institute.

The Clerk referred Councillors to correspondence received from the Trustees of Needham Market Institute in response to the Council's request for information relating to the distribution of funds, made by the Trustees, following the sale of The Institute premises.

The Chairman of the Trustees, being present, was invited to speak. The Chairman gave details of the amounts distributed to various organisations in the town plus, there had been costs paid to a solicitor. It is intended records held by the Trustees will be condensed and passed to the Suffolk Records Office when the distribution process is finalised.

C049/20 To nominate a Town Council representative to the Mid Suffolk Disability Forum.

Cllr Phillips said he would be prepared to represent Council on the Forum and was duly nominated.

C050/20 To consider the current consultation taking place in respect of the new (Councillor) National Code of Conduct.

Councillors agreed the new Code of Conduct was necessary but had no specific comment in response to the consultation.

C051/20 To consider the consultation for the proposed joint police/fire station in Stowmarket.

Councillors agreed the proposal made sense from logistical, operational and financial perspectives.

C052/20 To consider correspondence received relating to land rear of 6-16 Chainhouse Road.

Councillors had been forwarded many items of correspondence, relating to the area of land rear of 6-16 Chainhouse Road, when received by the Clerk.

A member of public present asked what the Town Council's position would be should a planning application be submitted for development of the land.

The Clerk confirmed that no planning application had been submitted to date.

Councillors agreed that, should a planning application be submitted, it will be subject to consultation by the Town Council, at which point the merits or otherwise of what is proposed can be considered and a position taken at that time.

C053/20 To consider correspondence received relating to the establishment of a residents' parking permit scheme in the High Street.

Councillors had been forwarded several items of correspondence, relating to the establishment of a residents' parking permit scheme in the High Street, when received by the Clerk and which had largely arisen as a result of the recent implementation of Civil Parking Enforcement.

Cllr Norris referred to his Highways, Lighting and Footpaths report, for tabling later in the meeting which concluded: Therefore it appears that a residents' parking scheme on the High Street is not viable, and I will investigate whether a scheme could be incorporated into the public parking provision in the redevelopment of the former District Council Offices site.

Cllr Lea said the difficulty High Street residents, plus visitors and shoppers, have finding parking provision has been exacerbated by Mid Suffolk District Council closing its Hurstlea Road car park.

C054/20 Clerk's Report and Correspondence to be noted.

1. Actions from Town Council Meeting 4th March 2020

C036/20 – Letter sent to the Trustees of Needham Market Institute 13th March 2020

2. Issues:

- Update on the Scout Hut replacement project

The Clerk reported he is awaiting architect's plans and drawings which he will submit, as a planning application, to Mid Suffolk District Council.

- Public Toilets update

Cllr Lea commented the work to make the toilet building robust and secure requires completing and, before they can become operational, a process for coping with the Covid-19 situation will have to be in place.

- Town Warden Role

The Clerk reported, in the short-term, contractors will be engaged to carry out a small number of tasks previously included within the Town Warden job role whilst the vacant post situation remains under review.

3. *Correspondence to be noted:*

- Email 13th July from SALC giving notice of its AGM, Thursday 30th July at 7pm, via Zoom conferencing

C055/20 SECTIONS

C055/20/1 Finance and Governance

C055/20/1a 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 Annis proposed adoption of the accounts. Cllr Lea seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C055/20/1b Accounts for Year Ending 31st March 2020

Cllr Phillips proposed adoption of the accounts for the year ending 31st March 2020. Cllr O'Shea seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C055/20/1c Confirmation and signing of the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) 2019/20

Cllr Annis informed Council this item is postponed to its 19th August meeting.

C055/20/1c Confirmation and signing of the Annual Accounting Statements (Section 2) for Year Ending 31st March 2020

Cllr Annis informed Council this item is postponed to its 19th August meeting.

C055/20/1d To receive a report from the Section Leader

Cllr Annis reported the Finance and Governance Section will next meet on Tuesday 11th August at 10am in the Town Council Office.

C055/20/2 Recreation & Sport

C055/20/2a To receive a report from the Section Leader.

Cllr Phillips expressed his frustration with Mid Suffolk District Council for the delay in receiving confirmation of s.106 funding (Developer Contributions) for proposals for improvements at Crowley Park. The latest correspondence from the Council again raised questions, comprehensive responses to which have already been provided.

C055/20/3 Town Property and Services

C055/20/3a To receive a report from the Section Leader

Cllr Lea referred to the Payphone Consultation documentation received from Mid Suffolk District Council which identified the payphone to the front of the former Mid Suffolk District Council office building in the High Street, as being severely underused. Councillors considered the evidence provided regarding underuse and, looked at potential options for reusing the payphone kiosk, which were concluded as not practical.

Cllr Lea proposed Council agree to the removal of the phone box. Cllr Norris seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

Cllr Lea informed Council a quotation has been received for maintenance works to be carried out on the Public Realm area on the Needham Maltings site, for which the Town Council is responsible. The work is to be paid for from within the Town Property Section budget.

Cllr Annis proposed the quotation be accepted and the works approved. Cllr O'Shea seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

Cllr Lea reported a quotation is awaited from a stone mason in respect of repairs required to the commemorative plaque located at Barretts Lane Corner.

Cllr Lea proposed the works be approved as soon as a quotation is received. Cllr Annis seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

Cllr Lea said she is to liaise with Cllr Wright over the prospect of obtaining bicycle racks which are needed in various locations in the town.

C055/20/4 Newsletter and Communications

C055/20/4a To receive a report from the Section Leader

Cllr Phillips presented his following report, which was tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book:

There is little to report on the Newsletter front other than that Gipping Press are enquiring as to whether we feel it is time to bring back the Newsletter and it would be safe to deliver it.

The Website is another matter Cllr Reardon has kept busy on this and has given me a short report on what he has achieved so far:

‘The website at <https://www.needhammarketc.co.uk/> is looking better.

If any info comes through to the office, I am finding a corner of the website to display it. So far; The News page has full details of the A14 closure and diversion routes being used. Remembering night-time northbound traffic would have started using the High Street by the meeting date.

Covid-19 has its own updated page.

Library announcement about re opening.

The Flu Jab program in the Country Practice also now has its own page.

Once on the web site I then advertise the subject on the Town Council Noticeboard Facebook Page. This post contains a link to our website directing traffic to our site making people aware that it exists. That is why I think any Social Media page we create should be issue free. Its main aim would be to communicate information out and to direct people to the resources/information on our web site.’

I would like to thank Cllr Reardon for his efforts at this time and stepping into a hot chair at short notice.

C055/20/5 Planning

Cllr O’Shea reported no Planning Section meetings had taken place during the COVID-19 lockdown period, Planning business has been managed with the participation of Section Members and, when appropriate, inclusive of all Councillors, to arrive at conclusions which the Clerk has submitted to the Planning Authority consultations. Planning Decision Notices and other Notices received in the lockdown period had been noted and actions taken, when necessary, as appropriate.

C055/20/5a Planning Decisions and other Notices received

There were none to report.

C055/20/5b Planning Applications Received

Cllr O’Shea reported the following Planning Applications had been received:

DC/20/02426 Willisham Hall, Willisham Hall Road, Willisham, Ipswich, Suffolk IP8 4SL.
Application for Outline Planning Permission. (Access and Scale to be considered) Erection of 11no dwellings, commercial B1 (office) space, A1/A3 farm shop/cafe, new vehicular access, new footpath, play area and associated parking, landscaping and attenuation basin.

Cllr O'Shea proposed Council take a neutral approach to the application but with comment; the Town Council will expect Suffolk County Council Highways, in its assessment of the application, to take account of the impact of additional traffic that will be generated on the B1078 Barking Road and in particular, on its entrance to Needham Market, where risk of vehicle accidents is already prevalent. Cllr Lea seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

DC/20/02716 4 Lime Tree Close, Needham Market. Application for works to a tree protected by Tree Preservation Order MS182 - Crown reduce height and spread of 1No Walnut tree (T1) by 2-2.5m.

Cllr O'Shea proposed Council support approval of the application on condition it is approved by the District Council's Tree Officer. Cllr Lea seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal

DC/20/02581 96 Stowmarket Road Needham Market. Householder Application - Erection of detached cartlodge/outbuilding (retention of).

Cllr O'Shea proposed Council support approval of the application. Cllr Annis seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

DC/20/02848 6 Saxon Park Barretts Lane Needham Market. Householder Planning Application - Construction of step lift access.

Cllr O'Shea proposed Council support approval of the application. Cllr Annis seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

DC/20/02090 Getford Barn, Badley Bridge House, Badley Hill, Badley, Ipswich, Suffolk IP6 8RJ. Full Planning Application - Use of building for 1No residential dwelling.

Councillors agreed comment already submitted should be reiterated.

C055/20/5c Planning Report

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.

C055/20/6 Highways, Lighting and Footpaths

C055/20/6a To receive a report from the Section Leader

Cllr Norris presented the following report, which was tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book:

Parking on the High Street.

Following the implementation of CPE (Civil Parking Enforcement) on 1st April this year we have received requests for a residents' parking scheme in the High Street, where some residents have received parking tickets. I refer to the email forwarded by Kevin, our Clerk, advising that County Cllr. Kay Oakes has discussed the matter with a senior officer from the County Council's Speed and Safety Management Team with the following outcome:

'To create a resident parking 'zone' requires a TRO (Traffic Regulation Order), which can cost up to £15,000.

To be viable it would need one hundred people to sign up (they are usually installed on residential housing estates).

The County Council would not support the idea as High Street parking is essential for visitors to the town and to the local economy.

On occasion, District Councils have apportioned part of their own car parks to residents and applied the permit scheme (this might be viable on the old District Council offices site).

This situation is cropping up all over the County since the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement.'

Therefore it appears that a residents' parking scheme on the High Street is not viable, and I will investigate whether a scheme could be incorporated into the public parking provision in the redevelopment of the former District Council Offices site.

Possible 20mph speed limit through Needham Market.

This had been suggested in view of the existing A14 traffic diversion through the town, which is scheduled to operate until 4th August and is necessitated by resurfacing works on the A14 westbound carriageway including the stretch up to the A1120 junction which is the alternative diversion route to that through Needham Market. Highways England, who are responsible for the A14 as it is a trunk road, have advised as follows:

‘We understand the concerns of local residents regarding our diversion route through Needham Market, traffic not adhering to the 30mph speed limit and the affect this may have on residents along the High Street.

I can confirm that prior to our works taking place, Highways England, Suffolk Highways and local Councillors (County Councillors) met to discuss diversion routes for each phase. The route through Needham Market was agreed as the most appropriate diversion while works take place on the A14 westbound between junction 52 and 50. To alleviate the amount of traffic on the B1113, a second diversion will be in place via Norwich Road, Claydon for A14 traffic wishing to exit at junction 51 to join the A140.

In order to change the speed limit through Needham Market from 30mph to 20mph, a temporary traffic order would be required however this takes 12 weeks to process and would therefore not be ready in time for our works.

We are planning to install additional 30mph signage through Needham Market, to remind motorists to adhere to the speed limit. For the duration of this diversion route, we will continue to monitor A14 traffic through Needham Market and if issues are identified, we will address them accordingly.

In addition to the speed limit signs, we will also install signs warning motorists of the low railway bridges in Needham Market. This is to mitigate against drivers of high-sided vehicles deviating from the B1113 diversion towards junction 51.

We are also aware of a section of road between Grinstead Hill and the B1078 Barking Road, where on-street parking prevents free-flowing traffic. As mitigation, we will be installing two-way traffic lights to prioritise flow for diverted traffic through this section. These lights will be manned every shift to monitor traffic queues, enabling us to change the traffic light sequence if necessary.’

Cllr Annis said he felt the additional 30mph signage in the High Street during the period of diversion of traffic off the A14 was counterproductive as it encouraged traffic to travel at that or a greater speed and, the District Council owned strip of land known as ‘Lime Walk’, off Stowmarket Road, could be converted to provide car parking for the town centre. Cllr Norris said he believed the District Council would not be keen on the latter point but nevertheless, he will make initial enquiries.

Councillors discussed the merits of a 20mph speed limit in the High Street if that were at all possible. County Councillor Oakes commented Suffolk County Council Highways advise 20mph speed limits are ineffective and, should one ever be agreed, it will require a Traffic Regulation Order to implement, at a cost of at least £10,000.

County Councillor Oakes said she could fund the purchase of a Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS), for use in the town’s Conservation Area. Councillors agreed it as an item for future consideration.

Cllr Lea proposed an extension of 10 minutes to the meeting end time, should it become necessary, to conclude business. Cllr Wright seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C056/20 Questions under Standing Order 40.

Cllr Wright asked whether Councillors were aware that he could, in view of the lack of a current Town Warden and his employment in the relevant sector, assist with arranging works to be undertaken on maintaining Council’s assets etc.

Cllr Norris proposed, pursuant to Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public should be excluded from the meeting for the business specified below on the grounds that if the public were present during this item, it is likely that there would be the disclosure to them of exempt information. The presenters of the reports proposed to be considered are satisfied that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. Cllr Wright seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C057/20/I To receive a report on a Town Council land asset.

The Clerk reported on a Council asset and an enquiry regarding a purchase/leasehold.

Cllr Phillips proposed, on the basis a strong precedent may be set, the response to the enquiry be negative. Cllr Annis seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C057/20/II To receive a report on Major Civic Event Planning.

Cllr Phillips presented an update on the latest arrangements attached to planning for a Major Civic Event.

The Meeting closed at 9:31 pm.

Chairman **Date**