

## **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 19<sup>th</sup> August 2020 at 7:30pm.

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

### **Apologies for Absence:**

Cllr I Mason – COVID-19 Precaution  
Cllr P Wright - Work Commitment

Suffolk County Councillor Kay Oakes

**In Attendance:** Mid Suffolk District Councillors Mike Norris and Steve Phillips, one member of public and the Town Clerk.

### **C058/20 To confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020.**

The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

### **C059/20 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 (DC/20/01496)  
Cllr X Stansfield - Accounts for Payment (Community Centre)

### **C060/20 To receive reports from the County Councillor, District Councillors and to take questions from members of the public**

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

- Suffolk CoronaWatch launches
- Council proposes unprecedented environmental plans in response to climate emergency
- Next steps to improve the region's rail service
- The Hold moves a step closer to completion
- Funding secured for summer holiday activity and food programme
- Vans, trailers and trade waste now accepted at nine of Suffolk's recycling centres
- Suffolk granted more funding for emergency walking and cycling schemes

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

**From response to recovery:** Over the past 4 months, the Collaborative Communities COVID-19 Board has been focusing on responding to the pandemic and supporting Suffolk. This includes the Home, But Not Alone phonenumber, food and medication deliveries, emergency food parcels, foodbanks, emergency housing and other support services.

Due to the continued easing of restrictions, the Board has agreed to move from an emergency response phase into recovery. Although there is a change of focus, the Board is conscious that the situation is changeable and will be ready to respond to any local outbreaks should the need arise.

As we move to recovery, the Board has agreed to focus on the following themes:

- Food and hardship
- Housing
- Support to the voluntary and community sector
- Restoring the social infrastructure of our communities and combatting loneliness

**Spotlight on Suffolk's Food Banks:** Food banks are designed to provide short-term, emergency support with food during a crisis. Their aim is to relieve the immediate pressure of the crisis by providing food, whilst also providing additional support to help people resolve the crises that they face. As Covid-19 continues to unfold food banks have been hit hard in terms of meeting increasing demand with a matching supply. They play a major role in the provision of food by distributing donated and purchased groceries directly to families in need.

Pre-C19 there were just over 20 established food banks in Suffolk; there are now 49 established and pop up food banks operating weekly.

Since the end of March 2020, Community Action Suffolk (CAS) has been working in partnership with Suffolk County Council, Ipswich Borough Council and East Suffolk, Babergh and Mid Suffolk and West Suffolk Councils to establish a food supply chain to food banks across Suffolk. The newly formed collaboration has continued to meet regularly to look at the information being collected from food banks and offer help where needed; this has included additional food at short notice and extra storage. CAS have been able to provide advice on both funding and sustainability and appropriate governance for those food banks looking at a more formal structure going forward.

The National food charity FareShare has a base in Suffolk and has been a member of CAS for a number of years. CAS contacted FareShare who already supplied food banks across Suffolk to ask them to take on further food banks. This partnership has gone from strength to strength and with help from the MOD for deliveries, FareShare is continuing to expand the number of food banks it supplies weekly.

A member of public raised various questions relating to Crowley Park. Cllr Phillips confirmed the District Council is currently refusing to release funds from s.106 Developer Contributions to enable the replacement of the Barretts Lane boundary fence and, the Youth Football Club is undertaking improvements to the pavilion ahead of proposed major refurbishment works for which s.106 funding remains allocated.

**C061/20 To receive a report of the activities of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on behalf of the Town.**

Cllr Phillips reported attending:

- the unveiling of a plaque, commemorating former Town Warden Bill Chilvers, held at Needham Market Burial Ground on 13<sup>th</sup> August.
- the VJ Commemoration Ceremony held at Barretts Lane Corner on 14<sup>th</sup> August, including the laying of a wreath

The Deputy Mayor had no activity to report.

**C062/20 To receive a report from the Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.**

There was no report.

**C063/20 To consider the requirement of s.85 Local Government Act 1972 (6-month Rule for Councillors attendance at Council Meetings).**

The Clerk referred Councillors to the terms of s.85 Local Government Act 1972.

Councillors considered the protracted absence of Cllr Mason in the knowledge he remains subject to COVID-19 precautions.

Cllr Phillips proposed Council waive the terms of s.85 Local Government Act 1972, as they relate to Cllr Mason's absence until the next meeting of the Council (16<sup>th</sup> September) when the matter will, if necessary, be reconsidered. Cllr Reardon seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

## **C064/20 Clerk's Report and Correspondence to be noted.**

### *1. Actions from Town Council Meeting 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020*

- C051/20** – Consultation response emailed 6<sup>th</sup> August
- C055/20/3a** – Consultation response emailed 6<sup>th</sup> August
- C057/20/ii** – Response emailed 10<sup>th</sup> August

### *2. Issues:*

- Review of the status of Council Sections – timetable for review.

The Clerk suggested the following: 1. Initial ideas/options to Finance & Governance Section meeting 10<sup>th</sup> November 2. Finance & Governance Section Report to full Council 18<sup>th</sup> November 3. Agreement on and adoption of new structure by end January 2021 4. Include details of new structure in March 2021 Town Council Newsletter 5. New structure operational following Annual Town Council Meeting May 2021.

Councillors endorsed the above timetable.

### *3. Correspondence to be noted:*

- Letter received 18<sup>th</sup> August from the Licensing Team, Mid Suffolk District Council, notifying of the consultation it is undertaking on its revised statutory Licensing Act 2003: Statement of Licensing Policy. The deadline for comments is 16<sup>th</sup> September.

## **C065/20 SECTIONS**

### **C065/20/1 Finance and Governance**

#### **C065/20/1a 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 Lea proposed adoption of the accounts. Cllr Norris seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

#### **C065/20/1b Adoption of the Council's Asset Register (as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020)**

Cllr Annis referred to the document tabled and proposed adoption of the Council's Asset Register (as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020). Cllr Lea seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

#### **C065/20/1c Confirmation and signing of the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) 2019/20**

Cllr Phillips read out questions 1 to 9 from the Statement and recorded Council's agreed response to each.

Cllr Annis proposed confirmation and signing of the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) 2019/20. Cllr Lea seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

#### **C065/20/1c Confirmation and signing of the Annual Accounting Statements (Section 2) for Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020**

Cllr Annis proposed confirmation and signing of the Annual Accounting Statements (Section 2) for Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020. Cllr Lea seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

#### **C065/20/1d To receive a report from the Section Leader**

Cllr Annis presented the following Minutes from the meeting of the Finance and Governance Section held on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> August, which were tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book.

### **Present**

Councillors: J. Lea, S. Phillips (Town Mayor), M. Ost, M. O'Shea, B. Annis (Chairman) and Mr. K. Hunter (Town Clerk).

### **Apologies**

Councillors: M. Norris, X. Stansfield, I. Mason

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the last F and G meeting held on the 4<sup>th</sup> February 2020 had been adopted by the full Town Council at its meeting held on the 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020 (C019/20/1b).

### **Review of Financial Management**

- a) **The Report of the Internal Auditor** was discussed. It was agreed to take forward the consideration and implementation of internet banking.
- The reference to s137 in the accounts should refer to the Local Government Act 1972. Regular meetings of the Employment Committee should be properly recorded, and any Staff pay increases properly authorised. Disciplinary and grievance procedures should be in place, in order to demonstrate risk management with regards to staff matters. It was agreed to recommend the Employment Committee meets quarterly.
- The current Employment Committee is currently Councillors J. Lea, B. Annis, and the Town Mayor. Councillor X. Stansfield is currently not available.
- In order to annually verify the Asset Register it is recommended that it should be treated as a separate agenda item when reviewing the Annual Accounts.
- The photographing of the notice of the public right as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations should continue as further evidence of compliance, as should be notification on the Town Council website.
- Full Town Council must consider the Annual Audit Reports and action accordingly. Council Standing Orders should be reviewed annually. Current Standing Orders have been prepared and are awaiting adoption by the Council.
- The same goes for the Financial Standing Orders, but these will require further revision if, and when Internet Banking is brought in.
- From the Audit Report it is becoming obvious that the present system of Sections reporting to Full Council does not give sufficient transparency. The current system must be reviewed. The Sections are actual standing committees of the Council and as such must be open to public scrutiny.
- It was agreed that a full review of the governance of the Council should be undertaken, and that the F and G should put forward proposals to the Council at the earliest opportunity.

It was noted that the minutes of Standing Committees should be produced by a Clerk of the Council.

A preliminary discussion suggested that the number of full Council meetings could reduce and Standing Committees could meet monthly or bi-monthly or, as required.

It would be important that Committee Chairmen be appointed by Council, and that all Councillors would be expected to serve on one or more committees.

The Council needs to urgently ensure that it is fully compliant with the requirements of the Data Protection Regulations, and that the list of the 5 requirements are met.

### **b) Investments**

The Town Council investments have not changed. But it was noted that notification of a reduction in the interest rates had been received.

### **Review of the Town Council priorities for funding.**

It is not easy in current circumstances to fully identify the future funding required to complete the current projects being undertaken by the Council, and to identify future expenditure. But it was important that Section Leaders consider this when preparing their Section (or Committee) budgets for the next financial year. The Finance and Governance Section will be considering the budget for the year 2021/2022 at its next meeting.

### **Employment Committee Report**

The Audit Report indicated the requirements that need to be met. The Committee should meet quarterly, be properly minuted and should have in place a staff disciplinary and grievance procedure.

The Town Clerk was asked to review the current staffing arrangements in light of the loss of the Town Warden, the effect of COVID-19 plus, recent approved staff absence and, to report back to the Employment Committee at the earliest opportunity.

### **Town Council Risk Assessment**

The meeting acknowledged with thanks, the revision of the Risk Assessment undertaken by the Town Clerk and the subsequent adoption of the document by the Council. The impact of COVID-19 had necessitated further and additional Risk Assessments, and the Town Clerk had completed the necessary assessments relating to the Council, Councillors and Staff.

### **Budget Setting.**

The meeting to set the recommended budget for the financial year 2021/2022 would be the next F and G Committee meeting. In the meantime, Section Leaders are asked to prepare their Section's recommended budget for presentation at that meeting.

### **Financial Matters raised by Section Leaders**

- a) **Town Property** Councillor Lea asked for confirmation that the wages of a Town Warden, a Cleaner and the maintenance of the Town's public realm areas should be included in Town property budget. It was agreed this was the case whether, or not Council replaced the Town Warden, as there would still be a cost for employing contractors to do works. The new public toilets have yet to be completed, and the work involved ideally requires a multi-skilled tradesman. COVID-19 regulations have been issued relating to the use of public toilets. The completion of the work to bring them into use is predicated upon resolving the public use and locating suitable resources to complete the work. The current budget is sufficient to cover the outstanding work. Councillor O'Shea offered his services to design the necessary ramp to enable disabled access to the toilets.
- b) **Highways and Lighting.** Councillor Norris had provided a report confirming he is awaiting a response from County Cllr. Kay Oakes on the possible assistance mentioned by her from her Highways Locality Budget towards the cost of improving the appearance / replacing the railings at Badley Bridge. He has also asked our County Councillor to investigate the possibility of a permanent 20 mph speed limit through the Town centre or any other method to reduce the effect of speeding traffic, which has been highlighted by the recent A14 diversion.
- c) **Newsletter and Communications.** The Town Clerk was able to report that a September edition of the Newsletter will be produced thanks to Gipping Press. The delivery team is in place. Newsletter advertisers have been given a free years advertising in consideration of the loss of the newsletter for 4 editions and the effect of COVID-19 on businesses. The Town Council website is being worked on towards compliance with forthcoming accessibility regulations, and thanks are due to Councillor J. Reardon for this and his work in maintaining the site. The work on the website should be included as an agenda item and minuted in the Section meetings.

- d) **Planning including Strategic Planning.** Financial planning matters are confined to the production of the Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan is in the final draft form and should soon be ready for submission to the District Council for further public consultation under the provisions of Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.
- e) **Recreation and Sport** Councillor Phillips reported the pothole in the Crowley Park car park was getting bigger and he would be seeking quotations for its repair. The project to refurbish the play equipment and provide a skateboard facility had currently stalled, not helped by the COVID-19 situation. The Barretts lane fencing is held up awaiting a response from the District Council in respect of s.106 funding. He went on to ask for support from the Town Council in respect of the grant application for funds to enable the Needham Market Phoenix Youth Football Club to carry out improvement works on the pavilion. The Section agreed a letter of support, as requested by NMYFC, should be sent by the Clerk. The Cricket Club (Mr. Andy Burgess) had agreed to undertake certain caretaker duties on Crowley Park. Cllr Phillips and the Town Clerk had isolated unusable equipment in the children's play area and requisite COVID-19 notices have been posted at the park.
- f) **Any Other Business.** Councillor Lea asked if the 6-month Councillor Attendance Rule was still relevant and in operation, whereby a councillor lost his/her seat after failing to attend for a consecutive period of 6 months. It was agreed that the Rule was still relevant. However, the COVID-19 situation has affected some Councillors more than others and each case should be treated with that in mind. In certain circumstances, a written application to Council describing the reason for a Councillor's absence should be made for consideration as to whether the Attendance Rule could be waived. The Town Clerk raised the matter of the untidy and insecure site which was the old Middle School. The Clerk's description had been passed to the District Council by our District Councillors. The description included photographs that highlighted the effects of vandalism, unlawful access and the general disgraceful state of the premises. This had resulted in a positive response from the District Council which had sent in a maintenance team to secure the property. There was no further business and meeting closed at 12.00 noon.

#### **Date location and timing of the next Finance and Governance Meeting.**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at 10.00.am at a location to be announced nearer the time.

Cllr Annis proposed adoption of the Minutes. Cllr Ost seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

#### **C065/20/2 Recreation & Sport**

##### **C065/20/2a To receive a report from the Section Leader.**

Cllr Phillips referred Councillors to his report to the Finance & Governance meeting held 11<sup>th</sup> August.

Cllr Darnell asked why improvements were currently being undertaken at Crowley Park pavilion when a full refurbishment was planned. Cllr Phillips explained the Youth Football Club has obtained grant funding from The FA, which is being used towards immediate improvements including those which provide increased safety and security in relation to COVID-19. He added that any drawings/plans received will be forwarded to Councillors.

Cllr Annis asked if the Crowley Park Skatepark Project was in scope of s.106 funding for Crowley Park. Cllr Phillips confirmed it is not in scope.

Cllr Annis said it is extremely frustrating that Mid Suffolk District Council has refused to release s.106 funds to pay for a replacement fence along the Crowley Park/Barretts Lane boundary, as it is an essential improvement necessary for providing for the safe and secure use of the park by the local community. Cllr Stansfield and the Clerk informed Councillors of the background and circumstances of the s.106 agreement relating to Crowley Park, which had been so poorly and

ineffectively managed by Mid Suffolk District Council, to the detriment of the local community. Cllr Phillips said he and the Clerk will challenge the District Council on its refusal to release funds.

### **C065/20/3 Town Property and Services**

#### **C065/20/3a To receive a report from the Section Leader**

Cllr Lea reported the contractor engaged to carry out works on the Jubilee Crescent public realm area is not yet on site but will follow this up to get a start date.

### **C065/20/4 Newsletter and Communications**

#### **C065/20/4a To receive a report from the Section Leader**

Cllr Phillips reported Cllr Reardon continues his work on improving the Town Council website.

Cllr Norris asked if the September Newsletter was in production and when the is deadline for content. The Clerk confirmed the deadline remained the 8<sup>th</sup> of the month prior and, unless there is an unexpected problem, a September edition remains probable.

### **C065/20/5 Planning**

Cllr O'Shea reported planning business continues to be managed online with the participation of Section Members and, when appropriate, inclusive of all Councillors, to arrive at conclusions which the Clerk will submit to the Planning Authority consultations. When consultation deadlines allow, planning applications and Section recommendations will be reported to and considered by full Town Council meetings for resolution.

#### **C065/20/5a Planning Decisions and other Notices received**

Cllr O'Shea reported the following Decision Notices had been received:

**DC/20/02511** - 26 High Street - Work to fell holly tree  
District Council Does Not object

**DC/19/05166** - Mill Meadow Picnic area, Coddendam Rd - Amendments to design and structure  
Approved

**DC/20/01496** - 137 High Street - Listed Building application - Installation of pargetted render  
Listed Building Consent Granted

**DC/20/02063** - Former Timber Yard, Coddendam Rd - Discharge of conditions.  
Discharge of Conditions Approved: Materials, Land Contamination, Long Term Monitoring, Restrict Piling/Penetration, Pedestrian Visibility  
Discharge of Conditions Refused: Environmental Management, Reptile Monitoring, Biodiversity Enhancement, Wildlife and Lighting

**DC/20/02581** - 96 Stowmarket Road - Erection of cart lodge outbuilding  
Planning Permission Granted

**DC/20/02848** - 6 Saxon Park, Barretts Lane – Construction of a Step lift access  
Planning Permission Granted

**DC/20/02881** - 20 Foxglove Ave - First floor extension and cladding  
Planning permission granted.

**DC/20/02716** – 4 Lime Tree Close – Crown reduce height and spread of 1 No. Walnut Tree  
Consent has been Granted

#### **C065/20/5b Planning Applications Received**

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

**DC/20/02881** - 20 Foxglove Avenue - Householder Planning Application - Erection of a first floor side extension and cladding existing elevations.

The Planning Section's considerations were:

One concern is that, after a structural engineer has submitted a Building Regulations application, the open steel column row may need further structural bracing and vehicle impact protection, meaning that the appearance may change. If this is the case, it should be referred back to MSDC Planning for further appraisal.

It was noted a member of public had contacted MSDC and copied NMTc with "The application of cladding to the existing building is not in keeping with the design of the house or other houses of the same design that have been extended....."

The Section noted that Planning Permission was subsequently granted, with standard conditions and informative clauses which referred to the need to refer the matter back to the LPA in the event of variations arising and the need to apply for Building Regulations approval.

**DC/20/03231** - The Old Vicarage, 3 Stowmarket Road - Household Planning Application - Erection of a single storey rear extension and detached garage/store (following demolition of garage/outbuildings).

The Planning Section recommends supporting approval of the application with the following comment:

The south facing wall of the proposed garage building is to be 'blockwork': whilst it is quite close to the boundary which is heavily planted, the 'blockwork' should nevertheless be of good external facing quality so that its appearance is not compromised.

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

**DC/20/03552** – 132-134 High Street – 1 No. Sycamore, Fell (causing damage to wall) 1 No. Cherry, Fell (Dead) 1 No. Silver Birch, Fell (causing damage to wall)

Cllr O'Shea proposed Council support approval of the application so long as the District Council's Tree Officer finds it satisfactory. Cllr Stansfield seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

### **C065/20/5c 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.

### **C065/20/6 Highways, Lighting and Footpaths**

#### **C065/20/6a 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:

The following items have already been mentioned in the Finance and Governance Section 11<sup>th</sup> August Meeting report:

- i) Badley Bridge Railings – I have requested an update from County Cllr. Kay Oakes on the possible assistance mentioned by her from her Highways Locality Budget towards the cost of improving the appearance of / replacing the railings, and I am awaiting a response.
- ii) Following comments from residents on the speed of HGVs travelling through the town in the early hours during the recent diversion for A14 resurfacing I have asked County Cllr. Kay Oakes to investigate with SCC Highways the cost of implementing a permanent 20mph speed limit, or any other possible mitigation measures that Highways can suggest.

Further items:

### **Public car park issue in Needham Market.**

District Cllr. Steve Phillips and myself, as the local ward members, were contacted by members of the public, who were very surprised to find that the free public car park and recycling centre behind



the former District Council offices site, which is to be redeveloped for housing, had been closed off with tall construction site type metal fencing without any warning.

Following our interventions, several notices have now been displayed on site giving directions for alternative temporary parking arrangements and the relocation of the recycling centre to the MSDC car park adjacent to the railway station building, although this does not now include a paper bank.

**A14 junction 58, Seven Hills to Junction 62, Felixstowe in both directions: resurfacing.**

Just a reminder to anyone travelling in that direction between those hours that resurfacing and associated works are planned to be carried out at the above location over 24 weeks commencing 10<sup>th</sup> August, between 8.00pm and 4.00am, subject to weather conditions. To keep up to date with the works programme and see diversion maps for each phase, please see the Highways England website using this address: <https://highwaysengland.co.uk/projects/a14-junction-58-to-junction-62-resurfacing-works-in-both-directions>.

**C066/20 Questions under Standing Order 40.**

Cllr Darnell asked whether Councillors were aware of the works undertaken by Needham in Bloom which greatly enhance the appearance of the town. Councillors acknowledged the works and expressed their gratitude to Needham in Bloom.

**The Meeting closed at 8:40 pm.**

Chairman ..... Date .....