

## **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 21<sup>st</sup> October 2020 at 7:30pm.

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

**Apologies for Absence:**

Cllr I Mason – COVID-19 Precaution

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

**C079/20 To confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held 16<sup>th</sup> September 2020.**

The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2020 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

**C080/20 To welcome and receive Declarations of Acceptance of Office from newly co-opted Town Councillors.**

Cllr Phillips welcomed the two new Councillors, Julie Kett and Liz Rix, who were co-opted to Council's vacant seats at its 16<sup>th</sup> September meeting. Each read out their acceptance of Office, which they signed, and the Clerk countersigned as Proper Officer of the Council.

**C081/20 To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interest for Matters on the Agenda.**

Cllr BE Annis – Accounts for Payment

Cllr MG Norris – Planning Matters

**C082/20 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:

- Council announces £300,000 for electric vehicle charging points in rural Suffolk
- Plotting the road to COVID recovery – Leaders agree £3.4 million investment in Suffolk's future
- County Council unable to support plans for Sizewell C
- Successful £4.4m adaptive street lighting project celebrates first year
- Window now open to apply for primary and secondary school places
- Suffolk County Council welcomes public consultation on improving rail capacity at Ely
- Have your say on a new political map for Suffolk County Council

County Councillor Oakes added, the new HGV weight limit road signage is now in place on Barking Road.

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:

**Covid-19 Update.** Earlier this month East and West Suffolk saw a steep incline in cases, putting them on the regional watchlist criteria set by Public Health England. This is when weekly cases reach 30 per 100,000 of the population. Mid Suffolk, Babergh and Ipswich have now reached that figure. Mid Suffolk's rate of 40.43 last week is up from 27.91 the previous week. In terms of actual case numbers this means 42 cases, up from 29. The rates are higher for 18-30 year-olds, which reflects the national pattern.

**Gateway 14, Stowmarket consultation.** The public consultation to provide early information and invite local feedback on the draft proposals for a mixed-use business park planned for land opposite

Tesco, Stowmarket adjacent to junction 50 on the A14, before plans are finalised, runs until 31<sup>st</sup> October and can be accessed at [www.q14yoursay.co.uk](http://www.q14yoursay.co.uk).

**Mid Suffolk and Babergh awarded £100,000 to help cover hotel costs for temporary accommodation.** Mid Suffolk and Babergh have been successful in securing funding to ensure interim accommodation for the most vulnerable over the winter period. The funding has been secured via the Next Steps Accommodation Programme, which is part of the government's landmark commitment to end rough sleeping for good. The two councils have never had a 'winter provision', such as a night shelter in the Districts before, so having funding to enable them to get rough sleepers off the streets promptly in spells of very cold weather is very welcome. They are 2 of 274 Councils who are being allocated £91.5m overall to help ensure vulnerable people are housed and continue to be housed, especially during the pandemic.

**New Chairman of MSDC chooses local charity. Cllr Barry Humphreys MBE, Councillor for Chilton ward, Stowmarket, was elected Chairman of Mid Suffolk District Council at the Annual Council Meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> September and has selected Stowmarket Dementia Action Alliance (DAA) as his chosen charity for the year.**

**New Public Realm Corporate Manager, MSDC/Babergh.** Will Burchnell has joined Mid Suffolk & Babergh District Councils as the new Public Realm Corporate Manager, and was previously with the National Trust, and before that the Broads Authority.

Cllr Darnell, referred to a current consultation on Gateway 14, the proposed mixed-use business park planned for land adjacent to junction 50 of the A14 in Stowmarket. Cllr Stansfield provided some background to the proposal. Cllr Phillips encouraged Councillors to access the online consultation and submit comment.

Cllr Darnell proposed Council reiterates its comment made to earlier consultations on the development proposal. Cllr Reardon seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

A member of public asked whether the recently created access to the Bosmere Community Primary School, located near to The Drift, is temporary or permanent, as it adds to difficulties that already exist with car parking in the vicinity. Cllr Norris said he is aware additional parking restrictions are proposed for roads close to schools but was unable to confirm whether this would affect the new access, neither could he confirm whether it is temporary or permanent. The member of public said he would come back to a future Council meeting if the parking issues persist.

A member of public representing residents of properties adjoining land (incorporating trees and a pond) at the end of School Street gave a number of reasons why the area should be left as it is. He referred to works already carried out on the land as being disrespectful of wildlife and the current Planning Notice of Works to Trees served on the Local Planning Authority (Mid Suffolk District Council) does not include provision for replacement of trees the works would see removed. He said the residents are aware the Planning Authority is not going to object to the Planning Notice.

Another member of public said residents would be happy if the Town Council could enforce a need for mitigation of the risk of flooding from the land if trees are removed and also if it could be found out what the long-term plans are for the site.

Cllr Phillips explained the Town Council can only act within scope of planning law and, it is not endowed with planning enforcement powers.

Cllr O'Shea advised the serving of the Planning Notice on the Local Planning Authority did not allow for the same consultation process as applies to Planning Applications. He agreed the Local Planning Authority has confirmed it will not proceed with Tree Preservation Orders for trees included in the Planning Notice as they are of insufficient quality to warrant Orders being placed on them. He added, the most positive way of resisting disturbance of the land would be to engage a body such as the Suffolk Wildlife Trust to support the residents' objections.

A member of public said some of the residents who had supported the objections to works being carried out on the land when activity started there earlier this year, had suffered intimidation from the owner, causing them to withdraw from direct involvement.

Cllr O'Shea concluded the discussion by stating that, should a planning application for development of the land be submitted to the Local Planning Authority, the Town Council will be a formal consultee and allow it to make a formal submission in relation to the value of the land as a green open space and a wildlife habitat.

**C083/20 To receive a report of the activities of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on behalf of the Town.**

The Mayor had no activity to report.

The Deputy Mayor reported, at the most recent Suffolk Association of Local Councils Local Forum, she stood down as Chairperson of the Forum and at the same time, as Deputy Chairperson of the Association, both after many years, adding she will continue as a Town Council representative on the Forum.

Cllr Phillips said, in past years the Town Council had nominated two representatives to the SALC Local Forum and he is willing to share representation with the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Lea. The Clerk agreed to include an appropriate item on the agenda for Council's 18<sup>th</sup> November meeting for Council to consider making a further nomination.

**C084/20 To receive a report from the Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.**

Cllr O'Shea referred Councillors to the three documents for which the review process had been formally concluded at Councils' 16<sup>th</sup> September meeting.

Cllr O'Shea proposed Council adopt the three documents for submission to Mid Suffolk District Council in accordance with The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. Cllr Ost seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

**C085/20 To receive arrangements for the Needham Market Remembrance Service 2020.**

The Clerk reported on the relatively lowkey arrangements planned for Remembrance Sunday. Cllr Annis gave further details regarding how the Service is to be conducted at the Parish Church of St John the Baptist.

**C086/20 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 (18<sup>th</sup> November) when the matter will, if necessary, be reconsidered. Cllr Lea seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

**C087/20 To consider Town Council nominations to Needham Market & Barking Welfare Charities.**

Cllr Annis proposed Cllr Phillips be nominated to the Needham Market & Barking Welfare Charities. Cllr Lea seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

**C088/20 Clerk's Report and Correspondence to be noted.**

1. *Actions from Town Council Meeting 16<sup>th</sup> September 2020*

**C066/20** – Email to Needham in Bloom 03.09.20

2. *Issues:*

- Review of the status of Council Sections – Finance & Governance due to consider initial ideas/options 10<sup>th</sup> November.
- Scout Hut Replacement Project – Plans submitted.
- New Park Keeper.
- Needham Market Middle School – project start imminent and possible salvage of items on site.
- Babergh and Mid Suffolk Innovation Awards – Nomination for High Street Business Award – Elton House nominated by Cllr Lea.
- Connect for Health – Motorhome drop-in held on Barretts Lane car park 23<sup>rd</sup> September.

3. *Correspondence to be noted:*

None.

**C089/20 SECTIONS**

**C089/20/1 Finance and Governance**

**C089/20/1a 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 O'Shea proposed adoption of the accounts. Cllr Lea seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

**C089/20/1b To receive a report from the Section Leader**

Cllr Annis reminded Councillors the Finance and Governance Section will meet on Tuesday 10th November with the meeting focussing on Council's budget preparation for 2021/22 plus the restructuring of the Council's governance arrangements.

**C089/20/2 Recreation & Sport**

**C089/20/2a To receive a report from the Section Leader.**

Cllr Phillips reported he and the Clerk are chasing Mid Suffolk District Council for a response to the questions raised regarding the proposed fencing of the Crowley Park boundary with Barretts Lane.

Cllr Phillips said he is considering a revised approach to the fencing of the boundary, which would incorporate an access for people with restricted mobility, to enable their use of park facilities.

Cllr Phillips proposed a construction company be engaged with to take an early view on the creation of a new off-road access point to Crowley Park. Cllr Darnell seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

**C089/20/3 Town Property and Services**

**C089/20/3a To receive a report from the Section Leader**

Cllr Lea referred to the High Street Christmas Trees display that would ordinarily be erected on the weekend of 28<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup> November. Councillors agreed the display should be erected and ways and means of arranging for that were discussed and are to be followed up.

**C089/20/4 Newsletter and Communications**

**C089/20/4a To receive a report from the Section Leader**

There was no report.

### **C089/20/5 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.

### **C089/20/5a Planning Decisions and other Notices received**

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

**DC/20/03231** The Old Vicarage, 3 Stowmarket Road. Construction of single storey extension to the rear of the premises.  
Planning Permission granted.

**DC/20/03475** 30 High Street. New house.  
Conditions relating to Archaeological Evaluation have been discharged.

**DC/19/05154** Freehold House, Freehold Road. Proposed erection of single storey house.  
Appeal against Planning Refusal has been DISMISSED.  
The proposed development would be at odds with the prevailing character and local linea arrangement.

**DC/19/05145** Land West of Badley Hill, Badley. Proposed use of land as touring caravan park.  
Appeal against Planning Refusal has been DISMISSED.  
The proposal would have an adverse effect upon the character and setting of the Special Landscape Area and Badley Conservation Area. There was also a lack of detail relating to Ecological Appraisal.

**DC/20/03147** Former Mid Suffolk District Council Offices & Associated Land 131 High Street Needham Market. Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/18/05104 - Condition 24 (Contractors Vehicles), Condition 25 (Construction Management to be Agreed), Condition 40 (Approval of Phasing of Development) Part Discharge for Phase 1.  
Granted.

**DC/20/03675** Mid Suffolk District Council 131 High Street Needham Market. Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/18/05104 - Condition 9 (Construction Surface Water Management Plan), Condition 12 (Bat Licence), Condition 13 (Biodiversity Measures), Condition 15 (Landscape Protection), Condition 16 (Landscaping Scheme), Condition 17 (Landscape Management Plan), Condition 19 (Provision of Roads and Footpaths), Condition 21 (Highways Surface Water Discharge Prevention), Condition 28 (Sustainability), Condition 35 (Lighting Strategy) and Condition 39 (Levels). Part Discharge for Phase 1.  
Granted.

**DC/20/03357** Site At Needham Market Middle School, School Street Needham Market. Discharge of Conditions Application for DC/18/04811- Condition 9 (Demolition and Technical Investigations Management Plan), Condition 10 (Construction Management Plan) and Condition 32 (Phasing)  
Granted.

### **C089/20/5b Planning Applications Received**

Cllr O'Shea reported the following Planning Application and Planning Notice had been received:

**DC/20/04130** Car Park, Hurstlea Road, Former Council Offices rear of 131 High Street. Application for Planning Permission without Compliance of Condition(s).  
Environmental Agency and County Council raised no objection to the proposals. NMTC also raised no objection and, due to the time limit in responding to BMSDC, BMSDC has been informed to this effect.

**DC/20/04076** Site within the Conservation Area to the rear of 29-47 School Street.

Notice under Section 211 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990.

This is not an Application for Consent but a Notice of intent and relates to the felling of 17 crack willows and the coppicing or monitoring of a further 12 crack willows. The object of the Notice is to allow the Local Planning Authority and possibly others to consider whether it would be appropriate to place a Tree Preservation Order on any of the trees identified within the Notice and if it is not considered appropriate then, after a period of 6 weeks for service of the Notice, the Notified works may be undertaken. Without a Tree Preservation Order the LPA cannot refuse consent neither can they grant consent subject to conditions. At present there are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) on any trees on the site.

BMSDC Arboricultural Officer has advised that none of the identified trees are of sufficient merit to justify a TPO. There could however be other trees on the site which may justify preservation, but these are not within the Notice. The officer did say if there is certain wildlife on the site which needs protection, this could mean that the proposed works may not go ahead. There is a mass of legislation which has a direct bearing upon wildlife; we understand that The Wildlife Trust provides advice to owners and members of the public, and if it is found that certain wildlife would be adversely affected by some proposed work, it may be possible to have this work stopped. It would be necessary to make a note of the animals or plants which are present and may be adversely affected and then let the Wildlife Trust have the information, including evidence of the presence of these animals or plants.

Assuming that the tree work will proceed, we would request that the owners do not carry out any works during the bird nesting season and could request that access to the site be granted so that it may be inspected and any wildlife findings duly reported.

It is unfortunate that BMSDC use the same application form for 'permission to carry out works to trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order' and 'works to trees in a Conservation Area', the TPO work needs specific consent whilst the Conservation Area work is simply a notification with no consent needed, and the final Declaration in the document increases the confusion by saying ' I hereby apply for planning permission/consent to.....' when in this instance neither are needed. The application has given rise to a considerable number of online objections to the proposals, and this inaccuracy will no doubt result in annoyance that people's objections have had no effect.

It is noted that the boundary for the Conservation Area specifically includes this wooded and ponded site and this was formulated well before the surrounding houses were built. From that, it is clear that this open site is considered of value to the town and, as part of the conservation area, is intended to be 'conserved'. It is noted that the trees on site have been historically coppiced but have been recently unmanaged, the BMSDC Arboricultural Officer has confirmed that the proposed felling and coppicing work represents good tree conservation. It will bring some light and space into the site thus encouraging heathier new growth.

Cllr Phillips proposed comments be submitted to Mid Suffolk District Council based on the above Planning Section notes. Cllr Ost seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

Councillors agreed the comments should be posted to the Town Council website.

### **C089/20/5c 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.

### **C089/20/6 Highways, Lighting and Footpaths**

#### **C089/20/6a To receive a report from the Section Leader**

Cllr Norris reported receiving contact from numerous members of public and the business community regarding car parking provision in Needham Market, following the implementation earlier this year, of the Civil Parking Enforcement Regulations. One, from a business owner, was seeking support from the Town Council, where it is relevant, in increasing the parking time limit from one hour to two hours. He asked Councillors whether he should take forward an application in support of that objective. Following discussion regarding numerous aspects of car parking provision in the

town, County Councillor Oakes agreed to facilitate a factual appraisal of the current position, plus the criteria for and cost of, making changes to the current regime.

**C090/20 Questions under Standing Order 40.**

Cllr Wright asked Councillors if they considered an environmental survey should be carried out on the area of land, incorporating trees and a pond, to the rear of 29-47 School Street. Cllr Lea said, when she was involved in the potential passing over of the land to appropriate (wildlife etc.) organisations a few years ago, none had any evidence the land was worthwhile of their attention and involvement.

Cllr Reardon asked whether a response has been received from Mid Suffolk District Council on the issue of estate agents' for sale/sold boards being attached to road name signs across the town.

**The Meeting closed at 9:10pm.**

**Chairman .....**      **Date .....**