

NEEDHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the NEEDHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL held in Needham Market Community Centre on Wednesday 16th March 2022 at 7:30pm.

Present: Cllr J Lea (In the Chair), Councillors: BE Annis, G Cave, R Darnell, I Mason, M O'Shea, A Reardon, J Reardon and X Stansfield.

Apologies for Absence:

MG Norris – Prior Engagement
M Ost – Holiday Commitment
S Phillips – Work Commitment

Absent

Cllr P Wright

In Attendance: Suffolk County Councillor Kay Oakes, three members of public and the Town Clerk.

C011/22 To confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held 19th January 2022.

The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held Wednesday 19th January 2022 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

C012/22 To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interest for Matters on the Agenda.

Cllr B Annis – Accounts for Payment
Cllr G Cave - Accounts for Payment
Cllr A Reardon - Accounts for Payment
Cllr X Stansfield - Accounts for Payment

C013/22 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 had been received and circulated to Councillors, and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book. The report headlines were:

- Council focuses on children's services, adult care and the environment, as budget confirmed
- Council's commitment to further enhancing Suffolk's natural environment
- Residents urged to support Suffolk spectacular
- Suffolk cements commitment to keeping its communities safe
- Good news for Suffolk Government gives the green light to negotiate a County Deal
- Plans for a large solar farm are seriously flawed and can't be supported, say Suffolk County Council

County Councillor Oakes added that despite her best efforts in trying to gather meaningful information, she was unable to clarify the reasons behind the traffic diversion off the A14 and through Needham Market, that has recently caused such distress for residents who live in close proximity to the B1113 as well as damage to properties. In addition, there had been no prior warning or consultation on the diversion route used. It appears Suffolk County Highways usual approach that requires diversion routes to run on equivalent status roads is not applied when traffic is diverted from the A14 onto the B1113.

Cllr Mason commented he felt that the County Highways Service was not forceful enough in maintaining a disciplined approach to diversion management.

A report, as follows, had been received from the District Councillors which had been circulated to Councillors, and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book:

Mid Suffolk District Council freezes council tax but investment in recovery to continue. Mid Suffolk District Council has frozen its element of council tax this year – helping residents through post-pandemic recovery while still investing in priority areas to improve quality of life. Further details on the MSDC website.

Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils respond to new ‘County Deal’. The leaders of Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils welcomed news that Suffolk is one of nine counties invited to negotiate a ground-breaking devolution deal – bringing more control over areas such as transport, infrastructure and skills to the region.

Switch onto a new Digital Skills Programme for businesses. Business owners in Mid Suffolk and Babergh who want to learn new or improve their digital skills can now access free courses as part of a new business support programme.

A new bigger, better library for Needham Market. Suffolk Libraries and Mid Suffolk District Council are pleased to announce that the new Needham Market Library is now open.

Additional funding to support districts’ rough sleepers. Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Council have been awarded £324K to provide specialised emergency accommodation for rough sleepers and those at risk of homelessness. The funding, from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government’s Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme, will see new energy efficient homes in Stowmarket and Sudbury, to provide emergency accommodation for vulnerable adults at risk of living on the streets.

New Government rebate. On 3rd February, the Government announced measures to help protect millions of households from rising energy costs - including a ‘£150 council tax energy rebate’. Further details on the MSDC website.

Mid Suffolk and Babergh pledge their support to addressing violence against women and girls. Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils have signed up to a new county-wide strategy, outlining how Suffolk will address violence against women and girls.

Constituencies are changing - have your say now. The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) is required by Parliament to undertake an independent and impartial review of all constituencies in England, to rebalance the number of electors in each constituency. Further details on the MSDC website.

C014/22 To receive a report of the activities of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on behalf of the Town.

The Mayor reported attending:

29th January – Suffolk Royal British Legion Annual Conference held at Needham Market Community Centre

Tuesday 8th February – Opening of the new Needham Market Library

Friday 18th February – Royal Naval Association celebration of the 80th anniversary of the Stowmarket and Gipping Rural Districts sponsorship of the Corvette, HMS Borage

Tuesday 1st March – Opening of the new public toilet facilities at Barretts Lane

Friday 11th March – Official opening of the Rocket Science Centre in Claydon

Saturday 12th March – Quarterfinal of the FA Trophy football match between Needham Market and Stockport County

The Deputy Mayor had nothing to report.

C015/22 To receive a report from the Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

Cllr O'Shea referred to the outcome of the Neighbourhood Plan Referendum held on Thursday 24th February which produced a 92.7% vote in favour of adoption of the plan.

Cllr Darnell suggested and Councillors agreed the efforts of those directly involved in creating the Neighbourhood Plan, including the Council's Planning Consultant Andrea Long, should be acknowledged.

C016/22 To consider establishing a Council presence on social media.

Cllr J Reardon referred to a Social Media Proposal Report that had been provided to all Councillors and which described the benefits the Council would gain from having a presence on social media and, how that presence could be managed and operated. It was confirmed the presence would involve information out only (i.e. no facility for public comment) and, there will be a link to the Town Council's website when comprehensive information is involved.

Cllr J Reardon proposed Council agree the establishing of a presence on social media in accordance with the information and terms set out in the Social Media Proposal Report. Cllr Annis seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

Following a question raised by a member of public present, it was confirmed the social media presence will be a supplement to the Council's current communication methods (e.g. the Needham Market Newsletter), not a replacement.

C017/22 Clerk's Report and Correspondence to be noted.

The Clerk had nothing to report.

C018/22 Committees

Governance & Finance Committee.

C018/22/1a 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 for payment. Cllr Mason seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C018/22/1b To receive a report from the Committee Chairperson.

Cllr Annis referred to the Minutes of the Governance & Finance Committee held on 8th February 2022, which were circulated to all Councillors and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book. He gave a brief explanation on a number of items contained in the minutes.

Cllr Annis proposed adoption of the accounts for payment. Cllr Cave seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

Cllr Annis referred to the Income and Expenditure Statement to 28th February 2022, which had been circulated to all Councillors and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book. He gave a brief explanation of the structure of the accounts and their management which is in the process of transitioning from the Council operating Sections to its now established Committees.

Cllr Annis proposed adoption of the Income & Expenditure Statement. Cllr Cave seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

Cllr Annis confirmed the next meeting of the Governance & Finance Committee will be held on Tuesday 10th May at 7pm in Needham Market Community Centre.

C018/22/2 Community & Assets Committee.

C018/22/2a To receive a report from the Committee Chairperson.

Cllr Lea referred to the work undertaken by Cllr Norris on the introduction of Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) in the town. County Councillor Oakes explained the potential locality funding support and qualification criteria that could be applied to SIDs and will confirm these to the next Community & Assets Committee for its 20th April meeting.

Cllr Lea presented the Minutes from the 16th February Community & Assets Committee, which had been circulated to all Councillors and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book.

Cllr Annis propose Council adopt the Minutes. Cllr O'Shea seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

The Clerk reported updates on the projects the Council is currently involved in.

Cllr Lea reported the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Working Group is, with the consent of Needham Market & Barking Welfare Charities, to relocate the proposed 4th June family picnic event from the former Needham Market Middle School Playing Field to the Camping Land.

Cllr A Reardon tabled a comprehensive report on Climate Action Planning and said she hoped it will be possible to create a Working Party to take that issue forward.

Cllr Lea thanked Cllr A Reardon for her excellent report and proposed her as the best person to lead Climate Action matters from the Town Council's perspective. Cllr Stansfield seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

The Clerk referred to a request from a local business for an extension to the 30mph limit on the B1113 Ipswich Road. The request related to both Needham Market Town Council and Darmsden Parish Meeting, the latter being on the boundary of one of the requested speed limit sign locations.

County Councillor Oakes provided advice on the process required to allow consideration of the request from the County Highways perspective and costs associated with that process. This included the cost of a necessary Traffic Regulation Order which is estimated at £6,000 to £7,000 and takes around 9 months to complete.

Cllr Lea proposed the request be followed up taking account of the comments received from the Chairman of the Darmsden Parish Meeting. Cllr Cave seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C018/22/3 Planning Committee.

C018/22/3a To receive a report from the Committee Chairperson.

Cllr O'Shea presented Minutes from the Planning Committee meeting held 7th March 2022, which had been circulated to Councillors and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book.

Cllr O'Shea proposed Council adopt the Minutes. Cllr Mason seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

Cllr O'Shea referred Councillors to a further Planning Notice received in relation to Planning Application DC/21/05596. The Notice related to additional documents received by Mid Suffolk District Council. The deadline for response is 25th March.

Cllr O'Shea proposed Council repeat its previous objection to the Planning Application. Cllr Stansfield seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

The Clerk informed Council he had been made aware of an application for a Screening Opinion, made to Mid Suffolk District Council, relating to a large area of agricultural land off the B1113 at Badley. The request relates to a proposal to establish a solar farm. County Councillor Oakes gave further information on the application.

C019/22 Employment Committee

C019/22/a To receive a report from the Committee Chairperson

Cllr Annis referred Councillors to the item in the 8th February 2022 Governance & Finance Committee Minutes which related to staff pay and confirmed the recommendations of the Employment Committee had been adopted.

The Meeting closed at 9.15pm.

Chairperson **Date**