

NEEDHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the NEEDHAM MARKET TOWN COUNCIL held in Needham Market Community Centre on Wednesday 19th January 2022 at 7:30pm.

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

Apologies for Absence:

Cllr P Wright – Work Commitment

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

C001/22 To confirm the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held 17th November 2021.

The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held Wednesday 17th November 2021 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

C002/22 To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interest for Matters on the Agenda.

Cllr B Annis – Accounts for Payment
Cllr J Lea - Accounts for Payment
Cllr X Stansfield - Accounts for Payment
Cllr M Norris – Planning Matters
Cllr I Mason – Accounts for Payment
Cllr G Cave - Accounts for Payment
Cllr J Reardon – Expression of Interest

C003/22 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:

- Children's services and adult care at the heart of Suffolk County Council's new budget plans
- Annual Public Health Report focuses on Mental Health impact of Covid-19
- Suffolk County Council approves extra £20m investment in highway drainage and footpaths
- Significant investment in firefighting equipment secures safer future for Suffolk
- Over 10,000 new LED streetlights installed across Suffolk

County Councillor Oakes added, the Badley Bridge railings on Stowmarket Road had been replaced although the original plan was for them to be refurbished. Cllr Lea thanked County Councillor Oakes for her support in getting the railings replaced.

District Councillor Norris presented the District Councillors report which had been received and circulated to Councillors, and a copy of which will be appended to the Minute Book:

An update on Covid-19 in Suffolk. Thank you to everyone who has helped to support the Covid-19 response, which has seen the Government revert to Plan B and the NHS ramping up the vaccination rollout in a race against time to combat the spread of the Omicron variant. Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils await further information from the Government regarding the additional financial support available for businesses, so that funds can be distributed to those eligible across the districts as soon as possible. They also continue to provide regular bulletins giving a snapshot of the current Covid-19 situation in Suffolk, along with case numbers and updates on the work being carried out as part of Suffolk's Local Outbreak Control Plan. You can find the bulletins via the Suffolk County Council website.

Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Council leaders offer thanks and urge residents to get boosted now. The leaders of Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils, Cllr Suzie Morley and Cllr John Ward, are amongst Suffolk public sector leaders sending a joint message to Suffolk residents.

Councils chosen for pilot to ensure neighbourhoods have say on planning. Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils were named on Wednesday 12th January 2022 as part of a pilot scheme to allow residents an easier way to shape and influence development in their area. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities announced that Mid Suffolk and Babergh are among 11 areas nationwide to be chosen as part of a pilot scheme to boost participation in neighbourhood planning. The councils will now receive an award of £45,000 in Government funding to go towards a new post, designed to encourage even more people in the districts to engage with the planning system.

Work begins on carbon-cutting solar carport schemes. Works have begun on installing solar carports which will help power and slash the carbon emissions of two council-owned leisure centres - as part of council plans to tackle climate change.

Freeport East passes major milestone. Mid Suffolk District Council has welcomed news that Gateway 14, near Stowmarket, has officially been designated as a tax site as part of Freeport East.

Scheme to support new small businesses marks successful six months. A pilot scheme to support small businesses in Mid Suffolk and Babergh has been hailed a success as it reaches its six-month milestone.

Councils urge National Highways to 'unblock Copdock'. Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils have submitted a joint response to a consultation by National Highways on proposed improvements to the Copdock Interchange on the A14 – urging the creation of a new link road from the A14 to the A12 to keep business traffic flowing freely. Traffic flow counts at the interchange have identified this as potentially the most effective solution.

Eight new affordable homes in Needham Market. Eight new homes in Needham Market can now open their doors to families as the Chambers Green development on the former MSDC offices site in Needham Market continues to expand.

District Councillor Norris reported he is receiving many complaints from homeowners living adjacent to the B1113 route through the town who are suffering the impact of the night-time diversion of HGVs off the A14. The original schedule for the diversion was not being adhered to and those residents affected were not receiving notices warning of extended periods for the diversion.

Cllr O'Shea asked what is meant by the 'Invest in Needham Market Programme'. District Councillor Norris said it is part of a broader and continuing project to provide support for the enhancement of High Streets across the District Councils.

Cllr Lea commented Mid Suffolk District Council's Waste Services Team should be congratulated on their efforts to maintain a regular bin emptying schedule during the Christmas/New Year period when the Covid pandemic was depleting their available staff resources. Councillors agreed. The Clerk agreed to pass that message to the District Council. Cllr Reardon said he would like to see more communication from the District Council when it is known bin emptying is going to be late.

C004/22 To receive a report of the activities of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on behalf of the Town.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor both reported attending:

3rd December – opening of the new houses on the Chambers Green development, off Hurstlea Road

C005/22 To receive a report from the Needham Market Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

Cllr O'Shea reported Mid Suffolk District Council has arranged the Neighbourhood Plan Referendum to be held on Thursday 24th February. The Notice received was unclear as to the voting process and the Clerk will ask for confirmation as to whether postal voters and others will receive their voting papers, as normal.

Cllr Reardon encouraged the use of social media to spread word of the referendum.

C006/22 To consider an Expression of Interest in co-option onto Council.

The Clerk referred to an expression of interest from Amanda Reardon to take up one of the vacant seats on Council.

Cllr Phillips proposed Council agree the co-option. Cllr Darnell seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C007/22 To confirm the Annual Budget and agree the Council Tax Precept for 2022/23.

Council confirmed the Annual Budget set for 2022/23 at £133,560. The Clerk tabled a paper on options and outcomes regarding how the budget requirement could be met.

Cllr Annis proposed a precept of £140,739.72, a 3% increase on 2021/22, equating to a Council Tax Band D amount of £82.31. Cllr Phillips seconded the proposal. Council unanimously agreed the proposal.

C008/22 Clerk's Report and Correspondence to be noted.

The Clerk gave a verbal report as follows:

- An email has been received from Mid Suffolk District Council giving details of the 'Spring Clean Suffolk' which promotes volunteers to litter pick in their local area.
- Despite the event taking place in August last year, a grant towards the 'Bounce Back' fun day expenses has still not been received from Mid Suffolk District Council. The grant had involved a long and complex series of forms to be completed evidencing expenditure incurred. The District Council is pointing to the Central Government funding source as the cause of the delay.

C009/22 Committees

Governance & Finance Committee.

C009/22/1a 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 Phillips proposed adoption of the accounts for payment. Cllr Mason seconded the proposal. Council agreed the proposal.

C009/22/1b To receive a report from the Committee Chairperson.

Cllr Annis confirmed the next meeting of the Governance & Finance Committee will be held on Tuesday 8th February at 7pm in Needham Market Community Centre.

C009/22/2 Community & Assets Committee.

C009/22/2a To receive a report from the Committee Chairperson.

Cllr Phillips gave updates on the Crowley Park Pavilion and the Crowley Park Skatepark projects.

Cllr O'Shea asked, how is the pavilion extension and improvement project to be managed? It was confirmed the Council's main contractor is to carry out the project management role.

Cllr Darnell asked, are the new facilities at Crowley Park to include adult gym equipment? It was confirmed they would be included in a phase of equipment installation alongside new young children's play facilities.

