

**Finance & General Purposes
Committee Meeting**

**Tuesday 24th July 2001 at 7.00 p.m.
at Bevan House, Camps Road, Haverhill**



**Haverhill
Town Council
Bevan House, Camps Road
Haverhill, CB9 8HF
01440 712858**

**PRESENT: Town Councillors: E Goody, L Hancock, and A Smith.
ALSO PRESENT: Town Councillor: M Dunning (by invitation).**

MINUTES

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Bowman, Gerry Kiernan, and Maggie Lee.

2. Election of Chair

In the absence of both the Chair and Vice-Chair Cllr Goody proposed that Cllr Alan Smith Chair the meeting. Cllr Hancock seconded the proposal and Cllr Smith assumed the Chair for the meeting.

3. Minutes of Meeting held on 15th May 2001

These were approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

4. Dr Cornish, West Suffolk Borders Primary Care Group

The Chair welcomed Dr Cornish to the meeting. Dr Cornish gave a short resume of the current difficulties in recruiting and retaining health professionals, which were not restricted to Haverhill alone. Dr Cornish explained that at present the Primary Care Group were not directly responsible for any of the professional staff working in the Town, and could only act as a pressure group on the Health Authority. In particular GP's were self-employed and their only contractual commitment to the Health Authority was the requirement to give three months notice of their resignation. The Committee questioned Dr Cornish on current moves to both retain and then attract GP's to the Town, and stressed the need for all those who could assist with the process to be actively involved and consulted at all stages in order that a co-ordinated approach could be made.

5. Matters arising from the Minutes

a) Changes to Clements Surgery

This item had been covered as part of the discussion with Dr Cornish. The Clerk reported that Suffolk Health Authority were discussing with a developer a possible redevelopment of the Surgery to provide better patient facilities.

b) Financial Seminars for Voluntary Organisations

The Clerk reported that one of the practices recommended to Voluntary Organisations was for their accounts to be subject to an annual independent inspection. The purpose of this inspection is to identify weaknesses in the organisation's internal procedures, and thus lead to reduced opportunity for fraud or theft. For many small organisations the cost of audit may be excessive in relation to their turnover, and for these organisations an independent examination may be preferable. At present there is no facility to offer such independent examinations at a reasonable charge to small organisations and it may be appropriate for the Town Council to endeavour to set up such a facility for small organisations, say those with an income not exceeding £3,000 per annum. Such an examination would not be able to offer a guarantee that fraud or theft was not occurring, but would ensure management groups or trustees that proper procedures were in place. Hopefully, using the services of HAVO and the Volunteer Centre, the cost to organisations could be kept to a minimum. Cllr Goody proposed and Cllr Hancock seconded that the Clerk investigate setting up such an inspection service, all being in favour.

c) Wednesdays for Women Group

The Clerk reported that he had still not received a formal response to his letter to the Director of Leisure Services at St Edmundsbury Borough Council regarding the funding of this Group. The Committee noted that this item was also on the agenda of the forthcoming Haverhill Partnership meeting.

d) Waiting Restrictions – Colne Valley Road

The Clerk reported that the suggested changes to the waiting restrictions in Colne Valley Road would be reviewed by St Edmundsbury Borough Council as and when resources permitted.

e) Traffic Issues, High Street

The Clerk reported that the Market Inspector had been asked to advise all market traders of the need to exercise caution if traversing the High Street contrary to the usual traffic flow.

6. Correspondence

a) Suffolk County Council – Appointment of Additional Co-opted Governor representing Minor Local Authority – Place Farm Community Primary School

The Clerk reported that Suffolk County Council had confirmed the appointment of Mr Gleeson as Minor Local Authority Representative on the Governing Body.

b) Local Government Commission for England – Periodic Electoral Review – Final Recommendations

The Clerk reported that the Local Government Commission had confirmed St Edmundsbury Borough Council's proposals that Haverhill would have ten Borough Councillors from a total Borough Council size of forty-five. The number of Town Councillors would remain at sixteen, but the Electoral Wards would change.

c) St Edmundsbury Borough Council – Social Impact Study 2001

The Clerk reported that St Edmundsbury Borough Council had commissioned a Social Impact Study to assess the changes required to the Towns support services and infrastructure to be able to absorb the projected growth of the Town over the next ten years. Consultants would be present at the Town Council meeting on 31st July to consult with the Council.

d) Suffolk County Council – Bus Service Changes Haverhill – Bury St Edmunds

The Clerk reported that Eastern Counties had implemented a fast, limited stop, service between Bury St Edmunds and Stansted Airport, serving Haverhill en route. The new service replaced other services that had previously served villages between Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill, and these were now catered for by Suffolk County Council contract services. However neither of the new services adequately served West Suffolk Hospital, both still requiring a change of bus and the purchase of a second ticket in Bury St Edmunds. The Clerk reported that he had complained to both Eastern Counties and Suffolk County Council, asking for the services to serve West Suffolk Hospital en-route to Bury St Edmunds, but to no avail. In addition he had complained that the new limited stop service was operated with coach height vehicles which rendered access for the elderly or disabled very difficult.

e) Suffolk County Council – Local Democracy Week 15th-19th October

The Clerk asked whether the Committee wished that the Council should be actively involved with Local Democracy Week and the Committee agreed that it should be.

f) Suffolk Compact – Consultation on Draft Working Framework

The Clerk reported that the Compact was a document which set out the working relationships between the voluntary and public sector, and it was agreed there were no comments to be made on the draft.

7. Long Term Investments

The Clerk reported that the Council's 3-month investment had matured on 9th July and been re-invested with interest for twelve months at 4.47%, the best rate available on that date. The Committee noted the report.

8. Vital Villages Grants Schemes

The Committee noted the Clerk's report on the first three Grants Schemes, and Cllr Goody proposed and Cllr Hancock seconded, all being in favour, that the Council research and prepare a Town Plan, work with HAVO to support the training of volunteers, and use the Transport Grant to aid the implementation of the 3-County Community Transport Scheme. The Clerk reported that since the preparation of his report it had become apparent that the Community Services Grant may be applicable to the Clements Surgery and he was asked to consult with the Surgery on this matter.

9. Christmas Lights Account

The Clerk reported that the Christmas Lights Account had been established in order to be able to account separately for the £7,000 donation received by the Council from an anonymous donor. In addition to operating this separate account, monies from the Town Council General Fund had been used to support the purchase, erection, and running costs of the Christmas lights, so that whilst the original donation has now been exhausted, the Christmas Lights Account was still technically in credit. This account had been incurring Bank Charges of £30 per annum, although these have now been reduced and it would seem appropriate at this time therefore to integrate the remaining monies in the Christmas Lights Account into the General Fund, and to close this separate Bank Account. Cllr Goody proposed and Cllr Hancock seconded that the Christmas Lights Account be closed and the funds transferred to the General Fund, all being in favour.

10. Authorisation of payments

Cllr Goody proposed and Cllr Hancock seconded that the payments shown on the lists detailed below were approved for payment, all being in favour.

List Date	Item Numbers	Cheque Numbers	Total Value for List
24.05.01 and 29.05.01	1-26	3363-3388	£6,868.73
07.06.01	1-18	3389-3406	£6,269.08
12.06.01	1-21	3407-3427	£13,448.30
19.06.01	1-7	3428-3434	£7,201.70
19.06.01	1-11	3435-3445	£7,500.47
22.06.01	1-5	3446-3450	£1,725.00
03.07.01	1-26	3451-3476	£7,584.71
10.07.01 and 12.07.01	1-18	3477-3494	£6,286.58
17.07.01	1-7	3495-3501	£7,607.15
17.07.01	1-5	3502-3506	£4,624.24

11. Matters of report

Cllr Goody reported that the hedges either side of the footway from Helions Park Road to Quakers Lane were still overgrown. The Clerk stated he would write again to St Edmundsbury Borough Council on the matter.

12. Closure

The meeting was closed at 8.45 p.m.