

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

FULL COUNCIL MEETING

**Tuesday 29th June 2004 at 7.30 p.m.
At The Town Hall Arts Centre, High Street, Haverhill**



**HAVERRILL
TOWN COUNCIL**
Bevan House, Camps Road
Haverhill
Suffolk CB9 8HF

Telephone: 01440 712858
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**PRESENT: Town Mayor: Cllr Tim Marks
Town Councillors: R Avallone (except item 10), M Dane (except items 10 and 11), S Fanning, M Graham, G Kiernan (except items 1,2, 18 and 21), Mrs Mary Martin (except items 17, 18 and 21), L Robinson (items 1-8 and 11 (part) only), J Rudd, L Samples, and A Thomas (except items 18 and 21)**

Also present: Twenty members of the public

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Cullum, Goody, Maggie Lee and Warwick.

2. Declaration of Interests

Cllrs Mrs Mary Martin and Thomas declared an interest as Members of St Edmundsbury Borough Council. Cllr Thomas declared an interest as Chair of HAVO.

3. To confirm Minutes of Meeting held 18th May 2004

Cllr Kiernan joined the meeting and declared an interest as a Member of St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Suffolk County Council

It was agreed to amend the minutes of the previous meeting in item 16 "CRB Checks on Councillors" by the deletion of "not" in line 3, between "Questionnaire", and in the same item by the deletion of "Fanning" from line 11 and the insertion of "Fanning" in line 12.

It was agreed to amend the minutes by insertion of a phrase under item 11. "A motion to change the wording of paragraph 2 of item 17 of the minutes of the 30 March, Town Council Meeting, alleging that the Town Clerk said he had received letters from three Councillors stating they would resign if they had to become Trustees of the Town Hall Charity was defeated on the casting vote of the Deputy Mayor".

4. To deal with any urgent matters arising from the Minutes not covered by this agenda

Cllr Dane attempted to raise an issue concerning a query from a member of the public at the Annual Town Meeting which was ruled as inappropriate for this meeting.

5. Inspector Mark Jepson, Suffolk Police

Inspector Jepson reported that Suffolk Constabulary had been rated 5th nationally on its performance, with only its central reporting mechanism falling below standard. Locally crime levels continue to remain low, although anti-social behaviour remains higher than desired. Inspection Jepson asked Councillors to remind members of the public to secure their premises, particularly in warmer weather. Inspector Jepson reported that two evenings of enforcing parking restrictions in Queen Street and High Street had resulted in the issue of over 40 parking tickets. Inspector Jepson advised that the Estate Audits would recommence in August. Inspector Jepson discussed the concerns regarding the young people congregating in the Jubilee Walk area and advised that a meeting was to be held with representatives of the Town Council to discuss options.

The Town Mayor thanked Inspector Jepson for his report and congratulated him on the achievements of himself and his colleagues.

6. Jean Parsons, Town Twinning

Mrs Parsons addressed the Town Council on recent Town Twinning events and emphasised the civic involvement from the relevant German and French Town Councils in the exchanges. It was agreed that the Community First Committee would discuss how greater involvement and support for the twinning process could be achieved by the Council.

7. Mark Crawley, Director of Modernisation and Primary Care, Suffolk West PCT

Mr Crawley outlined the proposed changes to out-of-hours GP cover in Haverhill, which were a direct result of the national changes to GP contracts. A number of questions were put and answered regarding how the more vulnerable might be affected by the changes, and about the proposed centralisation of the service in Bury during hours of low demand. It was agreed to refer the matter to the Community First Committee to consider a Town Council response to the changes.

The Town Mayor thanked Mr Crawley for his presentation and invited him to answer questions from members of the public.

(Full Council adjourned for Public Forum)

A member of the public asked if the Primary Care Trust had considered the use of the voluntary sector in the new Out of Hours provision. Mr Crawley indicated that the use of the voluntary sector had been considered and discussions would probably commence once the use of the new service had been established. Another member of the public expressed concern that the number of emergency calls to the Ambulance Service would increase as a result of the changes. A member of the public asked whether it was too late for another public meeting to comment on the changes and was advised that it was not.

On another matter a member of the public asked that the state of the bus station be brought to the Borough Council's attention.

A member of the public, commenting on the lack of affordable housing in the town, indicated that she was having to leave the town to find accommodation, despite wishing to live in the town.

(Full Council resumed after Public Forum)

8. Adoption of Committee Reports

Pre-Trustee Committee

The Council agreed the adoption of the minutes of the Pre-Trustee Committee meetings held 25th May, 1st and 15th June 2004.

9. Review of Council's Risks

Cllr Robinson left the meeting at this point.

The Council noted and agreed the Town Clerk's report.

10. To Receive The Internal Auditors Notes on the 2003/2004 Accounts (if available)

Cllr Dane indicated that he had an interest in this matter and left the room, but declined to indicate the nature of his interest.

The Council agreed to defer consideration of items 10 and 11 until later in the meeting when Cllr Dane had been given time to report the nature of his interest.

12. Market Town Healthcheck

Cllr Dane returned to the meeting.

Cllr Kiernan disclosed an interest as Chair of the Market Town Healthcheck Steering Group, and Cllr Thomas as Chair of HAVO who were likely to be the formal employers of a Market Town Project Manager.

The Council noted the progress and agreed that the prioritised projects would be circulated to and discussed at the relevant Committees.

10. To Receive The Internal Auditors Notes on the 2003/2004 Accounts (if available)

Cllr Dane indicated that he had an interest in this matter in view of a pending legal challenge and left the room. Cllr Avallone also left the meeting at this point.

The Clerk indicated that the report was not yet available.

11. To Sign Off The External Audit Form for the 2003/2004 Accounts

Cllr Avallone rejoined the meeting.

Cllr Thomas proposed that the Council approve and sign off the form for the External Auditor on the accounts for 2003/2004, and Cllr Rudd seconded the proposal, which was carried by a majority. Cllr Fanning asked that her reasons for voting against the proposal, which were that she had had insufficient time to consider the Annual Return (Statement of Accounts and Statement of Assurance) in detail, be noted. The Clerk explained that whilst the accounts (balance sheet, income and expenditure account, and supporting statement) had been with members since the issue of the agenda for the cancelled Finance Committee meeting, the completion of the form had been delayed until final agreement of the accounts by the Internal Auditor, which had occurred that morning. The Clerk advised that in a normal year the Internal Auditor would have been able to agree the accounts earlier, but problems with the new accounting software had caused a significant delay in production of the accounts, which had been followed by periods of leave for both the internal auditor and the Clerk.

Cllr Dane rejoined the meeting.

13. CRB Checks on Councillors

Cllr Thomas declared an interest as a lead signatory for CRB checks.

Cllr Kiernan proposed that the policy and procedure as set out be adopted by the Council. Cllr Thomas seconded the proposal which was carried by a majority, Cllrs Dane and Graham voting against.

Cllr Mrs Mary Martin left the meeting at this point.

The Mayor advised that in view of the lateness of the hour only items 17, 18 and 21 on the agenda would be considered tonight with other items being carried forward to a further meeting to be arranged.

17. To receive urgent correspondence

The Clerk advised that it was necessary to provide a response to the consultation on the proposal by St Edmundsbury Borough Council to change the system of Parish/Town Council Revenue Grants. This item should have been considered by the Finance Committee but that meeting had been cancelled. The Council considered the report prepared by the Town Clerk and agreed that Haverhill Town Council indicate that it would prefer to see the scheme retained in its present format, but if that is not an option, then option A, withdrawal of the scheme in its entirety is its preferred choice. The Clerk was also asked to draw to the Borough Council's attention anomalies in the present scheme, which were reflected in options B and C. The Clerk was also asked to open negotiations with St Edmundsbury Borough Council regarding financial support for those Town Council funded events which mirrored those events in Bury St Edmunds which are wholly funded by St Edmundsbury Borough Council. Cllrs Dane, Fanning and Graham abstained.

Cllr Thomas proposed and Cllr Rudd seconded, all being in favour, that in accord with Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public and press be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that the matters to be discussed will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the Act.

18. Bevan House

Cllrs Thomas and Kiernan declared an interest as members of the Labour Party, one of the hirers of Bevan House, and left the meeting.

The Council agreed the short-term lease of Bevan House to the British Red Cross on terms as set out in the Town Clerk's report, and that a tapering subsidy be provided to current groups hiring Bevan House, such subsidy not to exceed three years, and not to affect existing Community First Grant budgets. Cllrs Dane and Graham voted against.

21. Closure

The meeting was closed at 11.05 p.m.