



Haverhill
TOWN COUNCIL

HAVERHILL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday 29th January 2013 at 7.00pm in The Studio, Haverhill Arts Centre, High Street, Haverhill, CB9 8AR

Present: **Chair: Town Councillor: P Hanlon**
 Town Councillors: R André, M Byrne, T Cook,
 P French, E Goody,
 B Hawes, B McLatchy,
 D Russo, A Samuels, G Stroud,
 J Stroud and C Turner

Also present: **Ten members of the public**

MINUTES

ACTION

1. **Apologies for Absence**
Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Ager and Carr.
2. **Declaration of Interests**
No councillor declared an interest in items on the agenda.
3. **To Confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held 18th December 2012**
The minutes of the meeting held on 18th December 2012 were agreed.
4. **To deal with any urgent matters arising from the minutes not covered by this agenda**
The Town Clerk reported that a request for restoration of street lights in Clements Drive is under consideration, and that he was hopeful of a positive outcome subject to Police support.

The Town Clerk further reported on work on options for the High Street, which was ongoing. A meeting with Suffolk County Council was being arranged to consider whether there were any areas of potential agreement, e.g. one way on Camps Road. The Clerk's position on behalf of the Town Council was to be that the Council would look at options to improve the traffic/parking situation that fall short of pedestrianisation, but only if the County Council offers a firm commitment to pedestrianisation in future, with a date for achieving this.

Cllr Hawes reminded the meeting that County Councillor Guy MacGregor would be attending the next public SNT meeting on 11th March, and urged the best possible attendance.

Cllr Goody asked that signage and the directions given by satellite navigation systems be looked at as part of the discussion.

5. **Inspector Peter Ferrie**
PC Simon Bourne and PCSO Mark Isaac attended on behalf of

Inspector Ferrie. As crime statistics had been provided at the last meeting three weeks before, no further statistics were presented.

PC Bourne reported on the following local crime issues:

- Burglaries, mainly of dwellings and garages, but also some business premises. One person had been charged after admitting six offences
- Teenagers in Queen Street. Two suspects had been identified following criminal damage at the launderette. A multi-agency approach was being adopted, involving the Youth Offending Team in Bury St Edmunds

Cllr Byrne asked about the 'smash and grab' incident at a High Street jeweller, and congratulated all those involved in the capture of the suspect. PC Bourne reported that goods had been recovered as a result.

Cllr G Stroud asked about a car fire on the Parkway some weeks before. PC Bourne was not aware of the current situation on this case, and advised consulting the local beat officer. Cllr G Stroud added that the Fire Crew had taken some time to arrive, and could not find the hydrant on arrival as the street lights were not operational. The Town Clerk undertook to follow up on this issue.

Cllr Hanlon thanked PC Bourne and PCSO Isaac for their work and their report.

6. Caroline Maclean

The Town Clerk introduced Caroline Maclean to the Council, and reflected on her Paralympic achievements, her involvement in the 2012 Olympic Torch Relay, and her long and distinguished career in wheelchair basketball representing Great Britain. She is a local resident who had put Haverhill on the map.

Cllr Byrne proposed that Caroline's achievements be recognised by awarding her the Freedom of Haverhill. The proposal was agreed (unanimously).

Cllr Hanlon presented the award and congratulated Caroline on her extraordinary achievements, and thanked her for her work in and on behalf of Haverhill, and her attendance at the meeting.

The Mayor, with the agreement of the Council, adjourned the meeting at 7.18pm for the public forum.

Scott Cousin, Managing Director of FibreGrid Ltd, a Haverhill company presented a cheque for £750 to the Mayor's Charity.

Cllr Hanlon thanked Scott for this very generous donation.

There being no other matters raised by the public, the Mayor resumed the meeting with the agreement of the Council at 7.21pm.

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7. **Adoption of Committee Reports**

Finance Committee

The Council moved the adoption of the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 18th December 2012.

Planning Committee

The Council moved the adoption of the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 8th January 2013.

Leisure & Community Committee

The Council moved the adoption of the minutes of the Leisure & Community Committee meeting held on 15th January 2013.

8. **Haverhill and District Local History Group**

Councillors received a presentation from Patrick Crouch, David Austin and Roy Brazier of the Haverhill and District Local History Group. The work and financial position of the group was introduced. The current position for the year 2013/14 was that grant aid from St Edmundsbury Borough Council had been withdrawn completely, and approximately £4500 was needed to pay rent on the room occupied at Haverhill Arts Centre. Sponsorship of about £1200 and membership income of about £800 had been identified, leaving the group some £2500 short of the minimum needed to maintain their activities.

Additional grant aid had been sought from ONE Haverhill, but their grants scheme was not available for core funding. The Borough Council had confirmed that they too were unable to offer core funding.

Cllr French declared an interest as a Borough Councillor and member of the Borough's Grants Panel. He advised the meeting that the Borough Council's grants scheme offers core funding only to new groups, on a sliding scale to encourage self-sufficiency.

Cllr Byrne declared an interest as a Borough Councillor, and was advised that this did not preclude her participation in the item. She remarked on the tremendous work of the group, and encouraged them to apply again to the Borough Council. She said that the Town Council could not let the group go under.

Cllr André said that as a resident of Haverhill he saw the group as a valuable educational resource that must be supported.

The Town Clerk undertook to review the Borough Council grants scheme, as he was not aware of any policy such as that described by Cllr French.

Cllr McLatchy commented that the history of town expansion was of particular importance, especially to newcomers to Haverhill. Patrick Crouch said that the group could reach out to those in Haverhill who do not visit the town centre.

Cllr Turner agreed that the group was important, and asked whether it could prepare a communications plan to draw attention to their work. David Austin said this would be possible.

Cllr Goody said that local publications should mention the group's work.

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The Town Clerk advised the meeting that discussions with the group had identified the possibility of closer working with the Town Council, including exhibitions in areas that might benefit from this, such as empty shops.

Cllr Byrne proposed that a payment of £2500 be made to the group for 2013/14.

Councillors agreed a donation of £2500 to Haverhill and District Local History Group for 2013/14, and asked that the group work with the Town Clerk to identify opportunities for joint working.

9. Council/Committee Membership

The Town Clerk reported that Cllr Hawes had notified him on 20th January 2013 of his resignation as Conservative Group Leader and as a member of the Conservative Party. His future as a Town Councillor as a result of this decision was not directly a matter for the Town Council. However, Cllr Hawes had said that his own decision on his future would depend on fellow councillors' views, and had asked for their agreement to his staying as a councillor and sitting as an independent. He had also asked for their opinions on his committee memberships. He currently sat as Chair of the Appeals Committee, and as a member of the Finance and L&C Committees.

Cllr Goody said he saw no reason to change, and that the status quo should be maintained.

Cllr Byrne had discussed the issues with Cllr Hawes and with the Labour Group, and had no problem with him remaining as an independent councillor.

Cllr French said that it was a brave man who changed parties. He was disappointed at the decision of Cllr Hawes but was happy for him to remain.

Cllr Byrne asked Cllr Hawes for clarification of whether he had joined another party, and Cllr Hawes confirmed that he had not.

Cllr G Stroud said that as Chair of the Leisure and Community Committee he was happy for Cllr Hawes to remain on the committee.

Cllr McLatchy said that Cllr Hawes had a valuable contribution to make to Haverhill.

Cllr Hawes said that it had been a difficult decision, and thanked Town Councillors for their support.

Councillors agreed their support for Cllr Hawes remaining as a Town Councillor sitting as an independent, and that his positions on the Leisure and Community and Appeals Committees should remain unchanged.

Cllr French advised that a new Conservative nomination for the Finance Committee would be advised to the Town Clerk.

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CLLR FRENCH

Cllr Turner reported that the Conservative Group would be electing a new leader, and that Cllr French would occupy this position in the interim.

10. Burton Centre

The Town Clerk updated councillors on his attendance at the full Suffolk County Council meeting where he had put a question about the Council's appeal over the disposal of the Burton Centre. He explained the response, and gave details of a follow-up meeting with County Councillor Lisa Chambers and three County Council officers.

The Town Clerk and the three councillors present at that meeting considered that the responses did not provide reassurance that the decision to award the Burton Centre to the other bid was robust or reasonable. The explanations received had varied over time, none had been shown to be justified in fact, and the entire process appeared not to be linked to the County Council's policies on localism and the Neighbourhood Community Budget. There appeared to be no policy on disposal of assets. The Clerk invited councillors to consider engaging legal advice to investigate whether a judicial review or other legal challenge was appropriate.

Councillors considered the following issues:

- Whether the legal avenue would be pursued for initial investigation only. The Town Clerk confirmed that it would
- The balance of argument between the cost and potential benefit of seeking a Judicial Review in terms of crime, anti-social behaviour, addressing NEETs, the cost of redeveloping an alternative building, the localism agenda.

Councillors approved the engagement of initial legal advice to ascertain the viability and cost associated with a Judicial Review of Suffolk County Council's decision on the disposal of the Burton Centre.

11. Review of Risks

Councillors considered a review of risks presented by the Town Clerk. No new or increased risks had been identified since the previous review, and no associated measures had been proposed.

Councillors accepted the review and its findings.

12. Review of Audit Arrangements

The Town Clerk presented a paper on audit and internal control, which identified current arrangements and recommended that these be retained until the next annual review.

Councillors approved the recommendation that current audit arrangements be retained until the next annual review.

13. Royal Garden Party

Councillors approved Councillor Betty McLatchy and guest as nominees for a Royal Garden Party on 30th May 2013, the final selection to be drawn at random from nominations received by SALC.

14. Sustainable Communities Act

The Town Clerk gave an explanation of the provisions of the Sustainable Communities Act, and a request from SALC that all councils write to the Minister and to the local MP expressing the view that the Council should be able to submit proposals under the Act.

Councillors agreed that the Town Clerk should write to the Minister and MP accordingly.

15. To authorise payments.

Councillors authorised the following cheque lists:-

Date	Cheque Numbers	Value

16. To receive urgent correspondence

No urgent correspondence was presented for consideration.

17. Closure

The meeting was closed at 8.46pm.