

HAVERHILL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday 26th March 2013 at 7.00pm in The Studio, Haverhill Arts Centre, High Street, Haverhill, CB9 8AR



HAVERHILL
TOWN COUNCIL

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

Also present: Six members of the public

MINUTES

1. **Apologies for Absence**
Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Ager, Carr, Cook, French, Russo and J Stroud.
2. **Declaration of Interests**
No councillor declared an interest in items on the agenda.
3. **To Confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held 26th February 2013**
The minutes of the meeting held on 26th February 2013 were agreed.
4. **To deal with any urgent matters arising from the minutes not covered by this agenda**
The Town Clerk reported that an update on the recent car fire in The Parkway was still awaited from the Fire Service. Cllr G Stroud reported that the street lights on The Parkway had now been repaired. Cllr Byrne asked that the issue of Police involvement in restoration of street lights be considered as part of the Police report. Cllr Goody suggested that all hydrants be brightly painted to ensure that they are visible in the dark.
5. **Acting Inspector Gary Miller**
Acting Inspector Gary Miller (GM) reported on year-to-date crime statistics in Haverhill as follows:

Crime	Comparison with same period in 2012
Violence against person	Down 17
Sexual offences	Up 13
Acquisitive crimes	Up 17
Criminal damage	Down 23
Another offence	Up 8
Total crimes	Down 2

ACTION

TOWN CLERK

GM also reported on anti-social behaviour. Total recorded non-crime incidents were down 28% on the same period in the previous year, and in the last four weeks, the figure was down 70% on the same four-week period in the previous year.

GM further advised that the SNT staffing level was almost back to its full complement, with two vacancies.

GM addressed the issue of street lighting, following an indication from Suffolk County Council that street lighting would only be restored in cases where the Police gave their support. GM considered that this was not necessarily how judgements should be made, as the Police could only comment on issues related to crime and anti-social behaviour. There may be other issues such as health and safety, and in these cases the Police would not be well placed to advise the County Council. The Town Clerk asked GM if he could liaise with the County Council to provide a clear procedure to be followed. GM undertook to do this.

Cllr Hanlon asked GM whether he had received any feedback from Suffolk Police Commissioner Tim Passmore on the recent public SNT meeting. GM confirmed that as yet he had not.

Cllr Turner asked how the reported statistics compared with the national picture. GM said that he could not advise on this. Cllr Turner further asked whether the reduction in anti-social behaviour could be attributed to the poor weather or whether it was wholly down to good policing. GM advised that a 28% could not be attributed to the weather.

6. Diana Knightly

Cllr Byrne proposed a vote of thanks for Diana Knightly, who was to retire on 1 April 2013 after 16 years' service to the Haverhill Arts Centre Bistro. Cllr Byrne advised councillors that Diana had played a very important part in bringing financial stability and a 5 star Environmental Health rating to the Bistro, at a time when the business was struggling.

Town Councillors agreed the vote of thanks.

7. Chantry Mills Development Site Update

Mike Carpenter (MC), a consultant acting on behalf of Gurteen & Sons, gave a presentation outlining proposals for a partial redevelopment of the Chantry Mills site. The objectives of redevelopment were to:

1. Secure a viable and sustainable future uses for the site
2. Introduce uses which will contribute to the regeneration of Haverhill Town Centre
3. Protect and enhance the most valuable buildings
4. Retain the character and provenance of the site

The first phase of redevelopment would include removal of some buildings of lesser heritage value to make the remainder more attractive to potential office tenants. The vacant site space would provide some parking facilities. Potential future uses for this space and for the building at the north end of the site remained under consideration as there was no clear demand at present.

Cllr Turner asked whether a different access route could be considered to aid pedestrianisation of the High Street. MC advised that access would be addressed as part of a second phase of development, which could include housing provision.

Cllr G Stroud commented that there was no reference to retail options for the site, and that this was an important provision as Haverhill continues to grow. MC advised that due to the economic downturn there was currently insufficient demand for retail, but that this could change and a number of areas within the site could incorporate retail use.

Cllr Goody said that the development offered an opportunity to improve access to the site, including from Cleales Car Park, and that the building at the north of the site could incorporate a museum and/or antique sales use. MC advised that the site benefited from its history, its existing museum and the engine 'Caroline'. There would be a requirement to investigate all possible options and that the eventual solution would most likely be a mix of uses.

Cllr Byrne reminded the meeting that Christopher Gurteen had said that the removal of part of the boundary wall would give access to the Cleales Car Park access road, and that this would address parking problems and provide a serious contribution to measures to pedestrianise the High Street.

Cllr McLatchy commented that Haverhill has little 'passing trade', and that a shopping arcade would be an ideal use for the site. She added that the antiques trade was currently declining, and that any use would need to be mixed.

Cllr Hawes asked why the Counting House was to be retained given that it had been vacated by the Computing History Centre and presented an obstacle to improved access to the site. MC advised that this was a nice building, was listed, and that nuisance was not a justification for demolition.

Cllr McLatchy said that a covered link would help join the site to the High Street.

Cllr Turner asked where ideas and comments should be sent. MC asked the Town Clerk to provide contact details on his behalf.

The Town Clerk asked whether any planning gain may be available from this development, for example in the form of a Section 106 agreement, to enable works to provide/improve rear access to nearby shops, improve routes to help traffic avoid the town centre, and to provide alternative access to the Chantry Mills site avoiding the High Street. MC said that the planning gain issue is a simple one – if a policy exists, the Planning Authority can ask for a contribution. The benefit must be related to the development. The Chantry Mills development did relate to the town centre and so could be related to the type of works mentioned. Therefore a Section 106 agreement covering them was a possibility. This was most likely to be an issue for

phase 2 of the development.

MC advised that an application to demolish the relevant buildings should be forthcoming following a meeting with English Heritage, to take place in April.

Cllr Hanlon thanked MC for his attendance.

The Mayor, with the agreement of the Council, adjourned the meeting at 8.25pm for the public forum.

There being no matters raised by the public, the Mayor resumed the meeting with the agreement of the Council at 8.25pm.

8. Adoption of Committee Reports

Planning Committee

The Council moved the adoption of the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 5th March 2013.

Leisure & Community Committee

The Council moved the adoption of the minutes of the Leisure & Community Committee meeting held on 12th March 2013.

9. To Agree End of Year Transfers to/from Balances

Town Councillors approved the end of year transfers to/from balances as appended to these minutes.

10. Neighbourhood Community Budget

The Town Clerk summarised a report previously circulated with the agenda. There had been good progress towards individual aspects of the Community Budget proposals – a youth co-ordinator, youth sessions, community wardens and touchscreen PC. Some of the bigger ideas – a youth centre in particular – were proving more difficult, and contributions were needed particularly from the County Council to make the Community Budget a worthwhile partnership exercise. Otherwise the lesser proposals could continue, but a Community Budget would not be needed for them.

Other aspects that the Town Council needed to consider were:

Was the Council content to continue with ONE Haverhill as the lead body for the Community Budget?

Did the Council have any suggestions for priorities for the coming year?

Was the Council happy that the Town Clerk should continue to devote up to a day a week towards the Community Budget?

Supporting the continued involvement of the Town Council in the Community Budget, Cllr André offered to raise the issue of the County Council's engagement with the bigger proposals at the next meeting of the ONE Haverhill Board.

Councillors debated these issues, and Cllr André proposed that the Town Clerk should continue his involvement in the core group of the Haverhill Community Budget. Town councillors approved this proposal.

11. Burton Centre

The Town Clerk reported that Suffolk County Council (SCC) had received the Town Council's solicitor's letter warning of Judicial Review. They had replied robustly rejecting the case. The Town Clerk proposed that he seek further advice from a barrister at an estimated cost of £2000 - £2500. This would be the next step towards Judicial Review, and could result in an injunction to prevent SCC signing a lease on the property.

In the meantime, the youth steering group had been talking to St Nicholas Hospice Care (SNHC) about using part of the Burton Centre to deliver some of the Community Budget youth proposals.

SNHC had also asked to attend the next Planning Committee to explain their revised planning application, which it was understood would exclude any retail provision. The Town Clerk advised that the Committee would look strictly at planning issues only, and so SNHC had also asked to meet with councillors to discuss the general issue of the Burton Centre – they were concerned that our legal action was holding up progress. The Town Clerk advised Councillors to decide whether this was desirable at the moment, or whether it might interfere with the legal process.

The Town Clerk reminded Councillors of the delegation in place for any urgent decisions in respect of this issue.

Cllr André proposed that advice be sought from counsel on the potential and steps required in order to seek a Judicial Review. Councillors approved this proposal.

12. Haverhill High Street

The Town Clerk updated Councillors on the public Safer Neighbourhoods Team (SNT) meeting held on 11 March 2013. The meeting had produced limited new information. There was to be a further public engagement exercise after the SCC elections, but it was not clear what this would look at, and what would happen even if it produced a majority in favour of pedestrianisation.

The length of Camps Road between High St and Mill Road was to be made one way, in the direction away from town – it was not yet known when. This could reduce the amount of traffic entering the High Street and was to be welcomed from that point of view, but there were concerns about the impact on traffic in surrounding roads, especially Mill Road and Chantry Road.

The SNT meeting had not provided any indication of SCC's vision for the future growth of the town centre to cater for the large and expanding population, beyond the shared space idea which seemed to be an updated version of what we have now – a flat surface with street furniture to slow down the traffic.

Public reaction at and since the meeting had been very dismissive of Suffolk County Council's ideas and their attitude towards Haverhill. The reignited debate had prompted Haverhill-UK to carry out a survey asking "Are you in favour of full pedestrianisation of Haverhill's high

street?” Of over 500 respondents, 70% were in favour – the same percentage as in the Town Council’s earlier survey of 754 people.

The Town Clerk advised Councillors to decide whether they wanted to try to engage further with Suffolk County Council on the issue, and if so in what way. Councillors should also decide whether they were in support of the one way proposal for Camps Road.

Town Councillors commented as follows:

- There was concern and displeasure at the dismissive attitude and behaviour of County Councillor Guy MacGregor at the SNT meeting towards residents of Haverhill on both sides of the argument over pedestrianisation
- There was disappointment that only two of the three County Councillors had attended, and that only one – the Chair at the SNT meeting – had been involved in the debate
- There was a need to protect the interests of blue badge holders
- Concern about the impact of the one-way proposals for Camps Road on the surrounding streets
- There was a need for County Council officers to look properly at Haverhill before making decisions from their base in Ipswich
- A desire that the proposed consultation should be chaired by a representative of the Town Council to ensure the fullest engagement
- Concern at the abuse levelled at Cllr Marks at and after the SNT meeting, as his efforts had clearly been aimed at setting politics aside
- A concern that the Localism agenda appeared to be being ignored in the process of developing a traffic solution for the town centre

Town Councillors agreed to support the one-way proposals for Camps Road in principle, subject to a traffic impact assessment and effective signage, including at the edge of Haverhill.

Town Councillors further agreed that the Town Clerk should write to Suffolk County Council and the Secretary of State highlighting their concern that Localism was being ignored in this process.

13. Regional Growth Funding Bid for Haverhill Research Park

Town Councillors agreed their support for a bid for funding towards the creation of an innovation centre at the Haverhill Research Park development.

14. To authorise payments

Town Councillors authorised the following cheque lists:-

Date	Cheque Numbers	Value
12.02.13	008538 – 008541	£37,436.31
20.02.13	008542 – 008558	£18,445.25
26.02.13	008559 – 008570	£10,286.98
05.03.13	008571 – 008590	£7,075.41
12.03.13	008591 – 008612	£56,835.52

19.03.13	008613 – 008628	£37,420.19

15. **To receive urgent correspondence**
No urgent correspondence had been received.
15. **Closure**
The meeting was closed at 8.59pm.