

HAVERHILL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday 3rd September 2013 at 7.31pm in The Studio, Haverhill Arts Centre, High Street, Haverhill, CB9 8AR



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

Also present: **12 members of the public**

MINUTES

ACTION

1. **Apologies for Absence**
Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Ager, Carr, 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 23rd July 2013**
The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd July 2013 were agreed.
4. **To deal with any urgent matters arising from the minutes not covered by this agenda**
The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council was now managing Leiston Community Centre. A draft licence had been issued by the Borough Council, and the intention was to agree this under the auspices of the charity which would require a meeting of the Charity trustee to change the charitable objectives. Councillors suggested that the wording of the licence could be used as a template for any further properties taken on by the Council.

The Clerk also advised that the Vision 2031 amendments put forward at the last meeting had been adopted by the Planning Committee, and that final response had been submitted on 31 July 2013. Cllr Byrne said that it was inexcusable that the Haverhill Area Working Party had not considered the matter in more detail, and that it had not adopted the Town Council's comments after they had been circulated to all Borough Councillors for Haverhill. She said she was concerned that they did not seem to have read the documents. She would be attending the Sustainable Development Committee and would seek to ensure that the Town Council's view was incorporated.
5. **Inspector Peter Ferrie**

Acting Inspector Gary Miller attended on behalf of Inspector Ferrie and updated Town Councillors on the latest crime statistics. These showed an increase compared with the three-year average in the following types of crime:

- Sexual offences
- Acquisitive Crime
- Drug offences

And a decrease in:

- Violence against the person
- Criminal Damage
- All other offences
- Total recorded crime

Public order offences had remained constant, and anti-social behaviour reports had decreased in line with a nationwide trend.

Acting Inspector Miller said that an operation was in place to address a recent spate of 'creeper' burglaries. An arrest had been made on 31 August, and no new offences of this type had been reported since.

Cllr Hanlon asked about the position regarding a traffic order for the walkway between Queen Street and Tesco. A new sign suggested that an order was now in place. Acting Inspector Miller said he would investigate the position.

The Mayor thanked Acting Inspector Miller for his attendance and report.

The Mayor, with the agreement of the Council, adjourned the meeting at 7.51pm for the public forum.

A presentation was made by the Mayor to representatives of the Elsworth Opportunity Group, recipients of the prize money from the Summer Bash 2013 tug 'o' war, donated by the winning team.

County Councillor Julian Flood commented on how unresponsive the County Council had been in relation to street lighting matters, and on the low contrast in the marking of steps at a location on the Clements estate. He asked that councillors pass any County Council issues to him for consideration.

A member of the public asked why the Town Council had reserves of over £1m. Cllr Turner advised that a substantial reserve was required as a contingency against the Council's overall spending. Cllr Byrne said that this was not a large amount relative to some councils. The Town Clerk advised that approximately two thirds of the reserve was earmarked for specific purposes, and that the remainder was held as contingency funding. He advised that the detail of reserves would be published.

The same member of the public asked why the full detail of cheque payments was not published with the agenda for Full Council. The Town Clerk advised that this would be a considerable addition to the paperwork as the number of payments was large. He further advised that the detail was available to anyone wishing to inspect the Council's accounts, and that payments over

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£500 were published on the Town Council's website.

A member of the public complained about the County Council's approach towards road and pavement maintenance, and requests for street lights to be restored at night. He had wanted two lights in Landseer Court restored because of a trip hazard, had been told it was a Police matter, and subsequently found that the Police were only involved where the risk was one of crime or anti-social behaviour.

The Mayor advised the member of the public to send the lamp column numbers to the Town Clerk, who would pursue the matter. The Town Clerk also advised that the only route for an appeal was via the County Council's formal complaints procedure. Cllr Byrne said that most councillors seem to have faced the same problem, and that the County Council officer responsible seemed to use the Police as an excuse for not acting on this type of request.

Borough Councillor Gordon Cox asked what funding would be made available for the installation of a town clock. The Town Clerk advised that this would be raised with the next Leisure & Community Committee. Cllr Cox asked whether groups that use Leiston Community Centre were allowed to apply for Town Council grants. The Town Clerk advised that they could. Cllr Cox also asked about possible community uses for Bevan House. The Town Clerk advised that this would be taken into consideration.

A member of the public reported that access to Leiston Community Centre was not mobility scooter-friendly. The Mayor and Cllr Byrne advised that the Town Clerk would address this.

A member of the public asked about fires that had been lit in the goalmouth of the football pitch at Puddlebrook Playing Fields, and bottles and litter at the same site. The Town Clerk undertook to pursue this.

There being no further matters raised by the public, the Mayor resumed the meeting with the agreement of the Council at 8.20pm.

6. Adoption of Committee Reports

Planning Committee

The Council moved the adoption of the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 30th July 2013 and 20th August 2013.

7. Former Magistrates Court/Police Station

The Town Clerk advised councillors that he had the keys to the site, and was in discussion with property consultants to obtain a valuation, condition survey and other required expertise to help plan for the takeover.

The County Council officer responsible for negotiating the lease had been on leave since the decision to enter into negotiations was agreed, and the Clerk had contacted him that week to say that the Council wanted to get an agreement in place by October, the aim being to open at least the youth hub element by November.

The Clerk also reported that as previously agreed the Council had taken on the employment of the Youth Co-ordinator, whose name was Karen Chapple, on behalf of ONE Haverhill. Her early tasks had been

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dominated by making contact with key local stakeholders, and the Clerk said she would meet the Mayor and other key Town Councillors shortly.

The Mayor said that he was excited by this project. Cllr Turner asked about Bevan House and whether the Red Cross could still be allowed to hold jumble sales there. The Clerk advised that he was in discussion about finding a venue for these. Cllr Turner also asked whether the youth hub presented an opportunity to start a Youth Council. The Mayor advised that he had not received sufficient response to previous efforts to set one up, and hoped that youth involvement in the ONE Haverhill Youth Steering Group would provide a more successful means of engaging young people.

Cllr French suggested that the cells at the former courts site could be rented to the Police.

8. Committee Membership

The Mayor reminded councillors of the recent resignation of a Town Councillor. The Council agreed the following resulting changes to committee membership:

- Councillor McLatchy would be a member of the Leisure & Community Committee;
- Cllr Roach would replace Cllr McLatchy on the Planning Committee;
- Cllr Roach would be a member of the Appeals Committee.

The Mayor advised that a new Chair of the Appeals Committee would be agreed at its next meeting.

9. To approve the annual External Audit form (attached)

Town Councillors approved and accepted the Annual Return incorporating the audit opinion.

Cllr Goody proposed a vote of thanks to the Town Clerk for the positive outcome of the audit, and this was agreed.

10. Corn Exchange

The Town Clerk introduced an email from County Councillor Tony Brown, which asked for an expression of support from the Town Council for his efforts to restore the building to public use.

Cllr French advised that the building had formerly been a social club for the Catholic Church in Haverhill, and had subsequently been vacated and placed on the open market for private sale. He said it was a listed building in a conservation area.

Cllr Turner applauded Cllr Brown for his efforts so far, and said he would support anything that Cllr Brown could do to bring the building back into use. He said that this could also bring jobs to Haverhill.

Cllr Byrne proposed that the Town Council offer an expression of support to Cllr Brown and the group he had identified to take the initiative forward. She also proposed that the Borough Council

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Conservation Officer be put under pressure to ensure that the building be restored to public use. Councillors agreed both of these proposals.

11. To authorise payments.

Town Councillors authorised the following cheque lists:-

Date	Cheque Numbers	Value
23/07/13	008931-008956	£15,362.19
23/07/13	008957	£200.00
30/07/13	008958-008977	£10,985.73
30/07/13	008978-008979	£4,145.00
06/08/13	008980-008998	£9,377.36
13/08/13	008999-009013	£10,394.55

12. To receive urgent correspondence

The Town Clerk reported that a letter had been received from the Red Cross advising that they would be vacating Bevan House in September 2013. Cllr Turner asked whether the Leisure & Community Committee could consider its use for events. The Town Clerk advised that this could be considered.

The Clerk further reported that he had been advised by the Borough Council that a by election had been called in Haverhill North Ward and would be held on 10th October 2013. The Mayor reminded Town Councillors that Town Council staff should not to be involved in anything that could be construed as political up to and including the date of the poll.

13. Closure

The meeting was closed at 8.49pm.