

Haverhill Town Council

Minutes of a Meeting of Haverhill Town Council's

FULL COUNCIL

Held on Tuesday 27th January at 7.00pm at Haverhill Arts Centre, High Street, Haverhill



HAVERHILL
TOWN COUNCIL

Present: Mayor Councillor R André
Deputy Mayor Councillor M Byrne
Councillor P Firman
Councillor P Hanlon
Councillor B McLatchy
Councillor D Roach
Councillor B Robbins
Councillor C Turner

Apologies: Councillor L Carr
Councillor E Goody
Councillor M Martin
Councillor A Samuels
Councillor G Stroud
Councillor J Stroud

Absent: Councillor P French
Councillor D Russo

In Attendance: Colin Poole (Town Clerk)

11 members of the public were present.

Welcome:

Mayor R André welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised members of the public attending that the meeting was being recorded and filmed.

MINUTES

- C15 /001** **Apologies for Absence**
The above apologies were noted. Councillor Flood and Inspector Ferrie had also sent their apologies.
- C15 /002** **Declaration of Interests and requests for dispensation**
None.
- C15 /003** **The minutes of the Full Council meeting held 16th December 2014**
The meeting agreed these were a true record.

ACTION

C15 **Matters arising not on the agenda**

/004 **a) C14/030b Haverhill Clock**

The Mayor has inspected the works. The Clerk showed the clock face design to the meeting and advised that the trial pit dug to check ground conditions for the foundation design and for any utilities had in fact just missed finding the main gas pipe which passed too close to the intended location for the clock to allow for the width of foundations required. The Clerk recommended that the clock be re-located within the bounds of the grassed Jubilee Green, directly where the trial pit was dug. The Council **AGREED** to this recommendation.

b) C14/049 Town Twinning Signs

The meeting noted that the signage was now in place.

c) C14/063 Parish Boundary

The Clerk advised the meeting that a letter from SEBC had been received asking for comments on the terms of reference for the Governance Review. The meeting agreed to delegate responsibility for a response to the Planning Committee.

C15 **Adjournment**

/005 The meeting was adjourned for reports from the Police, District/County Councillors on issues pertinent to Haverhill and the Public Forum. See Appendix 1 for Details.
The meeting was reconvened

Note: Councillor C Turner arrived at 19:10pm

C15 **2015/16 Annual Budget**

/006 The Clerk presented the details of the 2015/16 draft budget (see separate document):

2015/16	
Expenditure	1,121,666.42
Income	275,588.00
Reserves	- 600.00
Balance	846,678.42
LCTSG	64,466.67
Precept Req	782,211.75
precept Curr	786,173.54
To/From Reserves	3,961.79
Band D property = £111.75	

The Mayor advised the meeting that the following points had been answered by the Clerk ahead of the meeting:

Bank interest £14000 - This is an accurate reflection of what we think we can achieve based on cashflow forecasts for sums we can invest for 3, 6, 9 months at a time. Bonds have fallen out the market so we downgraded expectations.

Leiston Centre - Currently not itemised as a single cost centre in the way Bevan House is, so income and costs are within other cost centres (e.g. insurance, cleaning etc). This will become necessary once/if it becomes part of the Town Hall Charity's estate portfolio.

Grit Bins £3000 - The sum includes snow wardens too. The Town Council is auditing the locations so as to be able to present a map showing accurate locations and whether they have been filled or not. Some bins may be located where SCC Highways will not fill them. A policy on how requests for grit bins are treated is necessary.

Tax Base - Calculations were made for Y2 & Y3 based on 25 extra houses for 2016/17 and 50 extra for 2017/18, working on historical increases. Many of the big Haverhill developments currently fall outside of the parish. After 17/18 any boundary changes, if approved, would kick in, so the figures could change markedly.

Councillor M Byrne thanked the Clerk for challenging the original SEBC taxbase figures, prompting a review which resulted in an increase in the tax base for Haverhill and Bury St Edmunds.

It was proposed by Councillor R André, seconded by Councillor M Byrne that the proposed budget for 2015/16 be adopted.

RESOLVED

It was proposed by Councillor C Turner, seconded by Councillor P Hanlon, that the precept for 2015/16 be set at £786,173.54, so that band D properties were charged £111.75, unchanged from last year

RESOLVED

The Mayor thanked the Clerk for his work on the budget.

C15 /007 **Report back from the Mayor's meeting with Mark Bee, leader of Suffolk County Council**

- a) The Mayor met with Councillor Mark Bee on January 15th 2015.
- b) The Mayor highlighted the following topics that had been covered:
 - i) Broadband & superfast broadband. Mark Bee had made a promise that there would be 100% access available by 2020 to superfast broadband, with 95% of people able to access faster broadband by 2016. 4G mobile services were not on the horizon.
 - ii) School improvement
 - iii) Residential School provision
 - iv) Child Poverty
 - v) Haverhill's interest in the Cambridge City Deal
 - vi) Highway Safety
 - vii) The Children's Centre which, the mayor noted from Councillor's Brown's report during the public forum, appears to have fallen on deaf ears
 - viii) Protection of heritage assets
 - ix) Youth Hub at Old Magistrates Court
 - x) Highlighting areas of co-operation, such as the planned spring-clean and mapping of assets.

C15 /008 **One Haverhill**

a) The Clerk provided a report on his meeting with Councillor Lisa Chambers, SCC Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills, regarding the Youth Hub and Old Magistrates Court.

- i. The Clerk advised the meeting that there was no movement on SCC's behalf to make the lease arrangements for the Old

magistrates Court palatable; the main thrust of the SCC argument was that we should be moving away from the concept of building-based services. SCC had agreed to provide an indicative price for the sale of the building to HTC, but needed to complete due process on the disposal or re-use of the neighbouring Place Court as this would have a significant influence on the value of the Old Magistrates Court. This information was unlikely to be available before April.

- ii. The Clerk advised the meeting that he could not recommend signing the lease as it stood given the risk of having to buy the building at an uneconomic price or lose all we might have invested in the intervening five years. He recommended that the Council cannot yet determine the way ahead for the Old Magistrates Court but should look for a Plan B.
- iii. The Clerk outlined possible options the Council may wish to consider:
 - i. Do nothing
 - ii. Find an alternative site; Bevan House, the toilet/kiosk site on the recreation ground or the Corn Exchange have all been previously suggested.
 - iii. Bring forward the planned extension to the Arts Centre with a focus on youth provision.
 - iv. Take the SCC advice and use existing facilities to provide services across town rather than in a 'hub'.
- iv. Councillors discussed the merits of the various options. It was proposed by Councillor M Byrne, seconded by Councillor B Robbins, that work on the Old Magistrates Court be abandoned.
RESOLVED unanimously
- v. It was proposed by Councillor M Byrne, seconded by Councillor P Hanlon, that the two options to be investigated are option iii, the Arts Centre extension and option iv, using existing facilities, in order to provide a service for today's young people.
RESOLVED
- vi. Councillor B McLatchy asked that the Corn Exchange be also considered, either as a youth hub or be transformed into a building the CCG could use as a walk-in NHS service, rented to them by the Town Council; Councillor P Firman asked that this idea be supported. It was proposed by Councillor R André, seconded by Councillor B Robbins, that the use of the Corn Exchange for either a youth hub or NHS provision be investigated further.
RESOLVED

b) Parish Handyman – The Council considered the recruitment of a Parish handyman. Several Councillors expressed misgivings about the apparent 'double taxation', the town paying for a service that was supposed to be provided by the Borough and County Councils. Others expressed the opinion that cuts in borough and county funding meant that was not a realistic expectation – if we wanted the job done, we should do it ourselves. The meeting also expressed concern that the vehicle lease was over three years, which was too long a commitment for a pilot project. The Mayor proposed that the matter be deferred and asked that the Clerk

bring forward proposals allowing for a short-term pilot.

AGREED

c) Community Ambassador Project - the clerk advised that the Community Ambassador Project which reports problems with roads or street furniture, and carries out litter-picking, had been under the management of Community Action Suffolk. This relationship had ended on 31st December and the 20 volunteers were left without a body to take responsibility for them, including insurance. ONE Haverhill, which wasn't a constituted body, was able to pay for the insurance and the Town Council were asked to step in to be the managing body. The incremental cost of adding this to our insurance would be £75.00 a year. It was proposed by Councillor P Hanlon, seconded by Councillor B Robbins, that the Council take legal responsibility for the Community Ambassador's project.

RESOLVED unanimously

C15
/009 **Adoption of Committee Reports**

a) Appeals Committee

The meeting noted that the Appeals Committee had not met since the last meeting.

b) Finance Committee

It was proposed by Councillor R André, seconded by Councillor C Turner, that the minutes of the meeting held 13th January 2015 be adopted.

AGREED

c) Leisure and Community Committee

It was proposed by Councillor P Hanlon, seconded by Councillor M Byrne, that the minutes of the meeting held 20th January 2015 be adopted.

AGREED

d) Personnel Committee

i) The meeting noted that the Personnel Committee had not met since the last meeting.

ii) The meeting noted that the appointment of an Operations Manager and also an Admin Apprentice was allowed within the budget and that recruitment will now start immediately.

NOTED

e) Planning Committee

It was proposed by Councillor C Turner, seconded by Councillor P Hanlon that the minutes of the meeting held on 16th December 2014 and 6th January 2015 be adopted.

AGREED

C15
/010 **Authorisation of payments**

It was proposed by Councillor D Roach, seconded by Councillor C Turner, that payments for cheques 10218 - 10275 totalling £59029.29 be authorised.

RESOLVED

C15
/011 **Urgent Correspondence**

See Matters Arising.

C15 **To Exclude the Press and Public**

/012 It was resolved under the Public Bodies (admission to meetings) Act 1960 that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of business to be transacted, namely staffing issues.
Proposed Councillor R André, seconded by Councillor P Hanlon.
RESOLVED

C14 **Staffing Matters**
/124 The Council noted the report given by the Clerk.

C14 **Date of next Meeting:**
/125 24th February 2015.

C14 **Closure**
/126 The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8:19pm.

Signed
Chairman

Date.....

Appendix 1

Reports from the Police, District/County Councillors on issues pertinent to Haverhill and the Public Forum.

County Councillor Tony Brown:

1 – The SCC “On Track” Children’s Centre at Chalkstone is to close, following a decision taken at cabinet against the wishes of all the local SCC Councillors.

2 – New signage for the High Street are all now in place. Double yellow lines have been renewed.

3 – Mill Road has still not been resurfaced.

PCSO Sophie Mitchell:

Total recorded crime in town was 1407 to date, compared to a 3-year average of 1451, broken down (3 year average in brackets) these were:

Anti-Social Behaviour	766	(1107)
Acquisitive Crime	589	(619)
Of which		
Domestic Burglary:	47	(50)
Robbery	7	(8)
Vehicle Crime	106	(154)
Criminal Damage and Arson	284	(350)
Shoplifting	164	(115)
Drug offences	89	(59)
Violence	321	(283)

Detection rate is 37%. Inspector Ferrie was pleased with the generally low level of crime and high detection rate.

Mr John Burns:

ONE Haverhill Report (Item 8a) – Youth Hub: As was reported in the press last week, it has been suggested that the Chalkstone Community Centre be sold by SEBC to the River of Life Church for them to hold meetings etc. with a secondary purpose of providing facilities to the residents of the town.

It has been claimed that residents of the Chalkstone Estate have been consulted however I should point out that none of the businesses, nor apparently any of the residents, on Strasbourg Square have been consulted

In addition random questioning of residents on the Estate would suggest the first many knew of the proposal was in the press last week. The consultation period actually finished on 16th January with a meeting held on the 12th which all these people were unaware of.

In order to clarify the situation a list of questions has been compiled and passed across to the Portfolio Holder in SEBC questioning several aspects of the proposal; particularly around parking issues.

One of the suggestions made was, if it had to be sold, then it would make an ideal Youth Hub considering it will be in the centre of town once 4,000 houses have been built to the north of it and require very little in the way of conversion/upgrade in view it has been continuously occupied.

Handyman (Item 8b):

1. Whilst I generally support the concept and provision of a handyman (or handy person) for the town, at the July 2014 full TC meeting this subject was brought up as a suggestion from ONE Haverhill that the TC employ such a person. However it was minuted that the Councillors expressed mixed emotions, asked to see a budget and also that the ONE Haverhill partners (SCC and SEBC) be asked to contribute to the costs. Has something happened that has changed their "emotions" and has any action taken place to resolve the budget/funding issues?
2. Following on from (1), it is assumed that the Haverhill taxpayers will not be asked to contribute twice for the same work to be carried out. Will the TC be either arranging for the costs to be recovered from either SCC and/or SEBC or by invoicing out the costs to those two councils on an actuals basis?
3. How will the handyman be employed e.g. on salary, with its associated pension costs, or on a freelance basis?
4. Will the TC be responsible for the supply, maintenance and running costs of a vehicle and tools?
5. Who will be responsible for managing the workload of the handy man, ensuring that work is done to a satisfactory standard, and that they comply with all health & safety procedures?
6. How will work needed be identified around the town and what procedures will be put in place to allow members of the public to report problems easily and efficiently particularly in emergencies?
7. How many hours per week will the handyman be utilised?

Operations Manager (Item 10d(ii)):

1. It is noted that the December 2014 Personnel Committee approved the recruitment of an Operations Manager. It is understood that this person will report to the Arts & Leisure Manager and be employed for 25 hours per week. How was this position identified as necessary in view that for the past 25 years this position has not existed?
2. How much does this position cost overall as the public have been denied access to a detailed budget analysis of staffing costs; allowing for individual salary confidentiality?
3. Why is the job requiring Managerial status, with its associated potential for perhaps a larger salary group than necessary, rather than a Supervisor? Considering the number of people working below that level is very small it hardly warrants a Manager position.