

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

FULL COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday 25th September 2001 at 7.30pm
At Haverhill Town Hall Arts Centre

PRESENT:

Town Councillors:

**M Dane, M Dunning, P French, E Goody,
K Griffin (items 1 & 2 only), L Hancock,
P Hanlon, L Kiernan, Mrs M Martin, A Millar,
Maggie Lee (except item 9), A Smith,
and M Woodley.**

IN ATTENDANCE: Clerk to the Council – Gordon Mussett

Four members of the public

MINUTES

In the absence of both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor Cllr Angela Millar, previous Deputy Mayor, took the Chair.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs E Bowman, G Kiernan, and A Trewartha.

2. Inspector Mike Bacon, Suffolk Police

Cllr Millar welcomed Inspector Mike Bacon to the meeting. Inspector Bacon thanked the Town Council for the opportunity to address them, adding that he hoped it would become a regular item on the Council's agenda. Inspector Bacon reported that reported crime figures for the Haverhill Police Sector had fallen by 11% last year, and that whilst this decrease had not been sustained this year the number of reported crimes had not risen above last year. Of these crimes 33% were detected, the second highest detection rate in Suffolk.

Inspector Bacon commented that house burglaries had fallen by 33%, but reminded householders not to be complacent: not only were many of the burglaries opportunist, thieves taking advantage of unlocked doors and open windows, but there had been an increase in thefts from sheds and garages.

Inspector Bacon reported that DNA evidence was now being used successfully to apprehend criminals.

Inspector Bacon commented that he was aware of criticisms that the reception at the Police Station was not staffed twenty-four hours a day, but added that Officers were continuously based at the Police Station and in the event of an incident were able to respond.

Inspector Bacon concluded by saying that it was hoped to give repeated publicity to the Crimestoppers scheme where the public could telephone 0800 555111 to report, anonymously if they so wished, criminal activity.

Cllr Millar thanked Inspector Bacon for his report.

Cllr Dane commented that there seemed to be an increase in the misuse of laser pens by young people, and Inspector Bacon reported that the Police do have powers to confiscate such pens if there is evidence of misuse.

Cllr Dane commented on the opening hours of the Police Station to the public, and Inspector Bacon reported that there had been difficulties whilst a member of his team had been assisting with a County-wide Police project.

Cllr French commented on the problems with abandoned cars and asked whether action could be taken against owners who sell their cars without notifying the DVLA of the new owner. Inspector Bacon advised that the question of prosecuting such owners was under review.

Cllr Hanlon asked about help given to offenders who are dependent on alcohol or drugs, and Inspector Bacon advised that the Police have access to substance abuse support workers.

Cllr Hanlon also asked whether greater attention could be given to parking on pavements in Queen Street. Cllr Goody asked whether the Traffic Warden's hours of work could be extended, and Inspector Bacon advised that he would review the matter. Cllr Goody added that he would like to thank the Police for their good work.

Cllr Larry Kiernan commented on the problems of cyclists in Jubilee Walk, and cycling against the traffic flow in the High Street, adding that earlier this week a shopper emerging from the Co-op had been knocked down by a cyclist. Inspector Bacon advised that he would draw the matter to the attention of the Beat Officers.

Cllr Mrs Martin commented on the problems of under-age drinking, adding that alcohol was a major contributor to 75% of crimes committed by young offenders.

Cllr Smith enquired as to how long the CCTV tapes were kept, and Inspector Bacon advised that they were not immediately re-used.

Cllr Dane asked if a speed camera could be installed in Ehringshausen Way to reduce the incidence of speeding in this road.

Cllr Dane also asked whether consideration could be given to the introduction of a ban on drinking in the streets in the center of the Town. Cllr Millar and Cllrs Maggie Lee and Smith all advised that the introduction of such a ban in Bury St Edmunds had been for reasons different to those that Cllr Dane felt applied in Haverhill, and that the introduction of such a ban in Haverhill would prevent families from enjoying a peaceful drink on the Market Square. Cllr Maggie Lee added that the Police already have powers to confiscate alcohol if required. Cllr Griffin added that in other towns people taking drink into the streets had to do so in plastic glasses and "rubber" bottles.

3. To confirm Minutes of Meeting held 31st July 2001

Cllr Hanlon proposed and Cllr Mary Martin seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on 31st July 2001 be approved as a true record, all being in favour.

4. To deal with any urgent matters arising from the Minutes

Cllr Dane enquired as to whether any further correspondence had been received regarding the condition of the railway bridge over the footway from the Chalkstone estate. The Clerk advised that a letter had been received this week advising that the bridge remained structurally sound, and that the brickwork was to be repaired and the parasitic growth removed.

(Full Council adjourned for Public Forum)

PUBLIC FORUM

A member of the public enquired as to whether any further progress had been made in respect of a meeting to consider increased health facilities in the Town. The Clerk reported that as previously reported a letter had been sent to Dr Cornish in his capacity as Chairman of the West Suffolk Borders Primary Care Group suggesting that he was best placed to convene such a meeting, but no such meeting had been convened. The Clerk added that the West Suffolk Borders Primary Care Group were shortly to introduce a Patients Forum which would provide a focus for community involvement. In addition the Clerk reported that Haverhill was now to be represented on the Community Health Council, the Town's previous representation having been lost through the resignation of the previous appointee.

A member of the public drew the Town Council's attention to a number of inaccuracies within the Haverhill Directory. The Clerk advised that the Directory was in the process of updating with an expected distribution date before the end of the calendar year, but already changes were having to be made to the collected information as businesses changed hands or ceased trading, and that any Directory was only accurate for a limited period.

(Full Council adjourned for Public Forum)

5. Adoption of Committee Reports

Leisure Committee

Cllr Smith proposed and Cllr French seconded that the minutes of the meeting of the Leisure & Environment Committee held on 21st August be adopted, all being in favour.

Cllr Hanlon asked the Clerk whether any correspondence had been received regarding the creation of a dog exercise area on the Chalkstone Playing Fields, segregating dogs and their faeces, from the rest of the area. The Clerk advised that the Borough Council had advised that there were no funds for such an area, nor were they willing to introduce a total ban on dogs from the Chalkstone Playing Fields as it was their opinion that the Home Office would not consider the alternative dog exercise arrangement adequate. The Clerk reported that he had advised the Borough Council that his experience was that the availability of public footpaths bordering agricultural land had been considered adequate by the Home Office previously, and that he had asked the Borough Council to prepare a scheme for a Byelaw excluding dogs from the area. Cllr Dane commented that there was a Town-wide shortage of Dog Bins. Cllr Dane proposed and Cllr Hancock seconded that the matter be referred back to the Leisure & Environment Committee for further consideration, all being in favour.

Personnel Committee

Cllr Maggie Lee proposed and Cllr Hanlon seconded that the minutes of the meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 28th August be adopted, all being in favour.

Planning Committee

Cllr Mrs Martin proposed and Cllr French seconded that the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 14th August and 11th September be adopted, all being in favour.

Cllr Dane asked that the item 3(e) "Litter Bins" on the minutes of the meeting held on 14th August be referred to the Leisure & Environment Committee.

Cllr Larry Kiernan advised that his name had been omitted from the list of attendees to the meeting held on 11th September. The Clerk apologised, and added Cllr Larry Kiernan's name and initialled the amendment.

Cllr Hanlon enquired regarding the outcome of item 3(g) "Toilet Block" on the minutes of the meeting held 14th August. The Clerk advised that the Parochial Church Council were yet to meet to decide the Council's request but it seemed unlikely that unsupervised access to the toilets would be permitted.

Finance & General Purposes Committee

Cllr Goody proposed and Cllr Smith seconded that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on 18th September be adopted, all being in favour.

Cllr Smith enquired as to whether agreement had been reached on further funding for Wednesdays for Women. The Clerk advised that the Borough Officers were still preparing the Committee report.

Cllr Dane enquired regarding the Social Impact Study, and suggested that a new Town Plan needed drawing up. The Clerk advised that the final version of the Social Impact Study would not be available for a month, and that the Town Council had already agreed funding with the Countryside Agency to produce a Town Plan setting out priorities. The Town & Country Planning processes had moved on since the original Gibberd Plan had been produced, and in the future the development limits would be set as part of the Local Plan process, highway schemes would come about through traffic management reviews, and supporting infrastructure needs highlighted by studies such as the Town Plan and the Social Impact Study. Cllr Maggie Lee advised that early in 2002 a meeting would be arranged to discuss in depth Haverhill's section in the Draft Local Plan being prepared by St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

6. 20th Anniversary of Town Twinning, June 2002

The Clerk reported that as 2002 marked the 20th anniversary of twinning with Ehringshausen, the Town Twinning Association had asked if the Town Council would recognise it as a civic visit attended by the Mayor and a number of other Councillors. Cllr Smith proposed and Cllr Millar seconded that the item be considered by the Leisure & Environment Committee, all being in favour.

7. To authorise urgent payments.

The payments shown on the lists detailed below were approved for payment.

<u>List Date</u>	<u>Item Numbers</u>	<u>Cheque Numbers</u>	<u>Total Value for List £</u>
25.09.01	1-5	3659-3663	£1,319.18

8. To receive urgent correspondence

The Clerk circulated, for Councillors to read and, if required comment direct to the Department of Health, the consultation document entitled "Involving Patients and the Public in Healthcare".

9. Matters of report

The Clerk reported that Cllr Maggie Lee and himself were to meet with the Planning Officers of South Cambridgeshire District Council regarding the proposed development at Abingdon, which would have a direct impact on Haverhill's future growth and investment.

Cllr Hanlon reported that a display illustrating the proposed speed reduction measures in Chalkstone Way and Millfields Way would be on display in the Chalkstone Community Centre on 15th October from 1.00 p.m. to 6.45 p.m.

Cllr Dane expressed regret at the closure of three shops in Queen Street recently and asked whether the Town Centre could be marketed more. The Clerk advised that already the Town Council spent considerably on marketing, although as it was provided under the guise of leisure, the events such as Saturday morning children's entertainment in the Market Square, the Folk and Dance Day, the Street Festival and the late-night shopping and Christmas Lights were not recognised as such. The Clerk added that the draft Social Impact Study report had suggested that further marketing be undertaken by the Borough as well as the Town Council and it might be better to await publication of the final report.

Cllr Millar advised that the Town Council had agreed that the Town Mayor would send a letter of condolence to the people of Haverhill, Massachusetts, who had lost a member of their community in the terrorist attacks of 11th September.

10. Closure

The meeting was closed at 8.50 p.m.