

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

FULL COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday 26th March 2002 at 7.30pm
At Haverhill Town Hall Arts Centre

PRESENT: **Town Mayor:** **Cllr Eric Bowman**
 Town Councillors: **M Dane, M Dunning, P French, E Goody,**
 K Griffin, P Hanlon, G Kiernan, L Kiernan,
 Maggie Lee, Mrs M Martin, A Smith and
 M Woodley

IN ATTENDANCE: **Clerk to the Council – Gordon Mussett**
 Arts & Leisure Manager – Nick Keeble
 Six members of the public

MINUTES

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Millar.

2. To confirm Minutes of Meeting held 29th January 2001

Cllr Maggie Lee proposed and Cllr French seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on 29th January 2002 be approved as a true record, all being in favour.

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

Cllr Hanlon asked that the Clerk reaffirm the date of the Special Town Council meeting to be held in April.

(Full Council adjourned for Public Forum)

A member of the public commented on the high speeds of traffic using Chimswell Way, especially since the opening of the link to Chivers Road. The member of the public asked the Town Council to press for speed reduction measures, and a footway beside the road from Appleacre Road to the new road. Cllr Larry Kiernan stated that traffic speed was for the Police to enforce, and Cllr Maggie Lee stated that as a member of the Police Authority she would speak to the Police on the matter. The Town Clerk was asked to write to St Edmundsbury Borough Council regarding potential traffic calming measures.

A member of the public asked the Town Councillors representing his Ward how many times that had sought the opinion of constituents like him on recent key decisions. Cllr Bowman

assured the member of the public that Councillors would take “soundings” on the views of their electorate.

A member of the public complained about the amount of litter and dog mess within Haverhill. Cllr Maggie Lee agreed that the litter problem had got worse, and that the Town Council continued to write to St Edmundsbury Borough Council on the subject. Cllr Hanlon stated that he raised with St Edmundsbury Borough Council the need for a segregated dog exercise area on the Chalkstone Playing Fields, but that the Borough Council were reluctant to provide such an area. Cllr Dane enquired about the hours worked and the area covered by the Dog Wardens and the Clerk responded. Cllr Gerry Kiernan reported that St Edmundsbury Borough Council’s own figures showed that the problem with litter was increasing, and that a review was taking place. The Haverhill Partnership were also active in working with St Edmundsbury Borough Council in reducing the problem with litter.

A member of the public stated that they felt that the ownership of much of the vacant land in and around the town centre placed St Edmundsbury Borough Council in a difficult position when dealing with planning applications for out-of-town retail developments. Both Cllr Gerry Kiernan and Cllr Maggie Lee advised the member of the public that if they were inferring there was any financial irregularity the member of the public should supply the facts in order that an investigation could be undertaken. The member of the public stated he would consider whether he wished his comments to be taken further.

(Full Council resumed after Public Forum)

4. Adoption of Committee Reports

Leisure Committee

Cllr Smith proposed and Cllr Hanlon seconded that the minutes of the Leisure Committee held 19th February be adopted, all being in favour.

Cllr Dane enquired regarding the play area for Jubilee Walk. The Clerk advised that St Edmundsbury Borough Council Highways Department had suggested two alternative sites/designs and that these would be presented to the next Leisure & Environment Committee meeting.

Cllr Mrs Mary Martin asked regarding the progress towards the skatepark. The Arts & Leisure Manager advised that the planning application was in draft stage with final consultations on both content, siting and site features before the submission of a full application. The group, Haverskate, continued to fundraise to supplement the Borough Council funding.

Planning Committee

Cllr Mrs Mary Martin proposed and Cllr Larry Kiernan seconded that the minutes of the Planning Committee held 19th February and 12th March be adopted, all being in favour.

Cllr Maggie Lee enquired regarding the planning application No. SE/02/1445/P for provision of additional car parking at Genzyme Ltd, Rookwood Way, and the Town Council’s comment regarding the applicant considering public transport and/or car sharing initiatives. Cllr Mrs Mary Martin advised that the application had not come before St Edmundsbury Borough Council’s Planning Committee as yet.

Finance & General Purposes Committee

Cllr Maggie Lee proposed and Cllr Gerry Kiernan seconded that the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held 19th March be adopted, all being in favour.

Cllr Hanlon enquired regarding the street light by 28 Elmdon Place. The Clerk stated that St Edmundsbury Borough Council had not received any notifications of problems with the light but were arranging for it to be rechecked.

5. To Formally Move The Drawing Down of the Precept for 2002/2003

Cllr Maggie Lee proposed that St Edmundsbury Borough Council be requested to pay over the precept for 2001/2002, a sum of £129,353, all being in favour.

6. To Increase The Membership of the Licensing & Appeals Committee

The Clerk advised that when this Committee was considering applications for Public Entertainment Licences, two of the existing members needed to declare an interest, which meant that the number of members eligible to serve was the minimum required for a quorum. In order to avoid cancelling meetings because of being inquorate two further members, not members of Planning Committee would be administratively easier. Cllrs Maggie Lee and Hanlon agreed to serve as additional members of this Committee, and the Council agreed to review the Committee membership in May.

7. To authorise urgent payments.

Cllr Maggie Lee proposed and Cllr Mrs Mary Martin seconded that the payments shown on the lists detailed below were approved for payment, all being in favour.

<u>List Date</u>	<u>Item Numbers</u>	<u>Cheque Numbers</u>	<u>Total Value for List £</u>
26.03.02	1-3	3853-3855	£1156.67

8. To receive urgent correspondence

Cllr Maggie Lee circulated to members details of a conference on “local governance – working together at a Parish level” and suggested that two members who wished to attend do so, together with the Clerk.

9. Matters of report

Cllr French reported that he had received a letter from the Chairman of Great Wrattling Parish Council suggesting some form of closer liaison between the two Councils. The Clerk advised that as part of the preparation for a Market Town Initiative bid he had already written to the Clerks of all Parish Councils with a seven/eight mile radius suggesting that their Parish be represented at the Haverhill Partnership meetings, and that this was a better forum for such liaison.

Cllr Dane asked when the Town Council minutes were to be updated on the website, and the Clerk advised that the pages had been updated within the last week.

Cllr Dane reported that although Withersfield Road had been resurfaced there were still potholes along the edges.

Cllr Dane reported that he was concerned for the young people of Haverhill, and their ability to buy into the housing market because of the house prices. Cllr Maggie Lee advised that affordable housing is an issue throughout the whole of the Greater Cambridge Partnership region, yet that house prices were still lower than elsewhere in the south east. Cllr Maggie Lee advised that both the Town Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council were aware of the problems faced by young people. Cllr Gerry Kiernan declared an interest in the matter as a member of the Havebury Board. Cllr Gerry Kiernan stated that there was no a requirement for affordable housing to be included in large developments, and that the price of housing was affecting not just though already living in the town, but also key workers such as teachers, nurses, etc seeking to move into the town to work, and that the Haverhill Partnership had asked St Edmundsbury Borough Council to review its key worker housing

policy. Cllr Mrs Mary Martin stated that she too shared Cllr Dane's concerns in this matter. Cllr Hanlon felt that the Town Council should write to St Edmundsbury Borough Council asking them to increase the amount of affordable and social housing. Cllr Larry Kiernan also expressed support for Cllr Dane's concern. The Clerk advised that there were schemes available already, including "Affordable Homes for Village People" initiated by The Princes Trust that could be used to provide permanently low-cost housing for the town. Cllr Hanlon asked that the matter be discussed further at the next meeting of the Planning Committee.

Cllr Goody stated he would like to thank St Edmundsbury Borough Council for resurfacing Ehringshausen Way.

Cllr French reported that there were cars abandoned in every layby along the bypass.

10. To Receive An Update On Negotiations for the Town Hall

Cllrs French, Maggie Lee, Hanlon, Larry Kiernan, Gerry Kiernan, Mrs Mary Martin, and Smith declared an interest in this matter, but in accordance with advice given by the Solicitor to St Edmundsbury Borough Council reserved their right to remain and speak, but not vote, on this subject.

Cllr Smith provided a resume of the negotiations that had occurred over the past two and one half years. During 2001 an agreement had been reached with clauses and content satisfactory to both St Edmundsbury Borough Council and the Town Council. Because of the charitable status of the building any agreement had to be confirmed by the Charity Commissioners, who had rejected the agreement because it did not clearly separate the duties of the Custodian Trustees (the Borough Council) and the Management Trustees (the Town Council). The Borough Council wished to accept the initial stance of the Charity Commissioners that the transfer of the whole building to a new Charity established by the Town Council was the simplest solution, whereas the Town Council had continued to press the Charity Commission who had now seemingly arrived at an alternative arrangement, one that more closely modelled the agreement reached in 2001. Cllr Smith posed the question to the Council that do they wish to take on the Custodian Trusteeship, or do they wish to continue to negotiate to an arrangement incorporating the essence of the 2001 agreement? Cllr Maggie Lee thanked Cllr Smith for his summary of the position, and for his endeavours in attempting to achieve the transfer of management to the Town Council. Cllr Maggie Lee referred to the letter received on 25th March 2002 from Borough Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White, Chair of the Borough Council's Leisure Services Committee, in which she referred to her commitment to the original plan for the management of the Town Hall. This original plan had been made impossible to achieve by the decision of the Borough Council's Leisure Services Committee to "transfer the Town Hall to a new trust established by the Town Council", a decision that was made and ratified by St Edmundsbury Borough Council without the knowledge that alternative models were available for consideration. Cllr Maggie Lee stated she intended to take a resolution to the next Full Council meeting of St Edmundsbury Borough Council with a view to having that resolution reviewed. Cllr Gerry Kiernan supported Cllr Maggie Lee, in that all parties, Officers and Members, had reached consensus on the agreement made in 2001, and it was important to try to achieve the aims of that agreement. Cllr Gerry Kiernan considered it worthwhile writing again to Mrs Mildmay-White, and perhaps seeking a meeting of those Members who had agreed the terms of the 2001 agreement. Cllr Gerry Kiernan stated he was optimistic of achieving the desired outcome. Cllr Dunning proposed that the Town Council write to St Edmundsbury Borough Council indicating that they were only prepared to negotiate a settlement along the lines of the agreement reached in 2001. Cllr Dane seconded the proposal, and with Cllrs French, Maggie Lee, Hanlon, Larry Kiernan, Gerry Kiernan, Mrs Mary Martin, and Smith declaring an interest and abstaining, the proposal was carried unanimously by the remaining members.

11. Closure

The meeting was closed at 8.50 p.m.