



HAVERHILL  
TOWN COUNCIL

## HAVERHILL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> August 2010 at 7.00 pm  
In The Studio, Haverhill Arts Centre, High Street, Haverhill

**Present:**      **Chair: Town Councillor: E McManus**  
                         **Town Councillors: L Ager, L Burgess, M Byrne, L Carr,**  
   **P French, A Gower, P McManus, M Marks,**  
   **and G Price**

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

### MINUTES

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.    <b><u>Apologies for Absence</u></b><br/>Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Hanlon, Richardson, Samuels and Turner.</li> <li>2.    <b><u>Declaration of Interests</u></b><br/>No Members declared any interests they may have on items on the agenda.</li> <li>3.    <b><u>To confirm Minutes of Meeting held 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2010</u></b><br/>The minutes of the meeting held 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2010 were agreed as a true record.</li> <li>4.    <b><u>To deal with any urgent matters arising from the Minutes not covered by this agenda</u></b><br/>There were no urgent matters to discuss.</li> </ol> | <b>Action</b> |
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The meeting was adjourned for the Public Forum

A member of the public stated that despite the good intentions that residents would take a greater interest in managing local affairs, there was a lack of other members of the public present tonight. The member of the public stated it was important to maintain the present level of services provided by the Town Council.

There being no further questions the meeting was resumed

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.    <b><u>To Comment on the Governance Review (attached)</u></b><br/>The Council agreed that it should seek to extend the boundaries of Haverhill as follows:-<br/>Kedington boundary – to extend the boundary with Kedington Parish Council to the north so the new boundary line runs along the line of the stream, from Coupals Lane to the existing boundary with Little Wratting Parish Council. No properties are affected by this move, which has the support of Kedington Parish Council.</li> </ol> | <b>Town Clerk to respond to consultation</b> |
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Withersfield boundary – to extend the boundary with Withersfield Parish Council so that it runs from the boundary with Cambridgeshire, along the southern/south-eastern boundary of the floodpark and thence along the western side of the north western relief road to a (new) boundary with Little Wrattling. The properties in Barsey Close, plus one other are affected by this change, which has the support of Withersfield Parish Council.

Little Wrattling boundary – to extend the boundary to run from the (new – see above) junction of Kedington/Little Wrattling/Haverhill to join the A143 at the new north west relief road roundabout, and thence to run on the northern side of the new relief road to a (new) boundary with Withersfield. Properties in Wrattling Road will be affected by this change. Little Wrattling Parish Council would prefer this change not to occur at this time.

The Council also agreed to submit that the boundaries with Sturmer Parish Council (and Braintree) should be amended to run along the southern side of the bypass from Bumpstead Road to Sturmer Road.

As regards number of Town Councillors it was agreed to keep these unaltered with recognition that a review of numbers, and Ward boundaries, would be required at such time as the north western and north eastern developments occurred.

**6. To Respond to the Consultation Regarding Local Referendums to Veto Excessive Council Tax Increases (attached)**

The Clerk explained the background, and highlighted the threats to the Council's financial plan that the proposed inclusion of Town and Parish Councils into the Council Tax capping regime would bring. Cllr Byrne advised that the Labour group were opposed to exorbitant Council Tax increases, and would therefore welcome any proposals that both impose a "cap" on the amount of any increase, and give residents the right to veto increases above that "cap". However, they also recognised that Town and Parish Council Taxes are a different animal from County and Borough Council Taxes, in these ways:-

- a) for most Town and Parish Councils they are the only source of revenue, unlike County and Borough Councils that receive the larger proportion of their income from the Government
- b) the average Town and Parish Council Tax levels are relatively low – in St Edmundsbury the average is around £35 per annum, and this is reflected across the country. In some Parishes the total sum raised is less than £1,200 per annum.
- c) However all Town and Parish Councils, regardless of size, are subject to the same costs for such core elements as Audit Fees, Public Liability Insurance, Information Commissioner Registration Fees and Clerk's Salaries – all negotiated nationally. Even a 3% increase in these annual sums would represent a 1.5% increase in Council Tax for the smallest Parishes, without any other cost increases.
- d) Most Town and Parish Council residents recognise that their "local" Council Tax is spent, in its entirety, in their Town and Parish. Residents resent that element of Council Tax paid to authorities with headquarters 20, and 50, miles away.

Cllr Byrne added that as a Town Council we have previously agreed (although the Labour Group opposed the actual amount) a three-year

**Town Clerk to respond to consultation. Town Clerk to publicise the issues**

financial increase to insure our current level of services against complete loss of Arts Centre grant from the Borough Council. Given the expected reductions in public expenditure at a Borough level, this plan seems wise. However any “cap” on Council Tax could mean that despite our prudent planning there will be a shortfall in total income, leading to loss of services.

Cllr Byrne urged all those present to put pen to paper to oppose any proposals to “cap” Town and Parish Council precepts. The Labour Group, and she hoped the whole Council, we will continue to ensure that only the minimum increases required to maintain our valued services will be accepted, and I hope that others will join me in that sentiment.

Cllrs Paul McManus and Gower supported Cllr Byrne’s sentiments, Cllr Marks highlighted the need to protect the more vulnerable residents and Cllr Ager emphasised the important role the Arts Centre played in the vitality of the town.

With more emphasis being given to the recent survey that indicated a willingness amongst the survey group to pay increased Town Council Council Tax for the services, the draft letter was agreed as the response to the consultation. The Town Clerk was asked to raise awareness of the issue, and what cuts in Town Council Tax would mean to residents.

Members agreed to consult with residents and bring to the September meeting their views on the potential for reducing services.

**7. To authorise payments.**

The Council authorised the following cheque lists:-

<b>Date</b>	<b>Cheque No.s</b>	<b>Value</b>
15.06.10	5906-5923	£6,303.25
29.06.10	5924	£34,119.47
29.06.10	5925-5959	£26,568.59
06.07.10	5960-5979	£8,199.89
13.07.10	5980-6000	£45,961.76
21.07.10	6001-6020	£9,146.71
22.07.10	6021-6028	£2,114.13
03.08.10	6029-6045	£13,131.13
03.08.10	6046-6066	£14,828.84

**6.**

**8. Correspondence**

a) St Edmundsbury Borough Council – Street Trading Permit – Mr Czajkowski – High Street

The Council agreed to oppose the application as this would result in over-trading in the High Street, which already had two long-established Street Trading Consents for similar food items.

**9. Closure**

The meeting was closed at 8.22 p.m.