

HAVERHILL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday 22nd February 2011 at 7.00 pm
In The Studio, Haverhill Arts Centre, High Street, Haverhill



HAVERHILL
TOWN COUNCIL

Present: **Chair: Town Councillor: E McManus**
 Town Councillors: L Burgess, M Byrne,
 L Carr (except items 9 and 11-20),
 P French (except item 9),
 P Hanlon, P McManus, M Marks,
 A Samuels, Mrs A Snape and
 C Turner

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

MINUTES

1. **Apologies for Absence**
Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Ager, Gower, Price and Richardson.
2. **Declaration of Interests**
Cllr Mrs Alison Snape declared an interest in items 9 and 10 as a member of St Felix Church congregation, and the parent of a child attending a Roman Catholic School. No other Members declared any interests they may have on items on the agenda.
3. **To confirm Minutes of Meeting held 8th February 2011**
The minutes of the meeting held 8th February 2011 were agreed as a true record.
4. **To deal with any urgent matters arising from the Minutes not covered by this agenda**
There were no urgent matters to discuss.
5. **Mark Hardingham, Deputy Chief Fire Officer to Speak on Suffolk Fire & Rescue Integrated Risk Management Plan**
Mr Hardingham explained the background to the proposed reductions in staffing, which would see a reduction in wholtime crewed hours at Haverhill Fire Station. Mr Hardingham indicated that, based on historical data, the impact would be negligible. Mr Hardingham advised that a full public meeting was to be held at the Fire Station on 10th March at 7.30 p.m. to receive comments from the public. The Council asked if Mr Hardingham could supply an analysis of the events attended by Haverhill Fire Station appliances by time of day, and he agreed to do so.

Action

The meeting was adjourned for the Public Forum

A member of the public spoke eloquently and passionately regarding the proposal by Suffolk County Council to introduce charges for home to school transport for children with special needs. Members expressed their concern that by attempting to introduce these charges the County Council was targeting the most vulnerable members of the community.

There being no further questions the meeting was resumed

6. To Respond to Consultation on Suffolk Fire & Rescue Integrated Risk Management Plan

The Council agreed to defer its response to the consultation on Suffolk Fire & Rescue Integrated Risk Management Plan until the Full Council meeting on 22nd March when the additional information requested would be available for consideration.

7. Budgets 2011/2012

The Council agreed the budgets and that the precept for 2011/2012 would be £871,505. The Town Council agreed to establish a small Working Party comprising Cllrs Byrne, Elaine McManus, Marks, and the Town Clerk to investigate how, during 2011/12, some funds could be distributed back to the residents and community.

8. Flower Club Presentation

The Council received a presentation regarding a request to fund £2,000 of the costs of the proposed Flower Festival in 2013. The Council asked the Flower Club representatives to seek alternative funding sources, and to return to a future meeting in September when the Council could reconsider the extent to which it might fund the Festival.

With the approval of the Council the Mayor brought item 10 to be considered as the next item.

10. To Respond to Consultation on Home to School Transport

The Council considered its responses to the consultation as follows:-

- a) Home to School Transport for Discretionary Users
That the proposal to increase charges should be limited to a maximum of £450 per annum for a family (i.e. rather than per child as proposed), and that changes to the eligibility criteria should be reassessed when the Government introduces the proposed new benefits regime.

- b) Proposed Home to School Transport Policy for post-16 pupils

The proposal that transport would be only provided to the nearest establishment that offers the course being sought by the student makes no allowance for those circumstances where the course is over-subscribed, or the pupil is otherwise excluded from attending that establishment. The Town Council supports the principle that the cost of transport for low income families should be reduced by 50%, and whilst supporting an increase in charges overall, believes these should reflect the charges for discretionary transport, ie. £450 per annum; in this instance the Council

believes it should be limited to a maximum of £450 per family.

- c) Proposed Home to School Transport policy for students who need special arrangements

The Town Council felt most strongly that the proposed changes were discriminatory in as much as they affected vulnerable members of the community, whose need to attend a special school was not their choice but the result of a medical condition which they had no control over. The Town Council asked the Town Clerk to write strongly opposing any changes to this provision.

- d) Home to School Transport for Roman Catholic Children

The Town Council objected to the proposal that there be a maximum of 15 miles set after which families on low income would not be eligible for free transport as this excluded Haverhill families whose children attended schools in Bury St Edmunds. The Council also considered that this policy should be extended to children attending other faith schools, and not limited to those attending Roman Catholic schools.

9. **Request for Financial Assistance Towards Landscaping/Car Parking, St Felix R.C. Church**

The Council considered a request for financial support towards landscaping/car parking in the new development and agreed an immediate grant of £5,000 towards the landscaping of a community area. The Council agreed to consider further grants later in the 2011/12 financial year.

11. **Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency – Consultation**

The Council agreed its response to the consultation.

12. **Suffolk Local Transport Plan 2011-2031**

The Council agreed its response to the consultation, which failed to address the need to improve north-south links through the town, nor how the proposed improvements in public transport, walking and cycling networks were to be funded in this current economic climate.

13. **Update on Expression of Interest for Library Service**

The Council received an update on the expression of interest, which had been made subject to due diligence of the finances, on the basis of sharing future savings on a proportionate basis with the County Council.

14. **Update on Expression of Interest for Youth Service**

The Council received an update on the expression of interest.

15. **To Note The Results of the Actuarial Review of the LGSS Pension Fund and the Proposed Employer Contributions from 1st April 2011**

The Council noted the results of the actuarial review of the LGSS pension fund and the proposed employer contributions from 1st April 2011.

**Public Health
Acts
(Amendment)
Act 1890 s44**

16. **To Nominate The Mayor for Entry Into A Draw to Attend a Buckingham Palace Garden Party**

The Council agreed the nomination of the Mayor for entry into a draw to attend a Buckingham Palace garden party.

17. **To authorise payments.**

The Council authorised the following cheque lists:-

Date	Cheque No.s	Value
08.02.11	6569-6575	1,452.50

18. **Correspondence**

a) Wednesdays for Women – Potential Closure of the Organisation
The Council noted the threat to the organisation and agreed to investigate how it could be sustained.

19. **To receive urgent correspondence**

There were no urgent items of correspondence to consider.

20. **Closure**

The meeting was closed at 9.40 p.m.