

HAVERHILL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

**Tuesday 24th April 2012 at 7.03pm in The Studio, Town Hall,
High Street, Haverhill**



HAVERHILL
TOWN COUNCIL

Present: Chair: Town Councillor: M Byrne
Town Councillors: D André, R André, T Cook,
B Hawes, D Russo, G Stroud,
J Stroud and C Turner

Also present: Five members of the public

MINUTES

1. **Apologies for Absence**
Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs. Carr, Goody, Hanlon and Samuels.
2. **Declaration of Interests**
Cllrs D André and R André declared an interest in item 5 on the agenda due to family connections. Cllr Hawes declared an interest in item 8 on the agenda.
3. **To Confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held 3rd April 2012**
The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd April 2012 were agreed.
4. **To deal with any urgent matters arising from the minutes not covered by this agenda**
The Town Clerk reported that he had received a response to members' question regarding ONE Haverhill meetings not being held in public. The reply indicated that the matter had been considered twice by the ONE Haverhill Board, with the majority voting to hold meetings in private as it considers that some issues discussed are not for public consumption. The Town Clerk will raise this matter again at the next meeting of the Board.
5. **Castle Manor Business & Enterprise College**
A presentation was received from Madeleine Vigar, Principal at Castle Manor Business & Enterprise College and the Castle Partnership, and Jason André, Marketing & Communications Manager. They outlined the background to the Partnership schools (Castle Manor and Place Farm), the significant academic and other improvements made in recent years, and the vision and plans for their future. These included academy status from June 2012 to formalise the ethos of 'all through learning, and in the longer term the incorporation of the College and Place Farm School on a single site to be a flagship building for Haverhill.

Councillors raised the following issues and comments:

ACTION

TOWN CLERK

- Whether Ms Vigar would remain as part of the future vision, to which she responded that she would be here for the long term
- Whether 'all through learning' would lead to top-down pressure. Ms Vigar explained the training and working arrangements that are in place to prevent this
- Whether sports provision and profile would suffer as a consequence of all through learning. Ms Vigar said that sport remains a key part of the curriculum and school activities
- Whether admissions would become more selective with academy status. Ms Vigar assured councillors that there is no intention to change anything with regards to the school's clientèle.
- That the behaviour of pupils at Castle Manor had been seen to be exemplary when attending a play at the Arts Centre recently

Cllrs G Stroud and Cook requested visits to Castle Manor, and these requests were enthusiastically accepted.

Cllr Byrne thanked Madeleine and Jason for the presentation, congratulated them on the improvements made, and expressed her pride in both Castle Manor and Samuel Ward Academy. Members echoed these sentiments.

6. Inspector Peter Ferrie

The Town Clerk read an email received from Inspector Martin Barnes-Smith explaining the difficulties faced by Inspector Ferrie in attending Town Council and other meetings. A new policing model has reduced the ability of local police commanders to attend meetings and engagements. A meeting would be arranged between Insp Ferrie and Town Council representatives to allow issues to be raised.

PC Will Wright attended in place of Insp Ferrie, and provided detailed crime statistics for the last week, showing reductions compared with the weekly average in overall crime and anti-social behaviour. Within this there had been small increases in vehicle crime and burglary, although these were not considered significant based on annual figures.

Members raised the following questions and issues:

- What was being done to address recent arson attacks on the Clements Estate. PC Wright reported that a named suspect was being followed up
- Concerns about recent assaults on police officers. PC Wright said this appeared to be an isolated spate of incidents
- The impact of the Town Pastors. PC Wright said that their efforts to defuse situations before they required Police involvement was having a positive effect
- The types of vehicle crimes. PC Wright listed these, and added that the crimes were not area-specific, and that some had been avoidable if belongings had been left out of sight.
- That anti-social behaviour is not confined to young people. PC Wright agreed
- Whether the Haverhill Police capacity was at full staffing. PC Wright said it was, subject to reduced duties for the injured officer. There are 4 PCs, 3 PCSOs and one Sergeant for

Haverhill, and the team now has access to additional support from the Bury Rural area.

- That a town of some 25,000 population is well-served by such a small group of officers – this is highly commendable

PC Wright outlined current priorities:

- Drinking in the alcohol-free zone
- Arson – in single figures but alarming. A beat officer has been deployed, and street lights have been switched on indefinitely following the recent spate. No further cases have been reported since 12 April, and an impact day is being arranged

Cllr Byrne asked whether the restoration of the street lighting had been beneficial. PC Wright responded that the effect had been on perceptions of safety and security rather than on crime, but that this was important. A plan is being discussed with the County Council, and any concerns should be raised with PC Wright.

PC Wright explained that 2012 will be unprecedented in terms of the pressures on Police resources, with the Jubilee, Torch Relay, Olympics and European football championships. Asked whether officers might be called away to Stratford during the Olympics, PC Wright said he had not yet heard.

Cllr Byrne thanked PC Wright for his attendance, and said that this had been the best report for many months.

The Mayor, with the agreement of the Council, adjourned the meeting at 8.13pm for the public forum.

Members of the public raised the following:

- The alleged selfish behaviour of parents parking at schools, with a call for the press to highlight this, and an appeal to parents to be more considerate
- Jason André, from the Castle Partnership explained that work was progressing towards a crossing at Place Farm School which should have a positive effect, although he could not comment on schools outside the Castle Partnership
- There was discussion of the relative roles of Police and schools, and the potential demonization of some parents for whom a car is a necessity.

There being no further matters raised by the public, the Mayor resumed the meeting with the agreement of the Council at 8.22pm.

7. Adoption of Committee Reports

Planning Committee

The Town Council moved the adoption of the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 10th April 2012.

Leisure and Community Committee

The Town Council moved the adoption of the minutes of the Leisure and Community Committee meeting held on 17th April 2012.

8. **Code of Conduct and the Registration/Disclosure of Interests**

The Town Clerk updated the Council on issues raised when this matter was discussed at its last meeting:

- Further guidance was awaited on indemnity for councillors against whom complaints are made
- A new disclosure form would need to be completed by all councillors in July
- New model standing orders are likely to be forthcoming to reflect the new régime. In the meantime, there should be consideration of an amendment to current standing orders to reflect the change from prejudicial to pecuniary interests.

The Town Council approved a change to its standing order 7 (d) as follows:

Councillors with a pecuniary interest in relation to any item of business being transacted at a meeting may (i) make representations, (ii) answer questions and (iii) give evidence relating to the business being transacted but must, thereafter, leave the room or chamber.

9. **Street Lighting**

The Town Clerk presented a response received from the County Council detailing requests and complaints received, inviting councillors to forward queries as and when they arise, and suggesting the establishment of a working group to enable councillors to meet with County Council officers, as the latter do not attend evening meetings.

The Town Council agreed the establishment of a working party of six councillors, temporarily pending the success of its operation. Membership would be three Labour and three Conservative, and the group would look at both specific street lighting concerns and the criteria used for determining whether lighting should be restored.

TOWN CLERK

10. **Borough/County Councillor Reports**

The Town Clerk reported a positive response from Cllrs Gower and Marks to the suggestion of regular Borough/County Council reports to the Town Council. The Town Council agreed a bi-monthly report, with Town Council members who are also Borough/County councillors to be included in a rota.

TOWN CLERK

11. **Neighbourhood Community Budget**

The Town Clerk updated councillors on progress and plans for the development of a Neighbourhood Community Budget, including a payment of £110,000 from the Department for Communities and Local Government in support of this pilot project. This money would be held and administered by the Town Council.

12. **Police Community Support Officer**

The Town Clerk reported that information on the funding and management of a PCSO was still awaited. The Town Council agreed to defer this item until such time as this information is received.

13. Place Court Residential Care Home

The Town Clerk reported on the recent appointment of Care UK Ltd as the County Council's preferred company to manage its 16 care homes and eight wellbeing centres. Members considered the following:

- The need to maintain and improve standards following the transfer to the private sector
- The checks and balances required to achieve this
- The need to focus on residents as the most important factor in this issue
- The need for high standards of care to be retained in Haverhill
- Concerns over the potential for reduced standards arising from the transfer of management to the private sector

The Town Council instructed the Town Clerk to invite Cllr Colin Noble, Portfolio Holder for Adult and Community Services at Suffolk County Council, to a future Town Council meeting.

TOWN CLERK

14. Crown Health Centre

The Town Clerk updated councillors on the decision by NHS Suffolk to close the Crown Health Centre from October 2012. Councillors expressed their disappointment that NHS Suffolk has not listened to the town or the Town Council, and stressed the need for the savings to be spent in Haverhill, and for this money to be used in support of both the GP and out-of-hours service.

The Town Council instructed the Town Clerk to draft a letter to NHS Suffolk to express their concerns, and to circulate it for comment prior to sending.

TOWN CLERK

15. High Street Pedestrianisation

The Town Clerk reported on recent letters to local newspapers calling for a town poll to assess the level of support for pedestrianisation. This could cost the Town Council an estimated £10,000 or more, and would not be binding on the Borough and County Councils who are responsible for the High Street Improvement Scheme. Councillors discussed alternative approaches to gauging public opinion, including both a newspaper survey and face-to face surveys by councillors. Councillors agreed that the needs of traders should be taken into account, but that a more representative view of the public should be obtained than the 108 responses to the online consultation.

The Town Council agreed that councillors should organise a street-based survey.

TOWN CLERS

16. To authorise payments

The Town Council approved the following cheque lists:-

Date	Cheque Numbers	Value
27.03.12	007688 – 007707	£5,611.01
03.04.12	007708 – 007728	£16,929.07
10.04.12	007729 – 007737	£2,170.18
10.04.12	007738 – 007746	£46,143.11

17. **To receive urgent correspondence**

The Town Clerk reported that a letter of resignation had been received from Cllr Riky Green, citing work and family commitments. A notice of vacancy had been advertised on 24th April.

Councillors thanked Cllr Green for his service to the Town Council and wished him well for the future.

The Town Clerk also advised councillors that a re-submitted planning application for Hamlet Croft had been received, and would be considered at the Planning Committee meeting on 1st May.

8. **Closure**

The meeting was closed at 9.23pm.