

HAVERHILL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

**Tuesday 29th October 2013 at 7.01pm in The Studio, Haverhill
Arts Centre, High Street, Haverhill, CB9 8AR**



Present: **Chair:** Town Councillor: R André
 Town Councillors: M Byrne, E Goody,
 P Hanlon, B McLatchy, D Roach,
 B Robbins, A Samuels
 and C Turner

Also present: 10 members of the public

MINUTES

ACTION

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Carr, French, Martin and Julie Stroud.

The Mayor advised that apologies on ill health grounds can be formally approved by councillors and that Cllr J Stroud's ongoing illness could be considered such as case. Cllr Byrne proposed that her apologies on ill-health grounds be approved, and councillors agreed this.

2. Declaration of Interests

Cllr Roach declared an interest in item 6 on the agenda as a resident neighbouring the site in question. The Town Clerk advised that this item was an information only item.

3. To Confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held 24th September 2013

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th September 2013 were agreed.

4. To deal with any urgent matters arising from the minutes not covered by this agenda

The Town Clerk updated the meeting on the following items arising:

- A written response had been provided to County Councillor Tony Brown in respect of 'zero hours' contracts of employment
- The rough sleepers identified at a site on Duddery Hill had vacated. The landowner, Wisdom, had committed to securing the site with advice from the Police
- The Borough Council had confirmed that there has been no Dog Warden for the Borough area since April 2011
- The Borough Council had also confirmed its intention to retain responsibility for the Remembrance Day parade and service, and that there were no plans to change the time. A suggestion that the Town Council organise an Armistice Day commemoration was under investigation

5. Inspector Peter Ferrie

PSCO Les Scott attended on behalf of Inspector Ferrie. He reported on the three current SNT priorities:

- Anti-social behaviour in Bedford Court and surrounding streets. There had been 114 patrols, one youth had been dealt with for smashing a bottle and throwing cigarette ends
- Speeding in the High Street. Patrols had shown an average speed of 18mph, with some vehicles travelling at up to 35mph. A particular problem with mopeds would be addressed as and when
- Parking issues. 32 fixed penalty notices had been issued for parking offence, and work was ongoing

Cllr Hanlon reported that two bollards had been removed and two damaged, along with a bench, in Queen Street. He asked if the area could be covered by CCTV. The Town Clerk advised that the damage had been reported to the Borough Council. PCSO Scott said that CCTV would be too onerous to review, but that the damage should be reported as a crime.

Cllr Byrne asked when the patrols at streets on the Clements Estate took place. PCSO Scott said they were between 11am and midnight.

The Mayor thanked PCSO Scott for his attendance.

6. Carisbrooke Investments – Prospective Housing Development

Nic Rumsey and Paul Sutton presented on behalf of Carisbrooke Investments, in respect of a possible future housing development on land east of Bumpstead Road. The site and planning policy context was outlined. The site had been allocated for employment use, and had attracted very little interest in the last six years. There was an excess of long term employment land in the Borough over that required, and arguably insufficient housing land for the next five years. There was therefore a strong argument for redesignation of this site as housing land.

A draft concept plan was shown, showing buffers, access routes, pathways/cycleways, pedestrian areas and housing areas. The site could accommodate some 170 houses, with 30% affordable housing.

A planning application was expected in November, which could allow a decision by the Development Control Committee in February 2014.

Councillors commented and questioned as follows:

- What was meant by 'long term' in protecting employment land. PS said that he viewed this as being from one local plan period to another
- A concern that this proposal might impact on other housing plans already identified. NR said that this site was more deliverable and viable than other sites, and could include up to 40% affordable housing and an area of executive housing
- General support for the proposals, particularly the provision of affordable housing and the link-up with other housing on Bumpstead Road
- In welcoming the proposals, councillors highlighted the need for a

planning application to cover issues of drainage, lorry and car parking, and waste bins.

The Mayor thanked NR and PS for their presentation. NR said he would forward the supporting documents.

The Mayor, with the agreement of the Council, adjourned the meeting at 7.52pm for the public forum.

County Councillor Tony Brown asked whether any rise in Council Tax would be to cover the withdrawal of Borough Council grant funding only.

County Councillor Julian Flood said he had managed to get a street light restored with the help of KICS. A form had been produced for future requests. He had also met with Matthew Hancock MP regarding A1307 improvements, and had asked a question at the County Council meeting about the 'bulge' in pupil numbers. Cllr Flood also said that he had taken further actions regarding the proposed Ladygate wind turbine and was hoping to demonstrate that it would be uneconomic.

John Burns asked what employment problems the Carisbrooke development proposals might cause. Nic Rumsey said that the ready-made site and proposals would encourage inward investment. It had been pushed hard as an employment site without success, and it was a sensible business decision to consider alternative options. Plenty of employment land would remain across the Borough.

John Burns said that businesses in that area struggled with poor broadband speeds and asked if the residents would expect better. Nic Rumsey said that improvements were likely to be a requirement.

Cllr André said a meeting was being arranged with County Councillor Lisa Chambers, Cabinet Member for Education and this was a welcome opportunity to discuss pupil numbers. He said that discussions with Matthew Hancock would help to back up the Town Council's efforts to improve transport links. He explained that a draft budget based on a 3.96% increase had been requested by the Finance Committee, and that this would cover only the lost Borough Council grant. No decision had been taken on the Council Tax, and a number of other options would be explored. He added that cutting the Council's events programme altogether would only cover loss of the Borough Council grant.

Cllr Turner said that any increase would be to protect the Council's services.

Cllr Byrne said she had always fought to limit increases in the precept, but that courage was needed to increase it in the light of cuts by the Borough Council. Struggling families would receive support, and the rise was less than 10p per week.

Cllr André said that a 3.96% increase would raise Band D Council Tax from £107.77 to £112.04, and that it would be three years since the last increase.

Cllr Byrne said that the 0% increase announced by the Borough Council was as a result of their actions in Haverhill.

Borough Councillor Gordon Cox said he had two grandchildren at Clements Primary School, and he considered SEN provision to be inadequate and in need of improvement now. He said that he agreed that planning was poor and that the County Council had sold Haverhill short.

Cllr André said that schools in Haverhill were doing a very good job, and that the issue was about County Council planning and support.

There being no further matters raised by the public, the Mayor resumed the meeting with the agreement of the Council at 8.12pm.

7. Adoption of Committee Reports

Finance Committee

The Council moved the adoption of the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 15th October 2013.

Planning Committee

The Council moved the adoption of the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 1st October and 21st October 2013.

8. Haverhill Town Clock

The Clerk summarised a briefing circulated to councillors and the public in attendance. This set out the brief for the clock, the draft designs and their rationale, the likely location, and the timetable for installation. Councillors made the following points:

- Cllr Byrne said the design was beautiful but would benefit from larger clock faces and lighting within the column
- Cllr Turner said he agreed with Cllr Byrne, and suggested it be named the William Blake Clock. Public input should be considered, perhaps via a market stall
- Cllr McLatchy said she liked the design of the clock face, and preferred stainless steel figures over copper, which might tarnish too easily. She questioned the location near the bus station
- Cllr Byrne said that consultation would extend the timetable too far
- Cllr Hanlon said he agreed with Cllr Byrne and that young people's involvement should be sufficient. He thanked Samuel Ward and Metcraft and said that the design was brilliant. His preference was for a stainless steel figures
- Cllr Turner asked whether students could hold a market stall to consult on the design
- Cllr Roach said the design was stunning. He preferred the stainless steel option
- Cllr G Stroud said he agreed that stainless steel was preferable
- Cllr Turner asked that the impact of pigeons be taken into account
- Cllr Goody said he too preferred stainless steel, and that the Town Council, Samuel Ward Academy and Metcraft should be recognised

Cllr Turner proposed that the Council approach Samuel Ward Academy to arrange a one-off market stall consultation on the design. This motion fell.

Cllr Byrne proposed that the draft design be approved, incorporating stainless steel figurines and subject to the inclusion of internal lighting, much larger clock faces, some form of numbering, and recognition of the Town Council's role. This was agreed by councillors.

9. Former Magistrates Court/Police Station

The Clerk updated councillors on progress towards a lease agreement with the County Council for the site. Heads of Terms had been agreed in principle. Outstanding issues were the rent payable and the timing of commencement. A surveyor's report had identified refurbishment works along the lines of those expected, and had supported the Town Council's valuation of the site, which the County Council had valued at £300,000. It had also highlighted a significant cost of up to £250,000 for a full replacement of the boiler and heating system over time. The County had offered transitional funding of £11,000 per annum for two years. They had also expressed an interest in including Bevan House as part of a future purchase deal.

Cllr Turner offered his thanks to the Clerk for his hard work.

Cllr Byrne asked whether the transitional funding offered had been broken down in any way. The Clerk said that it had not, but that it appeared roughly equivalent to the rent payable.

Cllr Byrne suggested a valuation of Bevan House. The Clerk said this was in hand and explained that the property was currently in use for ad hoc hires. There had been some interest in the property beyond that of the County Council.

Cllr Roach asked why the heating was the responsibility of the Town Council rather than the County Council. The Clerk explained that the lease to be offered would be on the basis of full maintenance and repair.

Cllr McLatchy said she considered the purchase price reasonable.

Cllr André said he was ardent about getting the site into use very soon.

10. Homelessness in Haverhill

The Clerk updated councillors on the current situation regarding rough sleepers in Duddery Hill. With a huge amount of effort from PCSO Lorna Chapman, the site was now clear of two rough sleepers, one of whom had been re-housed locally, and of regular visitors. A difficulty had been identified in that there were no staff available from the Borough Council as housing authority to visit site, and the rough sleepers neither spoke English nor knew how to access advice and services. This had left the Police to deal with issues that were well beyond their remit. A meeting had been arranged with a Housing Officer from the Borough to ask for improvements to the service offered.

Cllr Byrne said it was atrocious that no agency other than the Police and the Town Council had come forward to deal with this issue. She said the issues would have been the same regardless of the nationality of the rough sleepers, and that there should be a local housing authority contact based in Haverhill.

Cllr Goody said he shared Cllr Byrne's concerns, and that it was unacceptable that the lack of English speaking disadvantaged the

rough sleepers.

Cllr Turner supported the previous comments. He said this was yet another example of the Borough Council not responding to issues that matter in Haverhill, and that he would prefer more local control in Haverhill.

Cllr Byrne said that there was no joined up working from the Borough, no effective communication, and that the system was not working.

Cllr McLatchy said that Social Services should be involved. Cllr Byrne said she thought they had been to see the site but did not see the rough sleepers.

Cllr Turner suggested that information for new people in the town be drawn together into a leaflet.

11. St Edmundsbury Parish Conference

The Clerk reported on the parish conference held on 22nd October. There had been a very heated debate on the Borough Council's withdrawal of grant funding to town and parish councils, and a brief update on Vision 2031. Town Council representatives had attended a workshop to consider how councils could best absorb the cut in funding imposed by the Borough.

12. To authorise payments

Councillors authorised the following cheque lists:-

Date	Cheque Numbers	Value
10.09.13	009061 – 009078	£42,973.33
17.09.13	009079 – 009093	£3,274.68
24.09.13	009094 – 009114	£12,626.14
01.10.13	009115 – 009139	£13,192.86
08.10.13	009140 – 009160	£9,809.77
15.10.13	009161 – 009184	£85,623.88

13. To receive urgent correspondence

No urgent correspondence was tabled.

13. Closure

The meeting was closed at 9.10pm.