

various documents to Councillors and other interested parties, such as him, including agenda and minutes for meetings via Royal Mail. At the February finance meeting he stated that he had submitted a list of suggestions as a means of reducing back office expenditure without causing any cuts to services. One of those was the large amount we spend on postage, equating to about £16,000 per annum, and budgeted to rise by 3% in the next financial year. He suggested that this area of expenditure is immediately reduced by only sending printed documents to those recipients who have actively opted-in to receiving them by post. The remainder of the recipients would then receive by email and can elect to print only those in which they have an active interest. Apart from savings to be made on postage costs, this would have the added benefit of reducing Town Council staff time spent photocopying documents, stuffing and franking envelopes, as well as other expenditure in terms of paper and toner cartridge use. Haverhill Town Councillor Turner pointed out that most of the postage costs incurred by Council arise from its events' management activities rather than agenda items.

Borough Councillor Cox requested consideration be given to scrapping Council's existing grants' budget and replacing it by each town councillor having a locality budget of £1,000 to spend within their ward. He stated that this would be in line with a recent decision at the Borough Council. Haverhill Members pointed out that the Borough Council had not scrapped its grants budget; rather its decision resulted in additional spending.

Mr Austin expressed concern that the town council's expenditure was secret. Town Councillor Turner advised that Council's expenditures are published on the Council's website.

Mr Sayer expressed concern that a check should be made to ensure grants given by Council were used for the purpose for which they had been given. The Town Mayor, Councillor Andre advised that a report on the use of all grants was already an important part of the grants system.

Mr Flood raised concern about the parking situation around Burton End School and requested the Council to push for barriers and double yellow lines to protect school entrances. Town Councillors agreed that the matter was important but also pointed out that double yellow lines were frequently flouted by parents collecting children.

Mr Hannan requested that the Clerk should provide better information regarding grant applications to avoid applications like the recent one from the Tennis Club being refused. The Clerk pointed out that the matter had been deferred rather than refused. Town Councillor Turner advised that the application form requested relevant information from applicants. Town Councillor Goody pointed to the need for proper scrutiny of applications which may mean further information is requested; also to the fact that applicants could attend the meetings and speak to support their applications.

Mr Smith asked that more information be given on what functions different councils perform.

Borough Councillor Cox spoke in further support of the Burton End School parking issue.

Mr Sayer requested information as to who enforces the pavement parking

restrictions in the High Street. Members advised that parking was usually dealt with by Suffolk Constabulary.

Mr Burns was concerned to read in a recent press article that, despite negotiations being well advanced for the leasing of the ex-Magistrates Court as a Youth Hub, that a business plan had “yet to be developed”.

Whilst he generally supports the provision of any youth service in the town to proceed without a sound business plan is very unusual in a normal business environment.

Therefore, if at all possible, is there any reason not to publish:

1. The initial feasibility and any business plans that presumably were developed before any decision was made to go ahead with this project.
2. Any risk assessments and relevant gap analysis documents made.
3. The actual expenditure to date broken down between capital and expense.
4. The planned expenditure for the next five years again split into capital and expense.

Such documents would help satisfy his personal concerns, and those of others, as to the potential costs and any risks to Town Council finances.

Mr McDonagh, in regard to the High St parking issue, pointed out that a policeman may allow parking on the pavement briefly to load or unload.

Mr Hannan, in response to Mr Burns concerns about Broadband at the Industrial site, pointed out that a ‘30 meg. aerial system’ could provide local coverage without the laying of cables. He was requested to give further details to the Clerk.

There being no further matters raised by the public, the Mayor resumed the meeting with the agreement of the Council at 7.23pm.

6. Adoption of Committee Reports

Planning Committee

The Council moved the adoption of the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 4th March 2014.

Finance Committee

The Council moved the adoption of the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 11th March 2014.

7. Christmas Lights – Extension of Contract and Children’s Christmas Lights’ Design Competition

Christmas Lights’ Contract

In the light of current staffing issues, Council considered a proposal to extend the existing 3 year contract for Christmas Lights into a further year.

Council resolved to delegate authority to the Clerk to hold further discussions with the contractor with a view to providing the lights for 2014/15 at a cost within the approved budget of £30,000. Failing this the Clerk was directed to commence a tender exercise.

Childrens’ Christmas Lights Design Competition

Council resolved to run a Childrens’ Christmas Lights Design Competition during 2014, similar to the successful competition in 2013, at an approximate cost of £3,000 to be funded from the earmarked reserve.

Clerk

8. To Agree End of Year Transfers to/from Balances

The Clerk tabled a list of proposed Year End transfers between the specific funds held by Council.

Council resolved to defer this matter pending further information as to how the transfers will impact on the approved budget for 2014/15.

9. To authorise payments.

The Council authorised the following cheque lists:-

Date	Cheque Numbers	Value
18.02.14	009465 - 009478	£3,794.41
25.02.14	009479 - 009498	£8,241.39
04.03.14	009499 - 009515	£14,155.78
04.03.14	009516 – 009517	£1,875.40
11.03.14	009518 - 009529	£42,533.16

10. To receive urgent correspondence

There was no urgent correspondence.

11. Town Clock

The Mayor, Councillor Andre, reported that he had visited the company fabricating the new clock which was on track for delivery in mid April and would be installed within the budget agreed.

12. To Exclude the Press and Public

Council resolved that in accord with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

13. Staffing Matters

New Clerk's Recruitment

Council resolved to confirm the appointment of Colin Poole as permanent Town Clerk commencing 3rd June 2014; and delegated authority to the Locum Clerk, acting in consultation with the Chair of the Personnel Committee, to deal with all further recruitment matters in accord with Council's previous decisions.

Administration relating to Mr Austin's departure

Council noted the actions of the Locum Clerk in dealing with Council's contractual obligations at the termination of Mr Austin's employment with Council. Furthermore, Council resolved to authorise £180 of expenditure (at maximum) for a staff buffet in recognition of the very valuable service he has given to the people of Haverthill during his service with Council.

Locum Clerk

Council resolved to delegate authority to the Locum Clerk, acting after consultation with the Mayor and Chair of the Personnel Committee, to extend or alter his contracted working time to ensure completion of necessary business; any alteration being reported to Council at the earliest opportunity.

14. Contract Terms – Solicitor Acting in Relation to Old Magistrates Court

Council reviewed the terms of the draft contract and resolved to authorise the Clerk to sign the contract with FM&C Solicitors as

**Clerk;
Cllr Byrne**

Clerk

presented.

15. **Closure**
The meeting was closed at 8.49pm.

