

Haverhill Town Council

Minutes of a Meeting of Haverhill Town Council's



HAVERHILL
TOWN COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL

Held on Monday 20th December 2021 at 7.15pm at Leiston Community Centre, Leiston Road, Haverhill

Present: Mayor Councillor L Smith
Deputy Mayor Councillor E McManus
Councillor A Brown Councillor J Mason
Councillor J Burns Councillor M Marks
Councillor P Fox Councillor A Stinchcombe
Councillor D Smith

Apologies: Councillor J Crooks
Councillor B Davidson Councillor A Luccarini
Councillor P Firman Councillor D Roach
Councillor P Hanlon Councillor L Miller-Jones

Absent: None

In Attendance: Colin Poole (Town Clerk)
Alisha Jenkins (Office Administrator)
Dylan Mills (Tech Manager)

0 members of the public were present. The meeting was livestreamed on YouTube.

Welcome:

Mayor L Smith welcomed everyone to the meeting.

MINUTES

C21 **Apologies for Absence**
/179 The above apologies were noted.

C21 **Declaration of Interests and requests for dispensation**
/180 None.

C21 **The minutes of the Town Council meetings 29th November 2021**
/181 It was proposed by Councillor E McManus, seconded by Councillor J Mason that the minutes of the meeting held 29th November 2021 be adopted as a true record.

RESOLVED

ACTION

C21 /182 **To note progress of actions arising from the minutes not covered by this Agenda**

C21 /168 West Suffolk CCG and GP Federation: The Clerk had circulated the draft thank you letter to thank the NHS services in Haverhill for councillors' approval. Councillors were happy for the letters to be sent.

C21 /169 Layby, Haverhill Bypass: The Clerk has contacted Suffolk County Council regarding the layby and is awaiting a response – there is a 4-week service target for replies..

C21 /170 Haverhill Show: The Clerk has written a thank you letter to the Haverhill Show committee, which will now be sent.

C21 /183 **Reports from District/County Councillors on issues pertinent to HAVERHILL and the PUBLIC FORUM**

- a) Police – see appendix 1
- c) County Councillors – see appendix 2
- d) District Councillors – see appendix 3
- e) Members of the public – None present.

C21 /184 **Consultations**

- a) West Suffolk Limited Community Governance Review:
Councillors expressed disappointment that matters regarding the parish boundary at Hanchett End and along the A1017 were not included in this limited review. The Clerk advised that West Suffolk Council has formally agreed only a limited Community Governance Review. Councillor J Burns confirmed the terms of reference excluded a broader review. The review is correcting issues caused by the previous reviews, not reopening matters settled at the time. Councillors asked that the clerk investigate the procedure for 'petitioning for a full review'.

Clerk

C21 /185 **Mayor's Report:**

Mayor's report – see appendix 4

C21 /186 **ONE Haverhill Partnership**

- a) Board meeting held 9th December 2021:
The clerk reported that a very good presentation was given from the West Suffolk CCG regarding the development of the new West Suffolk Hospital and presentation from Helena Joplin looking at the clinical perspective which would give ONE Haverhill Partnership an interesting opportunity to help develop a community-based healthcare approach. More information is expected to be available in the new year.
Concerns were raised regarding the data collection process in respect to future planning, in that it was important data should be collected from both West Suffolk and Addenbrookes Hospital to truly reflect Haverhill's health.
- b) To appoint a representative to the Heart of Haverhill (Haverhill BID) Working group:
It was proposed by Councillor M Marks and seconded by Councillor T Brown to appoint Councillor E McManus as the representative for Haverhill Town Council on the ONE Haverhill Partnership Heart of Haverhill (Haverhill BID) Working Party.

RESOLVED

C21 Adoption of Committee Reports

/187

a) Planning Working Party:

It was proposed by Councillor D Smith, seconded by Councillor T Brown that the minutes of the meetings held 7th December 2021.

RESOLVED

C21 Arts Centre Management

/188

The Clerk circulated the report from the Personnel Committee on the immediate, and future, management of the Arts Centre.

The Job Description and Person Specification for an Arts Centre Manager are in draft format to be approved by the Personnel Committee. As the role is senior Councillors will be involved with the recruitment process. Jane Knight, Suffolk County Council Arts Officer, has offered support in the recruitment process. We will seek candidates with a good reputation within the Arts and a track record for leveraging significant external funds, to reduce the burden of funding the Arts Centre currently resting on local taxpayers' shoulders.

It is expected that the position will be signed off for advertising from the end of January, with the successful candidate in post from April. For the meantime Sara Marsh, Customer Service & Marketing Manager and Gary Wilson, Operation Manager have taken on responsibility for the management of the Arts Centre.

The former Arts and Leisure Manager has programmed events for the Haverhill Arts Centre as far as possible into 2022, which allows for the Council to have time to hire the right candidate for the position.

It was noted that Mary Argent, Office Administrator for Haverhill Arts Centre is retiring from her main role but will continue as a Casual Duty Manager. Sara is recruiting an Arts Centre Administrator to take on the general admin tasks of both Nick and Mary's former roles.

Outdoor event planning will not fall under the remit of the Arts Centre Manager. The Council will sign off a list of events annually. Some of these will require engaging a project worker to provide capacity or artistic input, but others will continue as now to be organised by a working party supported administratively. This will allow flexibility for other events and for councillors to have an input into the events.

Other changes include the Council setting room hire rates for the Arts Centre and Leiston Road Community Centre. Local groups who cannot afford these fees will be invited to apply for a grant from the council, in order to show transparency and ensure any decision to subsidise a group is made by elected members.

Financial reports showing the cost of shows and events will be required.

Councillors observed that the Armed Forces Day and the Remembrance Day events have been organised through committees and have been very successful events.

The above arrangements were noted.

C21 **Financial Matters**

- /189** a) Authorisation of payments: It was proposed by Councillor J Burns, seconded by Councillor P Fox, that the listed payments totalling £91,547.19 be authorised.

RESOLVED

- b) £775 panto tickets set aside for Reach: It was proposed by Councillor J Burns, seconded by Councillor T Brown, that the remaining equivalent value be retained to offer tickets for performances at the Haverhill Arts Centre throughout the year.

RESOLVED

C21 **Actions taken under delegated powers**

/190 None.

C21 **To receive urgent correspondence**

/191 None.

C21 **Dates of next Meeting:**

- /192** a) To approve the dates of the meetings for 2022:

The clerk to circulate the proposed dates to all councillors.

- b) Date of next meeting:

The meeting noted that the next meeting will be held on 25th January 2022 at 7:00pm – Haverhill Arts Centre.

C21 **To Exclude the Press and Public**

/193 It was proposed by Councillor M Marks, seconded by Councillor E McManus that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest as it would undermine the Council's ability to have unfettered debate and result in less robust, well-considered or effective policies.

RESOLVED

C21 **Budget Report**

/194 The RFO tabled a confidential report in respect of the budget considerations for 2022/23. He highlighted that The Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires all local councils in England and Wales set a lawful budget. Estimates of expenditure and income must be 'best estimates' made in good faith. The budget must balance, with the balancing sum being the precept.

The RFO further advised that this had been a tough budget to draft, with the prospect of another year of uncertainty due to Covid. In particular, the Arts Centre and Zone had been open since lockdown less than 3 months so there was limited recent sales data upon which to base income estimates, but it was clear sales were down significantly.

Expenditure on the other hand was likely to significantly increase due to inflationary pressures on salaries, energy and other general costs. It costs the same to put on a performance at the Arts Centre or open the Zone whether there are two or two hundred customers. The only difference is the contribution income normally makes towards covering those costs and what we can reasonably expect in 2022/23. It has been necessary to take a pessimistic view, but also to ensure there is sufficient resource put into

Clerk

marketing in order to rebuild the customer base – so long as covid doesn't throw another curveball like Omicron.

Councillors observed that a 4% assumption for inflation may be too optimistic.

The RFO presented some potential scenarios for Councillors to consider, none of which were ideal, but all resulted in a balanced budget. These included heavily relying on reserves to reduce the cumulative impact of the upwards pressure on the precept, and options for cost savings. It would be necessary to raise the precept in any scenario, but it was the degree to which it would be necessary to increase it that required mitigation. Of particular concern is the implications for 2023/24 if the reserves are spent this year.

Councillors discussed the options and gave their views. On a show of hands Councillors indicated that the RFO should explore the options for cost-savings and bring an updated report to the Finance Working Party on 18th January 2022.

RFO

C21 **Closure**

/195 The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9:05pm.

Signed

Date.....

Chairman

Appendix 1 – Police

Appendix 2 – County Councillors' reports

Appendix 3 – District Councillors' reports

Appendix 4 – Mayor's Report

APPENDIX 1 – Police

No further update.

APPENDIX 2 – County Councillors' reports

Councillor J Mason:

Pothole issues remain an issue in Haverhill in particular on Downs Crescent, where Councillor Mason is asking for patching repair of the road.

The Haverhill Rugby Club is looking for funding opportunities to fence off their main pitch to prevent dog walkers using the pitch. Councillor Mason has recommended the rugby club approach the town council for a grant.

Councillor J Mason to follow up on the progress being made to implement white lines on the road at Primrose Hill. **ACTION: Councillor Mason**

Councillor P Fox requested Councillor J Mason follow up on the progress for the placement of a bus stop on Greenfields Way. **ACTION: Councillor Mason**

APPENDIX 3 – District Councillors' reports

Councillor M Marks:

A response to independent review findings have now been published on the West Suffolk Hospital website – which can be found using the below link:

<https://www.wsh.nhs.uk/News-room/news-posts/Response-to-independent-review-findings.aspx>

Councillor Marks recommended colleagues read the executive summary.

Councillor T Brown:

Councillor Brown expressed concern at the assertion Haverhill will lose its tethered rapid response vehicle on 22nd January 2022, meaning the town will potentially lose 156 hours of cover a week.

This is a serious issue. The Clerk confirmed he had asked the EEAST Service manager, Mr James Norman, to comment. He has acknowledged the request but no made substantive reply as yet.

Damien Parker (West Suffolk Council) is investigating reports of pollution in the Stour Brook at East Town Park, as the river has been polluted for the 5th time since 2013.

Councillor J Burns reported:

Helen Cullup has been arranging for a domestic abuse support group to meet at the Leiston Community Centre in January lead by Iceni, which will working with victims and perpetrators.

NW Haverhill: Work continues. Sports provision and infrastructure plans still under discussion.

Great Wilsey Park: The 3 show homes at Chalkstone Way and drainage work connecting from the site to the main sewer system progresses. Work will start shortly on the roundabout itself with traffic lights scheduled to be on that site from after Xmas until about April when work is due to complete. The temporary 30mph limit on the A143 was resolved and now sensibly covers only the area needed. Traffic lights are scheduled to go into this location to cover the joining of the new roundabout to the A143, but the road will remain open. I understand plans are now with the developer for the new permanent lights at the junction of the A143/Chalkstone Way to replace the Pelican lights. This will bring relief to trying to get in and out of Chalkstone Way when the school run is on with many inconsiderate drivers thinking just stopping in the middle of the highway is a good thing for them.

Manor Road School Site: Still awaiting news on how WSC propose to spend the £33K s106 monies for the railway walk.

Castle Hill Site: Work continues apace.

Chapelwent Road Site: Still awaiting confirmation regarding the s106 funding for the railway walk near to Howe Road.

Atterton & Ellis site: Still no updates.

Police Matters: November crime stats will not be available until end of the month. The December edition of Constables County is being sent with this report.

Covid-19 SCC Highways / High Street Closures: Awaiting results of the recent WSC survey on what people thought of the road closures. Hopefully we will not have to have another lockdown. SCC Highways have still not replaced the “lost” road signs and I have chased them up again as they told me would be a “few days” nearly 2 months ago. On the basis it took them 9 months last time I don’t have high hopes.

Parking: WSC enforcement still poor and I had to chase them up (and they still failed to do anything) on Xmas family night when 2 vehicles (without blue badges) parked outside Nine Jars for some 5 hours during the day. No reason given as to why they failed to do anything.

Markets: The West Suffolk review is still ongoing and several more meetings planned with recommendations due out around May 2022. We have a meeting with “experts” in early February 2022 and a planned visit to Saffron Walden market next month. The analysis of the comments from the survey is ongoing but shows, what I expected, every market has its own set of problems meaning one rule for all cannot possibly be enforced.

Haverhill market itself continues to be poor especially in the week before Xmas with many stall holders deciding to only attend when they want which not only goes against the spirit of a market but the market regulations.

Sturmer Arches: Awaiting an update from WSC following their last briefing.

Vixen PH (Millfields Way): WSC have confirmed the minor demolition at the rear of the building makes the planning permission given for 18 x flats and 2 x shops extant despite my protestations. But the better news is the owner is now in contact with WSC and understanding the scope of the conditions they need to make as part of any development such as doubling size of the carpark, installing lighting, maintaining footways and the underpinning of Millfields Way to provide the parking spaces behind the existing building. It will be interesting to see if they continue with the plans which were themselves very cramped and certainly under latest minimum space standards. The question of claiming vacant building credit may arise still.

Strasbourg Square: Still awaiting plans by WSC over its renovation of the planting areas.

Market Square: Still nothing has been done about the large dips in the paved area and the resulting large deep puddles when it rains.

Queen’s Jubilee/AFD & Remembrance 2022: Plans for this will start to be discussed in the New Year once more information is forthcoming from government.

Other work: Helped all day at the Xmas family night – the blisters are still there! Continue to support Clerk and others working from home/office with IT and other issues. Usual ton of emails and questions answered as well as many online and occasional physical meetings. Will be facilitating broadcast of TC council meeting tonight (20th) at the Leiston Centre. Been working with others on the new WSC Local Plan process and attended 1st of 3 meetings determining grants as part of WSC Community Chest applications. Currently filming the panto and filmed Nick Keeble’s leaving do, edited last week, which he is pleased with.

APPENDIX 4 – Mayor’s Report

Mayor’s Report December 2021

Since the last report Christmas preparations have begun in earnest. The Wednesday after the last full council meeting saw the departure of a loved long-standing staff member, Nick Keeble, and the wonderful farewell extravaganza he put on for us. I was able to present some gifts and a card from staff and councillors during this event.

On Sunday, 5th December I attended the Toy Service at the Methodist Church in Camps Rd. The church community contributed toys and other gifts for vulnerable people, families, and children. These will be distributed by Social Services to those in need. It was great to be asked to receive these and the generosity of the congregation was amazing. I enjoyed meeting some of the church members afterwards with a nice cup of tea.

On Wednesday the 8th we had our own Town Carol Service that was again this year a moving event where so many members of the community come together to put a fine service together. My thanks to all those involved and especially town council staff for the mulled wine afterwards! It was lovely to see town councillors there to support this event.

There have been a number of cancellations of services over the last couple of weeks, but I managed to attend a Licensing service at HMP Highpoint on Monday, 13th December and met a number of the local Anglican clergy that were also there. This was to licence the Anglican Chaplain, which is a formal, legal process to conduct services at the prison. There was no mulled wine on offer but a great cup of coffee!

On the 17th of December Dave and I went to the Mayor’s Carol Service in Thetford. Again, a lovely service, although quite different to ours. The music was great and the prayers uplifting.

That’s it for now. Not much is planned post-Christmas so I will send you all a list when we have a few dates in the calendar.

Mayor Liz Smith