

Present: Councillors;

Tony Allen, Ben Chadwick, Annette Dunning, Peter Dutton, Anne Fleming, Rosemary Lewis, Karen Prime, Jill Reece, David Thomas, Maureen Took, Jackie Wagner, David Wollweber (Chair).

In Attendance: N Rees (Town Clerk) District and County Cllr Tony Goldson, 4 members of the public.

Minutes

1. Apologies: None
2. Declarations of interest: To receive declarations for pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests: Cllr Wagner for item 20.
3. Minutes: The minutes of the monthly meeting held on the 4th November, 2019 was accepted as a true record.
4. Matters arising from the Minutes: Cllr Dutton asked as to whether the public had been given an update on the fire damaged buildings. The Clerk confirmed that there was an update in the Community News for December and it had been posted on Facebook. A question was asked as to the extent of the maintenance programme being undertaken by the Environment Agency. The Clerk did not have details but it was agreed that he would ask the EA to provide them. Cllr Thomas reminded the Council that the decision was taken to have a survey and if the EA were not willing then the Council should consider commissioning a private company.
5. Chair's Report: To receive a report for November. The Chair attended the Remembrance Day Service at St Mary's Church on Sunday 11th November. The Chair also attended the Lights Switch on Saturday 23rd November, the Chair wished to congratulate Halesworth Events Management on another very successful event and the councillors who also volunteered for marshalling duties. Last Wednesday the Chair attended a Healthy lives and communities, meeting which aimed to bring together groups concerned with social well-being. It was a useful meeting and an opportunity to touch base with various groups in the area, it was also attended by Cllr Peter Dutton and District Cllr Tony Goldson. The Chair wished to keep flood risks on the agenda as last week the underpass was flooded again and must keep this on the radar. The Chair wished to follow up points on the four year plan in the New Year, in particular social housing and, with the aid of colleagues, to start considering the Patrick Stead Hospital building as to whether there was any interest in using part of it for community use.
6. Public Session: [15 minutes on matters relating to the town]. A resident asked whether the Council was considering announcing a Climate Emergency. The Chair deferred this to item 9 on the agenda.
7. Reports on meetings and events attended by Council representatives: To receive any reports on meetings or events attended by Councillors: Cllr Dunning also reported on the Remembrance service and the Festive Lights Switch-On event and it was agreed that the

Clerk would write to Halesworth Events Management to thank them for organising another successful event. Cllr Dunning reported on the Community Partnership workshop event but was surprised that the People & Places data had not been included in the discussions. The Chair (Judy Choke) for the Bungay, Beccles and Halesworth area had already been appointed by East Suffolk Council and it was noted that the meeting was predominately attended by representatives from Beccles. Cllr Dunning reported that there was funding available and that at the meeting it had been decided that the three priorities were; dementia care, sustainable community transport and loneliness & wellbeing. Cllr Dunning also reported on the Terracycle event at St Mary's Church which focused on difficult to recycle materials. Cllr Thomas had also attended the Community Partnership and added that Letitia Smith was the ESC Councillor in charge of this initiative. Cllr Thomas reported that he had attended the SALC AGM and the Clerk had distributed the report to the Council members. Cllr Thomas also reported on the Station User Group meeting and explained that the Museum were considering making a proposal to take over the lease of the Station building, provided that the vacant area (formerly Mencap) was included and preferably earlier than waiting for the current lease between HTC and Greater Anglia to expire in 2025. Cllr Thomas understood that SALC would provide some legal advice free of charge and proposed and it was RESOLVED that the Clerk would seek legal advice on whether the lease could be transferred to the Museum or ended early to enable a new lease to be drawn up between Greater Anglia and the Museum (assuming GA were agreeable). Cllr Dunning announced that there were documents relating to a list of items owned by HTC and held in trust by the Museum. The Clerk would investigate further and circulate the relevant documents. Cllr Dutton reported that he, Cllr Fleming and Cllr Thomas had attended a Village Hall and Community Centre training event and that he had also attended a brain storming event at the Cut held by the Ink Festival organisers to see how various groups could work together to promote the town. Mrs Janet Huckle reported on the quarterly Halesworth Tourism Group meeting and invited Cllrs to attend their next meeting at the Stables on Wednesday.

8. District & County Reports: County and District Cllr Tony Goldson also reported on the Community Partnership and understood the comments about the number of representatives from Beccles. Cllr Goldson felt that Halesworth should be in its own area as it was a hub that effectively served a population of 18,000 – 20,000 inhabitants. Cllr Goldson also commented on the recent near flood conditions and requested photographs of Chediston Street to show the conditions, this may help to highlight the concerns over the flood risks associated with the proposed new development.
9. Environmental challenges: To consider what actions the Town Council could take at a local level. Cllr Dunning will be arranging for a speaker on this subject to offer advice for a future Council meeting. The current general election meant that seeking advice from the Green Party would need to wait until January. The Clerk was also in contact with East Suffolk and they had offered a contact who may be able to offer advice in the New Year. Cllr Chadwick, was not convinced that Political parties were the best source for accurate information and suggested that the Council should approach an independent expert such as a University graduate. A resident reported that one of the retailers was still supplying plastic bags despite the fact that she had written to them on several occasions asking for them to offer a paper bag option. It was noted that the withdrawal of some bus services was not helping to reduce car use. It was agreed that this subject was a complicated matter and Cllr Thomas proposed and it was RESOLVED that an Environment Working Group should be set up to look at the subject and report back to the Council. Cllr Dunning, who was the lead Cllr for Green issues in the four year plan, may wish to head up the working group but this would be decided when the members met for the first meeting (membership to be determined at the next monthly meeting).
10. Financial Matters:
 - a) The Council received and approved the report of the meeting held on the 18th November, 2019.

- b) Proposal for a meeting of the Council to consider projects related to CIL funds. The Chair explained that he was keen to have an informal meeting open to all councillors to look at ideas of how spend the expected CIL funding which would be coming in over the next two years. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk would organise a brain storming session for all councillors to consider ideas for CIL projects in the town.
11. Communications Committee:
- a) There had been no meetings to report on since the last monthly meeting but the members had been reviewing ideas for the banners as noted below.
- b) To consider any proposals for theme for the banners around the fire damaged buildings. Cllr Dunning had discussed the idea of using old Market Place photographs, obtained from the Museum for some of the banners and the Clerk had sent two examples to the members. The Council had previously agreed a cost of up to £2,000 for the project to improve the impact of the fire damaged buildings and to encourage visitors to the Market Place. The Clerk reported that there was space for up to six banners, allowing for the existing safety signage to be retained. It was then RESOLVED that the Council agreed to purchase six perforated banners (each banner approx. 3.35 x 1.5m) at £175 per banner featuring old Market Place photographs. The Clerk advised that he would order a sample one first to see what effect the perforations had on the images before ordering the remaining banners.
12. Amenities, Buildings & Park Committee: A meeting would be arranged once a reply from ESC had been received. District Cllr Tony Goldson would chase up Kerry Blair and hopefully get some answers before the New Year. Cllr Fleming also reported that they had met Robert Horn, a local expert on community buildings, at one of the recent training sessions and he had indicated that he would be happy to attend a meeting.
13. CCTV Working Group: Cllr Dutton reported that the group were currently looking at changing the cameras located on street lights to adjacent buildings due to the low height of the street lights and the amount of equipment already on them. A pre-application meeting would take place shortly with ESC to determine if these locations were acceptable. Thereafter the group would be able to determine final costs with the supplier and report back to the Council.
14. Planning Committee:
- a) The Council received and accepted the report on the meeting held on the 18th November, 2019. The Chair (Cllr Dutton) gave a report on the number of planning applications that HTC had determined and noted that East Suffolk Council (ESC) had subsequently approved six (mainly larger) applications where HTC had recommended refusal. In regard to the Miles Ward Court application the Clerk had written twice to the Chief Planning Officer, Philip Perkin, to ask when the application would be considered by ESC's Planning Committee but had received no answer. It was RESOLVED that the Council instructed the Clerk to write to Stephen Baker (CEO of ESC) to express the Council's frustration and disappointment over the lack of communication and apparent disregard of the Council recommendations. The Clerk would circulate the letter to the Council before sending.
- b) To consider the proposal contained in the minutes regarding delegating decisions for minor applications. The Council considered whether it would be beneficial to delegate powers to the Clerk to determine small planning applications. After the Clerk confirmed that the Council was able to do this if it so wished it was RESOLVED that for minor applications the Clerk had delegated powers to recommend approval (but not powers to recommend refusal) directly to East Suffolk Council's Planning Department provided that the applications had been circulated to the full Council and that a) there had been no requests to consider the application at a planning meeting, b) that there were no objections from any Council members and (c) that there were no objections by neighbours or consultees at the time of circulating the application.

15. Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group: The Council received and noted the report on the meeting held on the 20th November, 2019. Cllr Thomas wished to know what the designated land was off Saxons Way. Cllr Allen would find out and report back.
16. Maintenance: Cllr Prime reported that she had received some complaints over the timber strips that had been added to the Rectory Lane bridge to alleviate the slippery surface. It was not lifting and was a potential trip hazard and wheel chair users were having difficulty getting over the raised timber strips. The Clerk would relay this to SCC Highways.
17. Correspondence: The Clerk reported that he had contacted the Royal British Legion to ask whether there were any arrangements for VE day (s) 8th May – 10th May. The RBL did not have any details as yet but would be organising an event soon. It was agreed HTC could come up with suggestions of their own and so this was deferred to the Communications Committee. The Clerk had also received a request from Southwold Rotary club to put on a 'brass on the grass' event in the Town Park and were requesting permission. The Council were in support of the idea in principle but wished to ensure that the fund raising was going to local charities.
18. Items for the Website/Noticeboard/Newsletters/Library.
19. Accounts for Payment: The following accounts were approved for payment.

<u>4282.</u>	Pearce & Kemp – repair and adjustment to Skateboard lighting Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, s19	57.00 + vat
<u>4283.</u>	EPS Transfers – Honours Board update (LGA 1972 s111)	24.00 + vat

DD/Standing Orders:

<u>4284.</u>	Monthly salaries (LGA 1972 s112)	2623.39
<u>4285.</u>	Barclays Bank Charges (LGA 1972 s111)	8.81

Bank & Cash Balances at 29th November, 2019

Current 728	£143,946.82
Unity Trust	£62,988.13
Community A/c	£5,289.42
Business Reserves 017	£92,581.28
Petty Cash	£69.88

The Chair, following an assurance from Cllr Jackie Wagner that the next item related to exemptions in the LGA schedule 12A, the Chair then announced "that in view of the [special] [confidential] nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw".

20. Audit: The Council to consider this item 'in camera' as requested by Cllr J Wagner. It was RESOLVED that the motion to undertake an audit for an unspecified period in the past was rejected as there were no specific reasons provided.
On a separate matter regarding the recent planning application, it was RESOLVED that the Clerk would investigate the ownership and arrangements regarding the purchase of the Miles Ward Court and the terms of the transfer to Foundation East and also to search for any documentation relating to the legality of the proposed sale of the property by Foundation East.

The meeting was closed at 9pm.