

EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING HELD BY ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE

In accordance with (The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020)

Present: Councillors;

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

In Attendance: N Rees (Town Clerk), members of the public; Karen Austin, Nat Bocking.

Minutes

The Chair reported that the Covid-19 Group was currently dealing with the social and economic impact of the virus. He was also aware that the Town Centre Group was meeting tomorrow and he was happy to attend if invited. The Council would also need to consult with ESC and SCC about how the town emerges from lockdown. However, the Chair explained the main purpose of the meeting was to review the priorities and actions of the four year plan.

1. Apologies: Cllr A Fleming (connections issues)
2. Declarations of interest: To receive declarations for pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests: None
3. Committees, Working Groups and reps on outside bodies: To consider any changes to the current list. Cllr Fleming, Cllr Lewis and Cllr Thomas joined the Communications Committee, Cllr Allen left the Highways Group but joined the ABP Committee, and Cllr Chadwick joined the Environment Committee. Cllr Took and Cllr Wagner joined the London Rd Building Working Group.
4. Four Year Plan review: All 8 points of the plan considered as follows:
 1. HTC to be seen by residents, community groups and East Suffolk District Council (ESDC) and Suffolk County Council (SCC) as a Council that is working well for the benefit of the town. It was RESOLVED that this item was given a lower priority in the current (Covid-19) climate apart from the need to maintain contact with essential ESC/SCC personnel.
 2. To help create a sustainable and vibrant community and voluntary sector to improve and provide leisure, sport and cultural activities and other community services (for example, transport) for all ages in the Town. Cllr Lewis gave an update on the current situation and wished to congratulate Rev Jane Held, Halesworth Volunteer Centre and all the helpers and volunteers who had worked so hard during the crisis. The community had been very resourceful in meeting the Covid-19 challenge. Cllr Lewis recognised that Halesworth benefitted greatly from all the many voluntary groups in the town and the Council were pleased to support them whenever possible. There was however a lack of communication between the groups at times particularly between groups that had similar aims. Cllr Lewis suggested that an open day could be arranged for all the volunteer groups to set up information stalls and that HTC could arrange a meeting with all the Chairs of each group. Cllr Lewis referred to the Youth Centre which needed HTC's support and for the Council to stay in contact with the youth of the town and look at activities and improvements to the facilities as there was funding available in the Council's budget for this purpose. Cllr Lewis would like the Council to explore options for unitising the park

for events in the future. Cllr Lewis also commented on the importance of the Neighbourhood Plan and local transport and the need for the Council to set aside reserves for future implications of the Covid-19 virus. It was RESOLVED that this should remain a priority.

3. Town Council to have an agreed Neighbourhood Plan for Halesworth. Cllr Allen confirmed that the Council received reports on a regular basis on the group's progress. Cllr Allen asked councillors to give a feedback on the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group's vision document via HTC's website. Cllr Allen then gave an update on the group's activities and drew attention to the importance of the feasibility study proposal that would be considered by the Council at the next meeting. It was RESOLVED that this item should remain a priority.
4. To plan for the possible closure of London Road offices and the proposed changes in the management of parks and toilets in ways that will benefit the town in the long term. Investigate the viability and potential of a new Community Centre for Halesworth. Cllr Dutton updated the Council on the current situation, there had been a potential deal on the table, approved by the Town Council but since then East Suffolk Council had verbally started to amend the offer and therefore a meeting needed to be arranged to resolve the matter. Cllr Allen would be producing a discussion paper on this in due course. It was RESOLVED that this should remain a priority.
5. To enable the Thoroughfare and Market Place to remain a thriving destination centre for the public. Work with others to enhance its attractiveness and economic viability. To investigate solutions to prevent unauthorised vehicles stopping in the Thoroughfare. The Chair recognised that there was imminent action required as shops would be coming out of lockdown. East Suffolk Council had arranged a meeting on funding that the Clerk would be attending tomorrow and there were other meetings taking place during the week. It was agreed that a 'town' meeting would be arranged for Monday 8th June. The Chair asked that the Town Centre Group forwards their ideas and requirements from their meeting tomorrow, Cllr Prime would relay any information so that the Council can consider taking the necessary action. It was RESOLVED that this item remains a priority.
6. More affordable rented/social/ shared ownership housing in the Town: The Chair realised that this was a longer term goal but it was very important that the Council together with the Neighbourhood Plan Group makes every effort to ensure there would be realistically affordable/social housing to buy or rent available to those working in the town and young families, etc. Cllr Thomas proposed and it was RESOLVED that one of ESC's relevant officers should be invited to a Council meeting to make a presentation on this subject. It was also RESOLVED that this item would continue to be monitored.
7. Make Halesworth a 'Green Town' Cllr Reece (Chair of Environment Committee) reported that the Committee would be putting forward proposals on tree preservation and identification, plastic reduction, river management, enhancing cycle ways in the town and traffic. Cllr Chadwick felt that this item was a priority particularly considering the recent government announcements on promoting cycling. It was RESOLVED that this item would remain a priority. The Clerk confirmed that he had contacted SCC Highways to look at Saxon's Way as an additional cycle route and he had supplied them with plans and the Sustrans report and was awaiting a response.
8. Prepare for the sale of Patrick Stead Hospital and establish the building as a community asset and run for the benefit of the town's community. Cllr Thomas confirmed that the Halesworth & Blyth Valley Partnership had registered the building as an asset of community value and it would be held on the register with ESC for five years. HBVP would be duly notified if the owners wished to sell the building within that period. It would then be possible for a group to put forward a bid for it if there was an interest in the town. It was RESOLVED that the Council agreed that Cllr Thomas could write on behalf of the Council to the CCG and National Health Service Property to obtain an understanding of their intentions which would then hopefully clarify the position. It was RESOLVED that this item was a medium priority pending a response to the letter.

5. Post Covid: Thoughts on coming out of lockdown. This item was covered under item 5
6. Items for the Website/Noticeboard/Newsletters/Library: It was agreed that regular Covid 19 information, from reliable sources, would be posted on Facebook and the website.

The meeting was closed at 5.15pm