

MONTHLY 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;

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

In Attendance: Nick Rees (Town Clerk) County & District Cllr Tony Goldson, one member of the public.

Minutes

1. Apologies: Cllr A Fleming, Cllr Wagner.
2. Declarations of interest: Non-pecuniary interests; Cllr Allen for item 4569 in accounts for payment.
3. Minutes: The minutes of the monthly meeting held on the 2nd November, 2020 was accepted as a true record.
4. Matters arising from the Minutes: Cllr Dutton enquired as to the latest situation with the email policy, the Clerk confirmed that the Communications Committee would be dealing with this at the next meeting. Cllr Dutton also enquired about HTC's position with regard to the changes to the residents parking. The Chair asked to deal with this under the next item. Cllr Thomas enquired about the letter to SCC regarding the lack of communications, however the Clerk reported that the situation with the road closure in the Thoroughfare had since been temporary RESOLVED.
5. Chair's Report: The Chair had attended a meeting regarding the Miles Ward Court, reported under item 12. The Chair also attended a meeting on the People and Places presentation and discussion on the Town Manager role organised by East Suffolk Council, more on this under item 16. The Chair reported on a deeply unsatisfactory meeting with Lewis Boudeville, ESC's Parking Manager who had displayed a complete lack of empathy and was inflexible to any suggestions or requests made by the Chair or District Councillor, Cllr Goldson. Nor was he willing to reactivate the second ticket machine in the Thoroughfare car park to reduce the queues, even for a temporary period during the current Covid-19 emergency. After further debate on how to proceed it was RESOLVED that the Clerk would draft a letter of complaint. Rather than listing specific issues the complaint would be how this officer had been uncooperative and refused to listen. Furthermore the Clerk would try to obtain support for this approach from the local towns. The letter would then be sent to the Chief Executive Stephen Baker, copied to the Cabinet member for Parking and the leader of the Council.
6. Public Session: [15 minutes on matters relating to the town] A resident congratulated the Council on its handling of the Covid-19 crisis. The same resident informed the Council that she had not received a consultation leaflet from the Neighbourhood Plan group. The same resident also enquired as to what the current position was with the supermarket planning application. The Clerk confirmed that his understanding was that the applicant had taken on board comments made by the Town Council and was considering making a revised

application but at this particular time the existing application was still awaiting review by East Suffolk Council.

7. To receive written reports on meetings and events attended by Council representatives: Cllr Reece reported on an information exchange meeting with the Neighbourhood Plan group that she had attended with Cllr Thomas. Cllr Allen enquired as to whether the Halesworth & Blyth Valley Partnership was still operating and Cllr Lewis confirmed that it was still meeting but the Charity had given up the lease on the Old Print Works.

8. Review of the List of reps on outside bodies and the following amendments:

The Council reviewed the current list:-

1. It was RESOLVED that the Highways Working Group was longer required and was disbanded.
 2. The following additional members for the Environment Committee were accepted; Emma Best, Sarah Butt and Cllr Annette Dunning
 3. Any other amendments: Cllr Fleming was no longer a trustee for HCSL, as there were no other volunteers there was no official representation on HCSL by the Town Council. Cllr Reece was no longer a member of the Communications Committee and Cllr Took was now the Vice Chair. Cllr Thomas was no longer a representative for SALC. Cllr Lewis requested and was given authority to speak with Mr James Hewitt to see if he was willing to be a representative on ESTA
9. District & County Reports: To receive any reports. County Cllr Tony Goldson reported on the latest Covid-19 figures for the district and reported that the County Covid Group were currently concerned about people traveling into Suffolk from higher tiered areas.
 10. Financial Matters: The Council received and noted the report of the meeting held on the 16th November, 2020.
 11. Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group: The Council received and noted the report on the meeting held on the 18th November, 2020. Referring to the minutes, Cllr Dutton asked what was the role of Dikon Povey? It was confirmed by Cllr Goldson that he was a principal planning officer. Cllr Dunning asked whether the group had investigated why some residents had not received a Neighbourhood Plan consultation leaflet. Cllr Allen confirmed that some residents outside of Halesworth had received the leaflets due to the postcode coverage by Royal Mail but he was aware that some Halesworth residents had not received any leaflets, including his own address in Holton. The Group would be contacting Royal Mail for an explanation.
 12. Planning Committee:
 1. The Council received and noted the report on the meeting held on the 13th November, 2020
 2. Miles Ward Court update; Cllr Dutton reported that the day after the meeting with ESC officers and Alex Till from the Menta group regarding the Miles Ward Court buildings, the Clerk had contacted the Estate Agents to discover that the buildings had just been sold. It was understood that the buyer intended to retain the units for business start-ups and so from that point of view it was good news. The Council had in the process obtained a very knowledgeable contact which may prove useful for any future community projects in the town.
 13. Environment Committee: Cllr Reece reported that the Committee would be meeting again shortly with their additional new members. In the meantime she intended to visit the Saxon way site and take some photographs of the issue with the fence and hedging alongside the allotments and play area.
 14. CCTV: Update from the Clerk. The Clerk reported that the recording equipment and broadband were now successfully installed. The contractor would be configuring the cameras and line of sight, erecting suitable signage and installing the software in the office. The Clerk

would be organising a suitable PC for this purpose and the system was now close to being operational. It was RESOLVED that the CCTV Working Group would, in view of the recent vandalism, start to investigate options for CCTV coverage in the park.

15. ABP Committee:

1. The Council received and noted the report on the meeting with held on the 23rd November, 2020.
2. The Council considered the list of assets (amended) for potential transfer from ESC. Cllr Dunning expressed concerns that the Council would potentially be taking on responsibility for two of the bridges in the Park without the necessary expertise and which she felt would be more suitable for District or County Councils to maintain. Cllr Prime was concerned about how the Town Council could afford to maintain all these assets/liabilities as this had not as yet been explained. Cllr Lewis, Chair of the Finance Committee, assured the Council that she had been working on the figures with the Clerk and a full financial projection would be presented at the next Finance Committee meeting. This would be a clear and transparent assessment of the affordability of the offer from ESC that the members could then consider whether it was acceptable, needed amending or rejecting.

Cllr Allen wished it noted that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group were in favour of accepting the two Open Space areas that had been rejected by the ABP Committee, namely the verges in Old Orchard Close and Bramblewood Way.

It was noted that there were some other areas missing from ESC's list, such as Chichester Rd Play Area and the Open Space at Allington Drive. The Clerk explained that there were in fact several more areas omitted from the list including Bedingfield Crescent allotments and some Open Spaces off Roman Way. He had been informed by ESC that these areas were 'Housing Assets' and for legal reasons ESC were not able to transfer them at this time.

It was then RESOLVED that the Council accepted the list of assets (amended) for potential transfer from ESC to enable the process to proceed but subject to further analysis of the financial implications. In other words HTC was not agreeing to the proposal in its entirety as this was subject to confirmation of the financial implications but HTC had agreed that this was the final list of assets in order that the Council and ESC could calculate the costs for these assets and move forward with future negotiations.

16. People & Places: The Council received and noted the People & Places presentation slides. The Chair proposed that the Council needed to consider if the recommendations in the People and Places report was referring to marketing the town in general or whether it was targeted towards the Thoroughfare and Market Place businesses. It was noted that there was a difference of opinion on this matter within the Council. The Chair reported that potentially Bungay Town Council may be willing to share the costs of a Town Manager's position, this was worth consideration as HTC would not be able to afford a full salary, which was likely to be around £40k per annum. The Chair was aware that the Communications Committee had originally been given the task of marketing the town and had since formed a working group. The group, comprising members from the Town Centre group, HTC and Halesworth Tourism Group had not met so far and he was mindful that as a working group of a Committee this may involve an unnecessary level of bureaucracy. It was then RESOLVED that a Working Group, reporting directly to the Council, would be set up for this purpose, the members were; Cllr Wollweber, Cllr Dutton, Cllr Thomas and Cllr Prime. The Chair asked members of the Council to write to the Clerk with any ideas or concerns for the group to consider.

17. Communications Committee:

1. The Council received and noted the minutes of the meetings held on the 26th November, 2020
2. To consider the proposal that the Town Council gives clarity as to what the Marketing Halesworth Working Group should cover? This had now been superseded by the resolution under item 16.
3. To consider the proposal that Cllr Prime should be the Town Council's town centre representative on such bodies that require this. This had also been superseded by the resolution under item 16.

4. To consider the proposal/question– should the Town Council submit reports to the local press in order to generate positive interest in the town? It was noted that previously the Council had a good working relationship with reporters from the Beccles and Bungay Journal in particular but in recent times this had lapsed and the paper seemed to be concentrating on the other towns. Producing regular reports for the press would be potentially beneficial for the town but it would also be very time consuming and probably too much work for the Clerks to manage. Cllr Prime suggested that this was exactly one of the roles that the Town Manager should undertake. The new working group would consider this further.
18. Meeting dates for 2021: It was RESOLVED that the suggested dates for the Council and Finance Committee meetings were approved. The clerk reported that the date for the Annual Parish Meeting would be subject to the Covid restrictions and it was not possible to set a date at this stage. The Communications Committee would monitor the situation and set a date as soon as practicable.
19. Correspondence: The Clerk wished to point out that he had added the traditional HTC contributions for the Bungay High School prizes to the accounts for payment as there wasn't an agenda item for it. It was a slightly unusual way to do this but if the Council were in agreement it could be duly processed but if not it would have to be considered at the next Finance Committee.

The Clerk had forwarded correspondence on the Saxon Way and reported that he had received several emails from residents concerned on the clearing of the land adjacent to Pound Close from an environmental point of view and also the reasons behind it. There were at present no applications for developing the land and investigations into the ownership revealed it was currently in a trust consisting of three individuals. The Clerk was concerned in the short term of the integrity of the fence alongside the Saxon allotment as the owners had removed their hedges that were in part supporting the fence owned by the Council. It was RESOLVED that the Council gave permission for the Clerk to make any urgent repairs or replacement of the fence.

The Council also received correspondence from the Millennium Green Trust regarding the large Oak tree that had fallen into the New Reach. MGT together with East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council would contribute towards the cost of the removal (approximately £1,500 - £2,500). MGT asked whether the Town Council would also consider contributing. The Clerk confirmed that the tree was in the area registered as a Village Green and the legal ownership had remained unclear ever since it had been registered by a resident. However, it was RESOLVED that HTC would be willing to contribute towards the costs, without accepting any legal responsibility, but the actual amount would be dependent on the final cost.

20. Maintenance: The Clerk reported that the recent vandalism in the Park had caused damage to a bench, the large roundabout and the swing walk in the Play area. Norse had attended and cleared up the mess. Repairs were currently underway. All the lights in the Saxon Way underpass were now working properly at night but the area still needed cleaning. The memorial soldier in the Arboretum had now been straightened and it was now in the correct position and the poppy had been replaced.

21. Items for the Website/Noticeboard/Newsletters/Library. Awards

22. Accounts for payment: The following accounts were approved for payment

<u>4569.</u>	Joyce Moseley - Zoom monthly subscription N Plan (localism Act 2011)	11.99 + vat
<u>4570.</u>	N Rees – Zoom monthly subscription (November) (LGA 1972 s111)	11.99 + vat
<u>4571.</u>	N Rees – Materials for civic preparations (GPoC) Armbands and rosettes	17.36
<u>4572.</u>	Greater Anglia - Station rent (GPoC) to correct previous payment	10.00
<u>4573.</u>	Bungay High School – Awards for Creative writing and Product Design (GPoC)	50.00
<u>4574.</u>	EPS Transfers – NP Banner (localism Act 2011)	45.00 + vat

DD/Standing Orders:

<u>4575.</u>	Barclays Bank Charges (LGA 1972 s111)	7.75
<u>4576.</u>	Monthly salaries (LGA 1972 s112)	2623.39

Bank & Cash Balances at 2nd December, 2020

Current 728	£130,210.07
Unity Trust	£112,329.87
Community A/c	£5,296.07
Business Reserves 017	£92,697.62
Petty Cash	£71.83

The meeting was closed at 8.52pm