

# FORUM REPORT – JANUARY 24<sup>th</sup> 2017 7PM EDGAR SEWTER

**Present:** Councillors;

Anne Fleming (Chair) David Thomas (Vice Chair), Tracy Gardner, Maureen Took, Peter Dutton, Rosemary Lewis, Sandra Leverett, David Wollweber.

**In Attendance:** Nick Rees (Clerk), Phillipa Welby (Assistant Clerk)

**Members of the Public:** A register was kept on the door, manned by Mrs J Dutton & Mr M Fleming, 68 members of the public attended the meeting.

The Chair, Anne Fleming welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the meeting would be accompanied by a Power Point presentation just to show the topics being discussed. Topics had been included from suggestions by Councillors and residents. Questions that could not be answered on the night should be sent to the Clerk.

1. London Road Building: Future Plans. A resident drew attention to a recent article in the Waveney Advertiser which reported that Waveney District Council (WDC) would be giving away 100 different assets to Lowestoft and Oulton Broad parish councils. The article warned that residents of both parishes would be asked to pay more for the upkeep of these assets through the parish precepts. It was noted that none of these assets included car parks which generated an income. Cllr Leverett explained that Halesworth Town Council (HTC) had formed a London Rd Building user group over a year ago but were no further forward in knowing if HTC could take over the ownership of the building. HTC were currently considering an offer from WDC for the London Rd Building made in October, 2016 but this offer had so far not been approved by WDC's Cabinet. It was disappointing that this process was taking so long. Dr Jean Macheath representing the Day Centre, explained that there were no other suitable buildings in Halesworth that would provide the necessary space and the necessary standard of kitchen facilities.

2. Free one hour Car Parking: The Chair thanked Corrine Legrys for designing the Free Parking banner. The Chair also thanked all the business and local parishes that contributed to the free one hour parking and also Cllr Goldson who contributed from his locality budget. HTC would be looking at how to find the money to pay for the following year, April 2018 – March 2019. WDC's initial estimate was £25,000 but this may go up or down when negotiations started later in the year. It was suggested by a resident that the payment for this year should not be released until the Thoroughfare car park had been repaired. Cllr Thomas suggested that this would be an option as WDC would just remove the free parking again.

3. Halesworth Playing Fields Association (HPFA). Mr Ezra Leverett, secretary for the HPFA, explained the reasons behind why the deal involving Campus, HPFA and Castle Meadow Care had fallen through. Mr Leverett also reported that he had recently received a petition organised by a resident present in the hall, Ms Alison Roe. Unfortunately, he explained, the wording on the petition itself was inaccurate as Campus Ltd had not offered to buy the land. However Mr Leverett stated that questions raised by residents would be answered on the HPFA's website. There followed more questions from the residents in the hall and Cllr David Thomas, Chair of the HPFA, invited those residents and anyone who was interested to come to the HPFA meeting on the following night (January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017) where they could ask questions. Cllr Rosemary Lewis, Chair of HTC's Finance Committee explained in detail how HTC had supported both Campus Ltd and the HPFA equally in terms of grants and loans.

4. Naming of the new road off Fairview Rd. Cllr Wollweber explained that HTC were asked to come up with a name for the new access road into the new development. There were a few suggestions being considered, one being St Luke, as there had been a medieval fair close to the site which was traditionally held on St Luke's day and therefore the road could be called St Lukes Way or similar. Cllr Wollweber had also discovered in the deeds of the fair that Richard Argentine paid King Richard two palfreys for the fair and so the road could be called Palfrey,

Palfrey was a term for a medieval horse. Hyde Clarke had been suggested after the long serving Town Councillor and Hammond, after the business man, Mr Roy Hammond. A resident then suggested Zemke Way, after the famous US ace pilot, Col. Hub Zemke, CO of the 56<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group, who had been stationed just up the road at Holton. The Council would consider these suggestions and decide on a name at the next Council meeting.

5. "Greening" the Town: Cllr Peter Dutton explained the idea behind forming a group of volunteers to conduct a survey of the town's 'arboreal assets' and to consider other areas in the town where tree planting may make the town more attractive and interesting. Cllr Dutton asked if anyone was interested in getting involved to contact the Clerk. There was currently a register of trees in the town held by Halesworth in Bloom but this needed updating and other suitable areas for planting could be explored. A member of the public asked about the verges in the town and how often these were cut. Cllr Dutton explained that due to recent cutbacks, the Highways Department would only consider additional cuts to verges and hedges where safety was an issue. General maintenance of roadside verges and hedges was being filtered down to local parishes but as there was no additional funding available this also relied on volunteers and property owners to maintain these areas. The Chair, Cllr Anne Fleming highlighted the excellent job that Waveney Norse did in the town with limited resources and urged residents to encourage them whenever they saw them in the town. Another resident suggested that a map of the town's perimeters could be posted on the website.

6. Traffic flow, safety of cyclists, Thoroughfare street furniture and possible re-designation of the Thoroughfare. Cllr Wollweber explained that the idea was to have an overall plan to look at improving the Thoroughfare and routes around the town for pedestrians, mobility scooters, cyclists, cars and delivery vehicles. The idea was to also look at street furniture, planters, gazebos and shop pavement displays to see if a voluntary set of rules could be applied. Cllr Thomas explained that the Thoroughfare was still designated a highway with certain restrictions and this may be difficult to manage. Mr Alastair Macfarlane reminded the Council that PCSO Edd Vincent has devised a possible solution to the Thoroughfare which could be looked at again.

7. Saxon Way Bridge Posters (Park side): The Council felt that the posters on the Saxon Bridge needed to be managed and priorities given to local events and non-commercial organisations. Waveney District Council and Suffolk Highways Dept had both confirmed that the Town Council could manage the posters. Cllr Wollweber read out some proposed rules for controlling the posters. One resident expressed concerns that there was also a proposal to have planters on the bridge which would restrict the width of the footpath and this could be a safety issue. Another resident wondered if anything could be done about stopping cars from turning right when exiting the car park.

8. Thoroughfare car park maintenance/Pedestrian Safety at Angel link Car Park. The Chair confirmed that WDC had sent surveyors to look at repairing the Thoroughfare car park but there was no news when this work might be completed. The gap in the hedge which allowed pedestrians to access the Angel Link North car park straight on to the Angel Hotel car park had been closed. This meant that pedestrians needed to walk around and through the vehicle entrance. There was no obvious solution to this at the moment but it was noted that there were still plans in place for a Bus Hub. The recent application for a hand car wash in the Angel Link South car park had been rejected by the Council as it was felt that the site was inappropriate and would not necessarily provide any employment for local residents. It was likely that at some point part of the Thoroughfare car park would be sold and all these factors had placed a greater importance on maintaining adequate parking provision in the town.

9. Housing Developments around the Town: The Chair of the Planning Committee, Cllr Peter Dutton explained that earlier in the day the Council had been notified of a proposal to build 180 new homes off Roman Way, south of Chediston Street, also known locally as Devil's Hill. With the other proposed developments in the town this could potentially raise the population of the town by 1000 or more. Residents expressed concerns over the existing infrastructure and the amount of affordable house that will be delivered by the Developers. It was noted that the Town Council would receive around 15% in Community Infrastructure Levy payments with the remaining 85% going to Waveney District Council.

10. Sizewell C: The Chair, Anne Fleming, explained that Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Coastal District Council had provided an overview of their response to the consultation (114 pages). If it went ahead, the project would start in 4 years' time and run for 15 years. This would have a significant effect on the local infrastructure but may also give additional opportunities for local businesses and provide employment. There were naturally concerns over the temporary housing scheme, the park and ride site on the A12, the volume of lorries (approx. 300 per day) and the impact on an area of outstanding natural beauty amongst many others. Residents could still have their say by visiting the Sizewell C EDF energy consultation website up until the 3<sup>rd</sup> February.

11. Emergency Planning: The Council were currently engaged with the task of producing an Emergency Plan, particularly to deal with flooding and large scale power failures. A resident remembered that the Council had looked at this previously, probably around 10 years ago but it may still contain some useful information. Another resident suggested the Council could research the 'Gold Control' method of dealing with emergencies.

12. Website: The Council would continue to keep residents informed via the website but anyone could sign up to the newsletters to get information sent to their email addresses. Details were on the website.

13. Miscellaneous questions from the public was covered elsewhere on Agenda. There was no time left to consider any further items.

The Chair thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

The meeting was closed at 8.45pm