



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MILDENHALL HIGH TOWN COUNCIL

REMOTELY VIA ZOOM

Thursday 29th October 2020 – 7pm

Present:

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| Cllr. Alecock | Cllr. Neal |
| Cllr. Bowman | Cllr. Power |
| Cllr. Bristow | Cllr. Shipp |
| Cllr. Busuttil | Cllr. Sulman |
| Cllr. Leaman | Cllr. Sykes |
| Cllr. Martin | |

Also in attendance: Mr. M Knight (Town Manager), County Councillor L. Busuttil. Sqn Ldr P Graham and one member of the public.

The Mayor opened the meeting and stated that item 66.2 would be discussed in exempt due to the confidential nature of the business.

057. APOLOGIES AND ACCEPTANCE FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were accepted from Cllr. Bloodworth, Littlechild, Peachey and Roman.

058. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

Cllr. Shipp: West Suffolk District Council.
Cllr. Alecock: West Suffolk District Council.
Cllr. Neal: West Suffolk District Council

059. TO RECEIVE APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE FULL TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD 16th JULY and 24th SEPTEMBER 2020 FROM THOSE MEMBERS PRESENT AT THE MEETING

Cllr. Busuttil presented the minutes.

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the two sets of minutes from the 16th July and the 24th September 2020 as presented with one alteration to the minutes of the 24th September 2020 regarding the costs of the proposed twinning process. Proposed by Cllr. Busuttil and seconded by Cllr. Sulman. All in favour.

060. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

061a. REPORT FROM THE MAYOR

It was reported that the Mayor had recently been interviewed by ITV Anglia regarding an interest story regarding posting to RAF Mildenhall.

Congratulations were also extended to County Councillor Busuttil after his election to Vice-Chair of Suffolk County Council.

061b. REPORT FROM THE DEPUTY MAYOR

Cllr. Shipp had nothing to report.

062. REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR

County Cllr. L Busuttil reported that he had been involved with issues surrounding the ongoing Covid-19 health crisis, the Mallards Bridge, the Sunnica Energy Farm development and the proposed housing development in west Mildenhall, and invited questions.

Cllr. Neal congratulated C Cllr. L Busuttil on his election as Vice-Chair of Suffolk County Council, and asked if concerns regarding the traffic flow from West Row had been addressed for the development in west Mildenhall.

Cllr. Bowman stated that the final conditions had not yet been seen and this might be connected to the development. She was unsure if the speed limits had already been changed.

County Cllr. L Busuttil agreed that there were lots of unresolved traffic issues and he would work to resolve them.

It was also announced that there was a virtual meeting with representatives of West Suffolk Council on the 17th November 2020 with further updates, the Town Manager will send a link after the current round of committee meetings.

063. REPORT FROM DESIGNATED DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Cllr. Neal reported on a £1.9m upgrade to Brandon Sports Centre and that Eriswell Lodge has hosted a World Skeet Championship. It was also reported that Mildenhall had County standard Bowls and Cricket facilities and Football facilities up to grade 4.

Cllr. Busuttil asked for clarification over the closing of the green at the Mildenhall Social Club, Cllr. Neal responded by stating that the club has shrunk in size but was still intact.

Cllr. Shipp reported that the rink was being reduced from 8 to 6 lanes which was a member's

decision after a membership drop off.

Cllr. Neal also reported that the Health and Safety Executive were in the town and imposing fines.

It was also reported that West Suffolk Council were on an alert list after experiencing ten Covid-19 deaths.

Parking revenue in the district was £69,575 in July comprising of 54 fines from 160 patrols, August being £81,070 comprising of 88 fines from 258 patrols and September being 99 fines from 359 patrols. In Newmarket in September this was 671 fines from 1,889 patrols.

The Apex in Bury has opened and the Christmas market has been cancelled. The Bury Cathedral would be open on the 4th and 5th of December for Christmas related events.

064. REPORT FROM RAF MILDENHALL BASE

Squadron Leader Graham reported that Covid-19 had presented new rules and new challenges for the base with 33% of staff on home or flexible working including both civilian and military roles. There had been concerns over activities on base with the mental wellbeing of troops who had not been homes in almost a year and resilience exercises planned.

A joint project with the Ministry of Transport involving a road survey around US bases was underway.

The Remembrance Sunday event for this year will still take place but will be significantly smaller.

Squadron Leader Graham also reported that he was unfortunately leaving the base, but that Squadron Leader Alistair Barber would replace him and be in post by the 16th November 2020.

Cllr. Busutil thanked Squadron Leader Graham for all his hard work and service which was echoed by all those present.

065. FINANCIAL MATTERS 2020/21

065.1 To receive and note the bank reconciliation up to 30th September 2020

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the figures as presented. Proposed by Cllr. Power, seconded by Cllr. Bowman, all in favour.

065.2a Approval of Accounts – Payments – 16th September 2020 to 15th October 2020

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the payments, proposed by Cllr. Shipp, second by Cllr. Sulman, all in favour.

065.2b Approval of Accounts – Receipts – 16th September to 15th October 2020

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the receipts, proposed by Cllr. Neal, second by Cllr. Power, all in favour.

065.3 To receive the 2nd quarterly budget monitoring report: 1st July to 30th September 2020

The document was received and **APPROVED**, proposed by Cllr. Neal, seconded by Cllr. Power, all in favour.

Cllr. Busuttil also noted the receipt of the contribution from Suffolk Council Councillor Busuttil for the play equipment.

065.4 To agree an amount for a possible donation to the Royal British Legion

Cllr. Sulman proposed that due to the impact of Covid-19 on the collections for the organisation that a one-time donation of £500 be donated. Seconded by Cllr. Bowman, all in favour.

066. GENERAL MATTERS

County Councillor Busuttil and one member of the public left at 7.41pm.

066.1 Update from Town Manager regarding Action Sheet

The document was presented and **NOTED**. Cllr. Shipp asked if a response had been received from Frickenhausen regarding the twinning, the Town Manager reported that it had not, but that this would be chased.

Cllr. Leaman asked for an update on the speed cameras, the Town Manager reported that the photos and associated forms had been sent and that the cameras were ordered but on hold until the posts had been installed.

066.3 To discuss received for works to the Jubilee Centre Clock

The quotes obtained by the Town Manager were presented.

Cllr. Sulman requested that more costs were obtained which would detail how much was spent on the clock over a period of five years so a cost/benefit analysis could be produced.

Cllr. Neal stated that attention should be paid to potential costs of labour as well as materials.

It was then **AGREED** to instruct the Town Manager to produce a cost/benefit analysis

for the clock (including labour) which would take into account expenditure over a five year period and a five year guarantee for a new clock.

066.4 To discuss and agree on a response to the Sunnica Energy Farm development

The Mayor introduced the item and said that there would be a ten minute discussion at this meeting where all councillors would be able to share their views and ask for clarification, then everybody would be encouraged to submit their views as individuals rather than one view be put forward by the Town Council as a corporate body. This was agreed.

Cllr. Shipp stated that the development was extremely large and that most of the long-term issues had not yet been addressed.

Cllr. Bowman reported on her attendance at the informal forum and stated that some towns and parishes affected by the development feel left behind due to its fast changing nature.

Cllr. Neal agreed that the development was eco-friendly but not completely as the carbon footprint is still large. The land is being farmed but with the product being electricity and would at least be protected from housing development in the future.

Cllr. Power supported Cllr .Shipp and agreed that the neighbouring villages should be supported also.

Cllr. Martin voiced concerns over the long-term impact of the development on the land and the feasibility of growing crops on the land in 30 years time.

Cllr. Alecock stated his concerns over the benefit for local people with no jobs being produced at all.

Cllr. Shipp asked Sq. Leader Graham on the impact on the local base regarding reflections.

Sq. Leader Graham reported that all development has to comply with statutory requirements regarding height, reflection and distance from the base and that a separate Ministry of Defence consultation will take place.

Cllr. Leaman stated that he was against the plan as were other Councils and that the Council should join with their neighbours. Furthermore it was disappointing that the Council were not submitting a response as a corporate body as they were in agreement.

Cllr. Busuttill summed up the discussion in that there was an agreement that the Council sympathises with their neighbours and that in 30 years the area would be an eyesore. Members were then also encouraged to submit their individual views so more impact could be made. But it was **AGREED** that the Town Council should submit a response as a corporate body. The Town Manager and Mayor to produce

one which sums up the discussion held tonight.

Sq. Ldr Graham then left the meeting at 8.09pm.

066.5 To note the West Suffolk Local Plan consultation period

Councillors were told that the event ran from the 13th October until the 22nd December at 5pm. They were encouraged to take part in the process and submit their ideas and concerns as appropriate.

066.6 To consider a grant application from the Mildenhall Social Club

Cllr. Bowman stated that the social club had been hit very hard by the Covid-19 situation and that a lot of hard work had taken place to improve the facilities prior to the lock down.

She then proposed to award the grant of £500. This was seconded by Cllr. Leaman. It was then **AGREED** to award a grant of £500 to the Mildenhall Social Club, all in favour.

066.7 To consider a grant application from Abbeycroft Leisure

Cllr. Shipp reported on an approach from Abbeycroft Leisure to the District Council regarding locality budget.

It was then **AGREED** to award a grant of £500 to Abbeycroft Leisure, proposed by Cllr. Neal, seconded Cllr. Sykes, all in favour.

066.8 To receive a verbal update regarding the Cemetery Extension Project

The Town Manager gave a brief verbal report regarding the planning application which was now being worked on. It was also reported that a meeting of the Working Group would be called for w/c 9th November 2020.

066.9 To consider setting up a Task and Finish Group concerning future plans for Council owned buildings

Cllr. Busuttil gave an update on a recent meeting with Suffolk County Council which combined with approaches from West Suffolk Council regarding land and facilities management identified a need for a complete review of the Town Council's facilities and buildings.

Cllr. Neal asked about the nature of the group and the powers they would have.

The Town Manager reported that this would be a task and finish group with no delegated powers. All decisions would run through the Full Council.

Cllr. Shipp reported that the Town Council has a significant footprint and that this

would be a good time to take stock and come up with a plan for the future.

Cllr. Bowman also stated that the group would be concerned with blue sky thinking and would not be an ongoing standing committee, and would also concentrate on the bigger picture.

Cllr. Sulman hoped that the group would be able to meet in person as would only be 6 members.

It was then **RESOLVED** to form a Task and Finish Group to begin to discuss the way forward for a complete facilities review for the Town Council, such group to comprise of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and the Chairs of the Establishment and Policy Committee and Amenities and Operations Committee with two other members. Proposed by Cllr. Shipp, seconded by Cllr. Bowman, all in favour.

The Mayor then invited interest from other Members who might want to take up the other two seats on the group. Cllrs. Power and Neal expressed an interest and with no other interest were so adopted onto the group.

067. COMMUNICATIONS AND EVENTS COMMITTEE

067.1 To receive a verbal update regarding the Christmas lights and tree

Cllr. Bowman reported that the Christmas Tree and lighting arrangement had been booked and would be installed over the w/c 23rd November. There had been a lot of positive response from people in the town.

068. PLANNING COMMITTEE

068.1 To note the minutes of the meetings held on the 12th October 2020

There were no questions and it was **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the meeting. Proposed by Cllr. Power, seconded by Cllr. Busuttil, all in favour.

069. AMENITIES AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

069.1 To agree on a way forward regarding tree maintenance in the town

The Town Manager gave an update on progress on this item which had been slow.

Cllr. Shipp reported that one year agreement had been located and that more clarity was needed with moving forward and for communications with the office and West Suffolk Council.

Cllr. Leaman supported Cllr. Shipp and stated that clarity was needed to establish whether or not West Suffolk Council had the appetite and capacity to move forward at this stage.

Cllrs. Bowman and Sulman also agreed with this way forward.

It was then **AGREED** to pursue this course of action and to report back to the Full Council when any progress had been made.

070. CLEANER, GREENER, SAFER WORKING GROUP

070.1 To receive the notes of the meeting held on the 19th October 2020

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the notes, with no questions, proposed by Cllr. Sulman, seconded by Cllr. Power. All in favour.

070.2 To consider and approve the recommendations in the notes

It was then **RESOLVED** to obtain a quote for the Disability Access Audit and to be presented to the November meeting of the Full Council. Proposed by Cllr. Sulman, seconded by Cllr. Power, all in favour.

071 FINANCE STRATEGY WORKING GROUP

071.1 To receive the notes from the meeting held on 14th October 2020

Cllr. Sulman gave a verbal report on the process of the budget setting for 2021/2 and also that items such as the staffing allocation and Suffolk County Council recharge had been resolved.

It was also reported that the loss of income incurred during the Covid-19 health crisis would be absorbed by underspends in the other areas of the budget and from the contingency reserves and for the burden for this year to not fall on the tax payer by an increased precept.

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the notes, with no questions, proposed by Cllr. Sulman, seconded by Cllr. Bowman. All in favour.

071.2 To approve a quote for installing utility meters in Council buildings

It was **AGREED** to continue with meters for all utilities for the Pavilion, Jubilee Centre and Lark Children's Centre. Proposed by Cllr. Sulman, seconded by Cllr. Sykes, all in favour.

072. To consider a resolution under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 to exclude the press and public for the duration of the following items in view of the confidential and personal nature of the business to be transacted. If resolved, such items to be dealt with after the item that confirms details of the next meeting.

This was so **RESOLVED**, all in favour.

075. EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

None.

076. Date of Next Full Council Meeting

This next meeting of the Full Council will be on 26th November 2020 at 7pm, remotely via Zoom.

066.2 To discuss an update regarding the Mallards Bridge

The Town Manager gave a verbal update on the matter. Much discussion took place and it was then **RESOLVED** to put forward a revised offer for the project.

073. To discuss an update regarding the Mildenhall Messenger

Cllr. Bowman gave a verbal update and it was **AGREED** to take the matter to the meeting of the Communications and Events Committee of the 5th November 2020.

074 PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

074.1 To receive the notes from the meeting held on the 27th October 2020

The notes were presented and it was **AGREED** to adopt them with no changes, proposed by Cllr. Sulman, seconded by Cllr. Power, all in favour.

074.2 To ratify the recommendations detailed in these minutes

The recommendations detailed in the report were accepted and it was **AGREED** to move forward on each point.

The meeting then closed at 9.34pm.