



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MILDENHALL HIGH TOWN COUNCIL
FENLAND ROOM, THE PAVILION, RECREATION WAY, MILDENHALL

Thursday 29th July 2021 – 7pm

Present:

Cllr. Alecock	Cllr. Martin
Cllr. Bowman	Cllr. Neal
Cllr. Brotchie	Cllr. Peachey
Cllr. Busuttil (Mayor)	Cllr. Shipp (Deputy Mayor)
Cllr. Littlechild	

Also in attendance was the Town Manager, County Councillor L. Stanbury and two (2) members of the public.

057. APOLOGIES AND ACCEPTANCE FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were accepted from Cllrs. Bloodworth (family commitments), Bristow (previous engagement), Leaman (holiday), Roman (ill-health), Sulman (family commitments) and Sykes (work commitments).

058. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

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

Cllr. Bowman: item 68.3 pertaining to a planning application.
Cllr. Littlechild: item 68.3 pertaining to a planning application.

It was also **RESOLVED** to grant Cllr. Roman a three-month dispensation to not attend Council meetings due to the nature and extent of his recent injury. The Town Manager to communicate this to Cllr. Roman, all in favour.

Signed:.....

Dated:.....

059. TO RECEIVE APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE FULL TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD ON 24th JUNE 2021 FROM THOSE MEMBERS PRESENT AT THE MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes from the meeting on the 24th June 2021 with some grammatical changes. Proposed by Cllr. Bowman and seconded by Cllr. Littlechild. All in favour.

060. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

061a. REPORT FROM THE MAYOR

Cllr. Busuttil reported that she had recently attended the Change of Command Ceremony at RAF Mildenhall where Col. Gene Jacobus was appointed. She also thanked the Councillors for the flowers sent on the occasion of her 60th birthday.

061b. REPORT FROM THE DEPUTY MAYOR

Cllr. Shipp also reported that he had also attended the Change of Command Ceremony at RAF Mildenhall. He had also attended the Celebration of Life for former West Row Councillor John Smith which was well attended and a fitting tribute to a much loved local figure.

It was then proposed by the Mayor to move item 068.3 to this point in the agenda so that the members of the public could have their issue resolved in a timely manner.

068.3 To consider planning application DC/21/0864/HH: Crundale House, Manor Road, Mildenhall, IP28 7EL

Cllrs. Bowman and Littlechild took no part in this item and abstained from the vote.

The application was discussed and it was **AGREED** to support the application subject to the findings and recommendations of the West Suffolk Council Tree Officer. Proposed by Cllr. Shipp, seconded by Cllr. Neal, all in favour.

The two (2) members of the public then left the meeting at 7.15pm.

062. REPORT FROM RAF MILDENHALL BASE

Sq. Leader Al Balmer was not in attendance.

063. REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Signed:.....

Dated:.....

County Cllr. L. Stanbury reported that the Mallards Bridge replacement had been delayed due to work needed through various agencies and other structures in the county being prioritised. It was hoped that if the existing programme ran smoothly that work would begin in September 2021. He also agreed that communication could be improved and would seek to address this.

Suffolk County Council are also ensuring that a robust service for Special Educational Needs was in development and remained a priority for the County Council.

There had also been spikes in Covid-19 cases across the area, but Suffolk remained the lowest in the east of England.

An electric bus scheme was also in development but concerns remains about service, especially with access to the Mildenhall Hub and the closing of the doctor's surgery meaning that reliance on public transport would remain high. A business case to include Mildenhall in this service is currently being made.

The Sunnica Energy Farm development is now waiting on the publication of the Development Consent Order. It is at this point that responses can be submitted and lobbying can begin.

Cllr. Bowman agreed that the communications surrounding the Mallards Bridge were bad, and that due to the piecemeal work being done that the project management could also be improved.

Cllr. Neal asked about the future funding of Suffolk Highways over the next 30 years, specifically regarding a £30m funding gap which, he calculated, would only widen substantially in years to come.

C Cllr. Stanbury did not recognise the figures put forward by Cllr. Neal, but stated that it was too early in the budget setting process to speak about specific figures and clauses in contracts. He requested that Cllr. Neal send him the figures in question so a full response can be given.

Cllr. Neal then asked if any attention was being paid to anti-social behaviour by Five Ways junction. C Cllr. Stanbury requested that all such concerns be reported to the Police as the proper authority.

Cllr. Peachey asked if any progress had been made on traffic restrictions along Church Walk. It was stated that at the recent Amenities and Operations Committee it was agreed to wait for the cast iron bollards rather than settle for lesser options due to supply problems.

C Cllr. Stanbury then left the meeting at 7.32pm.

Signed:.....

Dated:.....

064. REPORT FROM DESIGNATED DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Cllr. Alecock reported that the District Council were suffering problems concerning shortages in the workforce and that remaining officers were carrying out challenging roles in difficult circumstances to meet demands.

The grass cutting schedules were now available online and took into account the last week and forthcoming week.

The District Council also have a plan to weed all the hard standing footpaths within their remit. This includes a spraying programme to tackle new growth and will be rolled out in the weeks ahead.

Signage preventing the use of play equipment will be removed and the pieces will be reinstated in a phased approach across the area. Douglas Park continues to be a success and St. John's will be getting an upgrade following a consultation with over 400 responses from residents across Mildenhall.

The RSPCA have an ongoing campaign called 'Pets For Prizes' against giving pets as prizes at events on Council land. West Suffolk Council conditions of hire exclude the giving of pets as prizes. It is also hoped that the Town and other Parish Councils can include this clause in their own conditions.

065. REPORT FROM POLICE

Cllr. Busuttill reported that the recent meeting with Inspector Shipton did not take place due to his work commitments. It had been suggested that all future meetings take place with the local Sargeant in the area and the Town Manager would co-ordinate this.

066. FINANCIAL MATTERS 2021/22

066.1 To receive and note the bank reconciliation up to 30th June 2021.

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

066.2a Approval of Accounts – Payments – 1st to 30th June 2021

Cllr. Busuttill enquired about the payment for the new Town Clock, it was explained that this appeared due to an accrual after supply problems with the company involved.

Signed:.....

Dated:.....

Cllr. Bowman asked about the grass cutting payments, which were explained to be the subject of a virement transferring monies from the staffing budget to the maintenance budget to pay for this.

It was also explained that the payment to Pure Rinse was due to the specialist deep clean needed to the Jubilee Centre after a recent vandalism incident.

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

066.2b Approval of Accounts – Receipts – 1st to 30th June 2021

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the receipts, proposed by Cllr. Littlechild, seconded by Cllr. Alecock, all in favour.

066.3 To receive the list of current debtors to the Town Council.

The document was received and **NOTED** with no current debtors to the Town Council.

066.4 To receive the first quarter figures for the 2021/2 financial year (1st April to 30th June 2021)

The document was presented by Cllr. Busuttill and explanations were given on items concerning subscriptions which were 'front-loaded' to the start of the year and so were now 80% spent. It was also noted that a virement would be necessary for transferring the agreed £8,100 from the grounds staffing line to the Jubilee Field Maintenance line to take into account the decision to outsource the cutting of the Jubilee Field until the end of October.

It was also requested that page numbers be placed on the document.

The virement was then **AGREED** with all being in favour. The first quarter performance against budget figures were also **NOTED**.

066.5 To consider a grant application from the Mildenhall Responders

The application was considered with an explanation on exactly where the funds would be spent and other organisations where the applicant had applied for funds. It was also noted that the Town Council had previously given a grant to this organisation.

Signed:.....

Dated:.....

It was then **RESOLVED** to approve a grant of £500 to the Mildenhall Responders, proposed by Cllr. Shipp, seconded by Cllr. Bowman, all in favour.

066.6 To agree a contribution for legal costs to the Sunnica Parish Council Alliance.

Much discussion took place on this matter which included the existing in principle decision to contribute £3,000 towards the proposed legal fund to produce a Landscape Appraisal to object to the development. It was reported that after the previous meeting Cllr. Busuttil circulated the relevant documents to all Councillors under the understanding that any Councillors with concerns should then raise them with the Town Manager.

The Town Manager reported that eight responses had been received, six (6) in favour with two (2) abstaining. Concerns raised were due to the ability of the Parish Council Alliance to raise the full £24,000 and the position of the Town Council with its existing Green Agenda which would by implication support the use of solar power.

It was made clear that any objection to the development would be on the grounds of scale and loss of amenity to local residents and not the use of solar power in general.

It was then **RESOLVED** to offer a contribution of £3,000 to the Parish Council Alliance for the purposes of obtaining legal help in producing a Landscape Appraisal, on the condition that the remaining £21,000 can be sourced by them through other contributions. Proposed by Cllr. Shipp, seconded by Cllr. Busuttil, all in favour.

067. GENERAL MATTERS

067.1 Update from Town Manager regarding Action Sheet

The document was presented and **NOTED**.

Updates on the path to tender for the Cemetery Extension Project and the development in West Mildenhall were given by the Town Manager.

067.2 To agree the language for the Twinning Document

Cllr. Neal asked for clarification of the economic benefits detailed.

It was also **AGREED** to change the word 'municipalities' to 'representatives of both towns', to avoid confusion.

It was then **RESOLVED** to approve the document with the above change, proposed

by Cllr. Shipp, seconded by Cllr. Busuttil, all in favour.

067.3 To note the report concerning giving apologies for Council meetings

The report was **NOTED** and the Town Manager gave a brief verbal on the proper procedure and acceptable reasons for sending apologies, which should always be directed to the Town Manager as Proper Officer.

067.4 Update on Welcome Back Funding

The Mayor gave a verbal report on the recent successful grant application by the Town Manager for access to this funding. An amount of £55,200 had been granted for the purposes of Covid-19 recovery projects, and included an amount for a part-time, fixed-term member of staff to run these projects.

It was also noted that the monies would have to be spent by the end of the current financial year in March 2022.

It was **AGREED** that a copy of the terms and conditions of the grant be circulated to all Members and that a Task and Finish Group should be set up to make sure that logistics and specific actions in the spending of the grant funding are conducted in a timely and show value for money. All Councillors were encouraged to email the Mayor to express an interest in the group.

It was then **RESOLVED** to set up a Task and Finish Group to oversee the initial receipt of the monies and produce a project plan to run up until March 2022. Proposed by Cllr. Busuttil, seconded by Cllr. Shipp, all in favour.

The Town Manager was thanked for his work in obtaining this funding.

068. PLANNING COMMITTEE

068.1 To receive the minutes from the meeting of this committee from the 13th July 2021

It was **RESOLVED** to **RECEIVE** the minutes with no alterations. Proposed by Cllr. Shipp, seconded by Cllr. Busuttil, all in favour.

068.2 To agree a scheme of delegation to the Proper Officer to respond to applications

The Town Manager introduced the report which detailed a way to ensure that all planning applications could be responded to when the deadline was short or the Planning Committee could not meet in time.

Signed:.....

Dated:.....

The process was detailed as being in consultation with the Chair of the Planning Committee and it's members to agree on the wording of a response, before this being submitted by the Town Manager to the Planning Authority West Suffolk Council.

It was **AGREED** to **ADOPT** the scheme of delegation. Proposed by Cllr. Busuttil, seconded by Cllr. Bowman, all in favour.

069. COMMUNICATIONS AND EVENTS COMMITTEE

069.1 To receive the minutes from the meeting of this committee from the 1st July 2021

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes, proposed by Cllr. Bowman, seconded by Cllr. Shipp, all in favour.

Cllr. Littlechild kindly agreed to donate a digital camera for use by the Town Council. The Council expressed their thanks.

069.2 To adopt the Terms of Reference for this committee.

It was **AGREED** to **ADOPT** the document as detailed in the minutes, however it was noted that this had not been reflected in the document submitted. The Town Manager to make these changes before approval and publication on the website and in the Standing Orders. Proposed by Cllr. Alecock, seconded by Cllr. Bowman, all in favour.

069.3 To receive a verbal update regarding Merry Mildenhall

Cllr. Bowman reported that the committee had agreed Thursday 2nd December as being the date for the annual event which would be lead by Cllr. Leaman. It had been decided to keep to the normal date and not extend to a weekend or all day event due to the expectation of residents and possible conflict with existing markets.

It was also reported that the extra funding from the cancelled Lark in the Park Event and now extra funding from the Welcome Back Grant would lead to a large expansion in the event which could also be extended to future years if certain capital items could be purchase. Cllr. Leaman would be calling an initial meeting of the working group at the end of August to start this process.

It was also agreed to publish the date in the Mildenhall Messenger in August.

069.4 To receive a verbal update regarding the Annual Town Forum

Cllr. Bowman reported that although the Annual Town Meeting had been already held in a legal sense in early May it had previously been agreed to hold a larger Town Forum when Covid-19 restrictions had been lifted. The Committee had agreed Thursday 23rd September for this event.

It had been agreed that this should be a 90 minute meeting with two guest speakers who would speak on upcoming Council projects. These were agreed as being the Riverbank Project in association with the Environment Agency and the Neighbourhood Plan. The Town Manager was in the process of confirming two speakers in this regard. The two slots would also allow time for questions.

It was also hoped that the Cemetery Extension Project would also be far along enough to have a presentation too as well as representatives from all organisations who had received grant funding from the Council over the past few years.

The date and format of the meeting was then **AGREED**, proposed by Cllr. Neal, seconded by Cllr. Busuttil, all in favour.

070. Cemetery Extension Working Group

070.1 To receive the minutes from the meeting of this group from 12th July 2021

It was reported that the tender documents had now been updated by the consultant to include the input from Suffolk County Highways and environmental concerns. The DDA compliant toilet block had also been included. The planning permission had been confirmed as being almost ready for approval and this would then lead to the official tendering. It was also reported that the existing consultant should be approached to project manage the development due to time constraints and level of technical expertise of the Town Manager, Councillors an office staff.

The notes of the meeting were then **ACCEPTED**, proposed by Cllr. Shipp, seconded by Cllr. Bowman, all in favour.

071. Finance Strategy Working Group

071.1 To receive the minutes from the meeting of this group from 21st July 2021

Cllr. Busuttil gave a report on the recent meeting where reserves, virements, quarterly figures and the future reporting structure of the budget were discussed.

The notes of the meeting were then **ACCEPTED**, proposed by Cllr. Shipp, seconded by Cllr. Busuttil, all in favour.

071.2 To discuss and approve the recommendations from this meeting

It was **RESOLVED** to change the total Contingency Reserves to the 6-month figure of £173,323.47 (reviewed annually in March) and for the remaining £21,427 to be reallocated as follows:

- £10,000 to the Playground and MUGA Reserve
- £11,427 to the Cemetery Extension Reserve.

Proposed by Cllr. Busuttil, seconded by Cllr. Shipp, all in favour.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Financial Reserves Management Policy be changed to reflect the total Contingency Running Reserves allocated by the Council to 6 months as opposed to the existing 9-month position. Proposed by Cllr. Busuttil, seconded by Cllr. Shipp, all in favour.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve a virement of £8,100 from the Grounds Staffing Budget to the Jubilee field Maintenance Budget to take into account the recent outsourcing of the grass cutting. Proposed by Cllr. Busuttil, seconded by Cllr. Shipp, all in favour.

072. To consider a resolution under the Public Bodies (Admission 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 after the item that confirms details of the next meeting.

This was so **RESOLVED**.

077. EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

Cllr. Busuttil reported on the recently announced closure of Lloyds Bank which should take place in October. A mobile bank would be provided every fortnight and discussions were ongoing for a site. The taxi rank and tourist information centre were suggested.

Cllr. Peachey asked for an update on the Mildenhall Dome and the application to English Heritage for listed status. Cllr. Shipp updated him on this matter where a recommendation was being produced to apply for this status.

The Town Manager reported that he would be on annual leave for the next week.

078. Date of Next Full Council Meeting

This next meeting of the Full Council will be on 30th September 2021 at 7pm, in the Fenland Room of The Pavilion.

073. To receive approval of confidential minutes of the Full Town Council Meeting held on 29th July 2021.

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the confidential minutes from the 29th July 2021 as presented. Proposed by Cllr. Bowman and seconded by Cllr. Shipp. All in favour.

074. Verbal update concerning a land management opportunity

Cllr. Shipp gave a verbal report on the outcome from consultation with Suffolk County Council and it reported that the Town Council had been successful in it's second preference in this regard.

075. Verbal update regarding the Mildenhall Swimming Pool

The Town Manager reported that the situation regarding the Town Council's involvement with this project had significantly reduced. All Councillors were encouraged to submit ideas for the future use of this land to the Town Manager who would pass these on. The matter would now be removed from future agendas unless the situation again changed.

076. Facilities Review Task and Finish Group

076.1 To receive the notes from the meetings of this group from 21st June and 15th July 2021

The notes of the meetings were **ACCEPTED**, proposed by Cllr. Shipp, seconded by Cllr. Busuttil, all in favour.

076.2 To consider recommendations from the group

It was **RESOLVED** to include the Thetford Road Toilet Block Refurbishment Project into the Cemetery Extension Project. Proposed by Cllr. Busuttil, seconded by Cllr. Shipp, all in favour.

The meeting then closed at 8.55pm.

