



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MILDENHALL HIGH TOWN COUNCIL

REMOTELY VIA ZOOM

Thursday 26th November 2020 – 7pm

Present:

Cllr. Alecock	Cllr. Neal
Cllr. Bowman	Cllr. Power
Cllr. Bristow	Cllr. Sulman
Cllr. Busuttil	Cllr. Sykes
Cllr. Leaman	
Cllr. Littlechild	

Also in attendance: Mr. M Knight (Town Manager), County Councillor L. Busuttil, and two members of the public.

The Mayor opened the meeting and stated that item 89.2 would be discussed immediately following the public participation item due to the nature of the business and its relevance to a concern from a member of the public in attendance.

077. APOLOGIES AND ACCEPTANCE FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were accepted from Cllr. Bloodworth, Martin, Peachey, Roman and Shipp.

078. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

Cllr. Alecock: West Suffolk District Council.

Cllr. Neal: West Suffolk District Council

079. TO RECEIVE APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE FULL TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD 29th OCTOBER 2020 FROM THOSE MEMBERS PRESENT AT THE MEETING

Cllr. Busuttil presented the minutes.

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes from the 29th October 2020 as presented with minor changes to item 062, and an addition to Cllr. Leaman's statement in item 066.5 regarding the Sunnica Energy Far, Development and the Council's response. Proposed by Cllr. Busuttil and seconded by Cllr. Bowman. All in favour.

It was also **MOVED** by the Cllr. Busuttil that all confidential aspects to these minutes and

that of the standing committees minutes be approved in the confidential section of this meeting, seconded by Cllr, Bowman. All in favour.

080. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

One member of the public spoke regarding parking restrictions on St. Andrews Street. Concerns were raised over the current system which was single yellow lines 8am to 6pm Monday to Saturday which were in their opinion being ignored, although recent parking enforcement has resulted in several fines. It was thought that the restrictions were different and that the Council should consider a change in the existing areas to be similar to other areas in the town, with one side being double yellow lines and one single. The member of the public also understood that whilst the decision and the responsibility for conducting the works would be the responsibility of Suffolk County Council Highways, any initiative for change should come from the local level.

Standing orders were suspended at 7.11pm to allow County Councillor L. Bussttil to speak.

C Cllr. L. Bussttil agreed that the initiative for change should come from a local level and gave contact details for officers at the County Council who would be able to assist in this matter. He also reported that it was a very busy HGV route and offered to contribute monies from his Locality Highways Budget in this regard should the Council proceed. It was thought that the costs would be high though with around £6,000 for initial work and design costs, so this should not be undertaken lightly.

Standing orders were reinstated at 7.14pm.

089.2 To discuss parking issues on St. Andrews Street

Cllr. Leaman stated that the current restrictions were in place in the day due to local businesses and these were then lifted at 6pm when the traffic was quieter. Also he stated that the Town Council did not deem this area a necessity at the last review.

Cllr. Power asked a question regarding the exact position of the area in question.

Cllr. Bowman raised the issue of proportionate action and the possible legal fees which had historically been high in other similar projects.

Cllr. Sulman stated that in his opinion there was not enough information available at the time of the meeting for an informed decision to be debated and made.

The Town Manager suggested that the matter be moved to the Amenities and Operations Committee who absorbed the responsibilities of the now disbanded Highways Strategic Working Group.

Cllr. Neal agreed that this matter should be taken to committee.

It was then **AGREED** to send the matter to the Amenities and Operations Committee in the first meeting of 2021, proposed by Cllr. Bussttil, seconded by Cllr. Leaman, all in favour.

081a. REPORT FROM THE MAYOR

Cllr. Busuttil reported that she had recently had the honour of representing the Town Council at two Remembrance Sunday events on the 8th and 11th November at the War Memorial and has also shown her respects to the funeral and memorial of Mr. Simon Dobbins on Friday 20th November.

081b. REPORT FROM THE DEPUTY MAYOR

Cllr. Shipp was not in attendance.

082. REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR

County Cllr. L Busuttil announced that it was his intention to retire from public life in May 2021 and would not be seeking reelection. He also announced that Mr. Lance Stanbury has been selected to run as a Conservative candidate in his place.

Cllr. Neal thanked C Cllr. Busuttil for his service and was sorry that he would not be standing.

083. REPORT FROM DESIGNATED DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Cllr. Alecock reported that West Suffolk Council's commitment to continue to deliver services under Covid-19 restrictions has been good in trying times with all services under constant review. Councillors have seen positive responses to isolated problems that have arisen. The 'Love Where You Live' litter picking initiative has been a great success.

Civil Parking Enforcement continues with issued being identified outside St. Mary's Academy School which has led to more frequent inspections by the teams and more signage and repainted road marking in place with assistance in communications from the school itself. The virtual online exhibition of the Local Plan has been streaming, which puts residents at the heart of shaping it. Councillors have been encouraged to help promote engagement in their area.

The Shadow West Suffolk Council proposed that the new West Suffolk Council adopted the Coat of Arms in January 2019, held by the former West Suffolk Council until 1973, this has been a long process that dates back hundreds of years. Notification has now been given by the Windsor Herald that the certificate has been transferred and 'issued by the King of Arms with a Royal License granted by HM The Queen'. A copy of the official document is now recorded in the College of Arms, London.

The recent Parish and Town Forum was well attended with guest speakers on National and Local developments, emergency planning, place based needs assessments and the 2021 Census preparations.

Progress on the Mildenhall Hub development continues, but sadly tours are not currently allowed due to Covid-19 restrictions. Students from Mildenhall Academy have recently unveiled their creative work thanking Suffolk keyworkers and the NHS. Internal fittings are

now being installed, including the science and design and technology teaching spaces, with pupils due to relocate to the new site in track for spring 2021.

The Sunnica application will be determined by the Secretary of State, but many residents continue to submit their concerns to the case officers who will be compiling West Suffolk Council's response. The Statutory Consultation process finishes on the 18th December 2020.

Emergency accommodation across West Suffolk is being increased to ensure there are enough beds to cater for the homeless this winter whilst also maintaining Covid-19 safety measures with many attempts being made to engage with people who are rough sleeping to encourage them to take up support.

Cllr. Busuttill encouraged all Members to attend the virtual Local Plan consultation and asked Cllr. Alecock on the numbers of rough sleepers in Mildenhall.

Cllr. Alecock responded by saying that although the number of people rough sleeping can vary on an almost daily basis, there are currently 10 people known to be rough sleeping in West Suffolk. The Council is continuing to try to engage with people who are rough sleeping in West Suffolk and encourage them to take up the support and accommodation available.

084. REPORT FROM RAF MILDENHALL BASE

None was forthcoming from the base prior to the meeting on no representative was in attendance.

085. FINANCIAL MATTERS 2020/21

085.1 To receive and note the bank reconciliation up to 31st October 2020

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

085.2a Approval of Accounts – Payments – 16th October 2020 to 15th November 2020

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

085.2b Approval of Accounts – Receipts – 16th October to 15th November 2020

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

085.3 To receive an update regarding current debtors to the Town Council

The Town Manager reported that there were currently no debtors to the Town Council.

085.4 To receive the certificate for the end of the external audit

The Town Manager reported that this had not yet been received by the External Auditors, but that he was in regular contact with them regarding this due to the publishing deadline of the 30th November 2020. The Certificate will be put before Council at the next Full Council meeting.

085.5 To consider sponsoring an award for Mildenhall College Academy

The item was presented by the Mayor and it was reported that the Town Council normally gave the upper limit of £200.

Cllr. Bowman proposed that £200 be given to sponsor an award.

Cllr. Neal asked if consideration could be given to giving more and suggested £300.

Cllr. Power proposed amending the proposal by Cllr. Bowman from £200 to £300. Seconded by Cllr. Sykes.

A vote then took place on the amendment, four in favour and six against. The vote to amend the original proposal by Cllr. Bowman therefore **FELL**.

Cllr. Bowman's proposal of £200 sponsorship of an award was then voted on, seconded by Cllr. Power, nine in favour and one against.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** to donate a sum of £200 to Mildenhall College Academy for the sponsorship of an award.

086. Financial Matters 2021/2

086.1 To receive and consider the proposed budget for the Full Council for the 2021/2 financial year

The papers were introduced by Cllr. Sulman as the Chair of the Establishment and Policy Committee and explained the process.

Cllr. Neal thanked everyone involved for all their hard work in the preparation of the documents.

Cllr. Sulman also explained that the intention was to set the precept at a 0% increase for this current year only as a response to the Covid-19 situation on tax payers in Mildenhall. Any extra monies needed would be taken from general reserves or underspends from the 2020/1 budget year. This to be revisited next year.

The Town Manager also explained that all Councillors had a copy of the budget figures, in addition to the intention for a 0% increase, so they will have three weeks in which to look at, digest, and offer comment on the figures in the documents, before they are asked to vote on and approve the budget for the 2021/2 financial year.

Furthermore it had not been made clear as yet by West Suffolk Council what the tax base would be for the coming year and so any figures on amounts to be taken from reserves or underspends would be purely speculative. But it was hoped that this would be available in time for the December 2020 meeting.

It was **AGREED** that this was understood and the Mayor and Town Manager were authorised to sign the precept request form on this basis and for all Members to be given the exact figures as soon as they are known. All in favour.

One member of the public left the meeting at this time.

086. GENERAL MATTERS

086.1 Update from Town Manager regarding Action Sheet

The document was presented and **NOTED**. The Town Manager also reported that the Cemetery Extension planning application had been submitted.

086.2 To receive an update on Town Council noticeboards

The quote obtained by the Town Manager was presented, which had substantially increased since first received and approved, the company in question had not given a satisfactory reason as to why it had increased by so much.

Cllr. Littlechild agreed that the quote was very high and this was due to the bespoke nature of the product.

Cllr, Power asked as to the reason for the increase, it was reported that no reason had been given apart from the addition of some header boards and a graffiti resistant film coating.

Cllr. Neal stated that the increases in prices could simply be because of Covid-19 and that prices were rising everywhere in all sectors.

It was then **AGREED** to return to three quotes for the noticeboards in question and for these to be presented to the Full Council at the earliest opportunity. Proposed by Cllr. Sykes, seconded by Cllr. Bowman, all in favour.

086.3 To receive an update regarding tree management

The Town Manager gave a verbal update regarding progress with officers from West Suffolk Council which had been largely positive and it had been confirmed that West Suffolk Council had the capacity and the appetite to continue to be the contractors for the Town Council.

A meeting is pending between the lead officer at West Suffolk Council and the Town

Manager which had unfortunately been cancelled by West Suffolk Council twice in the past week. The Town Manager to update the Council when more is known.

086.4 To receive an update on the Jubilee Centre clock

The Town Manager presented the report which detailed the three quotes received for either a replacement or repair of the clock, including guarantees and parts and labour costs.

It was then **AGREED** to proceed with a replacement clock at a cost of £2760 (exc. VAT) with Outdoor Clocks. Proposed by Cllr. Sulman, seconded by Cllr. Alecock, all in favour.

086.5 To consider a Health and Safety proposal

The Town Manager gave a verbal update on the reason for the proposal and for the need for a competent person to be appointed who would adequately defend the Council's liability with any potential claims. It was reported that all conceivable risks had been assessed since the Town Manager was appointed in July 2019 and this included risk assessments, LCRS risk management and the updating of the Health and Safety Policy, but that this proposal would land all liability on health and safety with a third party who would ensure the integrity of the Council's policy, training and paperwork in this regard.

It was further reported that discussion had taken place in the pre-brief which suggested an alternative of continuing with the current system but would also train up one member of staff to a high level which would be an acceptable 'competent person'.

Cllr. Bowman agreed that this was a high priority and the training option would be advisable in the long term but that it would not help the council in the immediate circumstances, and that the integrity of the Council's policy and duty of care to staff and public was paramount. However, the five year term of the document was perhaps too long and asked if the Town Manager could negotiate this down.

Cllr. Neal supported Cllr. Bowman and supported the proposal.

Cllr. Power also asked if the term of the agreement could be negotiated to a two or three year term.

Cllr. Littlechild also agreed that the cost was high and that it was important to get the best value. He offered to help the Town Manager in sourcing other contractors, which the Town Manager gratefully accepted.

Cllr. Power also suggested a two year term would be preferable.

It was then **AGREED** for the Town Manager to speak to other contractors and to also negotiate to a two-year term the existing service provider. Then to sign up with the appropriate provider who provided the best option and protection to the Town

Council. Proposed by Cllr. Bowman, seconded by Cllr. Neal, all in favour.

087. COMMUNICATIONS AND EVENTS COMMITTEE

087.1 To receive the minutes from the meeting of this committee from the 5th November 2020

Cllr. Bowman presented the minutes and agreed that the confidential minute would be approved in the confidential part of this meeting.

The minutes were then **ACCEPTED** as an accurate record of the meeting. Proposed by Cllr. Bowman, seconded by Cllr. Power, all in favour.

087.2 To receive an update regarding the Christmas event

Cllr. Bowman reported that the Christmas Tree and lighting were now installed throughout the town and several very positive messages had already been received by staff and councillors alike.

The Mayor and Cllr. Bowman had also produced a short video to be shared on the website and social media with a Christmas message and video showing the tree and lights being installed.

Cllr. Neal thanked all concerned for the great job on the lights.

Cllr. Alecock also have his heartfelt thanks on a job well done.

Cllr. Bristow asked where the message will be shared, this was reported as being the Council's website and Twitter and Facebook feeds.

Cllr. Sykes also volunteered to share the video on his website as well.

088. PLANNING COMMITTEE

088.1 To receive the minutes of the meeting of this committee held on the 10th November 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.

088.2 To decide whether or not to begin the process of producing a Neighbourhood Plan for the Town.

Much discussion took place regarding the recommendation from the Planning Committee to begin work on producing a Neighbourhood Plan.

Cllr. Bristow stated that the process should involve the whole town and that this matter should be deferred until the public could be consulted in a meaningful way.

Cllr. Bowman agreed and that a good place for this to be discussed could be the Annual Town Meeting which is normally held between April and June each year.

Cllr. Neal questioned the weight which Neighbourhood Plans hold when confronted with substantial planning applications.

It was then **AGREED** to defer this matter until the Annual Town Meeting in 2021. Proposed by Cllr. Bowman, seconded by Cllr. Bristow, all in favour.

089. AMENITIES AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

089.1 To receive the minutes from the meeting of this committee from the 2nd November 2020

The minutes were presented by Cllr. Leaman as Chair with no questions being asked. It was then **AGREED** to accept the minutes as presented. Proposed by Cllr. Leaman, seconded by Cllr. Busuttil, all in favour.

089.3 To consider the recommendation of this committee to name the MUGA the Jubilee Play Area

The recommendation was discussed and it was **AGREED** that a sign should also be purchased to reflect the name change and that it should also acknowledge the Mildenhall Community Partnership and their involvement in the area.

It was then **RESOLVED** to name the Multi Use Game Area the 'Jubilee Play Area. Proposed by Cllr. Leaman, seconded by Cllr. Alecock, all in favour.

089.4 To discuss the repair and cleaning of the War Memorial

The Town Manager gave a brief report on the availability during the current lock down of a company to come out and clean and service the memorial. It was **AGREED** that this would be looked at by the Cleaner, Greener, Safer Working Group and any costs to be presented to the Full Council as appropriate.

090. ESTABLISHMENT AND POLICY COMMITTEE

090.1 To receive the minutes of the meeting of this committee held on the 12th November 2020

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

090.2 To adopt the Community Engagement Policy

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the policy as presented with no changes. Proposed by Cllr. Sulman, seconded by Cllr. Bowman, all in favour.

091. CLEANER, GREENER, SAFER WORKING GROUP

091.1 To consider the quote regarding a Disability Access Audit

Cllr. Sulman gave a verbal report regarding the proposal and the Council's responsibilities in this area.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the quote, with no questions being asked, proposed by Cllr. Alecock, seconded by Cllr. Sykes. All in favour.

092. CEMETERY EXTENSION WORKING GROUP

092.1 To receive the notes from the meeting held on 16th November 2020

The notes were presented with a report from Cllr. Sulman. It was reported that the planning application had been submitted and that minor changes to the tendering documents might be needed with help from Dr. Richard Earl the consultant. Another meeting of this group to be called in the New Year closer to when the planning application will be out for consultation.

It was then **AGREED** to accept the notes with no further questions. Proposed by Cllr. Bowman, seconded by Cllr. Sulman, all in favour.

092.2 To appoint a new Chairman for this working group

Cllr. Littlechild reported that due to personal issues he no longer had the capacity to take on this responsibility; but would remain on the group itself.

Cllr. Alecock then nominated Cllr. Bowman as Chair for the group, this was seconded by Cllr. Sulman, all in favour.

092.3 To appoint a new Vice-Chairman for this working group

With no changes to the vice-chair for this group this item was not discussed and Cllr. Sulman remained in the position.

093. FACILITIES REVIEW TASK AND FINISH GROUP

093.1 To receive the notes from the meeting held on 18th November 2020

Cllr. Neal gave a brief update regarding the activities of the group detailed in the notes. It was reported that it was very early days in the group itself and the project itself would take a while to complete, but that any actions would be passed through the relevant committees as appropriate.

094. 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.

096. EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

Cllr. Busuttil reported on a recent meeting with Inspector Mark Shipton of Suffolk Constabulary. Priorities at the moment being Anti-Social Behaviour and Drug Use. A Police Youth Officer PC Carl Benton was also looking into theft from vehicles.

There had also been some minor theft from RAF Mildenhall staffs vehicles.

It was reported that Inspector Shipton would attend all future pre-briefs for the Full Council meetings and that any questions could be forwarded by any Members at any time through the Town Manager.

097. Date of Next Full Council Meeting

This next meeting of the Full Council will be on 10th December 2020 at 7pm, remotely via Zoom.

County Councillor Busuttil and one member of the public left the meeting at 8.39pm.

095. To consider an update regarding the Mildenhall Messenger

Cllr. Bowman gave a verbal update and it was **AGREED** to ratify all three recommendations from the Communications and Events Committee with one minor amendment to the second.

The meeting then ended at 9.12pm

