

STOWMARKET TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of **STOWMARKET TOWN COUNCIL** held in the John Milton Room, Milton House, Milton Road South on Wednesday, 1st April, 2015 at 7.10pm.

Present: Councillor G M Brewster (Town Mayor)

Councillors: N G K Gowrley
G P Harris
B Humphreys
Mrs L M Mayes
Mrs P J E Robinson
N J Rozier
B J Salmon (Deputy Town Mayor)
K E Scarff
Mrs V I Waspe
Mrs A E J Whybrow
D S Whybrow

In attendance: Mr D G Blackburn (Town Clerk)

Present: Miss S T Goonan (Accounting & Finance Manager)
Mr C Maclean (East Anglian Daily Times)
Ms M L Marshall (Deputy Town Clerk)

372. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ms S L Britton, G Green and D J MacPherson.

373. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY OR NON PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Councillor G M Brewster declared a non pecuniary interest in item 386, Financial Support for the Museum of East Anglian Life. Whilst as Chair of the Board of the Museum of East Anglian Life Trustees, he was not prevented under the Code of Conduct from participating in the debate on that item of business, Councillor Brewster considered that the most appropriate course of action was to leave the meeting because notwithstanding the requirements of the Code, it could be perceived that he had a prejudicial interest in the matter.

Councillors B J Salmon, Mrs P J E Robinson and Mrs V I Waspe declared a non pecuniary interests in item 386, Financial Support for the Museum of East Anglian Life by reason of being Friends of the Museum of East Anglian Life.

Councillor Mrs A E J Whybrow declared a non pecuniary interest in item 386, Financial Support for the Museum of East Anglian Life as a Trustee of the Museum of East Anglian Life.

374. DISPENSATIONS IN RESPECT OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were none.

375. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor's announcements for the period Monday, 26th January, 2015 to Sunday, 22nd March, 2015 were received by the Council.

The Town Mayor, Councillor G M Brewster gave the following speech.

"These are exciting times for Stowmarket during which the past year has seen continued and healthy growth in the town, not only in housing development but also with the promise of much needed employment opportunities especially with the Mill Street proposals now coming forward. Purported to be one of the fastest growing Market Towns in the Country, it is most encouraging to see some evidence of that as the town centre becomes more vibrant. Individuals and Groups within our voluntary sector never cease to amaze me with the varied services carried out for different sections of the community, so many individuals giving selflessly for others.

It has been a tremendous privilege to serve as Town Mayor through this year. Together with my wife as Consort, I have had great pleasure in representing the Council in the many events we have attended, both locally and around the County.

There have been so many prestigious events, all of which we were honoured to be present at, however the Civic Events held in Stowmarket during the year will always be so very memorable, another will be the opening of 'Charlie's Garden. A sensory garden developed by a team of PPG employees for little Charlie Middleton, a wheelchair bound lad who has faced so many serious problems in his young life.

My Charities for the year have been The Royal British Legion Benevolent Fund and Stowmarket District Girl Guiding New Hall Fund, both have been very well supported for which I am most grateful, I expect to present a cheque of around £2,000 to each charity at the Annual Meeting in May.

The year has been a very successful and busy one for the Council during which Members and Officers working with Partners have delivered a number of excellent projects and events for the benefit of our Community. To briefly name a few: -

- *The events and Parades commemorating the commencement of the First World War in 2014, which included the unveiling of the Memorial Clock also, the paving slab commemorating the life of Spencer John Bent VC.*
- *The opening of '@ The Rec' the new Community Café on the Recreation Ground.*
- *Community Events such as Stow Fiesta and the Beach Party.*
- *The Christmas Lights Switch On.*
- *The Christmas Market throughout the Market Place and Ipswich Street.*
- *A special mention must be given to our inaugural and so professionally presented Stowmarket Town Awards Night, during which we met many exceptional local people and it was so good to be able to recognise their achievements.*

It is important to remember that for Officers and Members the 'day job' still goes on ensuring the efficient operation and governance of the Organisation in serving our residents and the town.

Other achievements include the delivery of a new five year Corporate Plan; Member/Officer Working Groups continue to make a valuable contribution to the Councils decision making process; developing working relationships with local business and industry; consulting with the District Council to achieve a good outcome on the Community Governance Review for Stowmarket. Work continues on the exciting proposals for improvements to the Regal Theatre and the new Council will pick this up in May. The list is almost endless and it is not possible to include everything in this report.

I wish to express sincere gratitude to our Officers and Staff for the dedication and commitment they exercise throughout the year in delivering so professionally the projects and events and in serving the community of Stowmarket as they do.

I believe this past Civic Year has been a very good year to have been Town Mayor, I have enjoyed it immensely and I wish to thank fellow Members, Officers and Staff for all the support given to me and for all the work they continue to do to ensure Stowmarket remains a wonderful and safe place to live, work and play.

This being the last Town Council Meeting of this session, I wish to express sincere thanks to those Members who will be retiring from the Council at the forthcoming Election, for the work they have carried out for the Council and the Town with absolute commitment and dedication over a long period of time and to wish them well for the future.

To that end, I wish to propose a vote of thanks to retiring Town Councillors for their distinguished services to the local community during their term of office as Members of Stowmarket Town Council”.

The vote of thanks was agreed, unanimously, by all those present.

376. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 4th March, 2015 be approved and signed as a correct record.

377. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Annual Town meeting held on 4th March, 2015 be approved and signed as a correct record.

378. QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDERS

There were none.

379. REPORT FROM SUFFOLK CONSTABULARY

A report was submitted by Police Constable Abbott covering the period 1st February, 2015 to 26th March, 2015. A total of 64 crimes were reported during that period, of which, 24 were of criminal damage, 13 of theft, 1 of burglary, 3 of drug offences, 15 of assault, 7 of public order offences and 1 of drink driving offences.

PC Abbott reported that Police Sergeant Neil Paterson had retired on 28th February, 2015 after serving over 26 years' service to Suffolk. PC Abbott had been appointed to act in Sergeant Paterson's place until a successor had been identified.

It was noted that the Stowmarket Safer Neighbourhood Team had been working to address anti-social behaviour in the area of the Library along Church Walk.

The Town Council extended its thanks to the Stowmarket Safer Neighbourhood Team for its efforts in tackling anti-social behaviour in the town centre.

The Town Council also expressed its gratitude to Sergeant Paterson for his service to the town.

380. MILTON HOUSE TENANCY FOR THE STOWMARKET REGISTRATION SERVICE

The Deputy Town Clerk submitted a report, (C/26/1415, copy on report file), seeking approval of the draft tenancy for the Stowmarket Registration Service. The tenancy period was above three years and hence, required approval by the full Council.

RESOLVED: That a tenancy of Milton House be granted to the Suffolk County Council's Registrar's Service for a period of 10 years in accordance with the terms of the lease submitted at the meeting.

381. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REVIEW OF THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME, RESERVES, BUDGETARY CONTROL, AND AUTHORISATION OF PAYMENTS

The Council considered the report of the Town Clerk, (C/27/1415, copy on file), providing an update on the Town Council's financial management arrangements.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the current status of all capital projects be noted;
- b. That the capital projects for the Glemsford Road Play Area and the Electric Piano for the Regal Theatre be closed with the residual funds being moved from the Capital Fund to the General Reserves at year end;
- c. That the underspends on grants, StowFund and the Business Enterprise Fund be transferred to the Resources Reserve and held as earmarked funds for use in future years;
- d. That the Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer takes appropriate steps to ensure that the Town Council holds general reserves at, or above, the minimum three months' total expenditure (calculated over a 12 month period) and transfers funds from designated reserves to achieve this, if required (subject to a proper assessment being conducted of the risks of reducing such designated reserves); and takes steps, if practicable, to replenish designated reserves where they have been depleted during the course of the current financial year and those reserves will be required in future years; and
- e. That a separate cost centre be established for the 2015/16 financial year which brings together all funding streams and third party funding contributions.

382. REVIEW OF RISK MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL CONTROL ARRANGEMENTS

The Town Clerk submitted a report, (C/28/1415, copy of report on file), providing an end of year review of the Town Council's Risk Management and Internal Control arrangements.

The review had been undertaken with reference to the guidance provided in the publication "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils: A Practitioner's Guide 2014" produced by the National Association of Local Councils

RESOLVED:

- a. That it be recorded in the minutes of the meeting that the Town Council has undertaken a review of its internal control and risk management arrangements for 2014/15 and appropriate measures have been taken to review and update policies and practices in accordance with the Council's Annual Governance Programme;
- b. That the updated version of the Council's Financial Regulations be approved and adopted; and
- c. That the Risk Management Committee be re-named the Audit and Governance Committee with effect from the start of the next municipal year.

383. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS FOR 2015-16 AND 2016-17

The Deputy Town Clerk submitted a report, (C/29/1415, copy on report file), seeking approval for the Calendar Meetings for 2015-16 and 2016-17.

RESOLVED: That the Calendar Meetings for 2015-16 and 2016-17 be approved and adopted.

384. ITEMS OF REPORT AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE

There were none.

385. PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

RESOLVED: That by virtue of the provision of section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the public be excluded from the rest of the meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by virtue of the confidential nature.

Councillors G M Brewster and Mrs A E J Whybrow declared a non-pecuniary interests in the following item and left the meeting room.

(Councillor B J Salmon took the chair for the following item of business.)

386. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE MUSEUM OF EAST ANGLIAN LIFE

The Town Clerk submitted a report, C/30/1415, copy on report file, regarding a request for funding from the Museum of East Anglian Life.

RESOLVED:

- a. That £12,500 of grant funding be provided to the Museum of East Anglian Life in 2015/16 to enable it to secure Arts Council funding as part of its “from reliance to resilience programme”, with such funding being made available to the Museum’s Trustees to support the Museum’s revenue budget; and
- b. That the Town Clerk writes to the Chair of the Trustees to convey the Town Council’s decision to offer financial support in the current financial year subject to regular budget reports being supplied by the Museum to the Town Council during the following 12 months.

The meeting ended at 8.25pm.

CHAIRMAN