

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 October, 2014 at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillor G M Brewster (Town Mayor)

Councillors: Ms S L Britton
N G K Gowrley
G Green
G P Harris
D J MacPherson
Mrs L M Mayes
N J Rozier
B J Salmon
K E Scarff
Mrs V I Waspe
Mrs A E J Whybrow
D S Whybrow

In attendance: Mr D G Blackburn (Town Clerk)

Present: Mrs L Hoggarth (Mid Suffolk Disability Forum)
Mr M Hunter (East Anglian Daily Times)
Ms M L Marshall (Deputy Town Clerk)

158. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Humphreys and Mrs P J E Robinson.

159. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY OR NON PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Councillors N G K Gowrley, G P Harris and Mrs V I Waspe declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 165, Milton House Business Suite as Trustees of the Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice Bureau.

160. DISPENSATIONS IN RESPECT OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were none.

161. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor's announcements for the period Friday, 29th August, 2014 to Tuesday, 23rd September, 2014 were received by the Council. The Town Mayor thanked the Deputy Town Mayor and Councillor Mrs L M Mayes for attending functions when he was unable to do so.

162. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 3rd September, 2014 be approved and signed as a correct record.

Councillor D J MacPherson thanked Members for their kind wishes during his illness.

163. QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDERS

There were none.

164. MID SUFFOLK DISABILITY FORUM

Mrs Linda Hoggarth of the Mid Suffolk Disability Forum attended the meeting to provide Members with information about the Forum.

The Forum was established in 2010 to give disabled people a voice and to discuss the issues that affect them. The meetings, which took place on a quarterly basis, are open to all people with a disability, carers and representatives of relevant organisations.

The Forum covered issues such as healthcare access, transport, employment, housing provision, access to the countryside and access to public building. An on-line guide had been produced to provide information to all.

The Town Mayor thanked Mrs Hoggarth for her presentation. Mrs Hoggarth invited all Members to attend a meeting of the Mid Suffolk Disability Forum.

At this point in the meeting Councillor Mrs V I Waspe left the meeting room.

165. MILTON HOUSE BUSINESS SUITE

The Deputy Town Clerk submitted a report, C10/1415, copy on report file, which provided an update on the proposal to provide the Mid Suffolk Citizen's Advice Bureau with additional accommodation in the Milton House Business Suite.

A meeting was held between Councillor David Whybrow, the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Roger Rehan, the Chair of the Board of the CAB Trustees and Michael Wangermann of Ashton KCJ Solicitors on 3rd September, 2014. This represented a significant milestone in negotiations in confirming in principle:

- That the length of the tenancy would be for a period of 10 years;
- That break clauses would apply at two, four, six and eight years;
- That a break clause would be included to enable the CAB to end the lease if its grant support fell significantly during the period of the tenancy;
- That the proposed lease terms outlined by the Town Council would be presented in writing to the CAB for consideration by the Trustees so that a final decision could be taken;
- That an annual increase would be applied to the rent by the Town Council with respect to all the accommodation, which would be restricted to the annual increase in the Consumer Price Index;
- That the differential between grant and rent for the present accommodation at Oak Cottage would remain in place for a further three years from 1st April, 2015 (subject to approval by Council); and

- That any structural changes to meet the specific requirements of the CAB and have no other benefit for the Town Council must be met by the CAB

Following the meeting, full details of the rental charges for the existing accommodation and the additional accommodation within Milton House was provided to CAB.

Councillor D S Whybrow reported that the CAB Manager, Mrs C Eagles reported, in an email dated 25th September, that the Board of the CAB Trustees had approved a resolution to proceed with taking the extra rooms at the rates and terms set out in correspondence between the parties and in discussions in particular regarding future funding/grants and break clauses. The Trustees also committed to the plans regarding the entrance at the approximate cost of £10,000.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the report be received and noted;
- ii) That the decision of the Board of the CAB Trustees be received;
- iii) That the rental differential in respect of the accommodation within Oak Cottage be approved for the financial years 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18; and
- iv) That the Town Clerk be authorised to finalise the lease terms and refurbishment measures for Milton House and to sign the lease.

At this point in the meeting Councillor Mrs V I Waspe returned to the meeting room.

166. POLICE REPORT

Police Constable, Barry Abbott, the newly appointed Police Constable for the town centre and the Chilton Hall area, submitted the Police Report for the period 1st August, 2014 to 24th September 2014, during which there had been 14 recorded crimes in the Stowmarket area. Of the 14 recorded crimes there had been two of criminal damage, three of theft, four assault offences, one public order offence and one classed as an “other” offence.

PC Abbott spoke of the new nightclub which opened in the town in the old Xcel Nightclub building. Members raised concerns and informed PC Abbott of complaints which had been received regarding noise pollution emanating from the venue.

PC Abbott spoke of the anti-social behaviour issue in and around the United Reformed Church car park which had a detrimental effect on the night time economy of the town. The Safer Neighbourhood Team had worked with all parties to address the issue and further meetings had been planned.

The Town Mayor welcomed PC Abbott back to the town and thanked him for his report.

167. COMMUNITY CAFÉ ON THE RECREATION GROUND

Alex Till, Chief Executive of MENTA, the Suffolk Enterprise Agency gave a report on the Community Café at the Recreation Ground.

Mr Till reported that the café had been operating for a period of three months and he was pleased with the progress that has been made.

He was pleased to report that £25,000 of funding had been secured from Job Centre Plus in order to enable them to provide weekly services from the venue. £4,995 of funding had been secured from Mid Suffolk District Council and work had been undertaken with The Mix to apply for funding from the Local Enterprise Partnership for Norfolk and Suffolk.

The Town Mayor thanked Mr Till for his presentation.

168. SPORTS FORUM

The Town Clerk submitted a report, C/11/1415, copy on report file, regarding the creation of the Stowmarket Sports Forum.

Engagement with local clubs and bodies which was undertaken during the recent audit of indoor and outdoor facilities in the town, highlighted a deficit in terms of the provision of a 3G Artificial Sports Pitch in the town as well as other sports facilities. This issue had been recorded as a priority within the draft Corporate Plan and was linked with the promotion of healthy lifestyles and provision of activities for young people within our community.

The Town Council had agreed to host an inaugural meeting of a new Sports Forum to enable engagement to take place with many local sports clubs over the promotion of sport and the development of sporting activities.

The key issues that appear to have thwarted progress over the provision of a 3G facility appeared to be identification of an appropriate location, securing funding for the project, management of the facility and discussions about other future sports provision in the town.

The launch of the Sports Forum initiative was an opportunity for the Town Council to provide community leadership over this matter and work with a range of local stakeholders to seek its delivery.

It was suggested that the Town Council could make a significant contribution to the project by the following:

1. Engaging positively with local stakeholders to identify requirements and opportunities;
2. Making it clear to all stakeholders that, as a matter of Council policy, it supported the provision of a Sports Hub;
3. Committing to support the start-up funding; and
4. Offering to assist with the future management of the facility (if required).

RESOLVED:

- i) That the report be received and noted;
- ii) That the launch of the Sports Forum be endorsed; and
- iii) That the Town Council commits, in principle, to support the start-up funding of the facility.

169. STOWMARKET TOWN AWARDS

The Town Clerk submitted a report, C/12/1415, copy on report file, regarding the Stowmarket Town Awards and sought Members' views as to whether the Town Council should continue to lead and coordinate the Town Awards in future years.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the report be received and noted;
- ii) That all of the Officers who were involved in the Town Awards 2014 be formally thanked for their efforts; and
- iii) That the Town Awards be held on a biennial basis.

170. ITEMS OF REPORT AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE

- i) The Town Mayor reported that a Community Litter Pick would take place on Saturday, 11th October, 2014 starting at 10am from Milton House, Milton Road South.
- ii) Councillor Mrs L M Mayes reported that The Mix were to hold an Open Day at the same time as the Community Litter Pick.

The meeting ended at 9.10pm.

CHAIRMAN