

STOWMARKET TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of **STOWMARKET TOWN COUNCIL** held in the John Milton Room, Milton House, Milton Road South on Wednesday, 7th January, 2015 at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillor G M Brewster (Town Mayor)

Councillors: N G K Gowrley
G Green
G P Harris
B Humphreys
Mrs L M Mayes
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: PC B Abbott (Suffolk Constabulary)
Mrs T Denny (Friends of Pikes Meadow)
Ms M L Marshall (Deputy Town Clerk)
Mr P Meluish (Climate Energy)
Sgt N Patterson (Suffolk Constabulary)
Mr Bob Taylor (Friends of Chilton Fields)

263. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ms S L Britton, D J MacPherson and Mrs P J E Robinson.

Councillor B J Salmon informed Members of the progress of Councillors S L Britton and D J MacPherson during their illnesses.

The Town Mayor wished Councillors S L Britton and D J MacPherson good wishes and a speedy recovery on behalf of the Town Council.

264. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY OR NON PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Councillor D S Whybrow declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 271 Play Areas – Update from the Friends of Chilton Fields as a Director of the Chilton Fields Community Interest Company.

265. DISPENSATIONS IN RESPECT OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were none.

266. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor's announcements for the period Thursday, 4th December, 2014 to Sunday, 21st December, 2014 were received by the Council.

267. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 10th December, 2014 be approved and signed as a correct record.

268. QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDERS

There were none.

269. REPORT FROM SUFFOLK CONSTABULARY

A report was submitted by Police Constable Abbott covering the period 1st December, 2014 to 2nd January, 2015. A total of 70 crimes were reported during that period, of which, 8 were of criminal damage, 13 of theft, 5 of burglary, 2 of drug offences, 15 of assault, 6 of public order offences and 3 of drink driving offences. Of the 70 crimes reported, 20 had been dealt with formally (penalty notices, cautions and charges).

PC Abbott was pleased to report that New Year's Eve and New Year's Day had passed without incident and no arrests were necessary in the town. Suffolk Constabulary received a third less calls compared with the same period last year.

PC Abbott reported that there had been five reports of school aged children being followed, spoken to or being made to feel wary of a presence. No individuals had been identified and no reports had been made since the start of the Christmas holiday. The police had increased patrols in the areas following the return of the children to school.

Other priorities for the Police at the end of 2014 had been targeting drivers under the influence of alcohol, proactive work to reduce crime on the streets of Stowmarket and the use of CCTV footage to prosecute a vandal who had damaged the wall of Superdrug.

270. SUFFOLK ENERGY SCHEME

Peter Meluish from Climate Energy, a private company specialising in energy efficiency, gave a presentation on the Suffolk Energy Action Scheme.

Suffolk Energy Action was created by Suffolk County Council and the seven District and Borough Councils in Suffolk. It was an energy saving scheme designed for Suffolk residents and worked by reviewing the energy performance of individual homes, finding potential improvements and providing the householder with options and advice for grant funding.

271. PLAY AREAS

Councillor D S Whybrow declared a non-pecuniary interest in the following item and left the meeting room.

Update from the Friends of Chilton Fields
Bob Taylor gave a presentation regarding the newly formed community group; 'The Friends of Chilton Fields'.

Mr Taylor spoke of the aim of the friends' group to create a new play area on Chilton Fields which would be located in a different place to the existing play area. Mr Taylor had publicised the group by placing an article in the community newsletter 'In Touch with Stowmarket' and had opened a bank account in the name of the group.

Mr Taylor estimated that a sum of £200,000 would be required to install a new, fit for purpose play area on Chilton Fields.

Councillor D S Whybrow returned to the meeting room.

Update from the Friends of Pikes Meadow

Mrs Tammy Denny gave a presentation regarding the community group; 'The Friends of Pikes Meadow'.

Mrs Denny spoke of her disappointment at the removal of the play equipment from Pikes Meadow which, prior to its removal, had been a hub of the community in the Combs Ford area.

Mrs Denny formed the Friends Group following a public meeting which was held in July, 2014. The meeting was well attended and demonstrated the depth of feeling surrounding the meadow. Following the meeting a public consultation was organised and a good response to the questionnaires showed a great deal of support for the cause.

The group had identified two phases; Phase 1 – to install a play area for younger children and a play area for older children at a total cost of £85,000; and Phase 2 – to install fitness equipment, a mini football pitch, a bridge to connect both sides of the meadow, a wild flower area and a dog exclusion hedge at a total cost of £57,000.

Through a wide variety of activities the Friends of Pikes Meadow had raised a sum of over £37,000.

The Council thanked Mr Taylor and Mrs Denny for their presentations.

272. CORPORATE PLANNING

The Town Clerk submitted a report, C/20/1415, copy on report file regarding the consultation process that had been undertaken with regard to the Draft Corporate Plan.

At the Council meeting on 3rd September 2014, the Draft Corporate Plan was approved as a basis for consultation. Since that date, wide-ranging consultation had taken place in order to obtain the views of different segments of the local community.

The Town Clerk reported that the total cost of the consultation and the printing of the documentation was unlikely to exceed £200 due to the fact that the Town Council had been largely self-sufficient in fulfilling the consultation. In addition, there had been staff time spent in organising and attending the meetings with stakeholders although many of the meetings replaced regular meetings that would have been held during the course of the year.

The Town Clerk explained that the adoption of a Corporate Planning document did not provide a legal basis for the Council's actions but it provided a powerful guiding document that explained the Town Council's priorities for the five years to 2020.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the completion of the consultation on the contents of the Draft Corporate Plan be noted;
- ii) That the Corporate Plan 2015 to 2020 be approved and adopted;
- iii) That the Corporate Plan 2015 to 2020 be shared with key partners and made available for public inspection;
- iv) That the Corporate Plan be submitted for re-adoption by the 'new' Council after the May 2015 elections;
- v) That the Corporate Plan be reviewed thereafter, in 2018 (3 year interim review), and 2020 (full review); and
- vi) That the Town Clerk be authorised to update the Corporate Plan to incorporate any emerging issues identified by the Full Council during the five year life of the Corporate Plan so that it remains up to date and an accurate record of the Town Council's strategic priorities.

273. PARKING IN IPSWICH STREET FACTSHEET

The Town Clerk submitted a report, C/21/1415, copy on report file, providing details of the factsheet entitled 'Your Parking in Ipswich Street'.

The Town Council regularly received comments from local businesses and residents about parking in and around Ipswich Street. There was a certain amount of confusion about the parking restrictions that were in place and in response, a factsheet was produced to provide clarity around the parking arrangements.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the report be received and noted; and
- ii) That the contents of the factsheet be endorsed.

274. ITEMS OF REPORT AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Councillor N J Rozier reported that the Poppy Appeal in Stowmarket had raised a total of £27,930.00.

Councillor Mrs L M Mayes reported that public meeting would be held on Friday, 16th January, 2015 at 6.00pm at the Stowmarket Community Hub, Crown Street to discuss the proposed closure of the level crossings in the town.

The meeting ended at 8.36pm.

CHAIRMAN