

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL
ON TUESDAY 02 MARCH 2021.**

The meeting was held remotely via ZOOM

Present

Cllr Eldridge -Chairman

Cllr Foord – Vice Chair

Cllr Christien, Cllr Dunnett, Cllr Overton, Cllr Thompson

Clerk - Alison Doe

There were 7 members of the public in attendance including District Cllr Bendle and County Cllr Dewsbury.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Amey and Cllr Gott

2. Public participation session - (generally 15 minutes) (Members of the public may make a statement or ask a question of not more than three minutes duration).

2.1 A member of the public spoke regarding the Greater Norwich Local Plan with reference to agenda item 10.4 (highway response to queries regarding the site allocation). Concerns were raised regarding the lack of suitability of the Norwich Road to facilitate additional development, and that the development plans would remove the potential of land being available for much needed road improvements. In particular with the industrial area having additional land earmarked for an extension which would increase the frequency of HGVs using the road, and exiting/entering Ironside Way. It was noted that the Norwich Rd is narrow in places and concerns were raised that the wing mirrors of large vehicles overhang the pavements. It was noted that there is no shelter on the Norwich Rd for users of public transport awaiting the buses, with people being near to the pavement edge in close contact with HGV's. It was also stated that additional development on Norwich Road, which would effectively be an extension of the Hops development would make an unattractive urbanised entrance to the town.

2.2 A representative from Clayland Estates spoke regarding Clayland Estates' proposal for a Statement of Common Ground, between the Town Council and Clayland Estates, as part of the GNLP regulation 19 consultation response. It was explained that the draft SoCG had been drawn up based upon the points raised and submitted during the Reg. 18C consultation as both parties had raised similar points regarding the site selection and the GNLP process, points which demonstrate that the GNLP is not sound. It was further explained that the SoCG is intended to highlight those points to the Planning Inspectorate. It was stated that the SoCG is not meant to show that the Town Council support the development plans of Clayland Estates' but is a transparent means of stating that both parties have, during their independent assessments of the GNLP, identified similar grounds on which they consider the plan should be considered unsound. Clayland Estates also advised that they had forwarded draft details of their Regulation 19 response to the Clerk as a courtesy, and offered to assist with any drawing of plans to help the Town Council prepare a Neighbourhood Plan.

3. Declarations of interests with regard to items on the agenda and to consider requests for dispensations

3.1 Cllr Christien confirmed a "personal interest" with regards to the GNLP as per the declaration made and request for dispensation (granted) at the previous meeting. (as minuted below)

...."(being that her property borders land allocated in the GNLP and that she had made personal enquiries regarding the land allocation in GNLP), and had submitted a written request for dispensation to be able to speak/vote on this agenda item and matters relating the GNLP until the term of Town Councillor expires in May 2023. It was agreed to grant the dispensation as requested".

Cllr Christien also advised that she had put representatives of Clayland Estates in touch with local people.

3.2 With reference to agenda item 19, Cllr Thompson advised that he is a resident of The Hops. It was agreed that Cllr Thompson should be permitted to take part in agenda item 19.

3.3 With regard to agenda item 16.2, Cllr Eldridge declared a personal interest as being a resident of Pitts Square, the planning application is for a neighbouring property.

4. To agree a Chairman to preside over any agenda items of this meeting, if both the Chairman and Vice Chair are unable to preside due to (agenda item 1) Apologies for absence and /or (agenda item 3) Declarations of interests

The Vice Chair presided for agenda item 16.2.

5. To consider any applications for co-option on to the Town Council

There were no applications for co-option. A resident had emailed regarding an interest in being co-opted but had not confirmed if they were eligible to become a Cllr.

6. To agree the accuracy of the Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 02 February 2021

The Minutes of the meeting of 02 February 2021 were agreed as correct. The Clerk will arrange for them to be signed by the Chairman.

7. Matters arising from the Minutes of 02 February 2021 (and other updates contained in a written Clerks report circulated prior to the meeting – See Appendix A)

The Clerk confirmed that the recent Cllr vacancies had been duly advertised and no residents had requested an election, therefore the Town Council can co-opt for all 3 remaining Cllr vacancies.

8. Working Party Reports

There had been no working party meetings.

9. Reports from representatives on external bodies/attendees of external meetings/training

It was reported that the Hingham Charity had now let all of the allotments.

10. General Correspondence (information/circulars etc)

10.1 South Norfolk Council - Rough Sleeper Estimate - March 28th - March 29th 2021

10.2 South Norfolk Council - COVID-19 Business Support and Grants update

10.3 South Norfolk Council - Guidance - death of a senior royal

10.4 Greater Norwich Local Plan – Response to specific Highway questions

It was noted that the response was not a logical justification for the allocation of sites within the GNLP, as it did not acknowledge the need for pedestrians to cross the road twice within the 30 mph speed limit to get from GNLP0520 to the co-op and Market Place. It was also noted that the allocation of GNLP0503 includes the extension of a 30mph speed limit to include the site entrance, yet the response did not acknowledge that the same consideration had not been applied to GNLP0298, or explain why this was the case.

Concerns were raised that decisions were being made based on incorrect and incomplete information provided by people that had no local knowledge of Hingham. The Clerk advised that she had seen references to Desktop studies using Google, within the GNLP site assessment information, but had not found reference to site visits and did not know if site visits had been carried out for the Hingham Sites.

Cllrs asked the Clerk to invite representatives from the GNLP team to visit Hingham to discuss the issues raised.

11. Correspondence (not for public inspection) as addressed directly to Hingham Town Council (from residents etc.)

None.

12. To discuss and agree any required responses/actions in relation to any item(s) of correspondence

None.

13. District Councillor's report

District Cllr Bendle reported that the surge testing regime for the Diss area had been very successful with a very good response from local people, a few Covid cases had been identified but it had not been verified if these were the South African variant.

Cllr Bendle advised that there had been an increase in the demand for urgent housing following an increase in relationship breakups due to the pandemic. Many more people are also seeking financial assistance.

It was also reported that there would be an increase in Council Tax (the equivalent of £5.00 on a band D property) to enable the Council to maintain services to help businesses and residents as much as possible.

14. County Councillor's report

County Cllr Dewsbury sent a written report prior to the meeting as below (and briefly outlines it's content during the meeting)

Fire recruits

As the first week of March is On Call Awareness Week the Fire Service is using this to attract more recruits. Information is always available if anyone would like to know more about becoming an On Call Fire fighter.

Broadband

The Better Broadband for Norfolk which has been improving the countywide network over the last few years has been very effective in supporting people working from home and children doing their schoolwork as well as providing a lifeline for people who are self isolating. Work is also being carried out with the mobile network operators to improve 4G coverage across the county.

COVID 19

Staff are looking forward to the end of lockdown and getting back to their normal jobs, reopening museums, libraries etc and welcoming people back. In the meantime many staff are still working for or with the NHS to provide assistance where they most need it including vaccinations and tests.

Grants

This year the Parish Partnership Scheme will have been running for a decade. The match funding it provides for Parish Council projects exceeded £715,000 for 113 projects agreed in December for completion this year. Projects included trods, village pathways, bus shelters and vehicle activated signs. The scheme will be available again the next financial year. The £6,000 Members Highways Grants will be extended this year to £10,000 per Division and can now include environmental projects.

Flooding

Norfolk County Council is still dealing with the results of some of the flooding and discussions have begun re preventative work. The Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance has been set up, chaired by Sir Richard Dannatt, and bringing together over 30 different agencies that are involved with water.

Budget

The budget was agreed at the Council Meeting on 22nd February with an increase of 3.99%. This includes the extra 2% allowed by Government to support Adult Social Care.

Libraries

Following the campaign to acquire IT devices for children, so that they can attend virtual classes and do homework, the Library Service is going to work with schools and offer all children aged 16 and under membership of the e – library. This will enable them to access e-books, magazines and comics from home to help with homework and widen their range of reading. It is said that children's reading skills have diminished nationally as a result of the pandemic so this should help to improve their reading abilities and enjoyment of books.

Libraries will also stop charging children aged 16 and under for the late return of books so that they are not put off coming to the library by fear of owing money if they cannot get to the library in the allotted timescale. The overdue charges were halted for everyone during the lockdowns.

15. Planning Decisions

- 15.1** 2020/2439 - Demolition of barn and erection of detached house, garage and tractor shed. Formation of new access onto Watton Road (B1108).
Land Adjacent To Greenacres House Watton Road Hingham Norfolk - Refusal

16. Planning Applications (as notified by SNC for consultation, including any additional application received since the publishing of the agenda)

- 16.1** 2021/0317 - Extension to external boundary wall
8 The Fairland Hingham NR9 4HN
The Council agreed to recommend approval.
- 16.2** 2021/0258 - Two-storey side extension, single-storey rear extension, and new entrance porch
8 Pitts Square Hingham NR9 4LD
The Council agreed to recommend approval.

17. (other planning applications where the Town Council is not a consultee – for information only)

- 17.1** 2021/0333 - Pear tree - crown reduction, reduce height from 11m to 6m and spread from 8m to 6m
Lacon Cottage 2 Royal Oak Mews Hingham NR9 4JF

(ITEM 18 FINANCE)

18. To approve Accounts for Payment (as below and any additional invoices received)

The Clerk advised that she had not yet received an invoice for the metered printing (as noted on the agenda as invoice expected). The accounts form payment were agreed as below.

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT 02 MARCH 2021					
	TOTAL		PAYEE	DETAILS	VAT
104151	£874.93		staff	WAGES (£870.93)	
				CLEANING PRODUCT (4.00)	
104152	£962.46		staff	WAGES	
d debit	£64.66		NEST	PENSION	
104153	£240.00		COZENS (UK) LTD	STREET LIGHT MAINTENANCE	£40.00
104154	£688.32		E-ON	STREET LIGHT ENERGY	£114.72
104155	£3,026.65		TTSR	GRASS CUTTING	£504.45
	£5,857.02		TOTAL	TOTAL VAT	£659.17

19. To discuss the Greater Norwich Local Plan and agree any actions

19.1 Submissions made to the Town Council by residents

With reference to the proposed development of GNLPO520, it was reported that in order to ascertain the extent concerns of residents regarding flooding/surface water and concerns regarding the current pedestrian provisions from The Hops to the towns facilities, 2 short surveys were delivered (one to properties on The Hops and one to properties in Seamere Road).

The survey responses were collated into a spread sheet and forwarded to Cllrs prior to the meeting.

Responses from the Hops consistently raised the issue of having to cross the B1108 twice just to get to the Co-op with some expressing difficulty using the pedestrian island due lack visibility of oncoming overtaking vehicles heading east. Some residents had raised issues with surface water and drainage, with regards to water run off from Norwich Rd, debris blocking drains and grassed areas and gardens becoming waterlogged.

Responses from Seamere Rd all expressed concerns regarding flooding and surface water run off from The Hops and from the proposed development area. Residents had submitted videos and photographs. The survey responses, photographic and video evidence (and any other submissions by residents to the Town Council regarding the GNLP) will be included in the Town Council Regulation 19 consultation response.

Concerns were raised regarding a lack of health and safety legislation in respect of road safety, with measures to mitigate an unsafe road layout being taken only after accidents have occurred.

Concerns were raised regarding the GNLP assumptions that there is a safe waking route to the Town's facilities from GNLPO520 and an assumption that a continuous footway can be installed on the west side of Dereham Rd, from GNLPO503 to Pottles Alley. It was noted that the decisions to allocate the sites and policies relating to them would not be a logical conclusion of anyone who had visited Hingham to assess the sites' suitability.

19.2 Submission made to the Town Council by the Hingham Road Safety Campaign group

A representative of the Hingham Road Safety Campaign group was invited to speak. It was reported that the HRSC would submit a response to the Reg 19 consultation, largely based on the HRSC report. However it was raised that the developer promoting GNLPO520, could promise delivery of suggestions made within the report (regarding road improvements such as a roundabout) to support any application, but then it not be possible to deliver. Concerns were raised regarding the developer's proposals for a zebra crossing to the west of Bears Lane as this appeared unfeasible and dangerous.

19.3 The draft Regulation 19 Consultation Response as prepared by the Clerk

The Clerk had started to prepare the Town Council response to the Reg 19 consultation (largely based on the points raised within the Reg 18C consultations). A copy of the draft response was published on the Town Council website prior to the meeting with a note that it was a document in progress).

The Clerk advised that she had spoken to the land owner of GNLPO503, who had confirmed that they wished to withdraw the land from the GNLP. The Clerk advised that she had put the land owner and GNLP team in touch with each other to resolve the issue, and also advised that the GNLP team had confirmed that if GNLPO503 remains within the plan they could not guarantee it would not be subject to a compulsory purchase if the housing allocation at the site was not built.

Concerns were raised that the developer of GNLPO520 had intimated in their Reg 18C submissions that they could absorb the 20 houses if GNLPO503 was not delivered.

The Clerk will continue with the response document which will be forwarded to Cllrs for last comments prior to submission.

19.4 The proposal by Clayland Estates to agree a formal statement of common ground between Hingham Town Council and Clayland Estates

Following their attendance at the previous Town Council meeting, Clayland Estates had emailed the Clerk to suggest that both parties could submit a Statement of Common Ground to highlight the areas which they have commonly found the GNLP to be unsound. Clayland Estates had drafted such a document (using the content of the Town Council Regulation 18C representations and the Council's discussion at the previous meeting to ascertain the "Common Ground").

The Council discussed the proposal, raising the following points/points of view:

- Concerns that agreeing a Statement of Common ground would look like Town Council bias toward one particular developer.
- Concerns regarding the legality of such a document as it is a tool used between a planning authority and appellant during a planning appeal to highlight areas that are not disputed.
- The Statement of Common Ground is a way of making a transparent statement that both parties had independently of each other identified similar grounds on which they consider the GNLP to be unsound, therefore protecting the Council against allegations of “collusion”.
- It was noted that there was information and guidance regarding Statement of Common Ground /UnCommon Ground on the Planning Inspectorate website, and that it is intended to be a transparent way of enabling the Inspectorate undertake a focused enquiry.
- It was noted that the GNLP had requested Statements of Common grounds from developers/promoters/land owners with sites allocated in the GNLP.
- It was raised that a Statement of Uncommon Ground could be offered by the Town Council to the developer promoting GNLP0520.
- With regard to the draft Statement of Common Ground concerns were raised regarding reference to housing numbers allocated to Hingham, as the Town Council were concerned that housing numbers are too high.

A representative from Clayland Estates was asked if they wished to add anything, they advised the Town Council could (if they agreed to submit a Statement of Common Ground) alter the draft and omit any points that they did not agree with. It was re iterated that this was a tool for the inspectorate to use to focus on points where 2 parties had independent come to similar conclusions on some points of the GNLP and was not an indication of Town Council support of Clayland Estates or the land they were promoting.

A proposal was made to accept the Statement of Common Ground in principle but amended to, remove points that the Council did not agree with and, better reflect the transparency of the document.

A counter proposal was made that further discussion was needed by the Council as there was not a clear cut view as to the implication of agreeing to the document.

The Clerk advised that further discussions would need to be done in a public Council meeting and that the consultation end date was 15 March 2021.

A vote was taken on the counter proposal (3 against, 2 for, 1 abstain), it was not agreed to hold another meeting to further discuss the Statement of Common Ground.

A vote was taken on the original proposal, (3 for and 3 abstained) which was carried.

The Clerk is to amend the Statement of Common Ground which will be forwarded to the Cllrs to ensure they agree it reflects the Councils point of view and transparency.

19.5 **Any other issues regarding the GNLP**

None.

20. **To agree members of a Working Party to look into the feasibility of producing a Neighbourhood Plan**

The Clerk advised that Cllr Amey would like to be on the Working Party. Cllr Thompson, Cllr Overton and Cllr Foord also agreed to be on the Working Party, it was noted that the Chairman is ex officio member of Working Parties.

21. **To agree Terms of Reference for the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party**

The Clerk had drafted Terms of Reference for the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party which were forwarded to Cllrs prior to the meeting. The Clerk advised that they can be reviewed by the Council if they needed amending in the future. The Terms of Reference were agreed.

22. **To discuss arrangements for the Annual Town Meeting and agree actions**

The Clerk advised that the scheduled date of the Annual Town Meeting is 20th April 2021 and as yet there is uncertainty as to whether the meeting could be held face to face or if it would have to be held virtually. The Clerk advised that the meeting must be held between 01 March 2021 and 01 June 2021 and that remote

meetings regulations are due to expire on 07 May 2021, community centres will be able to re-open at stage 2 of lifting the lockdown restrictions, no earlier than 12 April 2021, but it was unclear as to whether meetings would be permitted. It was agreed to hold the meeting on 20th April, deciding the method of meeting at the time the agenda was required to be published. It was acknowledged that the meeting would most likely have to be held virtually and may need to take a different format than the previous annual town meetings.

23. To discuss a response to requests which may be made regarding allowing the Cafe's and Public House to use the Market Place/Fairland green for customer seating and agree any actions

(with reference the lifting of lockdown restrictions which will see hospitality venues being able to serve people outdoors from Step 2 (not before 12th April 2021)

The Clerk advised that she had written to the Cafes and public house last year offering the use of the greens for customer seating, however none had taken up the offer due to being able to seat customers inside and staffing constraints, however this time hospitality premises will only be able to serve customers seated outside (during the first stage of lockdown easing). The Clerk advised that the South Norfolk Planning department had confirmed they would permit the greens to be used without the requirement for planning permission, until the end of June 2021, but still needed to check that the Police and Licensing Authority have no objections.

It was agreed invite the cafes and pub to use the greens for customer seating and to utilise the letter and application form produced last year (with some amendments), and was recognised that proprietors wishing to use the greens for customer seating would need to provide Public Liability Insurance and a means for dealing with any complaints.

24. 'Exclusion of the Press and Public under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to discuss the following matters:'

The following agenda items contain reference to information that is commercially sensitive, the following agenda item is therefore confidential

Agreed, the members of the public were thanked for attending and asked to leave the meeting.

25. To consider any tenders received for Internal auditor (to undertake the internal audit for the financial year 2020/21)

One tender for Internal Auditor had been received, it was agreed to accept this and appoint the internal auditor for financial year 2020/21.

The meeting ended at 9.05pm

Signed Chairman 06.04.2021

Appendix A

Clerks Report for 03 March 2021

Matters Arising From the minutes of the meeting on 02 February 2021

MIN Update

2 & 25 – Matters Relating to the Greater Norwich Local Plan

A survey regarding pedestrian access to facilities and surface water issues has been distributed to homes on the Hops, a survey regarding surface water and flooding issues has been distributed to homes on Seamere Rd. Clerks parishes affected by the GNLP have been contacted, some responses have been received but the Councils had not met to discuss the issues, there were concerns that the plan had set further housing numbers without further consultation.

26 Tree Survey – quotations for relevant work to be obtained.

27 Creation of a wildflower/bee friendly area in the cemetery – plan to be drawn up on how to achieve this.

Other Updates

Trees for planting (Fairland and Market Place permanent Christmas Trees) will be sourced in the new year.

Notice boards for the toilets to be purchased.

Notice Boards - both wooden notice boards are now becoming difficult to open and lock – they become damp and condensated.

The clerk advises considering the purchase of a new purpose built free standing notice board if there is a suitable location in the Market Place - a new notice board for the Fairland is also recommended.

Market Place Payphone – A payphone has been installed the kiosk door has been repaired. BT have been asked to refurbish the kiosk however there has been no response to this.

Church Clock – Site visits for quotations will be looked into post lockdown.

Skatepark repairs – quotation to be requested for the replacement rivets, quotation for maintenance contract received and needs to be discussed the cost is being included in the draft budget. Joins in the tarmac to be filled.

Outstanding Issues

Financial checking/scrutiny to be undertaken. Chairman and Clerk post lockdown.

Parking “options” to be investigated and report to be written for a future meeting.

Installation of cycle racks to be arranged.

Street Lighting – the contractor has been asked to undertake the renumbering of the footway lights

A condition report is awaited on all of the Council’s footway lighting – (priority can then be assessed depending on the condition/safety of the light columns, for obtaining quotations for changing lights to LED).

With regards to possible solutions to replacing the Tally Alley light, the contractor suggested the use of illuminated bollards, ownership of the alleyway needs to be established.

Lockable Bollard for the Fairland – quotations to be obtained and discussed at a future meeting.

Communications Policy (including social media - this is being worked upon) – Cllrs are reminded not to comment on public social media pages making reference to themselves as Councillors, in a way that could give inaccurate information or be misleading or misconstrued as the Council having discussed and agreed something, when this is not the case.

Staff/Cllr communication/relationship protocol to be drafted.

Cemetery fees discretion policy – The Clerk has been working on this as an overall Cemetery Fees Policy all points relevant to the fee structure including frequency and method of fees reviews. This is to be finalised and brought back to a future Town Council meeting with a review of the cemetery fees.

Extension of Cemetery Driveway and turning circle – The Clerk has spent some time in the cemetery looking at the area that would be required to extend the driveway the area is very extensive and the clerk is concerned about the application of such a large area of tarmac (environmental and cost).

There may be other more appropriate solutions including a shorter tarmac extension followed by “matting” under the grass surface (and possibly a tarmac path for better pedestrian/disability access), and leaving the existing grass as a driveway over the old cemetery area - advice is needed from a funeral director with regard to vehicles used. The use of the driveway (as in frequency) for funerals is minimal therefore the grass should

not become too worn from being driven on this requires a lot of further thought to ensure the Council have a cost effective but long term solution for the future use of the cemetery.

2 steel liners for the Market Place bins to be ordered – need to re measure the inside of the bin – (liners available at a reasonable price are a slightly different size to the existing ones (by mm's) - Have not yet found liners of the same size -

“Please do not park on the grass” signs to be priced/depending location of installation of bike racks

Commemorative Plaque for the Fairland Bus shelter – To be ordered

Report prepared 01 March 2021 does not include Matters Arising when the item is on the forthcoming meeting's agenda.

Crime Figures – latest update January 2021

<https://www.police.uk/pu/your-area/norfolk-constabulary/wymondham/?tab=CrimeMap>

on or near:

Lincoln Avenue - Public Order 6, anti social behaviour 4, violence and sexual offences 4

Other Crimes 1

Admirals Walk - violence and sexual offences 1

Drinkwater Close violence and sexual offences 1

Norwich Street – Shoplifting 1

Chapel Street - violence and sexual offences 2

Bell Meadow – Criminal damage and arson - 1

Muir Drive – Anti social behaviour 1 , Public Order 2