

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE LINCOLN HALL ON TUESDAY 07 JUNE 2022. THE MEETING COMMENCED AT 7.30pm.

Present

Cllr Eldridge – Chairperson

Cllr Amey – Vice-Chairperson

Cllr Christien, Cllr Dunnett, Cllr Overton, Cllr Roberts, Cllr Stabler

Clerk – Ali Doe

There were 5 members of the public present including District Cllr Bendle and County Cllr Dewsbury.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Foord, Cllr Sta Ana and Cllr Thompson.

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

District Cllr Bendle advised that she considered that the minutes of the previous meeting did not accurately reflect the information that she had brought to that meeting and requested changes to those minutes (see item 6).

Concern was raised by a member of the Town Council that the South Norfolk Council increase in Council Tax was unfair to residents due to the current cost of living increases. Cllr Bendle advised that the increase in Council Tax would enable help to be given to those who need it.

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

There were no declaration of interest.

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

Cllr Eldridge advised that he could Chair all agenda items.

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

A member of the public (resident) who had expressed an interest in becoming a Cllr at the previous meeting was present, but had not contacted the Clerk since the last meeting. The Clerk took contact details for the resident to forward on information regarding the role (Good Councillor Guide and Code of Conduct) and advised that the resident refer to these documents to ensure they were aware of the responsibilities of the role prior to making a decision on if they wished to be considered for co-option.

6. To agree the accuracy of the Minutes of the Annual Town Council meeting of 03 May 2022

As per the request by District Cllr Bendle, it was agreed to amend the minutes of the meeting of 03 May to read as follows:

“16. District Councillor's report

District Cllr Bendle reported that the South Norfolk Council AGM will be held on 23 May 2022. It was also reported that SNC had decided to increase the Council Tax to the equivalent of £5.00 on a band D property, this would allow for money to be set aside to help people in need, with the hardship fund increased and the Community Action Fund trebled, additional Community Connectors will be employed. SNC are trying to help communities to become carbon neutral and will be offering grants to Town Councils and community buildings to install electric vehicle charging points. The Clerk advised that NALC had issued a legal briefing regarding Town/Parish Councils powers in respect of Electric Charging points and SNC would need to refer to this as this issue is complex and

there may not be an existing power for all Town Councils to undertake installation of charging points.

Cllr Bendle also advised of grants in advance of CIL which will allow for infrastructure to be installed in advance however this would mainly be applicable to large parishes where more development is proposed.

SNC and Broadland Councils are seeking to share one office space, rather than be split over the 2 existing sites and are looking to relocate to a newer modern building. “

7. **Matters arising from the Minutes of the Annual Town Council meeting 03 May 2022 (and other updates contained in a written Clerks report circulated prior to the meeting – See Appendix A)**
It was queried where the trees were that had been received from the NCC free tree scheme. The Clerk advised that she had potted them up and was caring for them until they could be planted over winter.
8. **Working Party Reports**
There were no working party reports.
9. **Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group report**
A written update was circulated prior to the meeting as follows:
Work since last update
 - Meeting of the Steering group on 31 May 2022 – **(minutes will be on the NP website when available – see minutes for further details of points raised/discussions undertaken, further to the points listed below)**
 - Character Appraisal work being undertaken by the volunteers is almost complete.
 - The volunteers are working to identify potential green spaces and Non-designated Heritage Assets which can be considered for inclusion within the plan.
 - The steering groups are continuing to undertake discussions and meetings with stakeholders, this includes speaking with charities/groups/organisations.
 - A business engagement/drop in evening took place on 25 May in the White Hart attendance was low (8 recorded attendees)
 - A survey was delivered to all businesses, return numbers were low (7 online, 4 paper copies).
 - A household survey has been drafted and will be printed ready to be delivered week commencing 13 June 2022
 - The Steering Group discussed the potential for undertaking a call for sites and allocating sites, it was decided to leave the final decisions until the household surveys had been returned, the group’s preferences were not to allocate land for housing but potentially allocate land for business use and community facility.
 - The Steering Group discussed the potential for including in the plan a more general “preferred areas for development” as an alternative for allocating specific parcels of land.
 - The 2021/22 grant underspend has been returned to Locality/Groundworks. Further grant funding has been applied for (for 2022/23) including the element for design code work.
 - Locality have been advised that the steering group wish to include design codes in the Neighbourhood Plan and have a diagnostic meeting set for 8 June.
 - Placecheck remains available and open for comments:
<https://placecheck.info/app/maps/hingham>**Work ahead (over the next month or so)**
 - Steering Group to further consider:
 - Call for sites/Site allocation work, Designation of Local Green Spaces, Non-designated Heritage Assets.
 - Steering Group to conclude detailed meetings with stakeholders.

- Steering Group to complete their character appraisal work, identify potential green spaces and Non-designated Heritage Assets.
- Household survey to be delivered and data from returned surveys to be input onto online form. (Survey return deadline 15 July).
- Drafting of policies and writing a draft Hingham Neighbourhood Plan is expected to start in September, Rachel expects that the draft plan may be ready for consultation in the Autumn. The timetable is dependent on if there is a call for sites and then if there is the intention to allocate sites which will extend the timetable.
- Next Steering Group meeting 28 June 2022.

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

There were no reports from representatives on external bodies/ attendees of external meetings/training. The Clerk advised that social media posts had reported that the Jubilee celebrations at the sports centre had been well received and well attended.

11. General Correspondence (information/circulars etc)

11.1 Draft South Norfolk Public Space Protection Order

It was noted that a resident had contacted District Cllr Bendle regarding a problematic area of dog fouling. The Clerk advised that the SNC website states that SNC will “clean up” instances of dog fouling. It was suggested that the order needed to be enforced prosecutions made when possible.

11.2 SNC Response to Nutrient Neutrality queries

The Clerk advised that the response had not addressed her points regarding Nutrient Neutrality in respect of an area earmarked for development which was in very close proximity to the SSSI.

11.3 Norfolk County Council, Have your say on bus service improvements in Norfolk

11.4 Norfolk ALC, Extra Help with Rubbish and Waste

It was noted that the information regarding SNC bulky waste collection was useful. District Cllr Bendle advised that SNC are the only Norfolk council that has waste collection “in house” (i.e it is not provided by external contractors).

11.5 Greater Norwich Local Plan, Inspectors Note

11.6 Norfolk County Council, Call for people to join the Norfolk Residents’ Panel

12. Correspondence (not for public inspection) as addressed directly to Hingham Town Council (from residents etc. and may contain personal information)

12.1 Resident, Car Parking rear of Market Place

The Clerk advised that she asks residents who raise concerns regarding the parking issues to contact NCC, SNC and the Police.

12.2 Resident, Dangerous pavement camber Attleborough Road

It was noted that this information had been passed to NCC, the camber on the pavement had caused a mobility scooter to tip.

12.3 TTSR Important information relating to your Grounds Maintenance Service and the Changes in legislation for Red Diesel

13. To discuss and agree any required responses/actions in relation to any item(s) of correspondence
None.

14. District Councillor's report

District Cllr Bendle reported that SNC are still continuing to grant or refuse planning applications following the Nutrient Neutrality directive from Natural England, as there are concerns that if the planning system does not continue to grant applications then housing would be inflicted on the district (as housing numbers will not be met), however homes cannot be built as yet for those

applications granted until the issue of water run off mitigation in respect of Nutrient Neutrality is settled.

South Norfolk Council and Broadland Council are in negotiations to buy the Aviva building on the Broadland Business Park. Both Broadland and SNC existing buildings are aging and are not suitable for making more carbon neutral. There isn't a suitable sized building in South Norfolk to accommodate the requirements of both Councils and as yet it is not known what will happen to the current SNC building and site. It is predicted that cost of the move would be recouped in 2 to 5 years.

Concern was raised by the Town Council regarding a lack of public transport to the Broadland Business Park, it was noted that it was accessible via a park and ride bus route.

15. County Councillor's report

County Cllr Dewsbury reported that the delay in house building brought about by the Nutrient Neutrality directive may have a knock on effect on the ability to invest in things such as extensions to schools which relies on developer contributions.

Norfolk County Council are facing a £60million budget deficit and there are ongoing continuous budget meeting to try to find where savings can be made. It was reported that NCC are employing a consultancy company to assess the different services to see where there is duplication which can be removed.

The Town Council raised concerns regarding the cost of use of consultants, County Cllr Dewsbury explained that it was an independent process (therefore not undertaken in house by staff that would want to protect roles within their own service).

It was queried if cuts were to be made to adult and children's services as there are more adults and children needing help.

Cllr Dewsbury advised that such decisions had not yet been made.

16. Planning Decisions

16.1 2022/0780: Dormer to existing roof to the rear elevation.
The Coach House Chapel Street Hingham Norfolk NR9 4JH
Withdrawn

16.2 2022/0495: |Discharge of conditions 3 and 4 from 2021/1850 - (3) materials, (4) Landscaping scheme.
Barn At The Old Dairy Watton Road Farm Watton Road Hingham Norfolk - Approved

17. Planning Applications (as notified by SNC for consultation)

None.

18. Information regarding other planning applications where the Town Council is not a consultee , (for information only)

None .

Item 19 to 28 Finance

19. To note the date of the next meeting of the Finance Committee, scheduled 19 July 2022

Noted.

20. To agree that the Finance Committee are to approve any Accounts for Payment due (noting there is no scheduled meeting of the Town Council in August)

Agreed.

21. **To approve the Annual Governance Statement for the annual return 2021/22**
Questions 1-9 on section 1 of the annual return form, the Annual Governance Statement, were read out and it was agreed and answered as follows: questions 1 – 8 YES, question 9 Not Applicable.
22. **To approve the Accounting Statement for the annual return 2021/22**
The Accounting Statement (section 2) on the annual return had been completed by the Clerk, it was agreed as correct. A copy of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return form was forwarded to all councillors prior to the meeting and will be published on the Town Council website. The AGAR form and associated documentation will be submitted to the external auditor.
23. **To receive and discuss any information provided by Utility Aid (regarding Utility Bills) and agree any actions**
The Clerk advised that she had received some information regarding street light energy costs, however the email was received after 5pm and therefore the Clerk had not been able to forward the information on to Cllrs. Utility Aid had made a recommendation for the best deal, starting in April 2023. It was agreed to instruct Utility Aid to make the necessary arrangements to secure the best street light energy cost now, for switch over when the current contract expires.
24. **To acknowledge receipt of the £300 Queens Platinum Jubilee Grant from South Norfolk Council and agree to forward the fund to the Hingham Playing Field Association**
Receipt of the grant was acknowledged and it was agreed to pass on the funds to the Hingham Playing Field Association, it was noted that no other Hingham organisations had approached the Town Council for grant funding for the Jubilee event.
25. **To Consider making a Donation from the Town Council to the Hingham Playing Field Association if they have expressed a shortfall in funds following the Jubilee Celebrations**
The Hingham Playing Field Association had provided a draft account of income and expenditure for the Jubilee weekend celebrations, showing a shortfall in funds. It was agreed that the Town Council would match-fund the grant funding from South Norfolk Council and give a donation of £300 to the HPFA, with the proviso that any left over fund from the donation be used toward further HPFA community events. The Council requested to receive a copy of the Jubilee accounts when they are finalised.
26. **To consider a grant application from the short mat bowls club (if all relevant information is received in time)**
The Short Mat Bowls club had applied for a grant of £732, for bowls and equipment. 3 quotations had been obtained.
The Council agreed to award a grant for the full amount.
27. **Proposal for monthly payment for street light energy to be made upon receipt of invoice to ensure account does not accrue late payment fees (payment to be noted at the next Town Council meeting)**
Agreed.

28. To approve the Accounts for Payment (as listed below)

The Accounts for payment were agreed and the cheques were signed.

PAYEE	DETAILS		AMOUNT		VAT
STAFF	WAGES	£1,080.65			
	MOPHEADS	£12.99			
	TOTAL		£1,093.64		
STAFF	WAGES		£1,067.35		
NEST	PENSION		£82.19		
COZENS (UK) LIMITED	STREET LIGHT MAINTENANCE		£240.00	VAT	£40.00
N POWER	STREET LIGHT ENERGY		£614.83	VAT	£102.47
NORFOLK COPIERS	METERED PRINTING		£110.81	VAT	£18.47
NORFOLK PARISH TRAINING AND SUPPORT	INTERNAL AUDIT		£195.50		
EUROFFICE	PAPER/TOILET PRODUCTS		£110.53	VAT	£18.43
		TOTAL FOR ALL PAYMENTS	£3,514.85		
		TOTAL VAT	£179.37		

29. To receive the Internal audit report, consider recommendations within the report and agree any actions

The internal auditors report was forwarded to all Cllrs prior to the meeting.

The Internal Auditors recommendations were considered and discussed as follows:

1. Investment strategy/reserves – In March 2022, the Finance Committee discussed the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. If a bank goes out of business the FSCS will pay out depositors up to £85,000, this is why it is important not to have all funds with the same bank if over £85,000.

The Clerk advised that a large portion of the reserves would be used when outstanding projects were completed, namely repairs to the town clock, skate park resurfacing and renovations and upgrading street lighting.

The Council agreed that the Finance Committee should write an investment strategy and investigate an additional bank account with an alternative bank.

2. Financial Regulations – At item 11(h) it states that the Clerk must strive to obtain 3 estimates on purchases over £100 and under £3,000. The £100 threshold seems low and should be reviewed the next time Financial Regulations are discussed.

Agreed that the £100 figure was too low and this will be considered at the next review of the Financial Regulations.

3. Budget – It is necessary to have a further column in the draft budget for predicted income and expenditure at 31 March. This demonstrates to the Council for instance that it will have a significant under or overspend. In 21-22 there was a significant underspend of £25,000.

It was noted that for all income and some expenditure the budget figure is set on the predicted income and expenditure for that item. Income has been accrued where more general figures have been set to cover a potential eventuality in expenditure and that figure has not been spent, such as work to trees and cemetery/churchyard memorials. The Clerk will look at re-organising

the budget setting spreadsheet (without over complicating it) to make to budget setting process more accurate.

4. (from 2020.21 audit) the Council to consider to pay utility bills by direct debit, use online banking and make payments online, and close the dormant bank account. The dormant bank account is a loose-end and should be dealt with this year otherwise the Council should write-off this amount as the last bank statement is from 2012.

The Council discussed these points at the June 2021 full council meeting, the auditor noted they have not been actioned and so continue to be on the list of recommendations.

The Council again discussed the issues of direct debit and online payments. It was noted that currently direct debit is used for the pension payments and for the printer lease contract (a standard amount every quarter), additional direct debit payments will be considered when new (future) long term contracts are entered into, however It was again agreed that for the majority of payments, the current system of cheques works and works well, the Clerk advised she is confident in the cheque system as a secure means of making payments with the least margin for error, and for ease of checking, both during a council meeting when the payments are authorised/agreed by the whole council (at which point any Cllr can check the details of the cheque), it also allows for ease of checking during the internal financial check undertaken by the Finance Committee.

It was agreed to continue with the cheque system for the majority of payments.

The Clerk advised that she would have a final attempt at closing the dormant account when she next visited the bank.

5. Reserves policy – The year-end balance is high the Council needs to justify why it holds so much in reserves. Some projects have not been achieved in the past 2 years and it is likely that some projects will be achieved in 22-23, especially as a further £25,000 was added to reserves from budget underspend in 21-22.

The Clerk advised that there is a reserves policy in place (which allocates 1 quarter of the precept as a general reserve to enable the Council to pay bills should there be a delay in or issue with the payment of the precept), which the Finance committee look at annually. The year end reserves for year ending 31 March 22 will be considered for that policy at the Finance Committee meeting in July.

It was noted that there is protected reserves for the toilets, CIL money, money earmarked for the bus shelter renovations and the projects to repair the clock, renovate the skate park and upgrade street lighting will substantially reduce the reserves held.

6. Website accessibility – There is a website accessibility statement which was last reviewed in December 2020. This should be reviewed annually. Recommendation, that the Council reviews the website (content/style/website accessibility) and considers a new site that is fresh, modern and reaches out to the public it serves.

The Council agreed to investigate a new website, the Clerk advised that she needs to undertake training on website accessibility (document accessibility training has already been undertaken by the Clerk).

7. Debtor – the Council has a debtor who owes £120. Recommendation, that the Clerk follows this up with a formal letter to chase the payment.

The Clerk advised that the debtor (a funeral director) had made a payment with a cheque, then advised that the account was no longer in operation, the Clerk had requested a new cheque and had chased this via email several times and had received no response or payment.

8. Policies – Recommendation, that all policies have a date approved/reviewed and date of next review to make it easier to track when reviews are due.

The Clerk advised that a review date is included on policies of when they have been reviewed, but not date of next review, a schedule of policy reviews will be prepared.

The Clerk was thanked for her hard work in preparing the audit information and it was noted that the internal auditor had commented that the financial records were meticulous.

30. To consider a proposal to turn the oak tree stumps on the Fairland into planters and agree any actions

A resident had requested that the Town Council consider turning the oak tree stumps on the Fairland into planters. The proposal was discussed it was agreed to pursue this idea as it would potentially provide features to enhance the town and give a more "village" feel. It was noted that any planting should be of low height so as not to hinder visibility for drivers.

31. Proposal to request Ravencroft Tree Services to undertake the tree survey

The Clerk advised that Ravencroft had undertaken the tree survey for several years and this gives consistency in monitoring issues with the trees and advice on remedial work required. It was agreed to request Ravencroft undertake the tree survey.

32. To receive an update on Moon Court and agree any actions

A meeting had taken place via Zoom with a representative from Lifeways, (an on site meeting at Moon Court had not been possible).

It had been explained that there were three separate tiers involved in the ownership and management of Moon Court, Alpha Capital are the owners, inclusion are the landlords and lifeways are the care providers (although it was anticipated that tenant could choose an alternative care provider).

The facility has remained empty, as the Care Quality Commissions had changed rules governing care for ("category of") individuals from whom Moon Court was intended to house, and therefore the facility is not deemed suitable and it is unlikely to ever be used for its intended purpose. Representatives from the Town Council had made the point to the representative to Lifeways that there needed to be a plan put in place for the long-term use of the facility, which would most likely in the first instance require a change of use through the planning system. The representative from Lifeways had advised that they were keen to see the facility brought into use and would welcome contact from County and District Councils to support change of use and would also welcome any ideas for long term use of the facility. The Town Council had requested a site visit to look at the property.

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

The following agenda item contains reference to personal information, the following agenda item is therefore confidential.

The Council agreed to ask the public to leave.

34. To consider a request from a family for ledger style memorial(s) to be installed in the cemetery

The Clerk had forwarded a picture of the ledger style stone which had been requested for 2 cemetery plots. The circumstances of the request were discussed and it was agreed to permit the ledger stones at the same fee as kerbing.

The meeting ended at 9.10pm

Signed..... Chairman 05 July 2022

Matters arising from the minutes of the Town Council Meeting of 03 May 2022

- MIN 26: Nutrient Neutrality, The Greater Norwich Local Plan team have issued a statement in response to Planning Inspectors questions, which is available on the GNLP website.
https://www.gnlp.org.uk/sites/gnlp/files/202205/Written%20Ministerial%20Statement%20Response%20Letter_0.pdf
 South Norfolk Council have published information from Natural England on their website
<https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/downloads/download/816/nutrient-neutrality>
- MIN 27: Moon Court, members of the Town Council have met with a representative of Lifeways (via Zoom)
- MIN 28: Norfolk County Council have been advised of the preferred (revised) locations for the cycle racks on the Fairland
- MIN 29: Members of the Town Council have met with officers from Norfolk County Council to discuss issues regarding the Fairland Cross roads and various parking, road and pedestrian safety issues in the Market Place and Fairland

Other Updates/Outstanding Issues

- The town clock was assessed on 07 April 2022, further assessments and quotations are required from other companies before quotations can be considered.
- Energy Audit, information has been sent to Utility Aid.
- Report on poor state of directional road signs, to be forwarded to NCC.
- Skate Park is now temporarily closed, notices are on display and the gates are locked. Skatepark contractor has been asked for advice regarding suitable surface materials and suggests concrete may be a long term solution but advises against removing all equipment for tarmacking. RoSPA report (by Playsafety) due in June, Clerk has requested approved contractor list from Playsafety
- The pack of free trees have now received, planting required
- Applications for Assets of Community Value to be finalised, plans and ownership details are required.
- Parish Archives, the collection of the materials to be arranged.
- Parking, Please do not park on the grass signs received, they require suitable stakes.
- Trees for planting (Fairland and Market Place permanent Christmas Trees) to be sourced.
- Notice boards for the toilets to be purchased.
- Both wooden notice boards (Market Place and Fairland) 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. To be added to a future agenda.
- Church Clock site visit for quotations for upgrading the clock are to be arranged. Previous contractor has been contacted for advice regarding a new clock mechanism, no response received.
- Street Lighting, the contractor has been asked to undertake the renumbering of the footway lights which has been started. 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.
- Communications Policy, including social media policy 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.
- The Clerk has been working on an overall Cemetery Fees Policy containing all points relevant to the fee structure including frequency and method of fees reviews. This is to be finalised and

bought back to a future Town Council meeting with a review of the cemetery fees and cemetery terms and conditions.

- 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 (liners available at a reasonable price are a slightly different size to the existing ones (by mm’s) liners of the same size have not yet been found.
- Commemorative Plaque for the Fairland Bus shelter, to be ordered

Report prepared 06 June 2022 does not include Matters Arising when the item is on the forthcoming meeting’s agenda

Crime Figures – latest February 2022

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

on or near:

Lincoln Avenue: Violent and sexual offences 3, Vehicle crime 1

Norwich Street: Violent and sexual offences 1

Hardingham Street: Antisocial behaviour 1

Baxter Road: Violent and sexual offences 1

The Dell: Criminal damage and arson 1