

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE LINCOLN HALL ON TUESDAY 05 MARCH 2024. THE MEETING COMMENCED AT 7.30pm.

Present

Cllr Thompson - Chair
Cllr Amey, Cllr Barnard, Cllr Eldridge and Cllr Hardy
Clerk – Alison Doe

There were 6 members of the public present including County Councillor Dewsbury.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Roberts, Cllr Christien, Cllr Dunnett, Cllr Foord and District Cllr Woolliscroft

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

Two residents of Low Road spoke to thank the Council and County Cllr Margaret Dewsbury for supporting the residents of Low Road by helping to try to resolve the flooding and road surface issues. Concern was raised that “unsuitable for HGV” signage is missing from the Attleborough Road/Low Road junction, and that the reflector posts installed by Norfolk County Council (costing over £4000) have been knocked down and ripped out of the verge by sugar beet lorries. The residents request that the HGV signage is replaced and additional “resident access only” signage is provided by NCC.

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

None.

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 Thompson confirmed he was to Chair all agenda items.

5. To agree the accuracy of the Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 06 February 2024

The minutes of the meeting of 06 February 2024 were agreed as correct and signed by the Chair.

6. Matters arising from the Minutes of the Town Council meeting 06 February 2024 (and other updates contained in a written Clerks report circulated prior to the meeting)

See Appendix A

7. To consider any applications for co-optation onto Hingham Town Council

One resident was present at the meeting who was applying to be co-opted onto the Town Council. William Anthony spoke to confirm he is eligible to be a Cllr, advise of relevant experience and background and to outline why he wanted to be co-opted to serve on the Town Council. (Mr Anthony has served on a school board of governors and is keen to help boost the work of volunteers within the community).

The Co-optation of Mr Anthony was proposed by Cllr Amey and seconded by Cllr Hardy. Mr Anthony will take office at the next Council meeting when the Acceptance of Office form will be signed.

8. Working Party Reports

A written report was forwarded to all Cllrs prior to the meeting, outlining the progress of the Highways, Transport and Environment Working Party as follows:

- The working party are collating information regarding highway accidents and incidents in the parish, a request for highway incident/accident data has been included in the parish magazine.
- The survey to be sent to all residents and businesses is being finalised, a letter will also be sent to the businesses to accompany the survey (letter to include an invitation to discuss parking issues with the Working Party).
- It was noted that the Feasibility Study does not include an overall scheme for the Market Place that includes both a pedestrian crossing point and suggested parking restricted areas/marked bays, (these issues have been presented within the study in isolation of each other).
- Information regarding parking permit schemes has been requested from NCC
- Barford Parish Council have been contacted for information regarding the flashing junction warning sign in Barford.
- A drawing has been marked out detailing what would appear to be the most obvious/needed positions for double yellow lines. The following points were discussed/raised:
 - How can residents (of the 'town centre') needs for car parking be assessed (hopefully the survey will give some insight)
 - How many cars would it displace
 - How can commuter parking be assessed (this could mean those coming to Hingham to work, and those coming to Hingham to catch a bus)
 - Comparison of numbers of parked cars is needed for different times/days
 - Communication with businesses needs to be positive, we want to improve the current parking congestion situation to give better opportunities to visitors to the town and businesses.
 - Pedestrian crossing point in the Market Place, can this be positioned by the dropped kerbs? There are examples elsewhere of shortened zigzags - can this be explored?
 - Could single yellow line timed restrictions be used instead of double yellow lines in places?

Further discussion with NCC highway is needed.

- A pictorial report on the white lines around the Market Place and Fairland scoring them on a "risk factor" according to the function of the line and how visible they are has been produced, this will be given to NCC Highways Engineer.
- The Working party discussed the suggestion that a pedestrian priority crossing point is needed on the Fairland, this is not covered by the Feasibility Study. Also, the current footway between Rectory Gardens and The Fairland follows a poor line, exiting onto the Fairland adjacent to a residential driveway making it difficult to see joggers/cyclists who exit the footpath onto the Fairland. This could be discussed with NCC Highways.
- It was suggested that consideration should be given to Baxter Road/Bond Street becoming one way it would ease issues of difficulty of 2 way traffic passing, vehicles having to reverse on to the B1108. Parking on both sides of the road (and

pavements)needs to be addressed as vehicles (such as refuse lorry) are frequently unable to pass down the road without having to seek out vehicle owner's to move a parked vehicle, however, a one way system is not likely to be financially supported by NCC and would need consultation with residents .

- The next Working Party meeting planned for 26 March 2024.

9. Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group report

A written report was forwarded to all Cllrs prior to the meeting as follows:

Following the Town Council meeting of 06 February 2024, a list of errors in the text was forwarded to the Consultants, the necessary amendments were made and the documents made into an accessible format.

The Hingham Neighbourhood Plan and associated documents was submitted to South Norfolk Council for examination, on 15 February 2024. South Norfolk Council have accepted the submission and have given the approximate timescales for the next stages of the Neighbourhood Plan, as follows:

- Hingham Neighbourhood Plan to go to Cabinet for consideration – April 2024
- Reg 16 consultation (to be run over 6 weeks) – May-June 2024
- Independent Examination – July/August 2024
- Consideration by Cabinet – September/October 2024
- It is expected that a referendum could potentially be held towards the end of 2024.

Work to be completed

- Year-end financial reconciliation, including the return of any unspent Locality Grant Funding (if any remains unspent)

The Council noted the need to undertake public engagement prior to the referendum to encourage the community to vote positively.

Thanks was recorded to the volunteers on the steering group.

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

10.1 Lincoln Hall – AGM is coming up, the Lincoln Hall are seeking a new booking clerk.

10.2 Education Trust – AGM is due to take place in March.

10.3 Hingham Playing Field Association – the HPFA offered thanks for the grant funding received from District Cllr Woolliscroft, which has helped toward the cost of the new external signage.

Pickle Ball sessions are now available at the sports centre.

The HPFA had raised concerns that it was currently running at a loss. A new agreement is being set up between Abrahams (sports and social club) and the HPFA to ensure that Abrahams is providing some income to the HPFA. Concern was also raised regarding the high monthly cost of electricity. Fund raising events will be taking place over the course of the year.

10.4 Hingham Community Cupboard reported that they are now a registered charity and will be applying for gift aid. Grant funding has enabled the Community Cupboard to provide vouchers for fresh meat (from the local butcher) and to continue providing fresh fruit and vegetable boxes. The Community Cupboard is currently a nominee for co-op member funding and will be having an information stall at the Co-op and also at the Easter Trail. The Community Cupboard has helped to signpost some of its users to the relevant authorities who can provide more long term help. There is now also a children's toy/clothing exchange. The Council offered thanks to the Community Cupboard volunteers, in particular in ensuring that there is sufficient funds raised, noting that the numbers of people needing to use the Community Cupboard is concerning.

11. General Correspondence (information/circulars etc)

- 11.1 Greater Norwich Local Plan - Receipt of Greater Norwich Local Plan Inspectors' Report and Adoption of the GNLP
- 11.2 Council's New Duty to Prevent Sexual Harassment
- 11.3 Portrait Of His Majesty The King For All Town, Parish And Community Councils
- 11.4 South Norfolk Council - The Big South Norfolk Litter Pick 2024
- 11.5 NCC Savings Proposals Consultations
- 11.6 George Freeman MP - Mid Norfolk Flooding – Progress Report Update
- 11.7 Norfolk Wildlife Trust - Wilder Community Programme of Activities 2024

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

- 12.1 Resident – request for Disabled Parking provision, (the Clerk has responded)
(non resident) Parking Issues, (the Clerk has responded)

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

Relevant correspondence to be shared with the Highways, Transport and Environment Working Party.

14. District Councillor's report

District Cllr Wooliscroft was not present at the meeting. He had forwarded information regarding the Community Action Fund, the grant amount is increasing the maximum grant to £20,000.

Cllr Thompson advised that he had attended another local Parish Council meeting and had learnt from their District Cllr that South Norfolk Council were increasing the Council Tax by 3%, there would be £1 million fund set aside to help families in need. SNC are continuing to run a scheme to prevent bed blocking and are trying to support communities resolving issues with flooding.

15. County Councillor's report

County Cllr Dewsbury had forwarded a written report prior to the meeting, as follows:

Budget

The Norfolk County Council meeting on February 20th agreed the £528million budget for 2024. It had taken a while to balance the end of year budget for the previous financial year as there was an overspend by Adult Social Services and Children's Services. The number of adults and children needing support continues to increase each year.

Fire Service

On March 5th – 7th the Fire Service is holding electrical safety events in Norwich, Gt Yarmouth and Kings Lynn. They will be testing electric blankets and portable heaters for members of the public and providing information about fire safety in the home. Based on learning from the Grenfell Tower fire a new Aerial Ladder Appliance has been ordered. The new ALP will reach 45 metres high compared to the current one which only reaches 32 metres. This will provide better capacity when fire fighting in high rise buildings such as those in Norwich.

Highways

The Highways Capital Programme for 2024 has just been agreed. This includes £10million for Highways Maintenance Fund and £4.51million for the Road Resurfacing fund.

Flooding

DEFRA has awarded Norfolk County Council £150,000 to reduce the flooding in north Attleborough by using Natural Flood Management to reduce the flood risk by holding storm water upstream near Besthorpe. This is part of a £25million scheme to increase the national flood resilience and to slow down and store water. Diss Natural Flood Management Project, which is run by the River Waveney Trust, is also receiving funding. It is now recognised that we need to store water to help deal with the droughts that we have in summer months.

The County Council has also allocated £1.5million to the Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance for this year so that they can continue to help alleviate flooding in the county.

Parish Partnership Scheme

The Parish Partnership Scheme was launched in September 2011 and each year since then Parish Councils have been invited to bid for funding from Norfolk County Council to assist with their small highway improvements. The cost is shared 50/50. This year there were 118 bids and NCC is helping all of them. The joint investment in these schemes totals £1,040,586.

16. Planning Decisions

None to report.

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)

18.1 2024/0471 Notification for Prior Approval for a proposed change of use and associated building works of agricultural building to a dwellinghouse (QA and QB)

Agricultural Barn Attleborough Road Hingham Norfolk

Noted.

19. To consider the points raised in the report from the Hingham and District Community Car Scheme (and information given by the scheme co-ordinator if present), and to agree any actions

A written report was provided by the Community Car Scheme prior to the meeting, and the representative of the scheme who was present was invited to speak. Concerns were raised that the use of the scheme has increased in both the number of journeys and the distances of those journeys. Appointments at NNUH are often longer than they were, it is not unusual for the wait to be four hours.

Drivers can seldom park at the hospital, so less mobile clients are asked to be accompanied and wait off-site to be contacted for pick up. The increased range of many journeys takes a driver out effectively for a full day. The Scheme currently has nine registered drivers, some of whom are available only one or two days a week. Recently the scheme has not been able to accommodate some clients.

Concern was also raised regarding the funding of the scheme, the South Norfolk Council contribution used to more than cover their 'share' of the support, and over the years this has provided a buffer which has allowed the scheme to submit annual returns to Hingham Town Council for the payment of their actual 'share'. For 2022/23 no funding was provided from South Norfolk Council due to a communication error and no contract offer being sent to the Community Car Scheme, the funding level that SNC provides is still at £2189 p.a. Clients pay 25p per notional mile at the time of their journey. With

increased cost of travel, the funding from SNC is insufficient and Hingham Town Council are therefore now bearing the increased costs of supporting the scheme.

The Co-ordinator asked the Town Council for a member to work with the scheme to try to work out how best to manage the increasing demand on the scheme and how the funding could be better arranged and secured.

Cllr Eldridge volunteered to undertake this work.

20. To appoint a new Cllr member to the Highways, Transport and Environment Working Party

William Anthony (newly co-opted) , agreed to join the working party as a Councillor member.

21. To review/agree the Website Accessibility Policy

The Clerk had produced a policy and forwarded it to all Cllrs prior to the meeting, advising that it is based on the model policy on the .gov.uk website, and amended (as permitted) as necessary, following advice from NorfolkALC on the accessibility technical capabilities of the website.

The policy was agreed as presented.

22. To Review the Document Retention Policy

The Clerk advised that she had used the model Document Retention Policies on the Norfolk ALC website, to produce the document, which had been forwarded to all Cllrs prior to the meeting.

The policy was agreed as presented.

The Clerk noted that the document highlights mandatory policies, and the Council will need to adopt relevant policies in the list where the Council currently does not have the relevant policy in place.

23. To consider and agree a Biodiversity Policy

The Clerk advised that the document had been produced using the model policy on the Norfolk ALC website, the clerk had highlighted changes made to that Model Policy to make it relevant to Hingham. The Policy was agreed as presented.

24. To note the date of the Annual Town Meeting 16 April 2024

Noted.

FINANCE ITEMS 25 TO 29

25. Reminder of the date of the next Finance Committee meeting, scheduled date 19 March 2024

Noted, apologies given by Cllr Eldridge.

26. Proposal for the Finance Committee to approve any Accounts for Payment due (for ease of end of financial year)

Agreed.

27. To Note that the appropriate sum for section 137(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 (the 1972 Act) for local (parish and town) councils in England for 2024/25 is £10.81.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has notified the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) that the appropriate sum for section 137(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 (the 1972 Act) for local (parish and town) councils in England for 2024/25 is £10.81. The amount is a result of increasing the amount of £9.93

for 2023/24 by the percentage increase in the retail index between September 2022 and September 2023 under Schedule 12B to the 1972 Act.

(This enables the first tier of local government to spend a limited amount of money for purposes for which they have no other specific statutory power)

Noted.

28. To Note the thresholds for public procurement have changed from 1 January 2024

Noted, any amendments needed to the Financial Regulations will be done at the document review (scheduled for July 2024 Finance Committee meeting)

29. To agree and approve the accounts for payment (as below)

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

REF	PAYEE	DETAILS		AMOUNT	VAT
522	STAFF	WAGES	£1,064.86		
		CLEANING PRODUCTS	£4.00		
		TOTAL		£1,068.86	
524	STAFF	WAGES		£1,551.20	
D	NEST	PENSION		£78.63	
525	COZENS (UK) LIMITED	STREET LIGHT MAINTENANCE		£150.00	£25.00
D	SSE	STREET LIGHT ENERGY		£1,160.90	£57.57
526	ANGLIAN WATER BUSINESS	FAIRLAND STANDPIPE		£17.51	
527	NORFOLK COPIERS	METERED PRINTING		£49.12	£8.19
528	LINCOLN SOCIAL CENTRE	HALL HIRE		£37.50	
529	COMPASS POINT	NP CONSULTANT WORK		£495.00	
530	RACHEL LEGGETT	NP CONSULTANT WORK/MILEAGE		£1,442.60	
531	TTSR LTD	GRASS CUTTING CONTRACT		£3,572.96	£595.50
		TOTAL FOR ALL PAYMENTS		£9,624.28	
		TOTAL VAT		£686.26	

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

The following agenda item is considered commercially sensitive and is therefore considered confidential.

It was agreed to ask the public to leave the meeting. Members of the public were thanked for attending the meeting.

31. To consider any tenders received for Internal Auditor (to undertake the internal audit for financial year 2023/24) and agree the appointment of an Internal Auditor.

One quotation had been received for the undertaking of the Internal Audit for year 2023/24.

This quotation was considered and the appointment of Internal Auditor was agreed.

Appointed: Luisa Cantera

Estimated workload 7-9 hours work at £26/hour

The Meeting ended at 9.15pm Signed..... Chair 02 April 2024

Appendix A - Clerks report for 05 March 2024

Matters arising from the Minutes of the Town Council meeting 06 February 2024

- MIN 19 Hingham Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to South Norfolk Council on 15 February 2024
- MIN 20 A further Meeting with Safer Neighbourhood Policing Officer PC Busfield is scheduled for 06 March 2024
- MIN 21 A meeting with the Director of Property Services, Diocese of Norwich is arranged for 07 March 2024 to discuss land at the former Rectory

Other Updates/Outstanding Issues

- New Hingham.gov.uk website and email addresses should be arranged for April
- Vehicle damage Incidents at the cemetery, awaiting outcome through the insurance company. Information has been sent to Norfolk County Council with a request for the speed limit to be lowered. The Highways engineer will refer to the safety team (no updates). Awaiting contact from companies regarding safety bollards
- Quotation for tree works to be sought
- Regarding the Hingham History Centre request for the Town Council to take over assets and funds, the Clerk will meet with History Centre representative, hopefully in February regarding the assets, funds have been confirmed as a little over £10,000.
- The clerk has been in touch with SNC and will set up a zoom meeting to discuss what is needed for a Community Emergency Response Plan. The Council will need to make a decision regarding if an Community Emergency Response Plan should be implemented and if so agree responsibilities for its implementation and monitoring/reviewing, and the responsibilities regarding holding of any associated personal data.
- A site visit to be arranged regarding Methodist Church tree planting on The Market Place, During the tree survey it was recommended against a rowan tree but to find an alternative species due to soil conditions
- Norfolk County Council have been advised that the Town Council consent to a survey being undertaken to assess the suitability of the sports centre for an Electric Vehicle charging point, but that the actual installation of such a charging point has not been agreed – no further communication from NCC
- Moon Court facility, SNC have now confirmed they will investigate issues raised regarding Moon Court i.e if a change of use was required for the units to be let on the open rental market and issues with the secondary “emergency vehicles only” access track being used by residents/delivery vehicles for vehicular access. No further communication from SNC.
- Awaiting Raddiramps report on defects at the skate park.
- Raised bank between The Hops and Bears Lane no resolve from Norfolk County Council to undertake any action to implement measures to prevent access to the bank.
- “Re-dedication” of the bus shelter to be organised.
- Commonwealth War Graves Commission have been invited to install signage at the cemetery
- The Clerk has asked Norfolk County Council if a grit bin for The Hops will be supported, no response.
- A suitable place for a new Town Council notice board to be established.
- The resident who has proposed to plant an Oak tree on the Market Place green has agreed to source an alternative species no further correspondence received.
- Letter to the Chief Constable and the Police Crime Commissioner regarding parking drafted photographs need to be added prior to sending.

- Fairland Oak Tree stumps, advice has been sought regarding hollowing the stumps out, a suggestion has been made that a stump grinder will be required (cost approximately £500-600 per stump).
- Applications for Assets of Community Value to be finalised, plans and ownership details are required.
- Notice boards for the toilets to be purchased.
- 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 brought back to a future Town Council meeting with a review 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 and Market Place bus shelter, to be ordered

Report prepared 04 March 2024 does not include Matters Arising when the item is on the forthcoming meeting's agenda

Crime Figures –December 2023

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

Watton Road - Violent and sexual offences 2

Londsdale Crescent - Criminal damage and arson 1

Bond Street - Violent and sexual offences 1

Chapel Street - Violent and sexual offences 1

Copper Lane Violent and sexual offences 1, Public Order 1

Fleeters Hill - Violent and sexual offences 1

Norwich Road - Violent and sexual offences 1

Hardingham Street - Other theft 1, Anti Social Behaviour 1