

MEETING OF SPROWSTON TOWN COUNCILLORS – 16 DECEMBER 2020

At the remote meeting of the Sprowston Town Council held by video conference on Wednesday 16 December 2020, the following Councillors were present: -

Mr J M Ward – Town Mayor

Mr A J Barton	-	Mrs B J Lashley
Mr M G Callam	-	Mrs J Leggett
Ms D Coleman	-	Mr J H Mallen
Mr W F Couzens	-	Ms C T Rumsby
Mr J F Fisher	-	Mr N Shaw
Mr R J Knowles		Mr S C Walker

In attendance

Mr G Ranaweera	-	Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
Mrs E Elliot	-	Committee Officer
Ben Burgess	-	BDC/SNDC Major's Team Manager
Sally Hoare	-	BDC/SNDC Community Infrastructure Officer

1 member of the public was present

20/298. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY AND OTHER INTERESTS

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary and other interests were received.

20/299. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Written apologies for absence were received from Mrs B Cook and Mr I J Mackie.

Mrs B Cook last attended Council on 24 June 2020. Six consecutive months from that date would be 23 December 2020

Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 stipulates that “if a member of a Local Authority fails, throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of their last attendance, to attend any meeting of the Authority they will, unless the failure was due to some good reason approved by the Authority before the expiry of that period, cease to be a member of the Authority.”

Mr J M Ward proposed, seconded by Mr R J Knowles to exercise Council's power under Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 to approve Mrs B Cook's absence due to extenuating personal circumstances, and in respect of Mrs B Cook; to waive the '6-month Councillor attendance rule' until June 23rd 2021.

On being put to the vote the motion was CARRIED.

20/300. MINUTES

The draft Minutes of the Council's meeting held on 18 November and 2 December 2020, having previously been circulated to all Councillors were confirmed subject to the following amendments

Minute 20/277 - delete Greece and insert Grease

Minute 20/294 (1) - delete pond and insert pound

and will be signed by the Town Mayor of the Council at the next appropriate opportunity.

20/301. ACTIONS FROM MINUTES

(1) Minute 20/259 - Blue Boar Lane Cycle Path

Council noted the response from Norfolk County Council regarding their concerns about the design of the proposed footway/cycle facility and crossing at Blue Boar Lane.

Mr J H Mallen did not feel that the items raised by Council had been addressed.

Mr W F Couzens said that whilst a footway / cycle path on both sides of Blue Boar Lane was desirable he understood why it was not considered given that it would require the removal of several mature trees.

(2) Minute 20/282 1.2 - Parks and Open Spaces

The Town Clerk reported that he had discussed the opening of play areas during the pandemic with PC Gill. PC Gill advised that having spoken to his Sergeant it had been agreed they would monitor and engage if necessary.

Mr J M Ward advised that Broadland District Council had recently appointed Covid Support Advisors who could be approached for help.

20/302. POLICE LIAISON OFFICER'S REPORT

Mr M G Callam commented on the low levels of criminality recorded in the Old Catton and Sprowston West ward statistics for October.

Having spoken to PC Graham Gill, Mr W F Couzens advised that recorded crime statistics did not reflect the true level of crimes committed and ways to encourage residents to report crime to the Police was needed.

20/303. SECURING LAND IN SPROWSTON FOR FUTURE COMMUNITY USE

Ben and Sally had been invited to help Council understand how to ensure sufficient land could be procured within new developments, allocated for amenity use.

In response to a specific query on two parcels of land in Sprowston, Ben Burgess advised that following a land registry search he had ascertained that the unused piece of land on the industrial estate off Salhouse Road was owned by the University of Cambridge. It was not allocated in the existing Local Plan or proposed plan.

20/303. SECURING LAND IN SPROWSTON FOR FUTURE COMMUNITY USE (CONTINUED)

The area of land in the vicinity of the Wroxham Road Park and Ride, adjacent Sprowston Cemetery on Church Lane was part of the Beeston Park development and had outline planning permission for residential and community use football pitches. Councillors expressed concern that the boggy nature of this area would mean it was unsuitable for football pitches.

More generally Councillors expressed their frustration at not being able to allocate land for recreational use as it seemed at the point that plans come forward it is too late to argue for more amenity space as most land was already allocated for development.

The Community Infrastructure Levy offered the Town Council funds to provide facilities for residents but there was nowhere to locate them and if not spent would have to be paid back.

Mr Burgess responded that planning policies were in place to consider all aspects of development and cited Broadland Growth Triangle as a good example of proper strategic planning. It had a holistic approach looking at the wider area as a collective rather than individual parishes.

Sally Hoare offered to attend Recreational Facilities Working Group meetings and advise on CIL and s106 monies.

RESOLVED Sally Hoare attend meetings of the Recreation Facilities Working Group.

The Town Mayor thanked Mr Burgess and Mrs Hoare for their attendance.

20/304. CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence was received.

20/305. REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

A written report was received from Mr J M Ward.

Mr J M Ward also verbally reported:

Norfolk County Council had made a start on its pledge to plant 1 million trees by 2030 which is more than one tree for every resident in the county (population in 2019 908,000). 6300 trees are being planted this month on county farms estate at Bacton, Thorpe Market and Rollesby.

Following a cabinet meeting on 7 December 2020 the decision was taken to close Holt Hall with immediate effect. It was being used by fewer than 3000 pupils per year out of a total of 112,000. It had accumulated a deficit of £270k in the last three years and £600k needs spending on the hall in the next decade. 25 Councillors have now called for an extraordinary full County Council meeting to discuss this issue. It will take place on 11 January 2021.

Mr N Shaw reported on his attendance at a meeting of the Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group where extension of the safety zone around runways had been discussed.

20/305. REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS (CONTINUED)

Referring to the item on Covid Support Advisors in Mr Ward's written report, Mrs B J Lashley asked if all Broadland and South Norfolk District Council's staff had returned to work from furlough.

Mr Ward advised that Covid Support Advisors were additional posts funded by Government and not all Council staff had returned to work.

20/306. RESIDENT'S QUESTIONS

On the motion of Mr J M Ward, seconded by Mr W F Couzens it was **RESOLVED**, that the meeting be adjourned to receive residents' questions on matters concerning the town. Residents were reminded that their questions should be addressed to the Town Mayor who would, assisted by the Town Clerk, reply.

Referring to land adjacent Sprowston cemetery Mr K Lashley observed that outline planning permission mentioned football pitches. He questioned if this was a good neighbourly use of this land particularly on a Sunday morning.

Mr J M Ward requested the Recreational Facilities Working Group to consider this as part of their remit.

20/307. REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK

COMMUNITY BUILDINGS, ALLOTMENTS, PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

1.1 Potential Community Building: Ex-Viking Pub, Tills Road

Councillors noted the report of the Town Clerk concerning the engagement of Jason Menezes (Bidwells) to carry out a survey of the ex-Viking Public House.

Mrs B J Lashley commented that historically working groups provided Council with written reports or notes of their meetings.

It was agreed that notes of the Recreational Facilities Working Group meetings be made available to all Councillors.

CEMETERY

2.1 No matters were reported

STREET LIGHTING

3.1 No matters were reported

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION AND PERSONNEL

4.1 General Planning Training Sessions for Parish and Town Council representatives

20/307. REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK (CONTINUED)

Councillors noted that a General Planning Training session for Parish and Town Council representatives was to be held on 19 January 2021 and requests to attend should be made to the Town Clerk.

4.2 Sprowston Town Council (STC) Christmas and New Year Opening

RESOLVED to agree the proposed Christmas and New Year Opening arrangements suggested in the report of the Town Clerk.

Ms D Coleman remarked on the excellent maintenance of Sparhawk Park and requested her thanks be passed to grounds staff.

PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION

5.1 No matters were reported

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

6.1 Sprowston supporting Our Community Together (SSOCT)

It was noted that as of close of business on 9 December 2020 the Town Council had acted as facilitator for 597 financial transactions for shopping and other key services between vulnerable residents and SSOCT volunteers. The total amount transacted being £19,6305.03.

The Town Clerk advised SSOCT should have their own bank account in place in the New Year.

20/308. VARIATION OF SECTION 38 AGREEMENT - MANOR REACH, SPROWSTON

The Town Clerk reported that subsequent, to the original S.38 Agreement being entered into, the footway (leading from the Blue Boar Lane roundabout to the entrance of the Lidl store) was widened to become a shared footway/cycle path. A number of streetlights on the shared footway/cycle path and within the development itself had been repositioned. Although minor changes, any alteration to the agreed site plan required the original S.38 agreement to be amended by way of Deed of Variation.

RESOLVED to agree the Deed of Variation and authorise Mr J H Mallen and Mr J M Ward to sign the paper copy Deed on behalf of the Council.

20/309. PLANNING

The Town Clerk reported that observations had been requested by the District Council's Head of Planning on applications received since the last meeting.

Having considered each application and the accompanying plans the Council

RESOLVED

(a) to raise no objection to the following applications:

20/309. PLANNING (CONTINUED)

2020/2080 - replacement and extension of existing external balcony and creation of external staircase/fire escape at Sprowston Cricket Club, Barkers Lane, Sprowston.

2020/2199 - single storey front extension at 29, Blackwell Avenue, Sprowston.

2020/2253 - application for two temporary sales cabins with associated landscaping and parking for the period February 2021 - July 2021 at Land south of Salhouse Road, Sprowston.

2020/2254 - application for a dual branded sales area with associated landscaping and parking for the period July 2021 - July 2028 at Land south of Salhouse Road, Sprowston.

2020/2299 - remove existing rear UPVC conservatory and build single storey rear extension at 9, Linton Crescent.

- (b) not to oppose the granting of planning application 2020/2112 - display of 2 x internally illuminated fascia signs at Harveys, 6, Sprowston Retail Park, Salhouse Road, Sprowston subject to the illumination of signage being restricted to opening hours of the business.
- (c) not to oppose the granting of planning application 2020/2182 - proposed siting of 2 portable cabins within courtyard to accommodate new small businesses at White House Farm, White House Farm Shop and Cafe, Salhouse Road, Sprowston but express concerns about the detrimental visual impact portable cabins would have on an attractive court yard.
- (d) to strongly oppose the granting of planning application 2020/2197 - conversion and extension to rear part of shops to form two self-contained flats at 65 and 67, North Walsham Road, Sprowston on the grounds of loss of parking, overdevelopment of the site, lack of amenities for the proposed dwellings and impact on the highway at a busy junction with the displacement of staff and customer parking and deliveries.
- (e) not to oppose the granting of planning application 2020/2210 - 1 no. box sign, internally lit, skin with built up acrylic lettering, 1 no. aluminium panel at 6, Sprowston Retail Park, Salhouse Road, Sprowston subject to the illumination of signage being restricted to opening hours of the business.
- (f) not to oppose the granting of planning application 2020/2289 - two storey side extension at 213, Wroxham Road, Sprowston but question why the roofline had not been reduced on the proposed side extension.

20/310. CONFIRMATION OF CONCLUSION OF ANNUAL EXTERNAL AUDIT - AGAR

Councillors noted the External Audit Report and Certificate 2019/20 and requested staff be congratulated on the report.

20/311. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS 16 DECEMBER 2020

The Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer presented the schedule of accounts to 16 December 2020 totalling £15,489.32.

20/312. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS 16 DECEMBER 2020 (CONTINUED))

The Town Clerk responded as follows to Councillors' queries on the Schedule of Accounts:

Invoice No. 3418 - A.T. Coombes Associates Ltd, maintenance to make safe a tree at Pine Court following a branch falling on a parked car after the high winds in October as previously reported.

Invoice 230377 - Flameskill Limited, a fire risk assessment was carried out on all Council's building and report submitted with recommendations which he would be working through.

On the motion of Mr J M Ward, seconded by Mr N Shaw it was **RESOLVED** that payment of the accounts to 16 December 2020 totalling £15,489.32 be approved and the schedule authorising payment signed by the appropriate signatories at the first opportunity.

20/313. SCHEDULE OF DIRECT DEBIT PAYMENTS

The schedule of direct debit payments totalling £22,374.99 was approved and noted.

20/314. SCHEDULE OF CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS & BARCLAY VISA DEBIT TO 16 DECEMBER 2020

The schedule of credit card and Barclay Visa Debit payments to 16 December 2020 totalling £499.31 was approved and noted.

20/315. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Mr J M Ward proposed, seconded by Mr M G Callam to exclude the Press and Public from the meeting for the remaining business because otherwise, information which is exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 would be disclosed to them and on being put to the vote the motion was CARRIED.

20/316. REMOTE WORKING / BUSINESS CONTINUITY IT EQUIPMENT FOR SPROWSTON TOWN COUNCIL OFFICE STAFF

Council considered the confidential report of the Town Clerk and it was **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation from Intouch, the Council's IT supplier, for the purchase of office laptops and docking stations with set-up, plus laptop bags at a cost of £4,032.00 plus VAT. Funds to be transferred from reserves.

There being no other necessary business the Town Mayor of the Council thanked Councillors for their participation and declared the meeting closed at 21.08pm.

6 January 2020

Town Mayor