

4MEETING OF SPROWSTON TOWN COUNCILLORS – 31 MARCH 2021

At the remote meeting of the Sprowston Town Council held by video conference on Wednesday 31 March 2021, the following Councillors were present: -

Mr J M Ward – Town Mayor

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

In attendance

Mr G Ranaweera - Town Clerk and Responsible
Financial Officer
Mrs E Elliot - Committee Officer

No members of the public were present

21/077. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY AND OTHER INTERESTS

Councillor	Minute No. and Heading	Nature of Interest
Mrs J Leggett	21/082 (3) - Broadland Tree Warden Network	Broadland District Council - Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence

21/078. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Written apologies for absence were received and accepted by the Council from Mrs B Cook, Mr J F Fisher, Mr I J Mackie and Ms C T Rumsby.

21/079. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Council's meeting held on 10 March 2021, having previously been circulated to all Councillors were confirmed subject to

Minute 21/062, after Central and **delete** West and **insert** East

Minute 21/063, after since **delete** signing

Minute 21/068 (1), **delete** 22 and **insert** 21

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

21/080. ACTION FROM MINUTES

(1) Sprowston Youth Engagement Project (SYEP) - Bigger Picture Report 2020/2021

21/080. ACTION FROM MINUTES (CONTINUED)

Referring to Minute 21/061, Mr J H Mallen asked when the Recreational Facilities Working group would consider the work SYEP had planned for the 18-25 age range.

Mrs J Leggett confirmed she was waiting for a response from the planning authority to ascertain if planning permission was required for the proposed urban garden.

(2) Council Meeting Dates - 2021/22

Further to Minute 21/068, Mr M G Callam asked if there had been an update on Council meetings being held in person or continuing remotely.

The Town Clerk advised that Government had launched a consultation, details of which he would bring to the next meeting of the Council.

(3) Broadland District Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Council noted that Broadland District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee were considering the item suggested by Mrs B J Lashley at their meeting to be held on Tuesday 24 August 2021.

(4) Appointment of Finance Officer

Further to Minute 21/069 4.1, the Town Clerk reported the recently appointed Finance and Administrative Officer would be working from the office premises commencing 13 April 2021, three days a week for training.

21/081. POLICE LIAISON OFFICER'S REPORT

Council Noted:

- (1) Norfolk Constabulary's Priorities Poster - Old Catton and Sprowston SNT (March)
- (2) Council noted the Old Catton and Sprowston West crime updates from 1 to 28 February 2021.
- (3) Sprowston Central and East ward crime updates from 1 to 28 February 2021.
- (4) Community Update Norfolk 25/03/21

21/082. CORRESPONDENCE

Mrs B J Lashley asked what remaining budget was available for grants, and the maximum amount per electorate Council was permitted to spend.

The Town Clerk advised there was £1000.00 in the 2020/21 grant budget and permitted spend was £8.32 per member of the electorate.

21/082. CORRESPONDENCE (CONTINUED)

- (1) Norfolk Accident and Rescue

RESOLVED that a donation of £100 be made to the National Accident Rescue Service (NARS) in accordance with the Council powers under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

- (2) Norfolk Citizens Advice - Norwich

RESOLVED that a donation of £200.00 be made to Norfolk citizens Advise - Norwich in accordance with the Council powers under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

- (3) Broadland Tree Warden Network

Mrs B J Lashley enquired if there were active Tree Wardens in Sprowston and if so, who they were.

RESOLVED to make a one-year subscription to Broadland Tree Warden Network at a total cost of £30.00.

- (4) 45th Norwich Scout Group

RESOLVED that a donation of £400.00 be made to 45th Norwich Scout Group in accordance with the Council powers under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

21/083. REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

A written report was received from Mr J M Ward.

Mr J M Ward also verbally reported:

Broadland District Council

- (1) Grants of between £250.00 and £7,500 are available to support businesses in the hospitality sector with the adaptations they need to improve their outdoor facilities. Details at www.broadland.gov.uk/coronavirus/business
- (2) Up to £300 grants are available to athletes competing in their chosen sport at a regional level or higher. Details at www.broadland.gov.uk/sportsgrant
- (3) Broadland District Council and South Norfolk District Council have launched a new initiative entitled Work4all to support residents searching for a job. It will offer one to one information, navigation to vacancies and training, helping to create a CV and guidance on applications and interviews. Details at www.broadland.gov.uk/work4all
- (4) An area of woodland previously known as the Houghen Plantation has been renamed Broadland Country Park following its purchase by Broadland District Council. It is a 140-acre site of woodland and marshy grassland between Horsford and Felthorpe with the main entrances being on Holt Road and the Broadland Northway.

21/083. REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS (CONTINUED)

Norfolk County Council

(1) Norfolk County Council Election Dates

- Publish Notice of Election - Monday 29 March 2021
- Close of nominations - 4.00pm Thursday 8 April 2021
- Deadline for registering to vote - Monday 19 April 2021
- Deadline for proxy vote applications - 5.00pm Tuesday 27 April 2021
- Polling day - 6 May 2021
- Deadland for emergency proxy applications - 5.00pm 6 May 2021

(2) A new £1m specialist youth service has been set up aimed at supporting those who are at risk of harm outside the family home through criminal or sexual exploitation.

(3) Norfolk Constabulary's Chief Constable Simon Baily, has announced his retirement after 35 years' service and 8 years as our Chief Constable. He will retire on 30 June 2021.

(4) The highway drainage improvements on Wroxham Road will continue until 1 April 2021.

Mr R J Knowles reported that Mrs Valerie Hill, who had previously served on the Council and was an active member of the Sprowston British Legion, had passed away.

Mrs B J Lashley said her thoughts were with the Hill family. She also advised that Molly Howes who had taken a great interest in Sprowston and regularly attended Council meetings had also passed away.

Mrs J Leggett verbally reported she had spoken with officers at Broadland District Council with regard to the cutting of the hedge on Harrisons Drive, and timescales for regrowth.

She also advised that Government had announced, that whilst it remained committed to a Deposit Return Scheme to reduce pollution its implementation had been delayed to 2024 due to COVID.

21/084. RESIDENT'S QUESTIONS

As no residents were present the Chairman proceeded to the next item of business.

21/085. 2020-21 INTERNAL AUDIT INTERIM REPORT (26th FEBRUARY 2021)

(1) Internal Audit Report Interim

Council agreed it was a good solid Internal Audit Report and congratulated the Town Clerk and staff.

(2) Review and adopt the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy

Considered under Minute 21/285 (3).

21/085. 2020-21 INTERNAL AUDIT INTERIM REPORT (26th FEBRUARY 2021)
(CONTINUED)

(3) Investment Strategy options

In answer to Councillors questions the Town Clerk responded that:

- the platform used to select proposed investments options was a website recommended by the Auditor;
- there were few legal restrictions on where Council could invest and building societies would be viable;
- banks listed in the Investment Options had been selected on their credit rating, amongst other considerations;
- all Council's financial accounts were managed on-line.

Mr J M Ward noted that some fees exceeded interest paid.

Mr J H Mallen commented that investment options listed were more traditional companies and suggested extending consideration to other institutions such as Santander, Halifax, Starling etc.

Mr M G Callam felt it important to consider credit ratings as the Council's money was not underwritten.

He suggested exercising caution as Council might want to utilise the money they were considering investing. He did not want to see a high risk for little gain and questioned how much time was involved to earn a small return.

Mrs J Leggett asked how much Council were obliged to keep in reserves.

The Town Clerk responded the guide was approximately six-months. Council had £375,000, which included a generous six months plus other ring-fenced reserves. However, if Council proceeded with the purchase of the Viking Public House it would introduce an unknown factor and it would be beneficial to have liquidity to hand, thus he would recommend investing no more than £250,000 in a fixed term saving deposit.

Mr J M Ward proposed, seconded by Mr M G Callam to adopt the Treasury and Investment Strategy and Authorise the Town Clerk to invest where and when he felt appropriate. On being put to the vote the motion was CARRIED.

21/086. REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK

COMMUNITY BUILDINGS, ALLOTMENTS, PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

1.1 Reopening Facilities after the National Coronavirus Restrictions

Adding to his written report the Town Clerk further advised that following easing of restrictions far more people were now using the recreational facilities and he was

21/086. REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK (CONTINUED)

considering increasing the number of litter picks earlier in the season than usual. This would be at an additional cost to the Council.

CEMETERY

2.1 No matters were reported

STREET LIGHTING

3.1 No matters were reported

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION AND PERSONNEL

4.1 Grounds Team and Coronavirus

Council noted the return of Grounds staff to full time working given that a majority of their duties were now performed outside or on their own.

PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION

5.1 Speeding on Atlantic Way

Further to his report the Town Clerk confirmed he was pursuing permission from developers to attach a SAM2 unit to a street light column in Atlantic Avenue. Data collected would be shared with PC Gill.

Councillors agreed that given the high usage of this roadway and complaints about speeding it should be adopted by Norfolk County Council as soon as possible.

It was suggested Mr J F Fisher and Mr J M Ward pursue this matter with the appropriate officers.

ATTACHMENTS

6.1 None

21/087. 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:

21/087. PLANNING (CONTINUED)

2021/1472 - matters reserved by conditions 2 (Layout, scale, appearance and landscaping), 14 (landscaping) and 16 (layout) of outline approval 20152035 - development of 19 x dwellings with associated access, open space, and landscaping, pumping station and drainage infrastructure at land south of Moorsticks, Buxton Road, Spixworth.

2021/0369 - remove existing rear conservatories and erection of rear ground floor extension and extension to existing loft and dormers at 24, Cere Road, Sprowston.

2021/0373 - two and single storey rear extension at 146, Wroxham Road, Sprowston.

2021/0495 - single storey rear extension at 4, Bracey Avenue, Sprowston.

(b) to raise no objection to the granting of planning application 2021/0408 - moving garden fence closer to highway at 155, Wilks Farm Dive, Sprowston subject to the land being under the applicants' ownership.

21/088. BROADLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL - PLANNING DECISIONS

Council noted Broadland District Councils planning decisions for week commencing 1 March 2021.

21/089. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

Mrs J Leggett reminded members of the Recreational Working Group to re-visit the Sprowston Neighbourhood Plan before their next meeting on Thursday 8 April 2021.

21/090. REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS REPRESENTING THE COUNCIL ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

Mrs B J Lashley verbally reported that Norfolk Association of Local Council's Annual General Meeting was to be held remotely on 20 May 2021 commencing 7.00pm. Jackie Weaver was one of a number of speakers.

21/091. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS 31 MARCH 2021

The Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer presented the schedule of accounts and supplementary schedule of accounts to 31 March 2021 totalling £5,775.17 and £5,730.00.

In response to a question from Mr J H Mallen the Town Clerk advised that:

Invoice No. 479833 Ben Burgess & Co Ltd -Tine Vertidrain was a hydraulic tractor attachment used across all Councils open spaces to perforate the ground to improve drainage.

On the motion of Mr J M Ward, seconded by Mr M G Callam it was **RESOLVED** that payment of the accounts and supplementary accounts to 31 March 2021 totalling £5,775.17 and £5,730.00 be approved and the schedule authorising payment signed by the appropriate signatories at the first opportunity.

21/092. SCHEDULE OF DIRECT DEBIT PAYMENTS

The schedule of direct debit payments to 31 March 2021 totalling £22,202.37, was approved and noted.

21/093. SCHEDULE OF CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS & BARCLAY VISA DEBIT TO 31 MARCH 2021

The schedule of credit card and Barclay Visa Debit payments to 31 March 2021 totalling £319.33 was approved and noted.

21/094. 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**.

21/095. PURCHASE OF THE FORMER VIKING PUBLIC HOUSE

(a) Review the purchase price and decide how to proceed

Further to his report the Town Clerk confirmed he and Cllr. Mallen had investigated alternative ways to lawfully avoid the Council having responsibility for VAT on this purchase however this was not possible. The Town Clerk had subsequently requested a reduction in the purchase price and was waiting for a response.

Having looked at a Public Works Loan it required consultation with residents even if it did not impact on Council Tax. The consultation itself would take at least 4 weeks, and the whole application process would take approximately two months from start to finish before the loan could be drawn down.

If the Broadland District Council loan against future CIL receipts was approved it would not be available to Council until June 2021.

Mr J H Mallen referred Councillors to page 47 of the agenda and reserved holdings, stating this together with CIL receipts due in April 2021 would cover the purchase price of the Viking Public House and still leave sufficient operating funds.

Mr R J Knowles expressed concern at using reserves in the event of an unforeseen expense.

The Town Clerk advised the land contamination survey had been completed and a report was expected in two weeks. The asbestos survey was yet to be carried out.

Mr R J Knowles requested the Town Clerk email Council with results of the report.

RESOLVED

To authorise the Town Clerk to renegotiate the asking price to include the VAT. Should the price remain unaltered the matter to be reconsidered by Council.

21/095. PURCHASE OF THE FORMER VIKING PUBLIC HOUSE (CONTINUED)

- (b) Review legal documents received pertaining to the purchase of the former Viking Public House

Council considered and noted the legal documents pertaining to the purchase of the former Viking Public House.

- (c) Decision to formally request a loan from BDC's Community Infrastructure Fund, secured against STC's future CIL receipts.

Mr M G Callam proposed, seconded by Mrs J Leggett to authorise the Town Clerk to formally request a loan from Broadland District Council's Community Infrastructure Fund, secured against Sprowston Town Councils future CIL receipts. On being put to the vote the motion was CARRIED.

There being no other necessary business the Town Mayor of the Council thanked Councillors for their participation and declared the meeting closed at 8.42 pm.

21 April 2021

Town Mayor