

MEETING OF SPROWSTON TOWN COUNCILLORS – 21 APRIL 2021

At the remote meeting of the Sprowston Town Council held by video conference on Wednesday 21 April 2021, the following Councillors were present: -

Mr J M Ward – Town Mayor

Mr A J Barton - Mr J W Fisher
Mr M G Callam - Mr R J Knowles
Ms D Coleman - Mrs B J Lashley
Mrs B Cook - Mrs J Leggett
Mr W F Couzens - Mr I J Mackie
Mr J H Mallen

In attendance

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

2 members of the public were present

The Chairman announced this is our first Council meeting since the sad death of HRH Prince Philip, The Duke of Edinburgh. I would like to extend the Councils condolences to Her Majesty the Queen. Prince Philip devoted his life to Civic Service and will be greatly missed.

I would appreciate it if we could have a minute's silence in his memory.

It is also Her Majesty the Queens 95th birthday today so we could also wish her a happy birthday. Long may she reign.

21/096. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY AND OTHER INTERESTS

Councillor	Minute No. and Heading	Nature of Interest
Mrs J Leggett	21/105 - Norfolk County Council	Broadland District Council - Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence

21/097. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Written apologies for absence were received and accepted by the Council from Ms C T Rumsby.

21/098. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Council's meeting held on 31 March 2021, having previously been circulated to all Councillors were confirmed subject to

Minute 21/086, after be at **delete** and

21/098. MINUTES (CONTINUED)

Minute 21/095 (a), paragraph 6, before contamination **insert** land

Minute 21/083, **delete** Valarie and **insert** Valerie

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

21/099. ACTION FROM MINUTES

No actions from the minutes were received.

21/100. POLICE LIAISON OFFICER'S REPORT

Council noted the Community Update from T/ACC Julie Wvendth.

21/101. CORRESPONDENCE

Norfolk County Council's Latest Information, Advice, Useful Links and Services Updates (15 April 2021) was noted.

21/102. REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

A written report was received from Mr J M Ward.

Mr J M Ward also verbally reported:

Sprowston Town Council

On Friday 16 April 2021 I attended, as Town Mayor, the Parish Church Remembrance Service for HRH Prince Philip, The Duke of Edinburgh. Councillor Leggett also attended.

Norfolk County Council

Work has started on Norfolk County Council's annual road surface dressing programme with 305 miles of roads to get new seals and surface to extend the life of the roads and to prevent potholes opening up.

Fairstead Road will be closed 5 - 7 May 2021, except for access, because of new water connection works.

Cromwell Road will be closed, except for access for 5 weeks from 31 May 2021 for highway maintenance work.

Referring to Mr Ward's written report, Mr Couzens asked if Sadie and Anne, County Councils Youth Worker Team, were working in conjunction with Sprowston Youth Engagement Project.

Mr J F Fisher responded that a new County Council initiative had been launched by Children's Services to engage with young people in fringe areas. The Youth Worker Team would be working with schools and contacting youth groups and Councils.

21/102. REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Mrs B J Lashley enquired about the reduction in looked after children.

Mrs J F Fisher advised that numbers of looked after children had increased dramatically however, due to the hard work of children's services working with families and returning children to family members this had significantly reduced. Families were given follow-up support.

In answer to a question from Mr J H Mallen, Mr Ward explained that work was deemed necessary at the School Lane junction to make it safe for pedestrians crossing the road.

Mrs J Leggett reported that Broadland District Council had launched a COVID Safe award designed to support local businesses, by helping to provide reassurance to the public.

It was a self-assessment application which required businesses to provide evidence they had adequate COVID19 control measures in place appropriate to the venue.

A Covid Support Advisor would then visit their premises to conduct COVID Safe certificate checks before issuing a COVID Safe Certificate.

In response to a query from Mrs J Leggett the Town Clerk said he would clarify if details of the Sprowston Supporting Our Community Working Together Group were advertised on The Councils' website.

21/103. RESIDENTS QUESTIONS

On the motion of Mr J M Ward, seconded by Mr J F Fisher 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.

As there were no questions from residents the Chairman moved to the next item of business and the meeting was reconvened.

21/104. GOVERNMENT'S OPEN CONSULTATION: LOCAL AUTHORITY REMOTE MEETINGS: CALL FOR EVIDENCE

It was agreed that Councillors forward their comments on the Government's Open Consultation: Local Authority Remote Meetings: Call for Evidence consultation to the Town Clerk for collation and consideration at the next Council meeting.

21/105. NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL'S 1 MILLION TREE INITIATIVE

Mrs B J Lashley stated this was an opportunity for the Town Council to make a big difference to restoring Harrison's Woodland. It was previously a commercial woodland and retained a number of old fir trees with no significant value. There was scope to enhance the area by reducing the number of old crop trees and planting indigenous species, creating a mixed woodland with improved biodiversity. The Town Council could work with groups such as The Woodland Trust to make the plantation more sustainable.

21/105. NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL'S 1 MILLION TREE INITIATIVE (CONTINUED)

Mr J M Ward reminded Council the woodland was currently still in private ownership.

It was noted that the County Council member budget had increased to £10,000 to support environmental issues.

Ms D Coleman suggested replanting the verges with trees as it slowed traffic, protected verges and improved biodiversity.

Mr W F Couzens said there were lots of possibilities in Sprowston. The Town Council could future proof old trees in Wilks Farm Drive and revisit the project to create an avenue of trees to commemorate VE day. Furthermore, Atlantic Avenue with its wide verges would benefit from trees planted either side as well as additional planting within the housing development.

Mrs J Leggett questioned if young trees could be adequately supported and highlighted the importance of having the right tree in the right place.

She had heard of an initiative to plant tiny forests where an area of land of similar square meterage to a tennis court was densely planted with trees and shrubs.

Mrs B J Lashley advised Norfolk County Council would have to approve species of trees to be planted in verges as in time they can damage pathways.

She referred Councillors to Norfolk County Council's Tree and Hedge Explorer map which highlighted areas of sparse and high tree density.

Mr J F Fisher confirmed that Norfolk County Council held a list of suitable species of tree for roadside planting.

It was agreed:

- Town Clerk to contact Sprowston Tree Wardens to ascertain suitable locations for tree planting and species;
- Recreational Facilities Working Group to consider how the Council could support this project and acquire funding.

The Town Clerk reported that the 45th Scouts had expressed their gratitude for the grant awarded to them by Council and will send before and after photos for Councils' reference.

He also said that the Eastern Daily Press had been in contact regarding Council's funding of SYEP and requested Councillors send any comments they would like included in his response.

21/106. REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK

COMMUNITY BUILDINGS, ALLOTMENTS, PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

1.1 The Recreation Ground

21/106. REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK (CONTINUED)

Council noted the Town Clerk had agreed an extension to the football season at Sprowston Recreation Ground as a significant number of matches had been missed due to national COVID restrictions.

CEMETERY

2.1 No matters were reported

STREET LIGHTING

3.1 No matters were reported

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION AND PERSONNEL

4.1 No matters were reported

PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION

5.1 White House Farm Open Space

Council noted the Town Clerk was liaising with developers and Broadland District Council to open the space earmarked for a Council park as soon as possible,

ATTACHMENTS

6.1 None

21/107. 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:

2021/0196 - two storey side extension and single storey rear extension at 171, Wroxham Road.

2021/0483 - erection of single storey rear extension and new dormer windows at front and rear elevations at 17, Greenborough Road.

2021/0532 - single storey rear extension at 3, Linton Crescent.

2021/0591 - rear extension and flat roof changed to tiled hipped roof at 4, Creance Road.

21/107. PLANNING (CONTINUED)

2021/0680 - details for conditions 12 (construction traffic management plan) 14 (wheel cleaning facilities) and 23 (fire hydrants) of 20141725 at Land East of Buxton Road.

- (b) not to determine planning application 2021/0652 - to change existing hip roof to gable end. Extension to existing first floor bedroom and new dormers at 113, Moore Avenue as no plans were available, and to request an extension for comments.

21/108. BROADLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL - PLANNING DECISIONS

Council noted Broadland District Councils planning decisions for week commencing 29 March 2021.

21/109. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

Mrs J Leggett reported that results from the Recreational Facilities Working Group survey suggested residents wanted to see more trees planted around the town.

A meeting had taken place with Sprowston FC and the group now had a better understanding of the football club's ideal requirements and what facilities they could manage with.

Members of the working group were currently comparing progress against the Neighbourhood Plan.

SYEP had presented their business plan for their Urban Garden project together with costings and timescales.

21/110. REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS REPRESENTING THE COUNCIL ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

No written or verbal reports were received.

21/111. 2020-21 YEAR END FINANCE REPORT

In response to Councillors questions the Town Clerk advised:

Summary of Income and Expenditure

Grants - the Variance to Annual total was -24 as Council received a total of £2,300.00 in Coronavirus grants.

Detailed Income and Expenditure

Underspends

A majority of underspends were a direct result of COVID. Due to uncertainty as to what income would be generated following the closing of Council's facilities or if the precept would be paid, all non-essential spending was curtailed.

21/111. 2020-21 YEAR END FINANCE REPORT (CONTINUED)

Cost Centre 5606 - Bus Shelters, the Council received a reimbursement from a scheme purchased in the previous financial year.

Cost Centre 7511 - Park Loan Charges, the Town Clerk to clarify why only 49.3% of the budget was spent.

Overspends;

Cost Centre 7009 - Legal Fees, Elcons the Councils employment and legal consultants did not invoice for their previous years services and presented two invoices in this financial year.

Cost Centre 7010 - Bank and Interest Charges, referred to high usage of the PDQ card machine in support of Sprowston Help Group.

Cost centre 7017 - IT, was entirely due to the purchase of laptops to facilitate remote working during the pandemic.

Cost Centre 7029 - Equipment Lease, part of this expenditure was the cost of leasing the PDQ machine, although Council could defray some of this expenditure against the COVID grants received.

Cost Centre 7405 - Building Repairs, was a copy and paste error.

RESOLVED to approve and adopt the Statement of Accounts and Balance Sheet for year ended 31 March 2021

21/112. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS 21 APRIL 2021

The Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer presented the schedule of accounts to 21 April totalling £17,428.49.

In response to Councillors questions the Town Clerk advised that:

Invoice No. 480534 Ben Burgess & Co Ltd - Hire: Vertidrain was a hydraulic tractor attachment used across all Councils open spaces to perforate the ground to improve drainage.

Invoice No. 927240 - Easter Litter Picking: Extra hours, due to increased usage of the Council's open spaces during school holidays two additional daily litter picks had been instigated to maintain standards.

On the motion of Mr J M Ward, seconded by Mr R J Knowles it was **RESOLVED** that payment of the accounts to 21 April 2021 totalling £17,428.49 be approved and the schedule authorising payment signed by the appropriate signatories at the first opportunity.

21/113. SCHEDULE OF DIRECT DEBIT PAYMENTS

In response to Councillors questions the Town Clerk advised that:

Invoice No. 235169654/21 - Streetlight Sensors: March 2021

- referred to the energy costs for the Council's streetlights.
- COVID restrictions had not significantly affected the maintenance of the Councils streetlights.

The schedule of direct debit payments to 21 April 2021 totalling £3,573.52 was approved and noted.

21/114. SCHEDULE OF CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS & BARCLAY VISA DEBIT TO 21 APRIL 2021

The schedule of credit card and Barclay Visa Debit payments to 21 April 2021 totalling £162.00 was approved and noted.

21/115. 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**.

21/116. PURCHASE OF THE FORMER VIKING PUBLIC HOUSE

The Town Clerk reported that Council's solicitor had confirmed it was permissible for VAT not to be included in the purchase price.

Once an exchange of contract had taken place a deposit would be required and legally commit the Council. If Council decided not to progress with purchase the deposit would be lost.

In answer to Councillors questions the Town Clerk responded:

- Bidwells had reviewed all appropriate documentation pertaining to the purchase of the Viking Public House.
- he was not aware of who owned the land between the car park and highway and would make enquiries.
- as a corporate body liability would lay with the Council as a whole, not individual councillors.
- insurance would be in place, with rebuild value calculated from a reinstatement survey which was required to instigate the insurance;

21/116. PURCHASE OF THE FORMER VIKING PUBLIC HOUSE (CONTINUED)

- the strip of land highlighted on the map must be maintained in good condition as owners had access rights to the mast located on adjacent land.
- the contract had been examined by the Council's solicitor.

The Town Clerk reminded Councillors that Town and Parish Councils could not use CIL receipts to pay off loans (including Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loans) or reimburse past expenditure, i.e.: expenses incurred before receipt of a given CIL payment. This meant that current and future CIL could not be used to repay the PWLB loans previously borrowed to finance the purchase and renovation of Sprowston Diamond Centre. However, room for manoeuvre did exist. Instead of using Council's annual revenue budget to purchase certain items of equipment (e.g.: a replacement slide) or fund provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure, Council could instead use CIL receipts to fund those eligible purchases and expenditures. This would 'free up' funds from the revenue budget; an amount equivalent to the expended CIL could then be transferred from the annual revenue budget into reserves. There are many forthcoming purchases and examples of eligible expenditure where this process could be applied.

RESOLVED subject to:

- (1) a satisfactory asbestos survey and to no issues being raised by the land contamination survey, to authorise two Councillors to sign the Transfer deed (TP1) and one Councillor to sign the contract of sale for the former Viking Public House, and upon the signing of both, for the Town Clerk to instruct Council's solicitor to exchange contracts.
- (2) upon satisfactory exchange of contracts, to authorise the town Clerk to pay £37,000 from reserves to the Seller's conveyancer as the deposit required by contract.

There being no other necessary business the Town Mayor of the Council thanked Councillors for their participation and declared the meeting closed at 9.15pm.

26 May 2021

Town Mayor