

## **MEETING OF SPROWSTON TOWN COUNCILLORS – 26 MAY 2021**

At the Annual meeting of the Sprowston Town Council held at the School Room, Sprowston Diamond Centre, School Lane, Sprowston on Wednesday 26 May 2021, the following Councillors were present: -

Mr J M Ward – Town Mayor

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

In attendance

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

No members of the public were present

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### **21/117. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE ENSUING YEAR**

The Chairman of the Council, Mr J M Ward, occupied the Chair and invited nominations for the appointment of Chairman / Town Mayor of the Council for the ensuing year.

Mr I J Mackie proposed and Mr R J Knowles seconded the nomination of Mr J M Ward.

There being no other nominations and on being put to the vote it was **RESOLVED** that Mr J M Ward be appointed Chairman / Town Mayor of the Council for the ensuing year.

### **21/118. DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

Mr J M Ward signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Chairman / Town Mayor of the Council in the presence of the Town Clerk, thanked Members for his appointment and then held the office of Chairman / Town Mayor for the rest of the meeting.

### **21/119. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL**

Mr J M Ward proposed and Mr I J Mackie seconded the nomination of Mrs J Leggett.

Ms D Coleman proposed and Mr M G Callam seconded the nomination of Mr W F Couzens.

On being put to the vote it was **RESOLVED** that Mrs J Leggett be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year.

## **21/120. DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

Mrs J Leggett signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Vice-Chairman of the Council in the presence of the Town Clerk, thanked Members for her appointment and then held the office of Vice-Chairman for the rest of the meeting.

## **21/121. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY AND OTHER INTERESTS**

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Minute No. and Heading</b>	<b>Nature of Interest</b>
Mrs J Leggett	Minute 21/142	SYEP - Trustee
Ms C T Rumsby	Minute 21/142	SYEP - Trustee

## **21/122. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Written apologies for absence were received and accepted by the Council from Mrs B J Lashley and Mr S C Walker.

## **21/123. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Council's meeting held on 21 April 2021, having previously been circulated to all Councillors were confirmed and signed by the Chairman / Town Mayor of the Council.

## **21/124. ACTION FROM MINUTES**

### **(1) Minute 21/102 - Norfolk County Council's Youth Worker Team**

Mr W F Couzens reported that Norfolk County Council's Youth Worker team had advised SYEP they would not be engaging with young people in Sprowston as the parish already had good youth support.

### **(2) Minute 21/104 - Response to Government's call for evidence on remote meetings**

The Council **RESOLVED** to respond to the Government's call for evidence on remote meetings consultation as follows:

Q1. Generally speaking, how well do you feel the current remote meeting arrangements work?

A. Very Well

Q2. Generally speaking, do you think Local authorities in England should have the express ability to hold at least some meetings remotely on a permanent basis?

A. Yes

Q3. What do you think are some of the benefits of the remote meetings arrangements?

A. More accessible for local authority members;  
Reduction in travel time for councillors;

## **21/124. ACTION FROM MINUTES (CONTINUED)**

Documents (e.g., minutes, agenda, supporting papers) are more accessible to local residents and others online;

Time and cost savings.

Q4. Have you seen a reduction in costs since implementing remote meetings in your authority?

A. Limited cost savings.

Q5. What do you think are some of the disadvantages of remote meeting arrangements, and do you have any suggestions for how they could be mitigated/overcome?

A. It's harder for councillors to talk to one another informally

Q6. What do you think some of the main advantages of holding face-to-face meetings, as opposed to remote meetings?

A. You can see body language;  
Eye to eye contact with everyone;  
Fellowship rather than remoteness;  
Debate is easier.

Q7. If permanent arrangements were to be made available for local authorities in England, for which meetings do you think they should have the option to hold remote meetings?

A. It should be for councils to decide however, some meetings should be held face-to-face.

Q8. If permanent arrangements were to be made for local authorities in England, in which circumstances do you think local authorities should have the option to hold remote meetings?

A. In any circumstances.

Q9. Would you have any concerns if local authorities in England were given the power to decide for themselves which meetings, and in what circumstances, they have the option to hold remote meetings?

A. No

Q10. If yes, do you have any suggestions for how your concerns could be mitigated/overcome?

A. Not applicable.

Q11. In your view, would making express provision for English local authorities to meet remotely particularly benefit or disadvantage any individuals with protected characteristics e.g., those with disabilities or caring responsibilities?

## **21/124. ACTION FROM MINUTES (CONTINUED)**

- A. it would help some people and not others i.e., people with no internet or cannot use a computer.

### **(3) Minute 21/105 - Norfolk County Council's 1 Million Tree Initiative**

Referring to Tree Wardens Mr W F Couzens highlighted the importance of their active participation.

The Town Clerk advised that Sprowston Tree Wardens had been contacted and would be attending a meeting of the Recreational Facilities Working Group.

Mrs J Leggett informed Councillors that trees came under her remit as Broadland District Councils Portfolio Holder for Environmental Excellence. They had recently engaged a new member of staff to co-ordinate the Council's Environmental Strategy which included planting a tree for every resident.

## **21/125. POLICE LIAISON OFFICER'S REPORT**

### **(1) Old Catton and Sprowston West Ward Newsletter (April)**

Mrs J Leggett reported that PC Graham Gill had been on beat prioritising anti-social parking around businesses.

### **(2) Sprowston Central and East Ward Newsletter (April)**

Mr W F Couzens commented that one of the Neighbourhood teams main priorities in March was speeding yet there was not a category for it in the crime updates.

Mrs J Leggett agreed to make enquiries with Norfolk Constabulary.

Mr J H Mallen questioned the timescales for disseminating crime updates to Council.

Mrs J Leggett informed Council there was a Safer Neighbourhood Team priority setting meeting to be held remotely via Teams on 25 June 2021. She would circulate the now available April crime statistics together with an analysis of the 11 incidences of public fear, alarm or distress.

## **21/126. CORRESPONDENCE**

Councillors noted the rescheduling of the traffic improvement scheme at Constitution Hill and School Lane until October 2021.

## **21/127. REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS**

A written report was received from Mr J M Ward.

Mr J M Ward also verbally reported:

"The Chances Project" has been set up by Norfolk County Council and Voluntary Norfolk to offer 1 to 1 coaching to the unemployed 18+ to improve job prospects,

## **21/127. REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS (CONTINUED)**

confidence and wellbeing and to offer work placements, education and training programmes. Details at [chances@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:chances@norfolk.gov.uk)

At the County Council election on 6 May 2021 the three councillors responsible for Sprowston, myself, Karen Vincent and John Fisher were all re-elected. The County now comprises 58 Conservative (up 6), 11 Labour (down 4) 8 Liberal Democrats (down 1), 3 Independents and 3 new Green councillors.

The first face to face full Council meeting took place at Norfolk Showground on 24 May 2021. Andrew Proctor was elected leader for the next 4 years and this years Council Chairman is Penny Carpenter, and the Vice Chairman Karen Vincent.

Norfolk County Council, as the lead Local Flood Authority, has now removed its objection to the Sprowston High school application following the issue of a revised drainage strategy. This application will provide a new 2 storey, 14 classbase and library building, group and staff rooms and ancillary accommodation, 30 new car park spaces, 2 new multi-use games areas and a temporary 41 space car park for the duration of the proposed works.

The tender for the work at Sprowston Academy closes on 28 May 2021 with the contract being awarded on 1 July 2021. The new block and MUGA is expected to be completed prior to the start of 2022 academic year.

Today I attended the Town Council Office to make a presentation of a bouquet to Susan Formosa our Finance Officer who retires tomorrow after 5 years' service with the Council during which she has seen us through the successful purchase and development of Sprowston Diamond Centre and has consistently received good audits. We wish her a happy retirement.

Mrs J Leggett verbally reported that fly tipping statistics for Broadland District Council were the lowest in Norfolk.

Ms D Coleman asked if the data included incidences of fly tipping on private land.

Mrs J Leggett to clarify.

## **21/128. REVIEW AND ADOPT STANDING ORDERS**

In answer to a Councillors questions the Town Clerk responded:

5 (c) - 6.00pm refers to the Annual Meeting of the Council not the Annual Town Meeting.

18 (f) and (g) - figures were subject to Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and did fluctuate.

**RESOLVED** to adopt the Standing Orders unamended.

## **21/129. REVIEW AND ADOPT FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

**RESOLVED** to adopt the Financial Regulations subject to amending 4.5 from £2,500 to £5,000.

## **21/130. RESIDENTS QUESTIONS**

As there were no residents present the Town Mayor moved to the next item of business.

## **21/131. FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 1 MARCH 2021**

### **(1) 2020-21 Internal Audit Final Update Report 13 May 2021**

Councillors congratulated the Town Clerk and Staff on the excellent audit report.

### **(2) 2020-21 Statement of Accounts (Income and Expenditure)**

**In response to Councillor's questions the Town Clerk advised that:**

(2.1) Cemetery cost centre 5215 - Waste Disposal and Skip Hire was due to additional activity requiring waste disposal.

(2.2) Sprowston Diamond Centre cost centre 5415 - Waste disposal and Skip Hire, he would clarify why there had not been a reduction given the centre had been closed for a period of time during the Pandemic.

(2.3) Sprowston Diamond Centre 7405 - Building Repairs, the percentage of budget spent should be 274%.

**RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the Statement of Accounts and Balance Sheet for year ended 31 March 2021 subject to the amendment in (2.3) above.

### **(3) 2020-21 Bank Reconciliation**

**RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the Bank Reconciliation to 31 March 2021.

### **(4) 2020-21 Petty Cash Report**

**RESOLVED** to approve the Statement of Petty Cash for the year ended 31 March 2021.

### **(5) 2020-21 - Schedule of Public Works Loan Board Loans (PWLB)**

**RESOLVED** to approve the 2020-21 Schedule of PWLB Loans.

### **(6) 2020-21 Changes to Asset Register**

The Town Clerk confirmed the John Deer Compact 4066R Tractor was purchased as part exchange.

**RESOLVED** to accept 2021-21 Asset Register.

## **21/132. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) 2020-21**

### **(1) Annual Internal Audit report**

**RESOLVED** to accept the Internal Audit Report (Final) for 2020/21.

### **(2) Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement**

Having considered a sound system of internal control and arrangements for the preparation of the accounting statements the AGAR Section 1 was completed, question 1 to 8 in the affirmative and 9 not applicable.

**RESOLVED** to adopt the Annual Governance and Accountability Return and authorise the Chairman of the meeting to sign the Annual Governance Statement for year ended 31 March 2021 on behalf of the Council.

### **(3) Section 2 - Accounting Statements**

Having reviewed the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021 it was

**RESOLVED** to authorise the Chairman of the meeting to sign all accounting documents and supporting statements to the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021 on behalf of the Council.

## **21/133. FINANCIAL YEAR TO END 31 MARCH 2022**

### **(1) Appointment of Internal Auditor for 2021-22**

**RESOLVED** to confirm the appointment of Auditing Solutions Ltd as the Council's Internal Auditors for the ensuing year.

### **(2) Financial Risk Assessments**

Having reviewed the Financial Risk Assessments for 2020/21 it was

**RESOLVED** to approve the Assessment and Terms of Reference as listed under the Internal Audit Assurance including insurance details checklist.

### **(3) Internal Audit Review Checklist Part 1**

Having reviewed the Internal Audit Review Checklist part 1 it was

**RESOLVED** to authorise the Chairman of the meeting to complete all questions in the affirmative and sign on behalf of the Council.

### **(4) Internal Audit Review Checklist Part 2**

Having reviewed the Internal Audit Review Checklist part 2 it was

**RESOLVED** to authorise the Chairman of the meeting to complete all questions in the affirmative and sign on behalf of the Council.

**21/133. FINANCIAL YEAR TO END 31 MARCH 2022 (CONTINUED)**

Councillors were advised that the Notice of Conclusion of Audit and rights to inspect the Annual Return year ending 31 March 2021 would be advertised.

**(5) Direct Debits**

**RESOLVED** to approve the Schedule of Direct Debits.

**21/134. INSURANCE COVER**

Mr W F Couzens commented that the adjustment premium appeared very low.

The Town Clerk advised that overall, the Council's policy had increased to in excess of £9,000.

Mr J H Mallen was pleased to note the Ex-Viking Public House was included with in the insurance schedule.

**RESOLVED** to confirm the arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks.

**21/135. MEETING ADJOURNMENT**

Due to the early hour, it was **RESOLVED** not to adjourn the meeting for a short break.

**21/136. APPOINTMENT OF COUNCILLORS TO SERVE ON THE STAFFING COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED** those appointments be made to serve on the Staffing Panel as follows:

Mr M G Callam	Mrs J Leggett
Mr W F Couzens	Mr N Shaw
Mr J F Fisher	Mr J M Ward

**21/137. APPOINTMENT OF COUNCILLORS TO SERVE ON THE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES WORKING GROUP**

**RESOLVED** those appointments be made to serve on the Recreational Facilities Working group as follows:

Mr M G Callam	Mrs J Leggett
Ms D Coleman	Mr J H Mallen

**21/138. APPOINTMENT OF COUNCILLORS TO SERVE ON THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS**

**(i) Senior Citizens Welfare Committee**

Mr A J Barton and Mr W F Couzens



**21/138. APPOINTMENT OF COUNCILLORS TO SERVE ON THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS (CONTINUED)**

**(ii) Sprowston Heritage**

Mr A J Barton, Mr W F Couzens and Mrs J Leggett

**(iii) Grow Your Community Group**

Mr W F Couzens, Mrs B J Lashley and Mrs J Leggett

**(iv) Representative to Norfolk ALC**

Mrs B J Lashley

**21/139. REVIEW OF STAFF SUBSCRIPTIONS / OTHER BODIES**

Members reviewed and agreed the following subscriptions:

**(i) Norfolk ALC**

**(ii) SLCC Clerk**

**(iii) Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management**

**(iv) Broadland Tree Network**

**(v) Anglia Farmer Yearly Subscription (to September)**

**(vi) Creative Arts East**

**21/140. REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK**

**COMMUNITY BUILDINGS, ALLOTMENTS, PARKS AND OPEN SPACES**

**1.1 Recreation Ground Ladies Toilet**

Council noted the recent blockages of the ladies toilet and the Town Clerks recommendation to refurbish all public toilets at Sprowston Recreation Ground in the short to medium term. It was agreed he would bring a proposal to a future meeting of the Council.

**1.2 Blue Boar Lane Open Space**

Council noted that Anglian Water had resurfaced and reseeded the area of open space at Blue Boar Lane and would be replacing a wooden bench damaged in the process of accessing and repairing the sewer.

**1.3 Barkers Lane**

Having considered the report of the Town Clerk it was **RESOLVED**

## **21/140. REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK (CONTINUED)**

- (a) to waive the hire fee for SYEP's running club usage at Barkers Lane, in support of their plan to provide positive activities and help with anti-social behaviour.
- (b) Town Clerk to monitor for any evidence of additional litter.

### **CEMETERY**

#### **2.1 No matters were reported**

### **STREET LIGHTING**

#### **3.1 No matters were reported**

### **CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION AND PERSONNEL**

#### **4.1 Staff Retirement**

Council noted the retirement of the Finance Officer after five years-service and her positive contribution to the Council.

#### **4.2 Gas and Electricity Contracts**

Council to await proposals from the Town Clerk on suitable energy contracts from sustainable electricity providers.

### **PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION**

#### **5.1 Planning Applications requiring comment before 26 May 2021**

Councillors raised no comments or objections to the following planning applications (as notified to Council via email on 12 May 2021), and Broadland Planning had been advised accordingly:

- (1) 2021/0624 - part retrospective application for replacement garage at 2, Lambert Road, Sprowston, Norwich NR7 8XP
- (2) 2021/0640 - reserved matters for access (only) following outline permission 2017/0104 for the erection of up to 380 residential dwellings at land south of Salhouse Road, Sprowston.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

#### **6.1 None**

## **21/141. 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

## **21/141. PLANNING (CONTINUED)**

### **RESOLVED**

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

2021/0709 - proposed single storey side extension with flat to pitched roof and garage conversion at 10, Blithewood Gardens, Sprowston

2021/0718 - erection of single storey gym/studio in rear garden at 86, Cozens Hardy Road, Sprowston

2021/0853 - erection of front porch, bay window and single storey rear extension at 111, Proctor Road, Sprowston.

(b) Town Clerk to clarify the status of 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 which was previously undetermined by Council, as no plans were available.

## **21/142. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS**

Council considered the recommendations of the Recreational Facilities Working Group.

### **Sprowston Youth Engagement Project (SYEP) Urban Garden**

Mrs J Leggett verbally reported the working group had discussed SYEP's proposal and were conscious that Council already contributed £15,000 a year in support of their activities.

SYEP had secured £9,500 in grants towards the urban garden and had requested £5,000 towards a container from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

### **RESOLVED to:**

- (1) award an additional-start-up grant of £1,000, subject to SYEP securing sufficient other funds to make the urban garden viable.
- (2) Sprowston Town Council to submit planning application on behalf of SYEP, subject to SYEP completing all necessary parts of the planning application, indemnifying Council against incurred costs and taking sole responsibility for all necessary construction works.

### **Land North of Salhouse Road**

In response to a question from Mr W F Couzens, the Town Clerk replied that he was not aware if the land was contaminated however, it would be investigated before any consideration was given to purchase or purchase.

**RESOLVED** to authorise the Town Clerk to approach University of Cambridge to ascertain the possibility of buying this area of land or leasing it long-term.

#### **21/143. REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS REPRESENTING THE COUNCIL ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

No written or verbal reports were received.

#### **21/144. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS 26 MAY 2021**

The Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer presented the schedule of accounts to 26 May totalling £29,735.63.

In response to a Councillors question the Town Clerk advised that:

Invoices LRSG02708 and LRSG02706 were repaid Covid start up grants as Broadland District Council had subsequently advised the Council was not eligible for them.

On the motion of Mr J M Ward, seconded by Mr I J Mackie it was **RESOLVED** that payment of the accounts to 26 May 2021 totalling £29,735.63 be approved and the schedule authorising payment signed by the appropriate signatories at the first opportunity.

#### **21/145. SCHEDULE OF DIRECT DEBIT PAYMENTS**

In response to Councillors questions the Town Clerk advised that:

Invoice 8916133 was water usage for all facilities at Sprowston Recreation Ground.

The schedule of direct debit payments to 26 May 2021 totalling £6,279.05 was approved and noted.

#### **21/146. SCHEDULE OF CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS & BARCLAY VISA DEBIT TO 26 MAY 2021**

The schedule of credit card and Barclay Visa Debit payments to 26 May 2021 totalling £1,154.18 was approved and noted.

In response to Councillors' questions the Town Clerk advised that:

Invoice 14811008733 - was to urgently unblock the toilet at Sprowston Recreation Ground a subsequent request was paid by account.

Invoices 2021-49643, 2021-49646, 2021-49647, 7145381-4641 and 7145381-4640 were Groundsmen's PPE (Safety trainers).

#### **21/147. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Mr J M Ward proposed, seconded by Mr I J Mackie 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**.

**21/148. HERITAGE CONTRACT RENEWAL**

**RESOLVED** to extend the contract with Heritage Contract Services Ltd for 1-year to include the increase in annual charge as detailed in the Contract Service Agreement.

**21/149. PURCHASE OF THE FORMER VIKING PUBLIC HOUSE**

The Town Clerk reported that Council's purchase of the ex-Viking public House was completed on 21 May 2021. The property was insured as an addition to the Council's existing policy with Zurich Municipal.

He had arranged for Jason Menezes, Council's Project Manager, to complete a full structural survey and the next phase would be to implement a project schedule of works to coincide with CIL receipts and include public consultation.

Mrs J Leggett thanked the Town Clerk for his hard work in bringing this purchase to fruition.

There being no other necessary business the Town Mayor of the Council thanked Councillors for their participation and declared the meeting closed at 8.30pm.

23 June 2021

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Town Mayor