



Minutes

Present: Councillors;

A Fleming, P Dutton, R Lewis, A Payne, D Thomas (Chair), M Took, I Winton, D Wollweber

In Attendance: N Rees (Town Clerk), no members of the public

1. **Apologies:** Cllrs; A Baldwin, S Leverett
2. **Declarations of interest:** Cllr D Thomas for 7,8 9,10 &13, Cllr A Fleming for 7,8,9,10,11 & 14, Cllr I Winton for 9,10 & 11, Cllr D Wollweber for 6 & 8, Cllr M Took for 5 & 11, Cllr A Payne for 7,8,9,10 & 13, Cllr R Lewis for 7,8 & 9, Cllr P Dutton for 7,8,9 & 10
3. **Minutes:** The minutes of the last meeting held on the 21st December, 2015 was accepted as a true record.
4. **Matters arising from the minutes:** Cllr Dutton asked whether there was any further news on whether there would be an additional VAS sign and if it would be compatible with the existing brackets. Clerk had no further news but would chase SCC.
It was noted that the byelaws were not on the agenda, Cllr Thomas confirmed that he had not as yet had a meeting with Mr Alistair Macfarlane.
On the proposed Old Station Rd Development, Cllr Dutton reported that he had understood that the provision of play/exercise equipment had been offered by the Developers as part of the application. This was not a planning condition and it was uncertain as to who would maintain the equipment.
5. **G.A.P.P.A:** There were no further updates.
6. **Communication:** Cllr Anne Fleming expressed concerns over recent facebook comments regarding the Council. Cllr Fleming read an extract from a newspaper article that had reported on a woman who was facing up to £20,000 damages for posting untrue accusations about an individual on Facebook. Although the comments were made to a closed group of her 300 Facebook friends, her sister reposted the comments to a wider audience. It was then **RESOLVED that Cllr Fleming contacts SALC (Suffolk Association of Local Councils) regarding the comments made on the Halesworth Community Voice Facebook page about Halesworth Town Council and seeks legal advice.**

The subject of whether the Council should have its own Facebook page to reach a wider selection of the electorate was discussed again. It was noted that the 'Halesworth Community Voice' Facebook group had some 1200 users. The concerns of having a Council Facebook page were primarily on the administration and the time required to regularly police all the comments. Currently Mustard Creative were working on a revamped version of the Council's website which would hopefully make finding information about the council more accessible to all. Cllr Wollweber then proposed and it was **RESOLVED that HTC promote the new Halesworth Town Council's website as the main source of information on the web. In future HTC would investigate a Facebook page should HTC's website not receive the number of visitors that HTC expects.**
7. **Campus & HPFA:** Cllr Thomas reported on the recent presentation by a Lawyer who had recommended that the two groups be dissolved and a new body formed by merging the two groups.

8. **Parking:** The Chair, Cllr David Thomas reported that he had discovered research made by Grant Thornton Accountants that suggested that the use of parking revenues by North Dorset District Council to support their budget for other purposes was illegal. This information may prove useful for challenging WDC's decision to remove the 1hour free parking on the basis that they were intending to use the revenue to fill holes in their own budget. Cllr Thomas would circulate the report to the rest of the committee members. The Town Council was currently preparing a press statement and it was **RESOLVED that the information from HTC on Parking is sent to the members of WDC Cabinet and Senior officers. This is to include HTC's plans and emails between HTC and WDC Councillors.**
9. **Future of the London Road Building:** There was a meeting planned for the 18th January with Cabinet members Frank Mortimer and Mike Barnard. It was agreed that the Clerk would send the minutes of the last meeting with Simon Barnet (8th January) and each group's statement of their aims and objectives. The Chair confirmed that he and the Clerk had submitted an application to register the building as a Community Asset. This had since been acknowledged by WDC. The application would take approximately 8 weeks to process and if accepted by WDC, this would allow the users of the building a further 6 months to come up with a business plan to take over the building. A draft business plan was currently in progress.
10. **Town Plan/Neighbourhood Plan:**
- To consider the proposals to go forward to WDC's Local Plan Team – see item b)
 - Neighbourhood Plan – The Chair explained that due to the recent pressures out on the Council by WDC it was not possible to concentrate on the Neighbourhood Plan and temporarily it would need to be put back to a later date.
 - WDC'S Call for Sites. It was confirmed that the Clerk had submitted the list of sites to WDC. The Chair thanked Cllr Dutton for his work in compiling the list. The Committee would now wait to see what response came back from WDC on the suggestions.

The Clerk would chase Richard Woolnough for the section on Wildlife for the Town Plan.

11. **Fair Trade Town working group:** To receive a report (presented at the meeting) on developing Halesworth as a 'Fair Trade' town. Cllr Iona Wonton reported on the progress so far and the five goals required to achieve the status of a Fair Trade Town. There was a meeting planned for the 29th January at 5pm which will be open to all local businesses wishing to get involved. So far the response had been disappointing.
12. **Maintenance survey:** To consider assembling a photographic record of maintenance issues around the town, paths, signs, hedges, trees etc. Cllr Anne Fleming reported that she had attended a Divisional Parish meeting recently where Spexhall had produced a photographic record of maintenance issues around the village. Mr Mark Kerridge of SCC had commented on how useful this exercise was and it was **RESOLVED that Halesworth Town Council builds a portfolio of maintenance issues and forwards this to SCC (Suffolk County Council).**

It was noted that some issues such as overgrown trees/hedges may be caused by owners of private property. In this case SCC had a standard procedure to send a letter requesting the owner resolves the problem or SCC would undertake the work and charge the owner accordingly.

It was noted that the runway lights in the park were not working again, the Clerk had reported the problem to Waveney Norse and they had in turn been consulting with Pearce and Kemp to try and fix the lights.

Cllr Thomas reported that the new Market Place signs for the town which had been ordered from SCC will be installed on the 26th January.

13. **Public Toilets:** It was noted that there was not an immediate risk that any of the toilets would be closed in the short term as WDC were trying to find a solution by outsourcing the

costs to a private company. It was also noted that if HTC did take on the toilets in the future it would have to pay rates.

14. **Skateboard Park working group:** Mr Simon Walker had advised that the maintenance issues of the Skateboard Park were not a high risk priority but it was expected that some action would be taken soon.
15. **Correspondence:** It was reported that there would no longer be any Safer Neighbourhood Team meetings in the future due to the cutbacks. Although there would be a PC and two PCSO's based in Halesworth they would be expected to cover a much greater area which involved patrolling as far south as Eye.

The next Divisional Parish meeting was scheduled for the 4th February.

The meeting was closed at 7.58pm