

**Present:** Councillors;

Anne Fleming (Chair), Peter Dutton, Rosemary Lewis, Sandra Leverett, David Thomas (Vice Chair), Maureen Took, Paul Widdowson, Iona Winton, David Wollweber

**In Attendance:** Nick Rees (Clerk), Polly Grice (Beccles & Bungay), District Councillor Letitia Smith, 14 members of the public

## Minutes

1. **Apologies** Cllrs; Ann Baldwin, Andrew Payne, District Cllr Tony Goldson
2. **Declarations of interest:** To receive declarations for pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests and to receive requests for dispensation for all Councillors that reside in Halesworth for item 14c. Non Pecuniary Interests; Cllr D Thomas for 11 & 12, Cllr P Dutton for 8, 9, 11 & 12, Cllr M Took for 12c, Cllr I Winton for 12b & 13, Cllr P Widdowson for 13, 14 & any references to parishes where he is a Clerk, D Wollweber for 11 & 15b, S Leverett for 11 & 12, R Lewis for 11, 12 & 15b, A Fleming for 11 & 12. The Clerk received declarations of interest and signed requests for dispensation for item 15c from all Councillors except Cllr Dutton who does not reside in Halesworth.
3. **Minutes:** The minutes of the monthly meeting held on the 4<sup>th</sup> January, 2016 were accepted as a true record.
4. **Chair's Report:** The Chair reported that January had been dominated by the ongoing issues with the potential loss of the free car parking and the London Rd building. On the 4<sup>th</sup> January representatives from the London Rd building met with Nicole Rickard Head of Communities for WDC Council. On the 8<sup>th</sup> January the Council held an emergency meeting on the car park issue and then met with Cabinet members Cllrs Frank Mortimer and Mike Barnard on the 18<sup>th</sup> January. At that meeting Cllr Frank Mortimer made assurances that none of the users of the London Rd Building would be evicted on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016. On the 18<sup>th</sup> the Chair and District Councillor Tony Goldson attended an event organised by Malcom Ballantine at the University College London, where Post Graduates were studying the problems of delivering health care to an ageing population. On the 19<sup>th</sup> January the Council held another Town Forum Meeting at Edgar Sewter School. On the 25<sup>th</sup> January the Chair attended a Halesworth Business Connections breakfast where Mr Simon Weeks gave an update on the Campus project. On the 25<sup>th</sup> January there was another London Rd Building user group meeting. On the 28<sup>th</sup> January, the Chair went to a consultation on whether the Fire Station at Wrentham would be closed due to the reduced number of 999 calls. This has been put down to the fact that there are far less open fires, less people smoke and more homes now have smoke detectors. The Chair received an email from Tim Passmore, Police & Crime Commissioner, who was asking Suffolk tax payers whether they would consider paying a little more for the Police Service, around 1.9%. This was surprising in the wake of announcements that savings had been made to the Police Force with the loss of 4 Inspectors, 6 Sergeants, 13 Constables, 74 PCSO and 13 staff.
5. **Police:** There were no Police officers present and the Chair read the report provided (attached).
6. **Public Session:** [15 minutes on agenda items] Mr Alan Holzer wished to express support for the proposed 20mph limit in Chediston Street. Mr Alastair Macfarlane wished to report that cyclist were still being directed the wrong way up a one way street, namely Chediston Street. Mr Doug Gray announced that HACT had now obtained their new bus and were looking for a

major sponsor. The Chair said that the Council would try and help by asking members of the business community.

7. **Chediston Street 20mph Zone:** To consider if the Council supports the petition for a 20mph speed limit in Chediston Street. The Clerk explained that Suffolk County Council had acknowledged receipt of the petition and had asked whether the Council supported it. If the Council was in support of a 20mph limit in Chediston Street then the Clerk would become the contact point and would report back on progress. If not, then the resident who raised the petition would be the first point of contact. It was likely that the County Council would now conduct a survey on the speeds in the street and report back. **RESOLVED that the Council supported the petition for a 20mph speed limit in Chediston Street.**
8. **Planning Committee:** The Chair of the Planning Committee, Cllr Peter Dutton, reported on three applications that had been approved, Illuminated signs at A W 7 D Hammond, an extension at 11 Allington Close and an extension at 62 Thoroughfare. The report was accepted by the Council.
9. **Town Development Committee:** To receive a report from the meeting held on the 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2016. The Chair of the Town Development Committee, Cllr David Thomas, reported on the last meeting and read out the resolutions from that meeting. The report was accepted by the Council.
10. **Halesworth in Bloom:**
  - a) To consider if the Council supports the proposal that Halesworth in Bloom apply for the Green flag award for the Town Park. Cllr Sandra Leverett congratulated Tamsyn Imison on the very detailed draft plan submitted for the Green Flag award application, it was then proposed and **RESOLVED that Halesworth Town Council supports Halesworth in Bloom's application for the Green Flag award for the Town Park**
  - b) To review the draft Management Plan for the Park. It was noted that plan was in a draft form and although all members of the Council had received a copy it had only just been distributed. Cllr Dutton asked how HIB would coordinate all the interested groups in this plan. The meeting was closed to receive a report from Tamsyn Imison, who thanked the Council for their general support and explained that she had included all the relevant bodies to be consulted in the document but if there were any other groups not on the list please contact HIB. As part of the Management Plan, HIB would be starting a 'Friends of Halesworth Town Park' to coordinate volunteers and involve as many people as possible.
11. **Car Parks:** To receive an update. It had been very well documented in the press, that disappointingly, on the 6<sup>th</sup> January WDC had turned down HTC's plan to retain the free parking. The Council were still trying to open dialogue with WDC but so far this had proved frustrating. The Council had informed all the neighbouring parishes and the Chair thanked everyone for their letters of support. The Chair, District Councillor Tony Goldson and the Clerk would be meeting on Thursday to formulate a letter of complaint to WDC. Cllr D Thomas had also written to WDC querying the legality of using parking fees to supplement shortfalls in WDC's service budget under the Road Traffic Act of 1984, but had so far not received any response. There were also concerns that the decision to reject HTC's offer had been made outside of any Cabinet or Council meeting and the Clerk had asked for clarification from the Monitoring Officer on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January whether the correct procedures had been followed. Again there had been no response from WDC.
12. **London Rd Building:**

The Chair reported that there had been a lot of concern and unhappiness over the prospect of losing the building. The Council, the Volunteer Centre and the Day Centre had all been working very hard to get a business plan together to demonstrate to WDC that it could be managed effectively by the groups. Cllr Thomas explained that the Council were in the process of registering the building as a Community Asset and if and when this was accepted, it would give the users an additional 6 months to finalise the business case.

- a) The minutes of the meeting held on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2016 were received and noted. The Chair asked that the Clerk displays the minutes on the Notice Board and the website.
  - b) To form a London Road Building Working Group and appoint representatives. **RESOLVED that a London Road Building Working Group is appointed with the existing representatives from the Day Centre, Halesworth Volunteer Centre, Halesworth Town Council and the Blyth Valley Partnership.**
  - c) To agree the Terms of Reference of the London Road Building Working Group. **RESOLVED that the Terms of Reference of the London Road Building Working Group were approved.**
13. **Reports on meetings and events attended by Council representatives:** To receive any reports on meetings or events attended by Councillors. Cllr Iona Winton read out a report on the Day Centre meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> January and the Fair Trade meeting held on the 29<sup>th</sup> January. It was noted that a correction was needed as Cllr Maureen Took did not work for the Co-op.
14. **District & County Reports:** To receive any reports from the District & County Councillors. Due to personal circumstances, District Cllr Letitia Smith was not able to take questions at the meeting but Mr Doug Gray, who did have a question, would write to the Clerk for forwarding to Cllr Smith.
15. **Financial Matters:**
- a) The report of the Finance & Personnel Committee meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2016 were accepted as a true record with the amendments; Misspelling of Brian Howard, and apologies received for Cllr S Leverett to be corrected.
  - b) To confirm the grants awarded. The Chair, Cllr Rosemary Lewis reported that the Committee had approved a grant for £2,000 to Halesworth & District Museum for running costs and a grant of £2,000 to St Mary's Church for roof security.
  - c) To set the Precept for 2016/2017. It was noted that an extension had been given by WDC to Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February to submit the Precept figure. Cllr Sandra Leverett had prepared a proposal for consideration, but first explained that the Council faced many cuts and erosion to services from WDC and SCC in the coming months. The proposal was to increase the Precept from £80,000 to £100,000 but although that seemed to be a big increase it actually only represented an increase of less than £1 per month for a Band D house holder. Cllr Thomas supported the proposal and advised the Council that WDC's divestment of services meant an increased burden on the Town Council's resources. He also reminded the Council that at the Town Forum meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January, residents were showing support for raising the Precept in order to help the Council meet all these new challenges. Cllr Dutton noted that Suffolk County Council were also divesting some non-essential Highway Maintenance on to Parish Councils, the Council also needed to consider employing help for the Clerk to manage all these extra responsibilities and to cover some of the lost activities, currently provided by Waveney Norse. Professional advice would also be needed and this could easily eat in to the Council's reserves. Cllr Maureen Took was opposed to the raise but might have considered a smaller increase.
- The meeting was then closed to hear from members of the public. Three members of the public expressed their support for the raise and in general felt that this increase would primarily be needed for professional and legal advice. The meeting was reopened. As there were no amendments to the proposal it was then put to the Council for the vote and with a majority of 6 votes in favour and 3 against it was **RESOLVED that Halesworth Town Council raise the Precept from 80,000 to £100,000 for 2016/17 to facilitate potential divestment of services from Waveney District Council.**
16. **Correspondence:** There was no correspondence to consider
17. **Accounts for Payment:** The following accounts for payment were approved for payment.

## Accounts for payment

<b>3762.</b>	EDF Market Place 2 Electricity 122.67 + vat	24.00
<b>3763.</b>	Halesworth & District Museum	2,000.00
<b>3764.</b>	St Mary's Church	2,000.00
<b>3765.</b>	Sharp Print - Photocopier printing	55.97

## DD/Standing Orders

<b>3766.</b>	Essex & Suffolk Water (Bedingfield Crescent Allotments)	25.81
<b>3767.</b>	Barclays Bank Charges	15.95
<b>3768.</b>	EDF Market Place 2 Electricity	25.00
<b>3769.</b>	Salaries	1626.15

## Bank & Cash Balances at 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2016

Current 728	£95,697.78
Community A/c	£5,267.44
Business Reserves 017	£92,196.63

18. **Staff Matters:** To consider the employment of an assistant Clerk for approx. two days per week. It was agreed that this would be deferred to the Finance & Personnel meeting to be held on February 15<sup>th</sup> 2016.

The meeting was closed at 8.57pm