

Present: Councillors;

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

In Attendance: Nick Rees (Clerk), County Cllr T Goldson, Polly Grice (Beccles & Bungay), 11 members of the public

Minutes

1. **Apologies:** Cllr A Baldwin, Cllr I Winton, District Cllr L Smith
2. **Declarations of interest:** Non-pecuniary interests: Cllr D Thomas for 10, Cllr P Widdowson for 9, 10 & 11, Cllr S Leverett for 10 & 11 (HPFA), Cllr D Wollweber for 11.
3. **Minutes:** To receive and approve the minutes of the monthly meeting of the Council held on 7th March, 2016
4. **Chair's Report:** To receive a monthly report from the Chair of the Council: The Chair reported on the following events that she attended on behalf of the Council. On March 7th the Chair went to University College London with Malcolm Ballantine, Dr Kell and County Cllr Tony Goldson. March 9th The Chair and Cllr Winton attended the Fair Trade taster event at St Mary's Church. March 12th the Chair attended the Day of Dance event. On the 16th March the Chair, accompanied by Cllr Leverett, met with Simon Eades regarding the London Rd Building. On March 18th the Chair and the Clerk met with Millennium Pest Control regarding the problem with rats in the town. On March 23rd the Chair met with Brian Morton of the Morton Partnership who conducted a brief preliminary survey of the London Rd building and on March 21st the Chair, accompanied by Cllrs from the London Rd Working Group, met with Hannah Reid and Claire Taylor Crisp of Community Action Suffolk.
5. **Police:** There were no officers present and no report had been supplied. The Clerk expressed concerns as he was not sure who to contact now that PCSO Edd Vincent and PC Richard Warne had left and he had received no reply from PC Simon Green on a recent question. Cllr Thomas advised that the Police were currently in the process of restructuring and Cllr Took reported that she had seen two PCSO's in Halesworth recently. Cllr Payne read out an extract from his report on the last SALC meeting where the guest speaker had been Police Chief Constable Tim Passmore. This explained in brief the restructuring plans of Suffolk Police and overall it appeared to be quite positive. Cllr Payne would supply the information booklet 'Constables County – February 2016' to the Clerk for further reference.
6. **Public Session:** [15 minutes on agenda items] Janet Huckle handed a report which urged the Council to publish updated byelaws. Mrs Huckle reported that the Thoroughfare was getting very congested with A boards, tables, chairs, bollards, etc. With an increase in unauthorised vehicles using the Thoroughfare this was a potential hazard for pedestrians who should have priority over all vehicles, mobility scooters and bicycles. Mrs Huckle also reported that Hover boards (also known as mini skateboards/wheel boards/Sedgways) could only be used on private land with the owner's permission. It was not legal to use them on the pavement, pedestrianised zones or on the road but it was noted that they have been used in the Thoroughfare recently. The Chair reported that these Hover boards were becoming more common in London and some Cllrs had also seen them used abroad.

It was noted that there had also been an incident recently involving cars travelling the wrong way in the Thoroughfare. County Cllr Tony Goldson acknowledged that the Thoroughfare was a complicated situation but it was necessary for businesses to be able to receive deliveries. Mr Malcolm Smith asked whether the Council could establish whether the Thoroughfare was in fact pedestrianised or semi-pedestrianised. It was agreed to write to SCC to ask formerly to obtain the official designation of the Thoroughfare.

7. **Planning Committee:** Cllr P Dutton reported on the meeting held on the 7th March 2016 where planning applications for a development at the Holton Rd Garden Centre, a replacement sign at Hammonds, Norwich Road, a conversion of a garage at the Paddocks and reshaping of trees in Highfield Road had all been approved.

8. **Town Development Committee:** Cllr Thomas reported on the last meeting and then it was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 21st March 2016 were accepted as a true record.

9. **Rifle Hall: To consider the question raised at the monthly meeting on the 1st February, 2016 as follows:** What is the current charitable status of the Rifle Hall?
The meeting was opened.

Dr Simon Weeks explained that when he joined early in 2014 many of the Trustees were unhappy that it was an unincorporated trust and therefore there could be potential liabilities for the trustees. Since the 2006 Charities Act there is now an option for a charity incorporated organisation (C.I.O.) which had one set of annual accounts. The trustees were informed by the Charities Commission that the current organisation could not be converted and so a new C.I.O. would need to be formed. This new C.I.O. would be known as The Rifle Hall Trust (Halesworth). To link the former organisation to the new C.I.O. the trustees decided to make the new C.I.O. the single corporate trustee of the old charity.

Mr Doug Gray asked whether the people of the town still owned the building

Cllr Thomas explained that the present trustees of the Rifle Hall had not done anything wrong but that the fault lay with WDC when it misinterpreted the trusteeship of the building. [see previous month's meeting minutes]

Cllr Payne asked to whom were the trustees answerable to?

Dr Weeks explained that they were answerable to the residents of Halesworth through the regulatory powers of the Charity Commission.

Mr Malcolm Smith referred to the last meeting where Cllr Thomas had cast doubts over whether WDC had been the previous trustees and were in a position to hand it over to anyone. Cllr Thomas explained that between 1974 and 2003, WDC recognised that HTC were the trustees, however, a senior officer at WDC had made an assumption that it was handed over to WDC in 1974 but Cllr Thomas had evidence suggesting otherwise.

Cllr Thomas explained that the issue was with WDC not the present trustees however he was concerned about the type of C.I.O which was based on a Foundation Model and this prevented the wider public from voting. Dr Weeks explained that there had been two options. The two models were the Foundation and the Association. Reading from the guidelines from the Charities Commission, Dr Weeks said these guidelines made the Foundation model the only choice at that time.

Cllr Leverett noted that in the trustees February minutes it stated that design plans were being awaited from the surveyors to enable a bid to the Big Lottery Fund. Cllr Leverett wished to know, if the bid was successful, what were the timescales and whether there was any truth in the rumours that the Rifle Hall might be sold. Dr Weeks confirmed that there had been no discussion to sell the Rifle Hall and the only scenario where this might take place is if a series of bids for significant funding was unsuccessful. The survey had reported that the angle of the walls were leaning out to such a degree that if it wasn't fixed shortly it would go past the stage where it was economically viable to repair. If this became the case then the trustees and the residents would need to decide, in consultation, what the best options for the building would be. One of those options might be to sell the building.

Mr Weeks finished by requesting that any residents who wished to volunteer to help the trustees should contact him.

The Chair thanked Mr Weeks for coming to the meeting.

The meeting was then resumed.

10. **Barrow Crossing at Halesworth Station:** To receive any updates. It was noted that SOCH (Save out crossing Halesworth) now had a webpage on the Council website. The Clerk explained that some information had been posted but it was still work in progress. Cllr Thomas requested that Cllr Tony Goldson finds out if Network Rail owns the land that the Northside footpath is located on (Footpath: Bungay Rd – Norwich Rd)
The Chair also confirmed that she was in the process of trying to organise a Risk assessment for the two footpaths which made up the alternative routes proposed by Network Rail.
11. **Reports on meetings and events attended by Council representatives:** To receive any reports on meetings or events attended by Councillors.
Reports were received from Fairtrade, Halesworth Events Management, Halesworth Campus, Halesworth Playing Fields Association and Suffolk Association of Local Councils. These were available to view in the public folder and would be in the Library for reference.
12. **District & County Reports:** To receive any reports from the District & County Councillors.
Cllr Tony Goldson wished to make clear that SCC had not put up their part of the Council Tax. There was however a 2% increase for the Social Welfare Tax and this would be audited and accounted for separately. Cllr Wollweber wished to note, that there had not been any mention of Halesworth in the 'In Touch' magazine. Cllr Goldson said that this was the first time this had happened but it had been noted and would be addressed. Cllr Goldson went on to explain that all of Lowestoft is planned to be 'parished'. In answer to a question from Cllr Thomas, Cllr Goldson confirmed that the car parks would still belong to the District Council. Cllr Thomas also wished to know where the headquarters would be located when Waveney and Suffolk Coastal were merged. Cllr Goldson explained that this merger, if it happened, was many years away. The Waveney Riverside offices were in fact largely owned by Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Coastal District Council were in the process of moving to new premises so it was not known where the central office would be at this stage. Cllr Thomas asked about the restructuring plans as there had already been significant job losses and it was proving difficult to get hold of anyone. Cllr Goldson stated that there were no restructuring plans at present. Cllr Leverett asked whether there would be any consultation on the merger. The Chair read out a statement from Cllr Colin Law who stated 'that whilst public opinion was an important factor to bear in mind, when deciding whether to merge WDC with SCDC, it was not compulsory that we get it'. Cllr Thomas asked if WDC needs to be self-financing will they be looking favourably of disposable assets. Cllr Goldson confirmed that this was not the case, SCC has a £1.4 million budget most of which came from Business rates, however the latest announcement from the Chancellor meant that it was likely that they would lose some of this revenue, in the case of Halesworth, Cllr Goldson thought it was unlikely that any more than 2 businesses would be paying business rates.
13. **Annual Parish Meeting:** The meeting would be held on Thursday 14th April at Edgar Sewter at 7pm.
14. **Financial Matters:** To receive the report of the Finance & Personnel Committee meeting held on the 21st March, 2016. Cllr Lewis reported that the HPFA had asked for a loan and after checking with SALC it was confirmed that HTC was legally able to offer a loan. It was agreed by the Committee that the loan would be offered to the HPFA subject to agreeing the terms for repayment.

The Chair announced that the Council were pleased to confirm the appointment of Phillippa Welby as Assistant Clerk. On a query about the gender of the interview panel from Cllr Payne it was explained that the Chair of the Council, the Chair of the Finance & Personnel Committee and the Vice Chair of the Finance & Personnel Committee together with the Clerk conducted the interviews. The Committee then made the decision and appointed the candidate.

15. **Correspondence:** Janet Huckle – Hover Boards. This item was dealt with in the Public Session.

16. **Accounts for Payment:** The following accounts for payment were approved.

Accounts for payment:

<u>3774.</u>	Anne Fleming – Flowers for Gina, Chair’s Allowance	25.00
<u>3775.</u>	HMRC Payroll Liabilities (Quarterly)	1697.96
<u>3776.</u>	Local Council Public Advisory Service	200.00
<u>3777.</u>	Pearce & Kemp	42.50 + vat
<u>3778.</u>	SALC – AGM Cllr Dutton and Cllr Payne	20.00 + vat
<u>3779.</u>	Community Action Suffolk Council Insurance	1642.19
<u>3780.</u>	Community Action Suffolk Day Centre Insurance	307.82
<u>3781.</u>	EPS Transfers: 6 x Aluminium DON’T FEED THE DUCKS signs	42.00 + vat
<u>3782.</u>	Halesworth Computers and Photographic	545.00

DD/Standing Orders:

<u>3783.</u>	Salaries	1564.82
<u>3784.</u>	Nest Pension Scheme	106.86

Bank & Cash Balances at 31st March, 2016

Current 728	£85,956.06
Community A/c	£5,268.10
Business Reserves 017	£92,208.12
Petty Cash	£102.48

The meeting was closed at 8.50pm.