



Newmarket

TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Newmarket Town Council **held on Monday 29th June 2020 at 6.00 pm via Zoom**

Attendance:

Councillor M Jefferys (Town Mayor)
Councillor M Anderson
Councillor A Appleby
Councillor J Borda
Councillor O Bowen
Councillor J De'Ath
Councillor A Drummond

Councillor Y Fitzgerald
Councillor W Hirst
Councillor R Hood
Councillor P Hulbert
Councillor T Kerby
Councillor C O'Neill
Councillor K Yarrow

Also Present: Deborah Sarson Acting TCM, Debbie Baines -Town Clerk, Cathy Whitaker – RFO, Julie Ashton – Minute Assistant, Chris Pyburn – SCC, 1 Member of the Press and 12 Members of the Public.

Minute	Action by
20/06/1 <u>WELCOME</u> The Mayor opened the meeting and announced that the meeting was being recorded and asked if anyone else intended to record the meeting. There were no requests. The Mayor officially thanked the Acting TCM for her outstanding work and support to NTC. This would be her last meeting and since November 2019 she has guided the Council through the pandemic with her excellent organisational abilities and was instrumental in setting up and maintaining the helpline to support the Newmarket Community. He wished her every success for the future.	
20/06/2 <u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – LGA 1972, Section 85(1) & (2)</u> Apologies were received from Cllrs Caesar and Lay.	
20/06/3 <u>DECLARATION OF MEMBER'S INTERESTS AND TO REMIND COUNCILLORS OF THE NEED TO KEEP UP TO DATE THEIR REGISTER OF MEMBER'S INTERESTS AND TO CONSIDER ANY REQUESTS RECEIVED FOR MEMBERS DISPENSATION</u> None noted.	
20/06/4 <u>TO RECEIVE AND CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 15TH JUNE 2020</u> The Mayor presented the minutes of the ordinary Town Council meeting held on Monday 15th June 2020 and the following was agreed: <u>20/06/4.01 Resolved</u> That the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Monday 15th June 2020 be adopted and signed as a correct record by the Town	

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Mayor.

Cllr Yarrow joined the meeting.

Matters arising:

Page 4 – 20/06/12 – it was noted that Working Groups did require specific Terms of Reference as per NTC Standing Orders.

20/06/5 PRESENTATION ON THE RESULTS OF THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING SURVEY

Chris Pyburn gave a presentation on the survey results which was part of the work to improve the mental and physical health of Newmarket Residents.

He highlighted the key headlines from stage 2 – Connected communities and 3 – Young people’s emotional wellbeing. The details of the survey results are available on the SCC website. The topic for stage 4 is yet to be confirmed and he would welcome input from NTC on what this could include. He requested a separate meeting in the Autumn to discuss this and how NTC could support a programme of work to improve the mental and physical health outcomes for the residents of Newmarket.

The Mayor thanked Chris for his report and the following was agreed:

20/06/5.01 Resolved

That NTC supports the programme of work to improve the mental and physical health of Newmarket residents in principle with a meeting to be held in Autumn. Date to be confirmed.

Chris gave his thanks and left the meeting.

20/06/6 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AN INVITATION TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO PUT QUESTIONS/STATEMENTS OF NOT MORE THAN 3 MINUTES DURATION RELATING TO ITEMS LISTED IN THE PUBLIC PART OF THE AGENDA OR MATTERS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL

Several residents spoke to item 15 regarding resident parking zones, parking charges and parking enforcement.

It was noted that this had been a long-standing issue in Newmarket and representations should be made to WS to implement a fair and sustainable parking system.

A resident gave thanks to the Acting TCM for her professionalism and wished her well for the future. He spoke to item 21 regarding FOI requests.

A member of the press spoke to item 15 regarding illegal parking on the grass at St Mary’s Square. The Mayor advised that this item would be referred to the Community and Leisure Services Committee.

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A resident spoke to item 21 regarding the recording of meetings of Working groups.

The Mayor proposed that item 15 be brought forward and the following was agreed:

20/06/6.01 Resolved

That item 15 Car parking be brought forward.

20/06/7

CAR PARKING

Members were advised that West Suffolk had been requested to investigate the issues with a consultation to establish parking zones. However, this could take up to 2 years to complete. It was suggested that NTC could send a questionnaire to all streets where there are parking issues with the questions being set by a Working group made up of Cllrs and residents. The following was agreed:

20/06/7.01 Resolved

That a Working group be set up comprising of Cllr O'Neill as the Chairman, Cllrs Appleby, Bowen, De'Ath, Drummond, Hirst, Hood, Hulbert and 7 residents. That the terms of reference be to consult residents in all streets where on-street parking is an issue by devising a survey and developing a comprehensive response to the parking issues and report back to the next full Council meeting.

The residents that want to be involved were asked to email their details to Cllr O'Neill and he would set up a meeting.

20/06/8

COUNCILLOR REPORTS

SCC – Cllr Hood advised that her May report had been sent out and the one for June would be sent out in the next few days. She was also working on the children centres and the re-opening of the recycling centre.

WS – Cllr Drummond was working on a project to protect pedestrians on Snailwell Road.

It was noted that Cllr Soons (Newmarket North) had never attended a meeting or provided a report to NTC on how and what she is doing to represent and support Newmarket. The following was agreed:

20/06/8.01 Resolved

That Cllr Soons be invited to attend a meeting to give a report on District activities.

Cllr Hood advised that a meeting with the WS Planning Officers had been requested to discuss their decision to approve the McDonalds application and to ask how they had failed to take into account the NTC resolution to object along with the policies in Newmarket Neighbourhood Plan.

Ward Reports – Cllr Yarrow advised that there had been a report of fly tipping in the garage area of Icewell flats and that Flagship Housing had responded quickly. Flagship would continue to conduct regular checks in the area.

20/06/9 TO RECEIVE THE TOWN MAYOR’S AND DEPUTY MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor’s itinerary for 2020 included the following:

Sent a letter of condolence to RAF Lakenheath regarding the tragic loss of one of their pilots – a copy of the letter would be sent to all Members.

Provided a monthly column called Chainmail for the Newmarket Flyer.

Working with the BID manager on a project to promote independent retailers in Newmarket.

It was noted that due to lockdown, there had not been much activity away from Council business and the pandemic response.

20/06/10 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES AND CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE D&P COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON 22ND JUNE 2020

The Chairman of the Development & Planning Committee presented the report and recommendations from the Development & Planning Committee meetings held on 22nd June 2020. There were no recommendations.

The Committee had discussed a suggestion to seek a Judicial Review on the WS decision to approve the McDonalds application and the proposal was not carried. Members were asked to consider the proposal again and to approve funds of up to £10,000.

A recorded vote was requested and a vote was taken with the following results:

Votes for – Cllrs Drummond, Hood and Hulbert

Votes against – Cllrs Appleby, Bowen, Fitzgerald, Hirst, De’Ath, Jefferys, Kerby and O’Neill

Abstentions – Cllrs Anderson and Borda

The proposal was not carried but it was noted that NTC could take action to mitigate the decision.

20/06/11 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES AND CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE F&P COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON 22ND JUNE 2020

The Chairman of the Finance & Policy Committee presented the report

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and recommendations from the Finance & Policy Committee meetings held on 22nd June 2020.

20/06/11.01 Resolved (F/20/06/8.01 Recommendation)

That the ratification of the schedules of payments for the period 01/05/2020 – 31/05/2020 (Cash Book 1, 2 and 4) be received and adopted.

20/06/11.02 Resolved (F/20/06/11.01 Recommendation)

That the current tenants be asked to clear out the Kiosk and leave it in a clean and tidy state. If they are not able to do this, NTC will arrange for it to be cleaned and cleared and the costs will be recharged to the tenants. Should no payment be received, the outstanding monies will be pursued through the County Court.

20/06/11.03 Resolved (F/20/06/12.01 Recommendation)

That the identified Earmarked Reserves (EMR 311 Play equipment; EMR 328 Vehicle replacement; EMR 342 Grants; EMR 341 Water feature) be referred to the appropriate Committee to decide how much of the respective budgets should be put into the Earmarked Reserves.

20/06/11.04 Resolved (F/20/06/13.01 Recommendation)

That the F&P Committee set up a Working Group in October 2020 to review all relevant internal control documents including the Risk Management scheme and reassess the risk score ratings.

20/06/11.05 Not Resolved (F/20/06/14.01 Recommendation)

That the strimmer and other obsolete equipment be sold.

This recommendation was referred to the Community & Leisure Services Committee to consider.

20/06/12 NEW COMMITTEES TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference for the Community & Leisure Services and Neighbourhood Plan Committees were received and the following was agreed:

20/06/12.01 Resolved

That the terms of reference for the Community & Leisure Services and Neighbourhood Plan Committees be received and adopted.

20/06/13 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the Community & Leisure Services Committee was agreed as follows:

20/06/13.01 Resolved

That the Membership of the Community & Leisure Services Committee be comprised of Cllrs Bowen, De'Ath, Yarrow, Fitzgerald, Hirst, Hulbert, Borda, Jefferys, O'Neill, Drummond, Kerby, Appleby,

Hood and Anderson.

The membership of the Neighbourhood Plan Committee was agreed as follows:

20/06/13.02 Resolved

That the Membership of the Neighbourhood Plan Committees be comprised of Cllrs Bowen De'Ath, Yarrow, Fitzgerald, Hirst, Hulbert, Jefferys, O'Neill, Drummond, Kerby, Appleby and Hood.

20/06/14 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES AND ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE STEERING GROUP MEETING HELD ON 9TH & 16TH JUNE 2020

The Chairman of the Coronavirus Response Steering Group presented the report from the Coronavirus Response Steering Group meetings held on 9th & 16th June 2020.

20/06/14.01 Resolved

That the minutes of the Coronavirus Response Steering Group held on 9th & 16th June 2020 be received and noted.

The Mayor thanked call handlers, the volunteer network and all the organisations supporting the Community.

20/06/15 CORONAVIRUS FINANCIAL UPDATE

The Coronavirus Financial update Mar – May 2020 was noted.

20/06/16 DRAFT MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

The results of the consultation were noted and the following was agreed:

20/06/16.01 Resolved

That a Working group be set up comprising of Cllrs Jefferys, O'Neill, Appleby and Kerby. That the terms of reference be to look at the questionnaire and recommend a response to the Model Code of Conduct consultation and report back at the next full Council meeting.

20/06/17 SUFFOLK CHILDREN'S CENTRES

The information from SCC advised that they planned to make the family hub at Foley House full time and children's centre part time although this was contradicted by the information available on SCC's website which stated that the proposed Family Hub would be part time.

The Mayor intervened to propose that Standing Orders be suspended to allow the meeting to continue longer than 2 hours. The following was agreed:

20/06/17.01 Resolved

That Standing Orders be suspended to allow the meeting to continue to conduct business for longer than 2 hours.

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The discussion on the SCC planned cuts to children's services in Newmarket resumed and concern was expressed about the proposed reduction in service of the Children's Centre. A proposal was made that NTC not support the intended reduction in the Children's Centre services in Newmarket to part time for children under the age of 5 and requests that it is kept open full time.

A recoded vote was requested and a vote was taken with the following results:

Votes For – Cllrs Anderson, De'Ath, Bowen, Kerby, Fitzgerald, Hulbert, O'Neill and Hirst

Votes against – None noted

Abstentions – Cllrs Drummond, Hood and Appleby

With the vote being carried, the following was agreed:

20/06/17.02 Resolved

That NTC does not support the SCC planned reduction of the Children's Centre services at Foley House for children under the age of 5 and to request that the services remain full time.

Letter to be sent to Suffolk County Council.

20/06/18 SPEED INDICATOR DEVICE

An amendment was made to the RFO report to state that the post in Elizabeth Avenue was outside number 39 and the report was noted.

20/06/19 REOPENING PLAN

Acting TCM advised that recent Government guidance had changed for children's play areas and equipment and could be opened from 4th July. Members considered opening the Memorial Gardens and the following was agreed:

20/06/19.01 Resolved

That the Memorial Gardens remain closed and be reviewed at the next full Council meeting.

Acting TCM advised that it had been agreed by email to appoint a company to deep clean the Memorial Hall to allow staff to return to work and the costs were noted. It was also noted that an agency cleaner had been employed for 5 days per week.

20/06/20 THE GUINEAS

Members were advised that in order to open the Guineas, the Manager had to follow the Government guidelines for social distancing. A meeting would be held next Wednesday to review the current measures and

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guidance to inform the way forward.

20/06/21 TO CONSIDER CORRESPONDENCE

The following correspondence was noted:

- a) Matt Hancock – letter of thanks to NTC for providing the dedicated helpline to support Newmarket residents during the pandemic
- b) Member of the Public – letter regarding the lack of District and County reports to NTC
- c) Member of the Public – letter regarding the conduct of Cllr Hood at the F&P Working Group meeting held on 11th May 2020 – Cllr Hood maintained that the Working Group was not properly constituted as there were no confirmed terms of reference and that the information regarding voting was incorrect.
- d) Weatherby Crossing – letter from the inspector confirming the Inquiry had been postponed to September 2020, date and venue to be confirmed. It was hoped that the Inspector could be persuaded to still hold the enquiry at Newmarket Football Club. Cambridgeshire County Council had confirmed that they could not assist with funding however, they can act as an expert witness if called to do so.

20/06/22 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS

Acting TCM advised that the F&P Working Group meeting had no confidential content and the Freedom of Information request could therefore not be refused. With regards to meetings being recorded without Member's knowledge, it was pointed out that this is stated on every Council or committee agenda, each Chairman should state this at the opening of a meeting however, it was noted that sometimes this is overlooked. Anyone attending a meeting via Zoom will see that the meeting is being recorded on their screen (top left-hand corner). Members were advised to assume that in future, all meetings would be recorded.

20/06/23 CODE OF CONDUCT

Several complaints had been made to the Monitoring Officer regarding individual Councillor behaviour. The Code of Conduct complaints had been scrutinised by the Monitoring Officer and the following decisions and recommendations were made:

Date of decision = 7th February 2020

Complainant – Cllr Hood and TCM Roberta Bennett

Member – Cllr O'Neill

Decision – upheld – breach of Section 1 of the Code of Conduct failing to show respect.

Recommendation – Cllr O'Neill to apologise

Action taken – Apologies given

Date of decision – 28th May 2020

Complainant – Cllr Drummond

Member – Cllr O'Neill

Decision – not upheld – not in breach of Section 1 of the Code of Conduct

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failing to show respect.

Date of decision – Not provided

Complainant – Cllr Jefferys

Member – Cllr Hood

Decision – not upheld owing to lack of evidence

Date of decision – 23rd June 2020

Complainant – Cllr Jefferys

Member – Cllr Drummond

Decision – upheld – in breach of Section 1 of the Code of Conduct failing to show respect to the Acting TCM

Recommendation – Cllr Drummond to apologise to the Acting TCM

Action taken – Apologies given and noted by email

The Acting TCM made the following statement:

At a workshop meeting in February I stated to Council that it had a poor reputation because of political infighting and that it had achieved very little of note since the election last May; that trying to work with this Council is like walking through a minefield never knowing when the next bomb is going to go off and that I spend an inordinate amount of my time trying to manoeuvre through this minefield; that much time and energy is spent by Councillors political manoeuvring which is wasteful of Council resources including staff time; that Councillor behaviour is not conducive to staff retention

This is not a game. This Council is responsible for three quarters of a million pounds of annual expenditure of public money. Everything this Council does should be for the benefit of the residents of Newmarket. Every Councillor needs to examine their reasons for being a town councillor and if they can't honestly say that it's for that reason and that reason alone, then they should seriously reconsider their position. Politics should not interfere with the decision making of the Town Council; it's not appropriate at the community level of local government.

Rather than trying to score political points against each other or individual councillors, you need to be focussing on developing a clear plan for what the Council will achieve over the remainder of the electoral term and work together to deliver on it. This can't be achieved while you're all behaving like children in a playground. It's time to draw a line under the issues of the last few months and move forward.

This was all stated before the pandemic. Since then I have come to realise that the issues this council faces are caused by a small group of individuals who are so intent on their own agendas, they are prepared to do just about anything to achieve them. Because I stood up to these individuals, I have been bullied, publicly and privately vilified both in the papers and on social media, had false accusations made about me. I've been libelled, suffered character defamation, been belittled and undermined at every

opportunity and even written out of history. They have upset other Councillors, staff and members of the public by their actions and refuse to accept they have acted inappropriately.

This cannot be allowed to continue. Especially if the Town Council is going to have any chance of improving its reputation and achieving great things for the town.

Newmarket Town Council now has the opportunity under new leadership and with a new Town Clerk to move forward positively as a team, especially as it has now proven what it is capable of with its response to the pandemic. But it can only do that if those individuals who seek to use their power to influence, control, manipulate and outmanoeuvre are silenced and marginalised. And those on the Council who have much to offer are given a chance to shine and thrive under positive leadership and support.

I can honestly say that the last three months of lockdown have been some of the most challenging of my life – isolated from my family who all live the other side of the world and my son who lives in Yorkshire, I live alone and have on top of all the other hardships of this difficult time had to deal with the most challenging behaviour from councillors that I've ever experienced in my 20 years of clerking.

I leave NTC with mixed feelings but overwhelming relief is the main one. I stuck it out when many others would have cracked under the pressure that I have endured because of the support of the majority of the councillors, all the staff and the members of the community that we have worked with over these past months and because it was the right thing to do both for the community and the Town Council. To all of you, I say thank you for your support.

To the others who have behaved so abominably, please take your politics away to a bigger pond and leave NTC out of it and allow it to get on with its job without your petty nit-picking and time wasting.

I wish you all good luck in the future.

20/06/24 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
Monday 27th July 2020 at 6:00pm.

Meeting closed at 8:33pm

Signed: By the Chairman

Date: 27/07/2020