

NORTHSTOWE TOWN COUNCIL - FULL COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Full Council meeting of Northstowe Town Council held on
Wednesday 23rd February 2022 at Northstowe Secondary College

Present: 12 Members - Cllr Benedicic; Cllr Bros Sabria; Cllr Castelino; Cllr Gamon; Cllr Harrison; Cllr Littlemore; Cllr Males; Cllr Oluwasanya; Cllr Owen; Cllr Panvekar; Cllr Susarla; Cllr Van der Meijden.
Quorum: 5 Members.
Apologies: Cllr Delip; Cllr Thompson.
Public: 14 members of the public.

Meeting started at 19:00 pm. Cllr Owen (Mayor) took the Chair.

186/21-22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and approved from Cllr Delip and Cllr Thompson.

187/21-22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- Cllr Males declared the following interests: Co-Secretary of Northstowe Social; Treasurer of Northstowe Sports and Wellbeing.
 - Cllr Harrison declared the following interests: Treasurer of Sustainable Northstowe; Secretary of Northstowe Horticultural Association.
 - Cllr Bros Sabria declared the following interest: Chair of Sustainable Northstowe.
- Dispensation was granted to above Councillors to participate in discussion and vote on all agenda items.

188/21-22 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No member of the public wished to speak.

189/21-22 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 19TH JANUARY 2022

It was proposed by Cllr Littlemore, seconded by Cllr Gamon and **RESOLVED with 9 votes for and 3 abstaining, to approve the minutes of the meeting of 19th January 2022 as a true record of that meeting.**

190/21-22 PATHFINDER SCHOOL

- 1) *To receive a presentation, together with posters and a plan, from Northstowe Pathfinder School to highlight environmental and road safety issues (posters and plan pre-circulated).*
- 2) *To allow for questions and discussion around potential actions that could be taken.*

The Chair welcomed the delegation from Northstowe's Pathfinder Primary School, consisting of seven pupils, the headteacher, a teacher and a parent. The pupils gave a passionate account, explaining that, following a local walk to answer the question, 'is our community perfect?', the School Council observed litter, the Northstowe sign missing letters, and road safety issues due to speeding around Northstowe and in within the school car park. The pupils proposed several ideas to help improve the community. One is to help promote within the school and with parents and carers information about the monthly litter picks organised by Northstowe Pathfinder Church. Furthermore, the pupils held up posters they created and proposed that they are to be hung up on lamp posts and other key locations across Northstowe, to encourage people to keep the community litter free and posters to prevent cars from speeding.

Several Councillors made further observations, all welcoming the school's plans and a suggestion was made to ensure that the signs are made of durable quality. The Chair summarised, thanking the school and its pupils for bringing the issues to the Town Council's attention, explaining that the issues around road safety and environment are aligned with the Town Council's focus areas. He also declaring that the

Town Council wishes to help the school in delivering these plans; the Town Council will discuss the use of the lamp posts with the developers, as current landowners of these assets.

In addition, in response to a request from the school to work with the School Council, the Chair declared that the Town Council would welcome the opportunity to work together more closely, to help the school where possible and for the school and its community to understand what the Town Council's plans are and where further opportunities for cooperation can perhaps be created in future.

As per Standing Order 1(a) and 10(a)(vi), the Chair deferred items 191/21-22 and 192/21-22 to later at the meeting, when the respective speakers were expected to attend.

193/21-22 REPORT FROM SOUTH CAMBS DC'S OFFICERS

- 1) *To receive a report from Mihaela Stan, SCDC Phase 1 Community Development Officer, and Kathryn Beck, SCDC Phase 2 Community Development Officer.*

The report was noted. Mihaela Stan, who was present, provided the following updates to the report on the work of the SCDC officers;

- They are coordinating the delivery of a Northstowe Day event, with celebrations to focus on 7th May 2022. To this end, a meeting has been scheduled in the near future, with the Town Council also invited to join the discussion towards developing this event.
- They are working on the Welcome Packs and are recruiting volunteers to help with the delivery of the welcome packs in the community. She explained that, due to Covid-19, a large number of welcome packs (hundreds) still need to be delivered, to catch up on this work with all residents who have moved in the town.
- They are regularly conducting occupation counts, with another one scheduled later in the week; in the process they are improving the database of occupied houses in Northstowe.

A Councillor made the observation that the number of Northstowe News magazines still seems to be around 100 more than the household occupations listed, and that the reasons for this apparent discrepancy may need to be looked into in more detail. The Chair thanked Mihaela for her contributions.

194/21-22 REPORT FROM TOWN CLERK & RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

- 1) *To receive a report from Mark Nokkert, Town Clerk & RFO to Northstowe Town Council (reporting period: January 2022).*

The report was noted.

A question was raised around the clerk's CiLCA training and the links to the Council's current General Power of Competence (GPC). The Clerk explained that he has made some progress on the next phase of CiLCA training, the 30 units to be created through an online portfolio, but that the progress has been slower than he wished for due to the many other work commitments, and that he may probably need to reprioritise his work to allow for more time on CiLCA training to be spent. As for the GPC, the clerk explained that the Council retains its GPC until the Annual Meeting of the Town Council which is held each May at which point the Council needs to assess whether it still meets all the GPC criteria. At the coming meeting (on 11th May), one of the key criteria to hold the GPC, i.e. having a CiLCA-qualified Clerk, will change and the Council will therefore lose its GPC from that date, but will regain this again when the clerk has obtained his CiLCA qualification and it is, thereafter, noted as such at the next full Council meeting (where GPC is then to be re-declared at that meeting).

The clerk was **tasked** to investigate what the implications will be for the Town Council of losing the GPC, and report back to the Council on this matter.

195/21-22 COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- To receive and note minutes from the following Committee meetings held:*
- a) *Events and Markets Committee – 4th January 2022 (status: approved);*

- b) *Planning Committee – 11th January 2022 (status: approved);*
- c) *Finance and Governance Committee – 18th January 2022 (status: draft);*
- d) *Events and Markets Committee – 1st February 2022 (status: draft);*
- e) *Planning Committee – 8th February (status: draft).*

Noted.

196/21-22 CO-OPTION OF COUNCILLOR

- 1) *To Receive a report, setting out co-option procedures as proposed.*

The Chair invited the Clerk to speak. The Clerk explained the specifics of the options available to local councils where a casual vacancy has arisen within six months of a regular election, as was the case in this case. He then provided a summary of the co-option procedures proposed, in lieu of the Town Council having an existing co-option procedure.

- 2) *To agree to co-opt to fill the current Casual Councillor Vacancy, following resignation of a councillor in January 2022.*

A discussion followed whereby the following key points were raised, both for and against the proposed co-option procedure;

- Cllr Van der Meijden proposed that having a Councillor voted in only a couple of months before the next elections would probably not be very useful, as the councillor may not have enough time to get into the role.
- Cllr Owen considered that all five candidates who are standing appear keen and seem to be of high quality, so that any time people can give to the Council may be well worth their and the Council's efforts.
- Cllr Littlemore argued that already some committees have seen cases of being or being at risk of being non-quorate, and that making sure the Council has the full 15 Members at all times was seemed important to reduce the risk of these situations materialising.
- Cllr Bros Sabria observed that, although a new Councillor would not have many opportunities left before the elections to join Full Council meetings or even to join a committee, at the other hand it may be easier now for a new councillor to join in and 'find their feet' as a lot of Council business has now been set up and projects set in motion where they can join in if they so wish. She also proposed to consider having some form of 'Councillor buddy' system set up, to ease new Councillors into their role.

Following other Councillors' similar points, the Chair proposed to vote on the co-option procedures as proposed.

It was proposed by Cllr Owen, seconded by Cllr Littlemore and **RESOLVED with 10 votes for and 2 voting against, to co-opt to fill the current casual Councillor vacancy, following the procedures as recommended in the report.**

The Chair proposed (as per Standing Order 1(r)(ix) and 26a) to change the Council's Standing Order 3(s), to divert from the usual voting by show of hands to have this done through ballot papers instead. It was proposed by Cllr Owen, seconded by Cllr Littlemore and **RESOLVED unanimously, to divert from the usual voting by show of hands to have this done through ballot papers instead.**

- 3) *To receive a report with information from applications received from prospective candidates for the casual vacancy (Note that information from applications shared is restricted to people's initial, surname and the profile as prepared by the candidates - note that in the profile the candidates are asked to describe their reason(s) why they would like to become a Councillor, as well as details of any skills, knowledge, experience or life experiences that they think would benefit the Town Council and the Northstowe community).*
- 4) *To vote on who is to be co-opted as Town Councillor.*

The Chairman led on the vote, with the assistance of the clerk. He highlighted that an absolute majority vote from all members present and entitled to vote is required for a candidate to be co-opted. There were two rounds of votes before an absolute majority was reached.

After the votes, the Chairman declared S. Nikoro duly voted in (co-opted) as Town Councillor.

191/21-22 ICAN-NORTHSTOWE

- 1) *To receive a presentation titled 'Feedback on engagement in research and possible workshops in Northstowe' from ICAN researchers Dr Kate Ellis and Dr Jenna Panter, ICAN-Northstowe Research Team, on initial results from the ICAN-Northstowe survey held in late 2021 (summary information pre-circulated).*
- 2) *To allow for questions and discussion.*

The Chair invited the speakers. The speakers introduced themselves as Dr. Jenna Panter and Dr. Emma Lawlor, both working at the MRC Epidemiology Unit of the University of Cambridge. They provided for an understanding of the next phases of the ICAN-Northstowe study, highlighting the following aspects in particular;

- They highlighted that they will be present at then [Cambridge Science Festival](#), with activities and an exhibition with photos children took of their journeys to and from school; a mapping exercise will also be carried out at the Science Festival.
- The 'design your neighbourhood' mapping exercise, to map out public facilities/street furniture/cycle and walking paths residents wish to see across Northstowe is also something they plan to do as part of a future Northstowe Community Forum.

Councillors expressed that they were encouraged by the research carried out and their further plans and would welcome the community input they are instigating. They did also ask;

- Whether the outcomes would feed into what is actually going to be delivered in e.g., phase 3A that has just received outline planning approval;
- Whether Homes England, as key partner in the delivery of phases 2, 3A and 3B, are already aware of these plans and how they can learn from the community outcomes of the projects;
- It was also suggested that this may form a great school project, and the researchers were encouraged to include the School Councils in their work.
- It was also highlighted that the lack of community facilities may have had an effect on residents' isolation and mental health, and the researchers were encouraged to include these aspects in their community engagement work.

The Chair thanked the researchers for their time.

197/21-22 HYDROLOGY WORKING GROUP

- 1) *To receive a report on the Hydrology Working Group's current working hypothesis.*
- 2) *To agree that the Hydrology Working Group should work with Greater Cambridge Planning to facilitate and document the initial testing actions as proposed in the report.*

Cllr Littlemore summarised the hypothesis as detailed in the report, which focuses on the possibility that parcel H9 might act as a kind of 'soakaway' for phase 1, resulting in the water table issues observed. He expressed his wish – as detailed in the report - to discuss the issues with Greater Cambridge Planning, following on from initial informal discussions held with them previously, and asking for access to sites to investigate the hypothesis and which are currently private property. He emphasised that the proposed action plan is 'cost neutral', except for Town Councillors' and partners' time input. Following a question to the extent of Environment Agency input needed, Cllr Littlemore confirmed that their input is likely also needed, as well as all other partners the Working Group has been liaising with to date.

It was proposed by Cllr Benedicic, seconded by Cllr Gamon and **RESOLVED with 11 voting for and 1 abstaining, to agree that the Hydrology Working Group should work with Greater Cambridge Planning to facilitate and document the initial testing actions as proposed in the report.**

198/21-22 MARKET BUSINESS PLAN TO SECURE SCDC FUNDING

- 1) *To receive a brief outline from the Market Development Working Group on how it recommends that funding made available to the Town Council by SCDC for the set-up of a regular market in Northstowe is to be used (report attached).*
- 2) *To review outline.*

Following a summary from Cllr Oluwasanya, no further questions were asked.

- 3) *To approve the development of an expanded business plan by the Market Development Working Group based on this outline and present to the Council (Extraordinary committee meeting of the Events and Markets Committee or Finance and Governance Committee)*

It was proposed by Cllr Benedicic, seconded by Cllr Owen and **RESOLVED unanimously to approve the development of an expanded business plan by the Market Development Working Group based on the outline presented in the report and present this to the Council.**

199/21-22 MARKET COMMUNITY SURVEY PRINTING AND DISTRIBUTION

- 1) *To receive report from the Market Development Working Group on options for the Town Council to order the printing and distribution of a community engagement survey on pilot market.*
- 2) *To discuss the report findings, to;*

Cllr Bros Sabria informed the Council that the market survey was launched two days earlier (online only so far) and had already seen a couple of hundred responses.

A question was raised whether the Council still needs to invest in publicising a leaflet, if the online response rate is proving good, and whether having some hard copies in The Wing might be sufficient. In response, Cllr Oluwasanya argued that the Council wishes to act sustainably, hence print-outs would be done on recycled paper, but that after careful consideration the Market Development Working Group had considered it more important to be as inclusive as possible and to ensure everyone in Northstowe is reached and given an opportunity to provide their ideas, rather than an – albeit large - sub-section of the resident population if done through online promotion only.

- a) *agree to print and distribute community engagement survey to all households, and to pay for the associated costs.*

It was proposed by Cllr Benedicic, seconded by Cllr Gamon and **RESOLVED with 11 voting for and 1 voting against, to agree to print and distribute the community engagement survey to all households, and to pay for the associated costs.**

- b) *decide which company it wants to order the printing of the community engagement survey.*

It was proposed by Cllr Benedicic, seconded by Cllr Littlemore and **RESOLVED unanimously, to go along with the company recommendation from the Market Development Working to order the printing of the community engagement survey.**

- c) *decide which company it wants to entrust the distribution of the community survey to all Northstowe households.*

It was proposed by Cllr Littlemore, seconded by Cllr Benedicic and **RESOLVED unanimously, to go along with the company recommendation from the Market Development Working to entrust the distribution of the community survey to all Northstowe households.**

- d) *agree to pay the costs for printing and delivery out of the Council's budget heading 'Newsletters and Publications', or a different cost code as seen fit by the RFO.*

It was proposed by Cllr Owen, seconded by Cllr Benedicic and **RESOLVED with 11 voting for and 1 voting against, to agree to pay the costs for printing and delivery out of the Council's budget heading 'Newsletters and Publications'.**

192/21-22 REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL COUNCILLORS

- 1) *To receive a report from: Cllr Firouz Thompson – Cambridgeshire CC; Cllr Sarah Cheung Johnson & Cllr Alex Malyon – South Cambs DC.*

The report was noted. The following items were raised with Cllr Sarah Cheung Johnson, who was present;

- Ongoing issues with some residents experiencing billing issues with Greenbelt. It was mentioned that these issues had also been discussed at the most recent Phase 1 Open Spaces Steering Group meeting;
- Delays in development of the Phase 1. Cllr Cheung Johnson mentioned that she was to have a meeting with senior cabinet members of South Cambs DC and suggested that Northstowe Town Council may wish to approach them directly about this as well, to raise any concerns there may be around the delivery of these key facilities.

200/21-22 TRAINING COSTS

- 1) *To approve for the Clerk & RFO to go on the following training and development opportunities;*
 - (a) *Understanding Elections and the Clerk's role – CAPALC, 7th March, £30.*
 - (b) *Year-end Accounts and Audit, webinar, CALC with The Parkinson Partnership LLP, various dates in March and early April - £30.*
 - (c) *Introduction to VAT for Local Council, various dates, at least once per month, CALC with The Parkinson Partnership LLP - £30.*
 - (d) *: SLCC Annual Regional Conference ('Midlands Training Seminar'), 21st September 2022 - £85 + VAT [note: CAPALC is sponsoring the costs for coach transport to the venue].*

It was proposed by Cllr Van der Meijden, seconded by Cllr Males and **RESOLVED unanimously, to approve for the Clerk & RFO to attend the above training and development opportunities.**

201/21-22 DELEGATED POWERS UNDER COVID RESTRICTIONS

- 1) *To give full delegated powers to the Clerk in the event that the Council could not meet due to Covid restrictions. Delegated powers to last until the next meeting of the Full Council.*

It was proposed by Cllr Littlemore, seconded by Cllr Susarla and **RESOLVED unanimously that: In response to the Covid-19 outbreak in the UK, and in the event that it is not possible to convene a meeting and legislation does not allow for virtual meetings, the Town Clerk will have delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the Town Council where such a decision cannot be reasonably deferred or must be made in order to comply with commercial or statutory deadlines. This will be carried out where possible in consultation with the Mayor and the Deputy-Mayor. Any decision made under this delegation must be recorded in writing by the Clerk and reported to the next convened meeting of Full Council. The delegation authority ceases upon the first meeting of the Full Council after the council meeting at which the delegation was put in place.**

202/21-22 MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

- 1) *Annual Town meeting ('Meeting of the Electorate'), to be held on 16th March 2021 at the Secondary College.*

Noted.

- 2) *Town Council elections - Information sessions for prospective Cllrs held by CAPALC on 5th and 16th March.*

Noted.

- 3) *Traveller Awareness Training – Report from Cllr Van der Meijden on training attended on 25th January 2022.*

The report was noted. Cllr Van der Meijden provided additional information to the Council, emphasising also the need to have a policy in place. She cited the example of Willingham which has made available a transit site, and recommended that the Council contacts all neighbouring villages to understand their policies and to also have a collective response, where needed. It was also suggested that the Council enquires with the current landowners (L&Q; Homes England; SCDC) what plans they have in place themselves regarding travellers' sites in Northstowe.

- 4) [Further to item 182/21-22 (2)]: Minutes of the meeting with Stagecoach held on 6th December (attended by Cllr Littlemore and the Clerk).

Noted.

203/21-22 MEETINGS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES WITH TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATION

- 1) To receive minutes or notes from meetings of the following outside bodies with official Northstowe TC representation;
(a) 6th January 2022: Phase 1 Open Spaces Management and Maintenance Steering Group (attended by Cllr Littlemore and the Clerk).

Noted.

- (b) 25th January 2022: Northstowe Support Partnership (attended by Cllr Oluwasanya).

Noted. Cllr Oluwasanya added that, further to the minutes shared, at the meeting it was also considered to approach the Town Council to be on the funding panel for the Placemaking Fund. The Chair responded, mentioning that the Town Council would welcome a proposal to come to the Town Council for it to join the panel for funding application decision-making. The clerk was tasked to liaise with Cllr Oluwasanya in this matter.

- (c) 9th February 2022: Northstowe Community Networkers (attended by Cllr Littlemore).

Noted.

204/21-22 DATES MEETINGS OUTSIDE BODIES WITH TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATION

- a) 24th February 2022, 10AM: Phase 1 Open Spaces Management & Maintenance Steering Group.
b) 15th March 2022, 1:30PM: Northstowe Support Partnership.
c) 24th March 2022, 10AM: Phase 1 Open Spaces Management & Maintenance Steering Group.
d) 13th April, 7PM: Northstowe Community Networkers.

Noted.

205/21-22 DATES OTHER MEETINGS EXTERNAL BODIES WITH NORTHSTOWE TC INVITED

- a) [added for information]: 21st February 2022, 7PM: Park Play.
b) 25th February 2022, 1:30PM: Homes England.
c) 3rd March 2022, 5:30PM: Stagecoach.
d) 23rd March 2022, 7PM: Northstowe Community Forum.

Noted.

206/21-22 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Full Council: Wed 30th March 2022 at 7PM – location TBC.

For all Council meetings, see www.northstowetowncouncil.gov.uk.

Noted.

The meeting closed at 21:05 pm

Signed.....

Town Mayor

Date.....