# NORTHSTOWE TOWN COUNCIL - FULL COUNCIL

**MINUTES** of the Full Council meeting of Northstowe Town Council held on Tuesday **25<sup>th</sup> April 2023** at Pathfinder Primary School, Northstowe.

Members: 15

Quorum: 5 Members.

Present: 10 Members: Cllr Owen (Mayor); Cllr Littlemore (Deputy-Mayor); Cllr Benedicic; Cllr

Castelino; Cllr Kinnera; Cllr Males; Cllr Mgaidia; Cllr Oluwasanya; Cllr Panvekar; Cllr. Sovago.

Town clerk.

Members of the public: 4.

Apologies: Cllr Bros Sabria; Cllr Delip; Cllr Nikoro; Cllr Greef; Cllr Susarla.

Absent: N/A.

The meeting was opened at 19:00 pm. Cllr Owen took the Chair.

Cllr Owen introduced the meeting, stating that at next month's Annual Meeting of the Town Council he will not be standing as either Chair of Deputy-Chair of the Council, and that, after wo years in the role as Mayor, this was going to be last Full Council meeting he was going to chair.

## **O6/23-24** APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Standing Item)

To record any apologies for absence received prior to the meeting.

Apologies had been received, and accepted, from: Cllr Bros Sabria; Cllr Delip; Cllr Nikoro; Cllr Greef; Cllr Susarla.

It was noted that Cllr Warren-Green (SCDC), Cllr. Bygott (SCDC) and Cllr Handley (SCDC) had also sent their apologies.

# **07/23-24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** (Standing Item)

- a) Councillors to declare any pecuniary or personal interest in any items on the agenda.
- b) Councillors to declare any prejudicial interest in any items on the agenda and to inform the Chair if they wish to speak on the matter during public participation.

None were declared.

### **08/23-24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** (Standing Item)

- a) To adjourn the meeting for up to 15 mins. to allow members of the public, and Councillors declaring a prejudicial interest, to address the meeting in relation to business to be transacted at this meeting.
- b) To reconvene the meeting.

The Chair adjourned the meeting.

No member of the public wished to speak. The meeting was reconvened.

# 09/23-24 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS (Standing item)

1) To approve the minutes of the Full Council meeting of 28th March 2023 as a true record of the meeting (attached).

It was proposed by Cllr Benedicic, seconded by Cllr Males and **RESOLVED**, with 5 voting for and 5 abstaining, **to approve the minutes of the meeting of 28th March 2023 as a true record of that meeting**. The Chair signed the minutes.

2) To approve the minutes of the (Extraordinary) Full Council meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> April 2023 as a true record of the meeting (attached).

It was proposed by Cllr Littlemore, seconded by Cllr Panvekar and **RESOLVED**, with 3 voting for and 7 abstaining, **to approve the minutes of the meeting of 18**<sup>th</sup> **April 2023 as a true record of that meeting**. The Chair signed the minutes.

# 10/23-24 REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL WARD MEMBERS (Standing Item)

1) To receive a report from Cambridgeshire C.C. Division Member Cllr F. Thompson (attached; note: copy of Annual Report instead of monthly report).

Cllr Thompson, present, provided an update to their report;

- Update on the Park and Ride links created: there have been no complaints received from residents regarding possible light pollution with the new streetlamps having been installed.
- Ongoing discussions are taking place with Cardinalis about the need to cover their trucks to prevent
  accidental spillage of debris onto the public roads. Cllr Thompson requested, on behalf of the
  company, for residents to take the vehicle registration of any vehicles that drives around with their
  load not covered with tarpaulin.
  - In response to a discussion around the need to sweep up roads on a regular basis, Cllr Thompson agreed to take away some of the ideas voiced and discuss these with the company.
- A Councillor made a request for an update on the bus stops to be painted on the road on Pathfinder Way, which previously had been announced as 'imminent'.
- 2) To receive a report from South Cambs D.C. Ward Member Cllr. N. Warren-Green (attached). Noted.
- 3) To receive a report from South Cambs D.C. Ward Member Cllr. T. Bygott (attached). Noted.

# 11/23-24 REPORT FROM SCDC'S COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS (Standing Item)

To receive a report from SCDC's Phase 1 and 2 Community Development Officers (attached).

E. Bridges (SCDC), present, provided an update to their report;

• The modules of the Temporary Community Centre on the Green are due to arrive on Thursday. This information has been shared widely through social media and with nearby residents directly.

# 12/23-24 NORTHSTOWE DELIVERY GROUP (Standing Item)

To receive minutes of the Northstowe Delivery Group meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023 (attached). Noted. No questions were raised for A. Ainsworth, present.

### 13/23-24 REPORT FROM TOWN CLERK (Standing Item)

To receive a report from the Town Clerk (period: March 2023) (attached). Noted; no questions were raised.

The clerk highlighted that the Deputy Clerk is to start work at the beginning of May. This is good news, in particular considering the ongoing growth in workload and the backlog due to the delays in recruitment. He did, nevertheless, wish to highlight that it is likely that it will still take between 3 and 5 months for induction and introducing the Deputy Clerk to the wide range of work the Council staff gets involved in. This therefore means that until that time it is unlikely that the central staffing team can take on any extra work, and he made a plea to all Councillors to take this into consideration.

He continued, in order to ensure that staffing time is used effectively, he wished to make a respectful plea to all Councillors that they ensure that all motions that come to staff are given enough time and are researched properly and that all relevant people, in particular if a motion is coming from a Working Group, have all had their input into the motion before this reaches the staff's desk to be added to a meeting agenda. With this, he wished to reiterate that he is there for all Councillors to help them to look at draft motion papers and is always available to help out where people get stuck, or if they wish to discuss an idea with him already at a very early stage of motion preparation. With this, he asked that Councillors do start early on motions to prevent drafts reaching him just before deadlines for meetings; in such scenarios he may not always be able to provide any feedback or minimal feedback only.

# 14/23-24 KICKSTART FUND PANEL (Standing Item)

NB: A Kickstart Fund Panel meeting this month was cancelled, as no applications had been received.

- 1) To receive paperwork from the Kickstart Fund Panel meeting in March 2023 (N/A this month).
- 2) To decide on NTC's responses to the applications (N/A this month).

Noted. It was observed that it is understood that there had been several enquiries but that none had resulted in an application yet.

### 15/23-24 UPDATES ON ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

For information - To receive an update, from the clerk and/or relevant Councillor(s), on:

i) Park Play (items 194/22-23; FC 20<sup>th</sup> Dec. '22; 212/22-23(ii); FC 24<sup>th</sup> Jan. '23; 269/22-23(2); FC 28<sup>th</sup> Mar. '23) – Update: progress on Play Leader recruitment; taster session planned.

The Chair summarised that the next step in the process of getting Park Play for Northstowe & Longstanton started is the recruitment of a Park Play Leader. Park Play, in order to showcase what sessions are going to be like and to help in the recruitment of a Play Leader and volunteers, have offered to organise a trial session to take place on 13<sup>th</sup> May at Western Park, organised with assistance from the SCDC Community Development Officers.

ii) Appointment of Internal Auditor (Item 259/22-23; FC 28<sup>th</sup> Mar. '23) – Update: agreement signed with CAPALC for '23-'24 internal audit services delivery.

The Clerk gave an update, highlighting that the agreement with CAPALC, for them to undertake the twice-yearly internal audits in 2023-'24, has been approved.

iii) Recruitment of Deputy Clerk (Item 274/22-23; FC 28th Mar. '23) – Update: contract signed; start date agreed.

The Clerk highlighted that all contractual paperwork had now been signed and that preparations for induction and logistics are being prepared.

### 16/23-24 PLASTIC FREE NORTHSTOWE

[Items deferred from Full Council meeting 28th Mar. '23, item 256/22-23]:

- 1) Councillors to come forward to represent the Town Council on the Plastic Free Longstanton and Northstowe Steering Group (Community Group Sustainable Northstowe).
- Cllr Delip and Cllr Kinnera came forward to represent the Town Council on the Plastic Free Longstanton and Northstowe Steering Group (Community Group Sustainable Northstowe).
- 2) To appoint Councillor(s) to represent the Town Council on the Plastic Free Longstanton and Northstowe Steering Group (Community Group Sustainable Northstowe).

It was proposed by Cllr Littlemore, seconded by Cllr Mgaidia and RESOLVED, unanimously, to appoint Councillors Delip and Kinnera to represent the Town Council on the Plastic Free Longstanton and Northstowe Steering Group (Community Group Sustainable Northstowe).

### 17/23-24 APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

[Sub-item 2 deferred – and subsequently adapted - from Full Council 28<sup>th</sup> Mar. '23, item 259/22-23 (3)]: [Attached, for information: 1. Motion paper - as per FC meeting 28<sup>th</sup> March 2023, item 259/22-23; 2. Email with additional information].

1) To receive additional information from the Clerk regarding limitations to re-recruitment of internal auditor over a number of years (attached).

Noted.

A subsequent discussion focused on how best to ensure that a satisfactory outcome of an annual review can be obtained, and how, with regard to the company's personal independence, financial independence and professional independence. There was consensus that the clerk can ask the internal auditor each year for a statement to this end, and that this can be used for the clerk to provide an officer's recommendation when brought back to the relevant Full Council meeting ion an annual basis.

2) To decide to automatically renew the appointment of the chosen Internal Auditor for the following three years (until end '25-'26), subject to a satisfactory outcome of an annual review with regard to the company's personal independence, financial independence and professional independence.

It was proposed by Cllr Benedicic, seconded by Cllr Oluwasanya and RESOLVED, unanimously, to decide to automatically renew the appointment of the chosen Internal Auditor for the following three years (until end '25-'26), subject to a satisfactory outcome of an annual review with regard

to the company's personal independence, financial independence and professional independence.

### 18/23-24 RURAL MARKET TOWNS GROUP – MEMBERSHIP '23-'24

[Sub-items 2 and 3 deferred from Full Council meeting 28<sup>th</sup> Mar. '23, item 261/22-23]: [Attached: 1. Motion paper - as per FC meeting 28<sup>th</sup> March 2023, item 261/22-23; 2. Emails x2 with additional information].

1) To receive additional information from the clerk and from the Rural Market Towns Group, regarding further clarification on the benefits of membership (attached).

Noted.

- 2) To consider the invitation for membership renewal of the Rural Market Towns Group, for '23-'24. In a discussion the following key points were raised by Councillors, both for and against:
- A Councillor raised that the organisation seems to be able to provide useful information to help the Town Council access funding as well as useful other information.
- Another Councillor mentioned that it was still somewhat opaque what the group could actually do for Northstowe.
- Another Councillor deemed this group to be more relevant for more traditional market towns with a high street.
- 3) To approve the 2023-'24 Rural Market Towns Group membership fee for £105.64 + VAT (at 20%). Cllr Benedicic proposed to approve the 2023-'24 Rural Market Towns Group membership. This was **not carried**.

### 19/23-24 ORGANISATIONAL FIVE-YEAR STAFFING STRUCTURE PLAN

[Referred to Full Council, with recommendation for adoption, by the Personnel Committee at its meeting held on 18th April 2023, item 07/23-24].

[Attached: 1. Motion paper - as adapted following Personnel Committee meeting 18<sup>th</sup> April 2023, item 07/23-24; 2. Report, setting out a proposed plan for staffing structure for the next five years].

1) To receive a report, setting out a proposed plan for staffing structure for the next five years (attached).

Noted. In a discussion that followed the following key points were raised:

- Generally seen as a useful overview to get the Council thinking of its long-term staffing needs.
- Needs some more information to make more explicit the reasons behind the year-on-year changes as proposed, e.g. where changes in the town and Town Council's ambitions/ business plan are considered as trigger points for proposed staff changes over time.
- This also needs to be tied to likely changing in town such as growth of population and housing targets and to which also the Council's main income stream from precept is linked.
- 2) To adopt the organisational five-year staffing structure plan, with this structure to be reviewed by the Personnel Committee every year in or around Sep/Oct to ensure the staffing structure plan is kept up-to-date, with updated versions presented after each review to Full Council for adoption, and to feed into the processes for budget development for the next financial year.

It was proposed by Cllr Littlemore, seconded by Cllr Mgaidia and RESOLVED, unanimously, to adopt the organisational five-year staffing structure plan - taking aforementioned comments around improvements to be made into account -,with this structure to be reviewed by the Personnel Committee every year in or around Sep/Oct to ensure the staffing structure plan is kept up-to-date, with updated versions presented after each review to Full Council for adoption, and to feed into the processes for budget development for the next financial year.

### 20/23-24 CAPALC/NALC AFFILIATION FEE

[Attached: 1. Renewal invite from CAPALC, which includes a leaflet with information about benefits; 2. Motion Paper]. [Shared with Cllrs.: 3. Invoice].

1) To receive CAPALC & NALC affiliation renewal invite for '23-'24 (for period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024 (attached).

Noted. It was mentioned that the membership has, to date, been very valuable for the Town Council.

2) To approve continuation of CAPALC/NALC affiliation and approval of payment of the affiliation fee, including DPO Membership for '23-'24 of £686.88.

It was proposed by Cllr Littlemore, seconded by Cllr Benedicic and **RESOLVED**, unanimously, **to** approve continuation of CAPALC/NALC affiliation and approval of payment of the affiliation fee, including DPO Membership for '23-'24 of £686.88.

3) To decide to automatically renew the affiliation membership and payment for the following three years (until end '25-'26).

It was proposed by Cllr Benedicic, seconded by Cllr Mgaidia and RESOLVED, unanimously, to decide to automatically renew the affiliation membership and payment for the following three years (until end '25-'26).

## 21/23-24 FINANCE (Standing item)

[Items deferred from cancelled Finance and Governance Committee meeting of 18th Apr. '23]:

1) To approve the following retrospective and new payments:

#### **RETROSPECTIVE PAYMENTS - DIRECT DEBITS:**

i) TPT Pensions Trust - Pension contributions for: Mar '23 (cashed 29/03/23)	Confidential	
ii) Lloyds Bank – Credit card spend in March '23 (pads for defibrillator; credit card fee)		
(cashed 17/04/2023) (overview shared with Cllrs.)	£115.80	
iii) ICO (Information Commissioner's Office), fee for '23-'24 (cashed 5th Apr. '23)	£35.00	
iv) Unity Trust quarterly service charge Jan – Mar 2023 (cashed 31/03/2023)	£18.00	
It was proposed by Cllr Littlemore, seconded by Cllr Owen and RESOLVED, unanimously, to approve		
the aforementioned retrospective payments.		

**NEW PAYMENTS:** 

- v) Insurance premium, Hiscox Insurance Company Ltd., for period 07/05/23 to 06/05/24 £564.65 [Following resolution at Full Council meeting 28<sup>th</sup> Mar. '23, item 258/22-23(4)]
- vi) Staff salary Town Clerk, for: April 2023 (payment date 26/04/23) (shared with Cllrs.). Confidential vii) HMRC period 1, 6 Apr '23 5 May '23. Confidential viii) CAPALC Affiliation fee including DPO Membership £686.88

It was proposed by Cllr Littlemore, seconded by Cllr Owen and **RESOLVED**, unanimously, **to approve the aforementioned new payments.** 

2) To allocate authorised Councillors to sign paperwork associated with afore-mentioned payments and to carry out online banking authorisations.

Councillors Owen and Littlemore were assigned to sign the paperwork associated with afore-mentioned payments and to carry out online banking authorisations.

#### 22/23-24 TEMPORARY OFFICE SPACE HIRE

[Shared with Cllrs.: 1. Motion paper].

1) To decide to hire office space in May and in June 2023 until such time as a more permanent office space may become available for NTC staff to work from.

In a discussion several Councillors raised concerns about the high room hire charges at Northstowe Secondary College.

Cllr. Littlemore proposed the following amendments to the motion:

It was proposed by Cllr Littlemore, seconded by Cllr Benedicic and **RESOLVED**, unanimously, **to** amend the motion with the following changes:

- To decide to hire office space initially for May 2023 only.
- To decide to hire for the hours as has been proposed for 2<sup>nd</sup> May, but hire for 3 hours per day only on 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> May.
- To investigate whether the Community Room at NSC can be hired after all in day-time, or whether the Longstanton Village Hall meeting room might be available.

- To have this item come back to the next Full Council meeting, with a new proposal presented to the council for the remainder of the working days until the temporary community centre is open.

It was proposed by Cllr Littlemore, seconded by Cllr Benedicic and **RESOLVED**, unanimously, **to** adopt the motion as amended

2) To agree to use underspend elsewhere in the budget to cover additional costs to be incurred for office space hire, with delegation provided to the RFO to ensure virement of budget accordingly. Not relevant anymore, as a result of the previous, amended motion.

#### 23/23-24 COMPUTER EQUIPMENT NEW MEMBER OF STAFF

[Attached: 1. Motion paper].

1) To approve the purchase of a laptop for the Deputy Clerk. It was proposed by Cllr Benedicic, seconded by Cllr Mgaidia and **RESOLVED**, unanimously, **to approve the purchase of a laptop for the Deputy Clerk**, as proposed.

### 24/22-23 MICROSOFT 365 BUSINESS PREMIUM

1) To approve the purchase of Microsoft 365 Business Premium.

In a discussion it was raised that it would seem useful to extend the license in the future, to provide Councillors also with a Business Basic package, helping to improve the way information is shared through SharePoint, Teams and emails.

It was proposed by Cllr Benedicic, seconded by Cllr Oluwasanya and **RESOLVED**, unanimously, **to** approve the purchase of Microsoft 365 Business Premium, as proposed.

#### 25/23-24 WORKING GROUP REPRESENTATION

For information:

- 1) Cllr Benedicic has taken over from Cllr Delip as lead for the Warm Hub Working Group.
- 2) Cllr Bros Sabria has stepped down from the Warm Hub Working Group. Noted.

### 26/23-24 ITEMS FOR INFORMATON

- 1) SCDC meeting 5<sup>th</sup> April, Retail options for future local centre; attended by Cllr Littlemore. Cllr Littlemore summarised the discussions at this meeting that focused on future retail provision in Northstowe, also explaining how this meeting can be seen as an off-shoot from the Northstowe Delivery Group meetings.
  - A. Ainsworth added that any ideas are welcome, and that she would also welcome discussions how to come to a shared understanding of what is needed and what is going to happen.
- 2) SCDC event 18th April, Northstowe Sports Pavilion steel signing and time capsule placement; attended by Cllr Littlemore.
  - Cllr. Littlemore highlighted that this event had a good amount of press attention in a number of local media outlets.
- 3) Parish/Cabinet Liaison meeting to take place on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> June at 5.30 pm. NB: request received for up to x2 NTC representatives to join this in-person meeting. Noted.

## **27/23-24 COMMITTEE MEETINGS** (Standing Item)

To receive minutes from the following committee meetings held:

- i) Finance and Governance Committee, 21st March 2023 (minutes attached).
- ii) Events and Markets Committee, 21st March 2023 (minutes attached).
- *iii) Personnel Committee, 18<sup>th</sup> April 2023 (minutes to follow).* Noted.

# **28/23-24 WORKING GROUPS** (Standing Item)

To receive updates from Working Groups reporting to Full Council, where not already covered under other items on this agenda, from;

- a) Warm Hub Working Group (lead: Cllr Benedicic).
- Cllr Benedicic highlighted that, as new lead for the Working Group, he had not yet received all information in a hand-over. Meanwhile, plans are being considered for what could realistically happen after May, with further information from the funder about further funding opportunities also still being awaited.
- b) Phase 1 Asset Transfer Opportunities Working Group (Sports Pavilion) (lead: Cllr Benedicic). Cllr Benedicic mentioned that, with input from Cllr Littlemore, a start has bene made with a Business Plan and that information has been gathered through various meetings including new ones being organised. He highlighted that a first motion to be brought to Full Council is likely to include seeking approval for spending some budget on legal advice needed.
- c) Road Safety Working Group (lead: Cllr Susarla).

No update.

d) Hydrology Working Group (lead: Cllr Littlemore).

No update.

e) Sustainability Working Group (Jointly with Longstanton PC) (no lead).

No update.

# 29/23-24 UPDATES FROM OUTSIDE BODIES WITH NTC REPRESENTATION (Standing Item)

To receive minutes and/or updates from attendees, from meetings of outside bodies with official Northstowe TC representation;

- a) 9<sup>th</sup> Mar. '23: Phase 1 Open Spaces Steering Group attended by Cllr Owen; clerk (minutes attached).
- b) 28th Mar. '23: Northstowe Support Partnership attended by Cllr Males; clerk (minutes to follow). Noted.
- c) 6<sup>th</sup> Apr. '23: Phase 1 Open Spaces Steering Group attended by Cllr Mgaidia (minutes to follow). Cllr Mgaidia raised that at this meeting a discussion had taken place around the future management of Kingfisher pond, and that the Town Council had been asked for input into this. In a discussion that followed it was considered that the Council's Hydrology Working Group could look into this and bring ideas back, where deemed relevant, to both the Open Spaces Steering Group and Full Council.
- d) Cancelled 12th Apr. '23: Northstowe Community Networkers.
- e) Thu 13th Apr. '23: Northstowe Delivery Group attended by Cllr Littlemore (minutes to follow).
- *f)* 19<sup>th</sup> April, 17:30 19:00: Northstowe Faith Strategy Group (minutes to follow). Noted.

# 30/23-24 UPCOMING MEETINGS OUTSIDE BODIES WITH NTC REPRESENTATION (Standing Item)

To note:

- a) Thu 4th May, 10:00 11:30 (virtual): Phase 1 Open Spaces Steering Group meeting.
- b) Wed 10th May, 19:00 -19:00 (virtual): Northstowe Community Networkers
- c) Wed 17th May 2023: 17:30 19:00 (virtual): Northstowe Faith Strategy Group meeting
- d) Thu 18th May, 13:30 14:30 (in person): Northstowe Delivery Group
- e) Mon 5th June, 17:30 20:00(n person): SCDC Parish/Cabinet Liaison meeting. Noted.

To resolve to move into a closed session and exclude the public and press, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, due to the commercial or sensitive nature of business to be discussed under item 31/23-24.

It was proposed by Cllr. Owen, seconded by Cllr Benedicic, and **RESOLVED**, unanimously, **to move into a** closed session and exclude the public and press, due to the commercial or sensitive nature of business to be discussed under item 31/23-24.

#### 31/23-24 OFFICE HIRE IN TEMPORARY COMMUNITY CENTRE

[Shared with Cllrs.: 1. Motion paper; 2. Email from SCDC].

 To receive information obtained from SCDC regarding the office hire costs proposed to the Town Council for 'office 2' in the temporary community centre being constructed on The Green in Northstowe (see <u>planning application</u> for details and layout in its associated documents) (email shared with Cllrs.).

Noted.

2) To agree for the Town Council to enter into a leasehold agreement on the basis of the information provided.

It was proposed by Cllr Benedicic, seconded by Cllr Littlemore and **RESOLVED**, unanimously, **to agree** for the Town Council to enter into a leasehold agreement on the basis of the information provided.

3) To delegate to the clerk to arrange for and sign a contractual agreement, where the agreement and any associated paperwork yet to be received by the Town Council is considered to be in line with the outline leasehold agreement information provided to date.

It was proposed by Cllr Benedicic, seconded by Cllr Castelino and **RESOLVED**, unanimously, to delegate to the clerk to arrange for and sign a contractual agreement, where the agreement and any associated paperwork yet to be received by the Town Council is considered to be in line with the outline leasehold agreement information provided to date.

# To resolve to end the closed session.

It was proposed by Cllr. Littlemore, seconded by Cllr Benedicic, and **RESOLVED**, unanimously, **to reopen the meeting**.

# 32/23-24 DATES OF NEXT COUNCIL MEETINGS (Standing Item)

To note:

- Annual Town Meeting: Wed 26th April, 19:00 20:30/21:00, Northstowe Secondary College, Main Hall.
- Annual Meeting of the Town Council: Tue 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2023, 7-9PM, Northstowe Secondary College, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor 'gym'. [Finalised motions to be received by 13/05].

For all Council meetings, see <u>www.northstowetowncouncil.gov.uk</u> Noted.

The meeting was closed at 20:47 pm.

Signed	
Town Mayor	
Date	