

**Minutes of a meeting of Beccles Town Council held on Tuesday 5 March 2019
In the Council Chamber of Beccles Town Hall at 7.00pm**

PRESENT

**E Brambley-Crawshaw, Mayor, in the chair
R Stubbings, Deputy Mayor**

G Birrell	Mrs M D Haynes
N Brooks	R Kathuria
Mrs S A Bubb	J Janney
A Downes	A Lever
G Elliott	Mrs C A Topping
N Elliott	J B Walmsley
J D Harris	

IN ATTENDANCE

**Claire Boyne, Town Clerk
Rose Norgate, Baha'i Faith
David Goldstone, Deputy Chair, Neighbourhood Plan
Operational Group**

MEMBERS OF PUBLIC 2

Prior to the start of the meeting, Philip Love of the Social Prescribing Team gave a presentation regarding the new Social Connections Service for patients of Beccles Medical Centre.

Rose Norgate then gave a reading.

188. TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received and accepted from Councillor Catchpole.

189. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OR ANY REQUESTS FOR THE GRANTING OF DISPENSATIONS IN RELATION TO ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were none.

190. MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2019

RESOLVED To accept for accuracy and adoption the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 5 February 2019

191. REPRESENTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Mr David Goldstone, Deputy Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Operational Group had requested to speak on item 10 on the agenda regarding the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

The Operational Group had been working on the Plan for well over two years. Draft four was the final draft which should represent the views of the people of Beccles. The Plan was now with the town, district and county councils for comments prior to the formal consultation process commencing. Comments were required by the end of April.

192. TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AND RECEIVE REPORTS FROM THE FOLLOWING, AND TO ALLOW COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Reports attached.

193. TO RECONVENE THE MEETING AND RECEIVE REPORTS FROM THE FOLLOWING:-

Council's Representatives on Outside Bodies

Beccles Museum

Councillor Haynes reported that she had attended the recent trustees meeting. Two new trustees, a Secretary and a Treasurer were required. Redecorations had been carried out and cameras installed.

Youth Drop In Café

Councillor Topping reported that the first session had been held the night before at Blyburgate Hall. Eight young people had attended and it had been very successful. Tesco had provided lots of tuck shop items and a lady who specialises in mental health issues would be a regular attendee at the Café. It was aimed at 13 to 18 year olds.

Councillor Topping had also attended a meeting at St Luke's Church regarding funding that Waveney District Council had obtained for a 'Bringing Communities Together' event at the Free School.

Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB)

Councillor Harris reported on cases he had dealt with at the CAB office the previous day, which included a lady with various medical conditions, who was experiencing problems with her neighbours, a 90 year old who had received unaffordable energy bills soon after moving into a property, and a lady with an employment issue.

Working Party Reports

There were none.

194. DRAFT MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2019

Councillor N Elliott, chair of the Planning Committee, explained that the formal response to the Broads Local Plan had been forwarded to all councillors.

RESOLVED To receive the draft minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on Wednesday 13 February 2019

195. DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ASSETS & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2019

RESOLVED To receive the draft minutes of the Assets & Environment Committee meeting held on Monday 11 February 2019

196. DRAFT MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2019

PROPOSAL To receive the draft minutes of the above meeting and consider the following recommendations:-

- (i) To agree the review of the effectiveness of the internal audit
- (ii) To agree the clerk's review of the Fidelity Guarantee Insurance
- (iii) To agree the council's Risk Assessments
- (iv) To agree the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
- (v) To accept in principle the insurance quotation from Zurich Municipal (including key personnel cover) for a three year term, subject to receiving any further quotations

RESOLVED To receive the draft minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Monday 13 February 2019

- (i) Councillor Stubbings, chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, confirmed that the Suffolk Association of Local Councils carried out the council's internal audit and the committee was satisfied with the extent of the audit.

RESOLVED To agree the review of the effectiveness of the internal audit

- (ii) The clerk had reviewed the level of the Fidelity Guarantee Insurance and was not recommending an increase from the £500k cover level.

RESOLVED To agree the clerk's review of the Fidelity Guarantee Insurance

- (iii) The Deputy Clerk had redesigned the council's Risk Assessments. The fire proofing of the office doors and the installation of a fire proof letterbox had been included as action points.

RESOLVED To agree the council's Risk Assessments

- (iv) The Standing Orders had been rearranged to agree with the model Standing Orders that the Suffolk Association of Local Councils produced,

but still included the additional items that the council had included over the years.

RESOLVED To agree the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

- (v) Two further quotations had been received for insurance, one slightly lower than Zurich's quotation and one significantly higher. The lower quotation required the council to install an alarm and downstairs window locks in the Town Hall. The cost of such work would be more than the difference between the two quotations. Also, the council was pleased with the level of customer service provided by Zurich.

The clerk explained that the council could cover loss of income at Beccles Quay of £80,500 for an extra premium of £80. This was agreed.

RESOLVED To accept the insurance quotation from Zurich Municipal (including key personnel cover) for a three year term

197. DRAFT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2019 TO 2036 AND PROPOSED TIMETABLE FOR CONSULTATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The mayor reported that there had been even more community involvement in the Neighbourhood Plan process over the past 9 months. The Operational Group was very skilled and had really moved the process forward.

Comments were now required on the plan prior to formal submission. However, items could not just be included if there was not an evidence base. It was pointed out that the Community Stage at Beccles Quay had not been included. This would therefore be included with any changes from the district and county councils and the Broads Authority, as there was community evidence indicating that this should be included.

Any comments regarding the draft plan would need to be submitted to the clerk by the end of April.

The Neighbourhood Plan Operational Group members were formally thanked for all of their time and effort. Due to the efficiency of the group, the impact on town council staff had been minimal.

RESOLVED To receive the draft Neighbourhood Plan 2019 to 2036 and proposed Timetable for Consultation and Implementation for information

198. REQUEST FOR GRANT FUNDING FROM THE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

It was confirmed that £3,000 was included in the budget for this grant.

RESOLVED To agree the request from the Citizens Advice Bureau for a grant of £3000 and agree a response

199. REQUEST FROM THE DEPUTY CHAIR, BECCLES BUSINESS AND TOURISM ASSOCIATION, TO PLACE AN ADVERTISEMENT IN THE BROADCASTER

The mayor explained that the council was being asked to place the advertisement and would receive a grant from the Beccles Business & Tourism Association in respect of the cost.

The clerk informed councillors that council had made a £50 contribution to the cost of the advertisement last year. It was confirmed that a £300 contribution was also being received from Waveney District Council.

Councillor Stubbings therefore proposed that the council places an advertisement in the Broadcaster and makes a £50 contribution to the cost. This was seconded by Councillor G Elliott, a vote was taken and it was therefore

RESOLVED To agree to the request from the Deputy Chair of the Beccles Business and Tourism Association (BBTA) to place an advertisement in the Broadcaster and to make a £50 contribution to the advertisement.

200. SUMMARY OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS TO DATE

The cost of oil for Blyburgate Hall was queried as this seemed high. It was explained that the hall had a very crude heating system in place, with no thermostats on the radiators. It was suggested that a more sophisticated system should be investigated.

RESOLVED To approve the Summary of Receipts and Payments to date

201. SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS FOR MARCH 2019

There was a question as to why there was a £10k spend on the contingency code. The clerk would report back regarding this.

PROPOSAL To approve the Schedule of Payments for March 2019

202. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The mayor reported that she had attended a meeting the day before that had been arranged by Peter Aldous MP in order to discuss issues regarding the new Relief Road. After Councillor Bee had put forward a name for the road, the town council had been asked to consult with the public. Joe Crowfoot Way had been the people's choice. Waveney District Council (WDC) have not acted on this, and Weston Parish Council had now put forward an alternative name. WDC would therefore now carry out its own consultation. It was suggested that the public should be informed that there was going to be another poll.

Dates for the Diary

9 March – Fairtrade Café at Beccles Library from 10am.

16 March – Give and Take Event and Terracycle Collection at Blyburgate Hall
17 March – Lego Club at Beccles Library at 10am.

203. TO CONFIRM THE DATE OF THE NEXT TOWN COUNCIL MEETING AS TUESDAY 2 APRIL 2019

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 2 April at 7:00pm

DRAFT

Presentation by Phillip Love of the Social Prescribing team regarding the new Social Connections Service for patients of the Beccles Medical Centre on 5 March 2019

Mr Love explained that the Social Prescribing Roles were jointly funded by the Clinical Commissioning Group and Suffolk County Council. These were one year temporary positions.

Social Prescribing had been around for 8 to 10 years. In suburban environments, the project might concentrate on immigration or translation issues.

The local remit for the Social Prescribing team is to tackle isolation and loneliness. People may contact their GP's on a regular basis and have medical needs that are not being managed appropriately. Social Prescribers (SP's) look at people's strengths to help them manage their conditions and support them with their journey, such as accompanying them to a weight loss session to help combat diabetes. Social Prescribing is not just about sign posting people to the right services, but also about enabling.

As well as being referred by the GP practice, the public can also contact Social Prescribers directly via email or mobile and they accept self-referrals. Funding is not huge but the SP's can help people to apply for appropriate pots of money.

The team is based in Beccles, and most of the referrals come from Beccles. There have been 90 referrals since January. The Solutions service, based in Lowestoft, is different in that it is more of a sign posting service and is run by the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB).

Social Prescribing is not the answer to everybody's problems, but it is a positive step in the right direction. Early results are positive.

Q Do you think that some people may never get to be referred, as they are put off by the long wait on the phone to get to speak to a GP?

A People don't have to go through their GP. They can contact us via email and mobile. The GP Practices have a system in place whereby if the telephone queue is longer than 3 minutes, more staff are drafted in to answer the phones.

Q Waveney is a large area and there aren't many of you. Is there a risk that you are duplicating work, like form filling, which CAB could help with?

The point was made that people cannot be passed to another organisation just to fill out a form. It's easier for this to be done there and then.

Q Do you direct people to the Waveney Centre?

A Yes we do.

Q You said early results are positive. How will your success be judged?

A The 6 month period before the service was introduced and the 6 month period into the service will be compared, based on whether contact with the GP practice has reduced.

Q Despite a positive report by Essex University, The Local Area Coordinator's post was only funded for 2 years. What guarantee is there that the funding for SP's will continue beyond a year?

A Social Prescribing is a national initiative and is here to stay.

Reports to Council 5 March 2019

Suffolk Police

No new reports were available on the website. The clerk explained that she could not circulate crime figures from the website, as requested at the last meeting, as these were only available in map form on the website.

There was a request to find out when the next Locality meeting would be held.

Suffolk County Council

Councillor Brambley-Crawshaw gave her report (attached).

Waveney District Council

Councillor Topping gave her report (attached).

Councillor G Elliott reported that Waveney District Council had agreed its budget for the coming year. There may be a significant increase in member's allowances in the future, which may be back dated.

The new Dell Care Home was soon to open, after many years of planning issues. The planting of trees off road was being considered in order to stop cars driving off road around the Dell.

The Local Plan should be agreed on 20 March.

Parish Report March 2019

Councillor

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2019/20 budget agreed

Suffolk County Council's 2019/20 budget was agreed on Thursday 14 February. This will see an increase in council tax of 3.99%, and savings across the council's directorates totalling £10.1m.

I am concerned by a number of the cuts, in particular:

- The decision to remove all grant funding from Citizens Advice. This will be phased over two years, with a 50% reduction in the 2019/20 budget (£0.184m);
- Reducing the amount spent on Housing Related Support, which supports those at risk of homelessness (£0.45m);
- Reduced funding for sponsored bus services (£0.34m) and cessation of the provision of roadside bus timetables (£0.1m);
- Reduction in highways maintenance, including no road sign cleaning (£0.1m), only maintaining mandatory road markings (£0.075m) and less frequent weed treatments in rural areas (£0.055m);
- Staffing reductions across all directorates, which may result in less efficient services (£2.968m).

CCGs to pick up CAB funding for 2019/20

As mentioned above, the budget includes a cut to the grant funding provided by Suffolk County Council to Citizens Advice. This grant will be cut by 50% in 2019/20 (£184,000) and removed entirely in the 2020/21 budget.

Thankfully, the CCGs have stepped in and agreed to provide Citizens Advice with £184,000 in funding this year, to make up for the 50% funding cut from Suffolk County Council. Although this means Citizens Advice will not lose funding this year, it does not address the longer-term problem of funding in the future. The CCGs have been clear that this funding is only available for 2019/20.

Reduction in 2018/19 predicted overspend

Suffolk County Council's latest budget monitoring report suggests the 2018/19 budget will be overspent by £5.9m. This is a reduction since quarter 2, when they were predicting an overspend of £7.5m.

The £5.9m overspend represents 1.2% of the net budget and is made up of £3.8m on base budget and £2.1m on Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) spend.

Although it is positive to hear the overspend is reducing, I am concerned by where these savings are being achieved. The majority are due to ongoing staff vacancies at the council, particularly in social work teams. This is clearly not a long-term solution and is a dangerous false economy. Without adequate staff, the county council will struggle to properly and efficiently provide services in Suffolk.

Respublica report into housing costs council £66,000

Last year Suffolk County Council commissioned the thinktank Respublica to undertake a study into housing growth in Suffolk at a cost of £66,000. The final report was published on 21 February. At just 14 pages long, it cost the authority almost £5000 per page and failed to discuss the issues in any great depth.

School Travel – opt-in for funded transport

Following changes to the school travel policy, which will take effect in September 2019, eligible families must now “opt-in” to receive free school transport – you will no longer be automatically signed up.

If your child is eligible for free transport, you will need to apply each year. The application window for this year is 1 March 2019 to 31 May 2019. There is more information available at www.suffolkonboard.com/optin.

New mental health strategies for Suffolk

Since Spring 2018, the Suffolk and Norfolk Clinical Commissioning Groups have been leading work on developing new mental health strategies for Suffolk.

The Strategies seek to describe the future vision for mental health and emotional wellbeing within the context of an integrated physical, mental and social care system and a departure from the way traditional services have been delivered. There is also a strong emphasis on prevention, wellbeing and expanding community/primary care mental health services.

The next phase of work will focus on designing delivery plans for the Strategies, including a programme of work and timetable for implementation. This will include a review of the existing structure and form of mental health provision and how this supports or impedes the vision for the future.

Waveney District Council Report to Beccles Town Council Meeting 5th March.

On 28th February 2019, the 90 councillors of the East Suffolk Shadow Authority (ESC) met for the last time, before the new authority starts. There was a long speech from Ray Herring telling us all what we had been doing over the last year plus, and then another speech from Mark Bee, even though the agenda only allows the Leader to speak not the Deputy Leader! Mark said that he was 'proud' to stand at the last Shadow Meeting and basically celebrate all the work that started 11 years ago to get us to this point.

The new budget was agreed. This includes each of the new 55 East Suffolk Councillors getting £7500 locality money, similar to that which the Suffolk Coastal councillors are already getting and that which Suffolk County Councillors get. Interestingly we also found out at this meeting the Suffolk Coastal Councillors who sit on planning also get an extra allowance for sitting on that committee.

The Independent Remuneration Panel had met and had a 'light touch review'. It was decided that the councillors of the new council would have corporate ICT, (be supplied with laptops). That councillors across the two old districts should have equalised payments from 6th May 2019 and a full review would be carried out 6 months after the creation of the new ESC and that the amounts recommended at that review would be 'backdated to the coming into office of the new councillors on 6th May 2019'.

The last Waveney District Council meeting will take place on 20th March 2019.

I have been busy with housing issues, which I am pleased to say I am slowly helping to resolve. It really is quite shocking, the conditions that some people are living in in Beccles.

We have had a few antisocial behaviour issues on the street, but last evening I met with Stuart Halsey, WDC Communities and Antisocial Behaviour Officer for Beccles (and with residents, members of the church, some young people and WDC Officers). We discussed a community celebration project that we are hoping to deliver in the community this year to try to overcome intergenerational barriers and create a greater sense of community and pride in Beccles. The outcome is hopefully going to be more community pride and less antisocial behaviour.

Cllr Caroline Topping

WDC Councillor Beccles South – Green Party.