

MINUTES of the Meeting of HARWICH TOWN COUNCIL held at The 1912 Centre, Cow Lane, Harwich on Wednesday 31st August 2011 commencing at 7.05 pm

Present: Councillors C Callender, R Callender, Calver, Day, Double, Flavell, Gibbins, I Henderson, J Henderson, King, McLeod, Thompson, Thurlow and Todd

In the Chair: Councillor B Brown

Clerk: Mrs L Ballard

Also present: 10 members of the public and 1 member of the press

Mrs B Holbrook commented on the recent fire at the site of the Queen's public house and the condition of this, and other buildings in the area, including the former Starlings building and Park Hotel, and asked how long it is going to take HTC/TDC/ECC to put these back into a reasonable condition, and how soon. Cllr Calver said this had been ongoing for several years and members of previous councils had met, along with the Mayor of the day, Jacky wares, with the owner on site in an attempt to put pressure on them to deal with the worsening condition, but powers are limited. The former Starlings site has now been declared unsafe and as such Cllr Calver has liaised with all relevant TDC departments and the Chief Executive to look at how best to move forward as there will now be grounds to take action. Cllr Calver also mentioned that due to the timing of the fire, the issue as a whole will be addressed and steps have already been taken to do this. Cllr R Callender believed the owners would be responsible for funding the renovations. Cllr Flavell said he was appalled by TDC's lack of responsibility. Cllr McLeod raised concerns over the resulting road closure due to it affecting the viability of the town centre, and understood there had been delays due to more extensive, underground work that needed to be carried out, but mentioned that the site will be boarded to enable the road to re-open from Monday. Cllr Brown confirmed that HTC's powers are limited due to any work requiring planning permission, under the authority of TDC.

Mrs Bradnum asked why the ground beside the hospital has gotten so bad. Cllr McLeod suggested a phone call to the owners might help as the site had been previously cleared but then left to overgrow again.

Dr Rogers raised concerns over issues raised at the Annual Parish Meeting (notably Jet Skis and Friday market), and which had been deferred but had not yet appeared on a Council agenda and was still awaiting answers. Cllr Brown confirmed he would ensure these feature on a future agenda. Cllr R Callender confirmed in relation to the concern over Jet skis that buoys have been put in place. Dr Rogers suggested pressure be put on those with enforcement powers.

Mr Laurie Payne referred to recent items being raised at TDC regarding leisure facilities in Dovercourt, such as the swimming pool, gym and sports hall, and how they will be managed in the future. If managed by a leisure trust, would be good as there would be an element of re-investment to those facilities, but if management goes to private control, it could see the end of some of these facilities, as they would want to take a profit. He suggested HTC ask TDC for a consultation to look at proposals and enable the public to have a say before making a decision. Cllr I Henderson agreed and commented on the frustration of being excluded from consultation, even as an elected

TDC councillor. Cllr J Henderson mirrored the frustration as it was becoming common to be informed of decisions rather than being included in them. Cllr Brown suggested that we could ask TDC to include HTC in any consultations regarding the future of leisure facilities in Harwich.

Prayers were said by Reverend Peter Mann.

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The Chairman gave condolences to Cllr O'Neill in reference to her recent bereavement and announced that an emergency item would be included in the agenda after item 12 to receive the minutes of the last meeting of the Guildhall Committee.

60/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor O'Neill.

61//11 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

None.

62/11 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor announced that he had attended 10 different events since the last meeting, and gave a brief account of a few including the opening of the new CAB building, the Sea Festival and Bobbits Holes, as well as attending a Gala event at the Electric Palace in aid of the visit to Essex of Queen Elizabeth I in 1651, a visit on board 'Balmoral' and BBQ and award ceremony hosted by Teen Talk.

63/11 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on 20th July 2011 (previously circulated) be approved by the Chairman and signed as a true record, following an amendment to the date of the next meeting at minute reference 58/11, which was corrected from 10th to 31st August 2011.

64/11 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- Members noted a letter from the Essex Police Authority and concerns over the content. **RESOLVED** to write to the EPA to ask for a rep (suggested Linda Belgrove) to come to HTC to explain how they see things working in the foreseeable future and to hear the concerns of HTC in this regard. **FURTHER RESOLVED:** to write to Harwich Police Station to obtain the official numbers of Police Officers, PCSO's and Front office staff covering the Harwich area.
- Members noted a response from Ian Taylor, TDC regarding parking congestion and the council's assets. A recent 'walk round' between Cllrs I Henderson and Flavell and Ian Taylor and Pam Sambridge from TDC was discussed, and a 'wish list' of remedies perused to alleviate parking problems, and progress will be monitored directly with TDC. The charges for Wellington Road car park were also discussed and since a response had not been received from TDC to a request from HTC to consider immediate removal of these charges it was **RESOLVED:** to write to Ian Taylor at TDC to request a) that Wellington Road car park is free at all times during the period 1 October to 31 May and to give consideration to it becoming a free car park at all times after then, to encourage greater use, and b) to request the removal of

as much as possible of the 'No waiting' restriction, between the Naval House and 57 King's Quay Street.

- An update on the recruitment of an Assistant Clerk was given and it was **RESOLVED**: to delegate appointment to the recruitment panel.
- Cllr Calver asked if the findings of the Dovercourt Town Centre Study, in relation to the Lidl's s106 monies, had yet been released (Minute ref 41/11). It was **RESOLVED**: to write to TDC urgently to request the findings of the study.

65/11 ADOPT A KIOSK

Members discussed possibilities for use of the BT Kiosk on the junction of St Helen's Green on Main Road, as well as advantages and disadvantages of adoption. It was **RESOLVED**: to proceed with an application for adoption on the basis that it would be kept as piece of 'living history' and accept to incur maintenance costs as they arise.

66/11 NEIGHBOURHOOD NETWORKING MEETINGS

Members discussed the advantages of these bi-annual meetings and it was **RESOLVED**: to attend meetings for the purposes of liaising with other local councils on matters of common interest.

67/11 STANDING ORDERS

Members discussed the proposed revised Standing orders along with the additional appendix of delegations to committees. It was expressly mentioned that one particular change, which would affect the public, is during the 15-minute question time in that all questions to full council meetings must now be sent into the Clerk in writing prior to the meeting, in order for members to prepare a response, and that for committees, all questions must be pertinent to the items on the agenda. It was **RESOLVED**: adopt the revised Standing Orders.

68/11 RECYCLING CENTRES

Members discussed the proposed plans to reduce opening times/days of the Dovercourt civic amenity site following receipt of the survey data from ECC on which they based their proposals. It was **RESOLVED**: to write to TDC and ECC to oppose the reduction in the number of days opening from 7 to 5, but to accept the reduced opening hours on Monday and Tuesdays. Also to stress the comparison with Clacton's usage in relation to population.

69/11 POLLING STATIONS

The Chairman made recommendations of the Working Party to members as to how to overcome problems with polling station locations in Harwich. It was **RESOLVED**: to forward these recommendations to Judith Raisin at TDC with the addition of a suggestion that TDC look into the proximity to polling stations to enable voters to vote at the polling station closest to their residence, with the aim benefitting through the encouragement of voters.

70/11 COMMUNITY WARDENS

Cllr Double raised the successful use of a Community Wardens scheme through SEETEC (part of the Job Centre) by Sudbury Town Council and the potential benefits of adopting this scheme at HTC.

RESOLVED: for Cllr Double and the Clerk to visit Sudbury TC to establish what's involved, the benefits, costs etc. with the view to produce a report to bring before a future meeting of the Town Council.

71/11 PARKING ISSUES IN RELATION TO DOVERCOURT MARKET

Cllr Calver informed members that due to a current spate of tickets being issued by the Essex Parking Partnership on Fridays, he'd submitted a FOI request to ascertain the total number issued. Members discussed the possible reasons for this high level and it was **RESOLVED:** to write to the EPP to request the re-sanctioning of the previous-used cones to provide a clear indication of the parking restriction on market days. It was **FURTHER RESOLVED:** to write to both Peter Martin, Leader of Essex County Council and Bernard Jenkin M.P to request they put pressure on the EPP to behave responsibly.

72/11 MINUTES OF THE GUILDHALL COMMITTEE MEETING

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Guildhall Committee held on 18th July 2011 (previously circulated) be accepted. It was **FURTHER RESOLVED:** to pass the Disabled Access Feasibility Study to the Finance & General Purposes Committee for consideration in regard to the anticipated costs.

73/11 ACCOUNTS

Payments and receipts, current balances, financial activity against budgets and earmarked funds were noted.

RESOLVED: to authorise payments as listed Appendix A.

74/11 BRIEF REPORTS FROM MEMBERS

Cllr Thurlow informed members that the Harwich & District Pensioners Association were now flourishing following a grant from HTC. Cllr McLeod commented that he'd yet to receive an invitation to attend a meeting of the Chamber of Trade and Commerce.

75/11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Harwich Town Council will be held on Wednesday 12th October 2011 at The 1912 Centre, Cow Lane, Harwich at 7.00pm, or at the rise of the Town Planning Committee, whichever is the later.

The Chairman closed this part of the meeting at 8.45pm

TOWN MAYOR AND CHAIRMAN

DATE