

## SUDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD IN THE ASSEMBLY ROOM, TOWN HALL, SUDBURY ON WEDNESDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2021 AT 7.00 PM

Present: The Mayor of Sudbury, Mrs S Ayres in the CHAIR

Mr C Griffin	Town Clerk
Mrs J Budd	Deputy Town Clerk
Mr P Faircloth-Mutton	County Councillor

6 Town Councillors

3 members of public in the Assembly Room, 13 people watching online.

#### 1. MINUTES

**That the Minutes of the last Town Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019 were taken as read, confirmed, signed and ADOPTED.**

#### 2. TOWN MATTERS

Councillor J Owen had stepped down from his role as Mayor of Sudbury on the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2021. He gave a report on Town Council matters for the past year.

A copy of the report is shown at minute page 4.

General discussion related to the ongoing issues surrounding the future of Belle Vue House and the importance of bridges being rebuilt between the Town Council and the District Council. The Town Council needed to be heard and listened to.

It was recognised that the public would be able to give their opinions on Belle Vue House once a full planning application had been received, however it was hoped that the developer may give some indication of the plans before this stage.

#### **RESOLVED**

**That Councillor J Owen be thanked for his report and his commitment to the Town during his time as Mayor.**

#### 3. COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

Councillor J Owen had not stood for re-election as a County Councillor, however he did give a 'final' report on his period representing Sudbury. A copy of this is shown at minute page 5.

Newly elected Councillor for Sudbury East and Great Waldingfield, Mr Philip Faircloth-Mutton attended the meeting and gave a report. A copy of the report is shown at minute page 7.

County Councillor Faircloth-Mutton stated that he was keen to work closely with the Town Council. This could be through a task group meeting quarterly.

General discussions were had regarding various County issues.

**RESOLVED**

**That Mr J Owen be thanked for his last report as a County Councillor and for his work over the past 4 years.**

**Mr Faircloth-Mutton was welcomed to the meeting and thanked for his report. The Town Council look forward to working with him and fellow new County Councillor Jessie Carter.**

**Thanks were also given to the Town Clerk over the way he has dealt with the COVID 19 situation in Sudbury.**

4. DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORT

The Mayor of Sudbury, Councillor Mrs Ayres gave a brief District Council report.

**RESOLVED**

**That Councillor Mrs Ayres be thanked for her report.**

5. SUDBURY MUNICIPAL CHARITY ACCOUNTS

The accounts of Sudbury Municipal Charities were distributed to those present at the meeting. A copy of the accounts is shown at minute page 9.

**RESOLVED**

**That the contents of the report be NOTED.**

6. POLICE REPORT

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the new locality inspector covering Sudbury, Matt Paisley was unable to attend the meeting. The Town Clerk read out a statement on his behalf.

A copy of the statement is shown at minute page 11.

With regards to the issue of County Lines, members of the public were advised to keep reporting anything suspicious, as the police rely on local intelligence.

**RESOLVED**

**That Inspector Paisley be thanked for his report.**

7. SUDBURY VISION STEERING GROUP

The Town Council's representative on the Steering Group, Councillor Ms Murphy advised members that there was nothing to report.

The Town Clerk was currently in discussion with the Chief Executive at Babergh District

Council over options to develop an effective forum for exchanging views on the future of Sudbury. It was felt that to enable the Town and District Councils to build bridges, the Sudbury Vision Steering Group needed to change the way it currently worked.

**RESOLVED**

**That Councillor Ms Murphy and the Town Clerk be thanked for their reports.**

8. TOWN MATTERS

No other matters were discussed.

There being no other matters proposed for discussion the business of the meeting was concluded at 8.23 pm

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Chairman

2020/21 has been a very turbulent year for all sorts of reasons, very early on in the year some very difficult but necessary actions had to be taken as a consequence of the outbreak of the Covid 19 virus that affected all parts of the UK.

The Council taking Government advice on social distancing, and in consultation with Suffolk County Council closed the Market Hill and North Street to parking to allow Social Distancing, the measure was not universally supported either within the Council or the wider community but for the safety of the Community it was felt necessary, this was later changed to allow parking to return in North Street and delay the return to normal parking on Market Hill until September. Virtual Meeting of all the Committees was brought in by the Government for the safety of all concerned which proved difficult for some Councillors, but was fairly successful after some initial IT difficulties.

The Council has experienced several difficulties with decisions being taken by Babergh District Council which will have a profound impact on Sudbury and its citizens, it became clear very early on that the District were reducing funding for the Advice Centre which provided vital information to many of our citizens and those from villages around Sudbury, many people even those competent to utilise the internet visited the advice Centre to seek information on services provided by the District, County and the Town Council and the Staff that worked there were part funded by the District Council and County with the District paying the lions share. Babergh decided to end the funding by the end of March and transferring the Advice Centre to the Library and reducing the service from 5 days per week to 2 days per week, out of the three staff employed Sudbury TC was able to employ one with the other two taken on by the District Council or face redundancy.

The issue with Belle Vue House and the Park is well documented, the District wanting to sell the House and some of the land to a developer who will build flats on the land and turn the House into two properties, create an open gateway into the Park with a new Cafe and Toilets, and others including the Town Council wanting a different outcome, an open entrance into the Park, the House developed for a community purpose, Cafe and Toilets but challenge the need for the flats, the Council has a small team that are looking at the issue in more detail.

Car Parking charges after 1 hour free parking is the third item that we have challenged which will be introduced at the earliest in October we are being told, our concern is the damage it will have on our retail sector and deter visitors into Sudbury which will have a damaging effect on our economy. The proposed changes to Market Hill is another area under discussion which members of the Public are invited to express their views.

Of course the Covid problems have dictated most of our thoughts but with the gradual easing of restrictions it is hoped we can get back to some sort of normality.

There have been many issues that the Council and its committees have been working hard on to resolve, these can be found on the Sudbury Town Council Web site under committee minutes.

Jack Owen Sudbury Town Mayor 2020/21

## My County Council report for 2020/21

My County Council report to the 2021 Annual Meeting covers the changes that have taken place over the last 12 months, when I look back at my previous report to the Annual meeting I could have just changed the date as the substance doesn't seem to change.

We have fewer Buses on our streets although it is a bit unfair to compare with previous or future years as the Pandemic has totally changed the behaviour of both service providers and the Public, but what is clear is that the county has reduced the financial support given to Public Transport providers as a consequence of the change in the way funding is calculated. Also the County has changed the process for calculating the Home to School Transport which has resulted in many more appeals and more children across Suffolk having to walk or find other ways of getting to school, being a member of the Appeals committee made me realise some of the difficulties that many children have to experience in many of our more rural areas.

Our roads seem to have deteriorated with repairs taking longer and funding budgets running out early as a result of repairs outstanding from the previous year when we had an extremely bad winter.

A small group have been meeting regularly with representatives from Halstead Town Council including their Essex County Councillor, Head of Highways and the Chairman of Essex County Council to look at alternatives for HGVs to access both Suffolk & Essex without the need to enter either Sudbury or Halstead, unfortunately we have been unable to encourage Suffolk Highways Officers or Councillors to join us.

Last years Budget was very challenging mainly down to the underfunding of financial support by the Government, so the County were spending more in financially supporting services than they were getting back from the Government in grants.

At the beginning of the year we had 3 children's centres in Babergh after the cuts we were left with one, I'll be surprised if that survives for much longer.

Adult Care throughout Suffolk whilst receiving funding from Council Tax which was ring fenced has suffered during the Pandemic with an increase in those suffering from Mental Health issues.

On the plus side the way the County has dealt with the Pandemic has been outstanding which has continued with the anti virus jab which has resulted in many parts of Suffolk including Babergh being amongst the lowest in the Country.

The County increased the Council Tax by 4% which included 2% for Adult Care, the Police was increased by 6%, resulted in an overall increase of 4%, we have been promised additional Police Officers across the County which we will hope to see what impact it has around our corner of Suffolk.

Through my Highway locality fund I have funded 2 speed indicator devices(SIDs) which I hope is having an impact in reducing the speed of vehicles around our Town, information collected is available on request. I also through the same fund have started a process of getting vehicles off of the grass areas in the Cats Lane Estate, the exploratory work has been carried out I hope my successor will continue with the project so that we can improve that estate for those living there.

We still have an outstanding problem with HGVs using the Station Road/Friars Street junction which is causing major damage to the buildings, Highway Engineers will be contacting the Town Council shortly to progress this matter. Christopher Lane has also been identified as a problem area for HGVs entering Gainsborough Street.

The County are changing the Street lighting in Suffolk at a cost of £9.8m to more efficient LED lighting which should cut 60% off of the energy bill, the programme should be completed by 2022.

I have been able to support many local charities and good causes through my Locality fund throughout the year, this has given me immense satisfaction.

Jack Owen County Councillor from May 2017 till May 2021

## **Sudbury East & Waldingfield County Councillor's Report to Sudbury Town Council Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

### **Covid-19 Rapid Testing Centres**

The County Council has worked closely with the NHS to facilitate the opening of 28 centres across Suffolk to provide lateral flow tests.

For Sudbury residents, the most local site has been the Stevenson Centre in Great Cornard from 7am – 2pm (excluding Wednesdays and Sundays). Due to numbers falling consistently, this site will close on 28<sup>th</sup> May.

### **Tree-planting and Hedgerow Replenishment**

£228,000 has been allocated from the Suffolk 2020 Fund to promote biodiversity across the county, through a number of new schemes as well as building on existing work.

Working with The Woodland Trust, Suffolk Tree Wardens, landowners, and county farm tenants, the funding will support the planting of around 100,000 trees, including replanting hedgerows in suitable locations across Suffolk over the next 18 months. Local volunteers will be supported to collect seeds, set up nursery beds and grow trees in their communities.

### **Highways Drainage**

In response to increased snowmelt and higher than average precipitation over the 2020/21 winter months, there has been a £2 million boost in funding to support the fight against flooding.

### **Electric Vehicle Charging Points Funding Boost**

In September 2020, it was announced, following a £300,000 funding award, that 100 fast charging points for electric vehicles will be installed in rural parts of the county by Suffolk County Council.

The fast-charging points supplied by Plug In Suffolk do not require any registration, membership or apps - drivers simply park, plug in and charge using contactless payment.

There have already been expressions of interest for charging points from around 20 suitable sites. Suffolk County Council have contacted parish councils to investigate more possible locations.

### **Quiet Lanes**

The County Council's Quiet Lanes programme has gathered pace in the past year, with parish and town councils being invited to participate and submit proposed locations.

### **Digital Care Support**

On November 2020, it was announced that Suffolk County Council successfully delivered the largest digital care project in its history, from procurement to delivery in just 16 weeks.

Working alongside care technology specialists, over 750 Carephone devices to elderly and vulnerable people, both in and outside of formal care settings, to help them, their families and care providers stay in touch during the coronavirus pandemic and winter months.

### **Better Broadband Suffolk**

By June 2020, an additional 100,000 households across Suffolk were using faster broadband thanks to the council-led Better Broadband for Suffolk programme.

The importance of this project is underpinned by the uptake in remote working opportunities following the pandemic.

### **Primary School National Offer Day**

Since the last Sudbury Town Council Annual General Meeting, it has been confirmed that 98.6% of Suffolk children were offered a place at one of the schools, including those in Sudbury, preferred by their parents.

Some 7,116 children received offers for their first preference school and 7,493 children received an offer for one of their three preferred schools.

Philip Faircloth-Mutton

May 2021







**Inspector Matt Paisley – Police Report for the Sudbury Annual Town Council Meeting****18<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

Good evening to you all, and apologies for my unavoidable absence. I wanted to give you a brief update on my appointment, a summary of the last twelve months, and a picture of where our local priorities are moving forward.

For those that do not know me, I have a great affiliation with the Town, having gone to sixth form at the former Great Cornard Upper School, and having played youth and reserve team football for the former Sudbury Town Football Club. My connection with the Town has been further cemented thanks to a brief spell as Constable covering Sudbury some years ago, and five years as the Safer Neighbourhood Team Sergeant for the Town prior to my promotion to Inspector in 2019. I therefore return to a location I know well, and have a great deal of passion for the communities we police locally!

Like all other organisations, the Covid-19 pandemic has seen policing go through a challenging time over the last year. We have had to meet the demands of additional PPE for all officers, find innovative ways of delivering the same level of service, and support a workforce often hampered by higher than expected absence levels, agile home working and the unavoidable knock on affect of increased strain on the mental health of officers and staff. We have seen demand change, with most common crime types occurring less frequently, but with other crime types increasing.

The use of digital technology in the commission of crime has meant that my officers have investigated more online based crime – not just fraud related offences, but also malicious communications and harassment.

Whilst some of the higher risk crime has fallen, some areas – such as domestic abuse and violence within the home environment, has increased. As leaders across the western area, we have focussed our attention on how we support our officers in assisting the victims within our communities of such crimes, and most importantly how we work with them and partners to prevent future offences from happening.

There have been a number of headline inducing crimes that have occurred in pockets in the past year. I want to offer you all my reassurances that investigations around a series of crime will always be tackled across multiple departments and agencies, with a strong leadership focus in resolving the long term problem.

As a direct result, the following positive updates can be provided:

1. A male was arrested, charged and imprisoned for a series of dwelling burglaries that occurred throughout Sudbury and Great Cornard in the first quarter of 2021. Since the conviction, there have been no dwelling burglaries reported in the Sudbury area.
2. As part of a wider organised crime group operation, Sudbury officers proactively worked with our Serious Crime and Disruption Team in locating and dismantling a large cannabis factory in Sudbury, making three arrests. One of those detained is believed to be strongly linked to the origins of the criminal group behind the activity.
3. County Lines – Whilst overall, the number of County Lines have reduced over the past 12 months, one particular line is still operating locally. Recognising the business model has changed for county lines, officers have built on community intelligence, worked with our

proactive teams, and Essex police to significantly reduce the activity of this line. A number of key arrests have been made, with over £17000 of class A drugs taken off the streets. We continue to work towards developing new intelligence strands that will ultimately prevent the line from entrenching themselves in the town.

4. Arsons – a recent fire at the clothes bank outside of the Kingfisher leisure centre was one of a few that we believed to be committed by the same young people. Through community intelligence, we identified and arrested two young males with admissions being made for the offences. The Youth Justice Service are now involved in working with the offenders and their families for future diversion.

As well as those high interest news pieces, my officers also continue to work with partners to support a vulnerable young person in the area who carries a high risk of exploitation. Some excellent work has taken place in supporting them and their family with results already being seen.

For the future, county lines activity will always be high on the agenda, but I am also asking my teams to focus on anti-social behaviour and how we can work closely with communities to start picking apart long term issues with sustainable solutions. Visibility and engagement are always strong pieces of the jigsaw here, and it is a difficult balancing act between dealing with the daily demand and proactivity.

As we hopefully move towards the removal of all restrictions in June, we continue to work with the local authority and licensed premises to ensure they have our support at a time when heavy demand could be seen in our pubs and clubs, coinciding with the European Football Championships. Getting the deployment of resources right will ultimately have a direct impact on the feeling of safety within our communities.

The key message from me moving forward is that my teams will be prioritising supporting those most vulnerable within our communities, targeting those offenders who continue to bring with them the most threat and risk, and to work together with you all to prevent and detect crime, and to keep our streets safe!

I am Inspector Matt Paisley, but we are all Sudbury.

Thank you!