



Needham Market Town Council

Town Council Meeting

Minutes – 14.05.2025

Present: Cllr T Lawrence (In the Chair), Councillors: J Reardon, R Darnell, C Goodchild, I Mason, M Norris, M Ost, M O'Shea, A Reardon, K Hunter, G Blake, and L Cornish.

In Attendance: Suffolk County Councillor Kay Oakes, Assistant Clerk/RFO Gina de Cova and Locum Clerk Melanie Thurston.

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and introduced the Locum Clerk who is to take the minutes of the meeting in the absence of the Town Clerk. The assistant Clerk/RFO is in attendance for items 2, 5 & 22. He thanked all the councillors for their work over the past year.

NMTC/25/94 To elect the Town Mayor/Chairperson of Council for 2025/2026:

Cllr Mason proposed Cllr J Reardon as Town Mayor/Chairperson for 2025/26. Cllr Ost seconded the proposal. All in favour. Cllr Mason thanked the outgoing Town Mayor/Chair for all his work over the past year. Cllr J Reardon took the Chair, thanking Councillors for electing him.

NMTC/25/95 To witness the Town Mayor/Chairperson's Declaration of Acceptance of Office:

Cllr J Reardon made his Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Town Mayor and Chairperson of the Council, signed it and read it out. The Declaration being witnessed and countersigned by the Assistant Town Clerk, as the Proper Officer.

NMTC/25/96 To receive Councillor's Apologies for Absence:

Cllrs T Cooke, G Sinnerton & E Smith. Apologies were received and approved.

NMTC/25/97 To elect the Deputy Town Mayor/Deputy Chairperson of Council for 2025/2026:

Cllr Mason proposed Cllr Goodchild, Cllr Ost seconded the proposal. All in favour.

NMTC/25/98 To witness The Deputy Town Mayor/Deputy Chairperson's Declaration of Acceptance of Office:

Cllr Goodchild made his Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Deputy Town Mayor/Deputy Chairperson of Council, signed it and read it out. The Declaration being witnessed and countersigned by the Assistant Town Clerk, as the Proper Officer.

At 7.35pm Cllr Lawrence gave his apologies as he had to leave the meeting for a family commitment. The apology was approved.

NMTC/25/99 To confirm the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 12th March 2025:

The minutes have been corrected to read that the start of the meeting is 7.30pm not 7.00pm. The minutes of the meeting of 12th March 2025 were then accepted as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairperson. Proposed Cllr A Reardon, seconded Cllr Goodchild. All in favour.

NMTC/25/100 To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interest for matters on the Agenda:

The following Declarations of Interest were received and recorded in the Declaration of Interest Register: Cllr A Reardon – Accounts for Payment (VE Day).

At this point the Chairman asked for the approval of the Council to bring forward item 22 Committees, a) Governance & Finance, as the Assistant Clerk who needs to be present for the item as the Proper Officer, has to leave after it is dealt with. This was agreed by all, proposed Cllr Darnell seconded Cllr Mason.

Cllr O'Shea would like to make public his apology to Cllr Cooke for speaking out of turn to her at the last meeting whilst speaking about harassment from members of the public.

The Chairman also brought to the attention of the Council that should any member ever be verbally abused in public, then they should report the incident to the Town Clerk or to the Police, as it is not acceptable behaviour.

NMTC/25/101 Committees

NMTC/25/a Governance and Finance:

NMTC/25/a/i Accounts for Payment and Confirmation:

The Assistant Clerk/RFO presented the Accounts for Payment and Confirmation which were tabled and a copy of which will be appended to the minutes. Cllr Ost queried the £400 payment for mowing of the burial ground as it is usually only £200. The Clerk confirmed that the invoice for the previous month, £200, was late being received therefore the previous month and the current month £200, were paid together totalling £400.

Cllr Darnell proposed Council adopt the Accounts for Payment and Confirmation, Cllr Ost seconded the proposal. All in favour.

NMTC/25/a/ii To adopt the accounts for the year ending 31st March 2025:

The Chairman explained that the Clerk and RFO have not had the time to complete the end of year accounts due to other issues. Therefore, the accounts have been passed over to Scribe to assist with completion of the task. This agenda item will be deferred until 3rd June and presented at the Governance & Finance Meeting. Proposed by Cllr Ost, seconded Cllr Mason. All in favour.

NMTC/25/a/iii Confirmation and signing of the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) for year ending 31st March 2025:

Also to be deferred to the Governance & Finance Meeting.

NMTC/25/a/iv Confirmation and signing of the Annual Accounting Statements (Section 2) for year ending 31st March 2025:

Also to be deferred to the Governance & Finance Meeting.

NMTC/25/a/v To adopt the Town Council Asset Register (31st March 2025):

It was noted that the cost of the Beacon which cost £650, was purchased after the year end, so will therefore be added to the Asset Register for the next financial year.

Cllr Hunter asked when the Asset Register was last reviewed. The Chairman agrees and that a review should be carried out by the Community & Assets Committee within the next year. Proposed Cllr Ost, seconded Cllr Hunter. All in favour. Copy will be appended to the minutes.

NMTC/25/a/vi To adopt an Internal Control Statement for the period to 31st March 2026:

The Chairman informed that the date on the statement has been corrected to 2026 and that item 3 paragraph 2 has been amended to "meet at least quarterly". Cllr Darnell would like the council to consider if it has enough full council meetings each year. The Chairman advised that the schedule of meetings was agreed and adopted for the previous year. If any additional meetings are needed, then these would be in the form of "extra ordinary meetings" Cllr Darnell proposed Council adopt the Internal Control Statement for the period to 31st March 2026. Cllr Ost seconded the proposal. All in favour.

NMTC/25/a/vii To receive Minutes from the Governance and Finance Committee meeting held 8th May 2025:

Cllr Ost proposed Council adopt the Minutes. Cllr O'Shea seconded the proposal. Those Councillors who had attended the meeting were in favour. Chairman signed the minutes.

Cllr Darnell raised the matter that Donations were to be reviewed by the committee. The Chairman informed that he has been unable to locate the Grants/Donations Policy. Once the policy has been located it can then be reviewed.

NMTC/25/a/viii To deal with matters referred from the Governance and Finance Meeting held on 8th May 2025.

The Chairman advised that the agenda had been confirmed before an informal request for a donation had been received from the WI. Assistant Clerk to seek further advice from SALC regarding guidance on making donations. No other matters arising.

NMTC/25/a/ix To confirm arrangements for the next meeting of the Governance & Finance Committee:

Confirmed the next meeting of the Governance & Finance Committee will take place on Tuesday 3rd June 2025 at 7pm in the Community Centre.

NMTC/25/b Community & Assets Committee:

NMTC/25/b/i To confirm arrangements for the next meeting of the Committee:

Confirmed the next meeting of the Community & Assets Committee will take place on Tuesday 15th July 2025 at 7pm in the Community Centre.

NMTC/24/c Planning Committee:

C024/24/c/i To confirm arrangements for the next meeting of the Committee:

Confirmed the next meeting of the Planning Committee will take place on Tuesday 10th June at 6pm in the Community Centre.

At 7.50pm the Assistant Clerk left the meeting.

The Chairman would like his thanks recorded to the Assistant Clerk for all the extra work she has put in over the last few weeks.

NMTC/25/08 To receive reports from The County Councillor, District Councillors and to take any questions from members of the public present:

County Councillor's Report:

County Councillor Oakes presented her report, which was tabled and a copy will be appended to the Minutes. She also highlighted the Nature Reserve Recovery Strategy Consultation and encouraged councillors and individuals to make comments.

District Councillors' Report:

No report from District Councillor Ross Piper. However, the Chair has received a report from District Councillor Lawrence and this will be appended to the Minutes.

NMTC/25/09: To appoint Chairpersons for the Council's Committees (excluding Employment) for 2025/2026.

The following Committee Chairperson appointments were agreed by Council:

Governance & Finance Committee: Cllr Goodchild. Proposed by O'Shea and seconded by Cllr Darnell. All in favour. The Chairman advised that Cllr Cooke is happy to become Vice Chairman.

Planning Committee: Cllr Ost. Proposed by Cllr Darnell and seconded by Cllr Mason. All in favour.

Community & Assets Committee: The Chairman suggests that the committee looks to appoint at its first meeting, so that the new Chairperson can get a better understanding of what is involved.

NMTC/25/10 To agree Members of the Employment Committee for 2025/2026:

The Chairman recommends not to change the current members of the committee until an outstanding employment issue has been resolved. Proposed Cllr Mason seconded Cllr Hunter. All in favour.

NMTC/25/11 To appoint SALC representatives for 2025/2026:

Cllr Lawrence would like to carry this out. Proposed Cllr Mason seconded Cllr Blake. All in favour.

NMTC/25/13 To confirm the appointment of the Internal Auditor:

The Chairman confirmed that the internal audit is booked in with SALC for 23rd June.

NMTC/25/14 To appoint representatives on the Community Centre Management Committee for 2025/26:

The current Chairman and Cllr Goodchild would like to remain as representatives. Proposed Cllr Mason seconded Cllr Ost. All in favour.

NMTC/25/15 To appoint a representative to liaise with Needham Market Neighbourhood Watch 2025/26:

Cllr Ost happy to do so. Proposed Cllr Blake, seconded Cllr Mason. All in favour.

NMTC/25/16 To appoint Emergency Contacts for 2025/26:

The Chairman informed that he is happy to continue. Cllrs Darnell & Hunter also happy to be representatives. Proposed Cllr Goodchild seconded Cllr Cornish. All in favour.

NMTC/25/17 To appoint to the Civic Events Management Group 2025/26: (Does not include the Christmas Fayre)

Cllr A Reardon and Cllr Cornish had taken on the representation last year and are happy to continue. They both agreed to remain for the forthcoming year. Cllr Cooke may also like to be a representative. Cllr Goodchild proposed, seconded Cllr Ost. All in favour.

NMTC/25/18 To confirm arrangements for Council's insurance cover for all insurable risks:

The Chairman informed that the insurance runs from July to July. The Council has not received a renewal quote yet. To discuss at the next meeting once renewal has been received. Cllr Mason asked if the insurance policy has a caveat that individual Councillors cannot be prosecuted. The Chairman confirmed that all councillors are covered.

Cllr Hunter recommends that the insurance cover should be reviewed when the renewal is received and that it should be summarised for the councillors. The Clerk will be asked to carry out a summary.

NMTC/25/19 To review Council's subscriptions to other bodies:

The Assistant Clerk confirmed annual subscriptions are paid to the Information Commissioners Office, Suffolk Association of Local Councils, Suffolk Local History Council and The River Gipping Trust. It was agreed to maintain these subscriptions and in addition to this also include MARPA (railway association). Proposed Cllr Ost seconded Cllr A Reardon. All in favour.

NMTC/25/20 To determine the time and place of Council and Council Committee Meetings up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council:

The Clerk has already prepared a schedule of meetings for 2025/26 inclusive of the 2025 Annual Town Council Meeting, which had been provided to Councillors at the last meeting. The schedule has been sent to the Community Hall booking officer. The Chairman informed that town council meetings are scheduled to take place monthly. Should any meetings be cancelled then an email will be sent out to councillors and will also be advertised on the town council website and noticeboards.

NMTC/25/21 Clerk's Report:

The Chairman informed that the Clerk has been unable to submit a report as she has been unwell over the past few weeks. Therefore, the Chairman and Cllr Lawrence has put together a report on behalf of the Clerk. This has been circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr Hunter proposed acceptance of the report, Cllr Ost seconded. 7 Councillors have read the report and are in favour. However, the remaining Councillors have not yet read the report.

The Chairman concluded that during the past year, the town council has lost 130 years of councillor experience and 60 years of staff experience. He hopes that now the council has a full complement of Councillors, it will now be able to move forward positively. If at any time a Councillor is considering resigning, then please speak to him in the first instance.

The Chairman thanked the Locum Clerk for her help in taking the minutes of the meeting.

The Meeting closed at 8.21pm

Signed **Date**