

SUDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD IN THE ASSEMBLY ROOM, TOWN HALL SUDBURY ON TUESDAY 15th JUNE 2021 AT 6.30PM

PRESENT: Mrs J Antill – Chair

Mr T Cresswell – (left the meeting at 8:00pm)

Ms L Fowler

Ms E Murphy

Mrs J Osborne

Mr J Owen

Mr R Spivey

Mr J Thomas

Mrs S Ayres – Mayor Ex-Officio

ATTENDING: Mr C Griffin – Town Clerk

Mr R Drury

Mr N Bennett

Mr S Hall

1. **SUBSTITUTES AND APOLOGIES**

All members were present.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Mrs S Ayres, Mr T Cresswell and Mrs J Osborne declared that they were Babergh District Councillors. Mrs J Osborne declared that she had a non-pecuniary interest in Item 6.

3. **DECLARATION OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY**

No declarations were received.

4. **REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION**

No requests for dispensation had been received.

5. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Policy and Resources meeting held on the 16th February 2021 be confirmed and signed as a correct record. These had been approved and adopted at the March Full Council meeting.

6. REVIEW OF THE POLICY FOR THE LONG-TERM USE AND LAYOUT OF MARKET HILL

The Chair invited Mr Robin Drury to present his sketch of a rough concept for Market Hill, shown at minute page 401, which included a single row of parking spaces with access via a new slip road from King Street and egress near the current opening at the bottom of Market Hill. Cllr N Bennett was then invited to present the Review of Town Council Vision Document, shown at minute page 402, which made eleven recommendations for the future of Market Hill. Member discussed the merits of each of these recommendations and there was broad agreement that consultation with stakeholders would be very important to successful delivery. The Town Clerk advised that, for the consultation, it would be helpful to have the proposed designs drawn professionally so that they were accurate enough to confirm that there would be sufficient space for the parked cars and a wider pavement. It would also be important to understand the exact size of the space available for the market stalls. The Town Clerk confirmed that he had obtained a quotation from a local architect to draw up four alternative sets of plans for a cost of £500 excluding VAT.

RESOLVED

To support the principles of the recommendations in the Review of Town Council Vision Document for Market Hill.

To have four designs professionally drawn accurately to scale to show the following options;

- **Wider pavement with a single row of parking accessed from King Street.**
- **The design above on a market day with no parking.**
- **Wider pavement with a single row of parking accessed from Market Hill.**
- **The design above on a market day with no parking.**

To hold a study day for interested town councillors, plus selected invitees which would include the key representatives from Babergh District Council, Suffolk County Council and Highways.

To postpone discussion of the review's recommendations for the Hamilton Road Quarter until the next meeting.

7. REVIEW THE BUSINESS PLAN FOR 2021

In 2018 the Town Council had adopted a four-year business plan covering the period 2018 to 2022. The Town Clerk asked members to identify areas that they would like to see covered in greater detail in the next version and suggested greater focus on those areas where the council spent or received the most money. This could include quarterly reporting on the market, the community wardens, the cemetery, the tourist information centre, the allotments, the town centre, etc.

RESOLVED

That a working group consisting of Cllrs Antill, Fowler, Thomas and Spivey be established to start the process of reviewing the business plan. Cllr Bennett was also invited to join the

working group when he was available. That the WG report back on the proposed structure for the next version of the business plan to the Policy Committee in July.

8. REVIEW OF THE MAYOR'S BENEVOLENT FUND AND ALL OTHER CHARITABLE FUNDS

The members discussed the report from the Mayor's Secretary, Mrs Teresa Elford, on the Mayor's Benevolent Fund, shown at minute pages 406 to 410. There was general concern that the purpose and governance of the Mayor's Benevolent Fund had not developed over the years to keep pace with changes in practice and public expectations. In particular there was concern that public money was being given out without consideration of need and with no measures to avoid any indirect discrimination or favouritism.

RECOMMENDED

That the current Mayor's Benevolent Fund should be abolished at the end of FY2021/22.

That the next meeting of the Policy Committee should consider whether there was a need for an alternative Town Council Benevolent Fund or Community Chest and, if so, what rules should govern the distribution of benefits.

The members discussed the report from the Mayor's Secretary, Mrs Teresa Elford, on the Mayor's Charity Account, shown at minute page 411. There was wide agreement that, although the primary role of the Mayor was to represent the Town Council, it was acceptable for those mayors who wished, to raise money for their chosen charities. Any money raised would have to go directly to the named charities and would be held by the Town Council in a separate earmarked reserve (EMR) until distributed. Any charitable events held by a mayor would need to be self-funding and could not be subsidised by the Town Council with public money.

RECOMMENDED

That the Mayors should continue to be allowed to raise money for their chosen charities if they wished.

That no public money would be used to support the Mayor's charities.

9. REVIEW THE PROCEDURES FOR THE MAYOR'S EXPENSES FOR THE NEXT MAYOR'S HANDBOOK

The members discussed the report from the Mayor's Secretary, Mrs Teresa Elford, on the Mayoral Expenses Budget, shown at minute pages 412 to 413. It was noted that the May Finance Committee had resolved that, in future, all the Mayor's expenses were to be paid from Sudbury Town Council's Current Bank Account on the submission of supporting documents and had recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee review the procedures for the Mayor's expenses before re-issuing the next edition of the Mayor's Handbook.

RESOLVED

That the Mayor’s Secretary, Mrs Teresa Elford, be thanked for her excellent work producing the reports and that she uses them as the basis for redrafting the next edition of the Mayor’s Handbook.

Cllr J Owen wished it to be recorded that he opposed the motion.

Members resolved to approve a 10-minute extension until 8:40pm

10. DEVELOPMENT OF A MEDIA POLICY

The members discussed the benefit of having a press and media policy for Sudbury Town Council. There were examples of such policies from other town and parish councils and it was suggested that the best elements might be brought together for use by Sudbury Town Council. It was stressed that such a policy should not restrict individual member’s rights to express their personal views, but that there should be a clear distinction between a personal view from an individual town councillor and the corporate view of the Town Council.

RESOLVED

That those members who are interested pass their suggestions on areas that they would like to see included to the Town Clerk, who will compile a draft policy for consideration at the next meeting of this committee.

11. DEVELOPMENT OF AN ADVERTISING POLICY

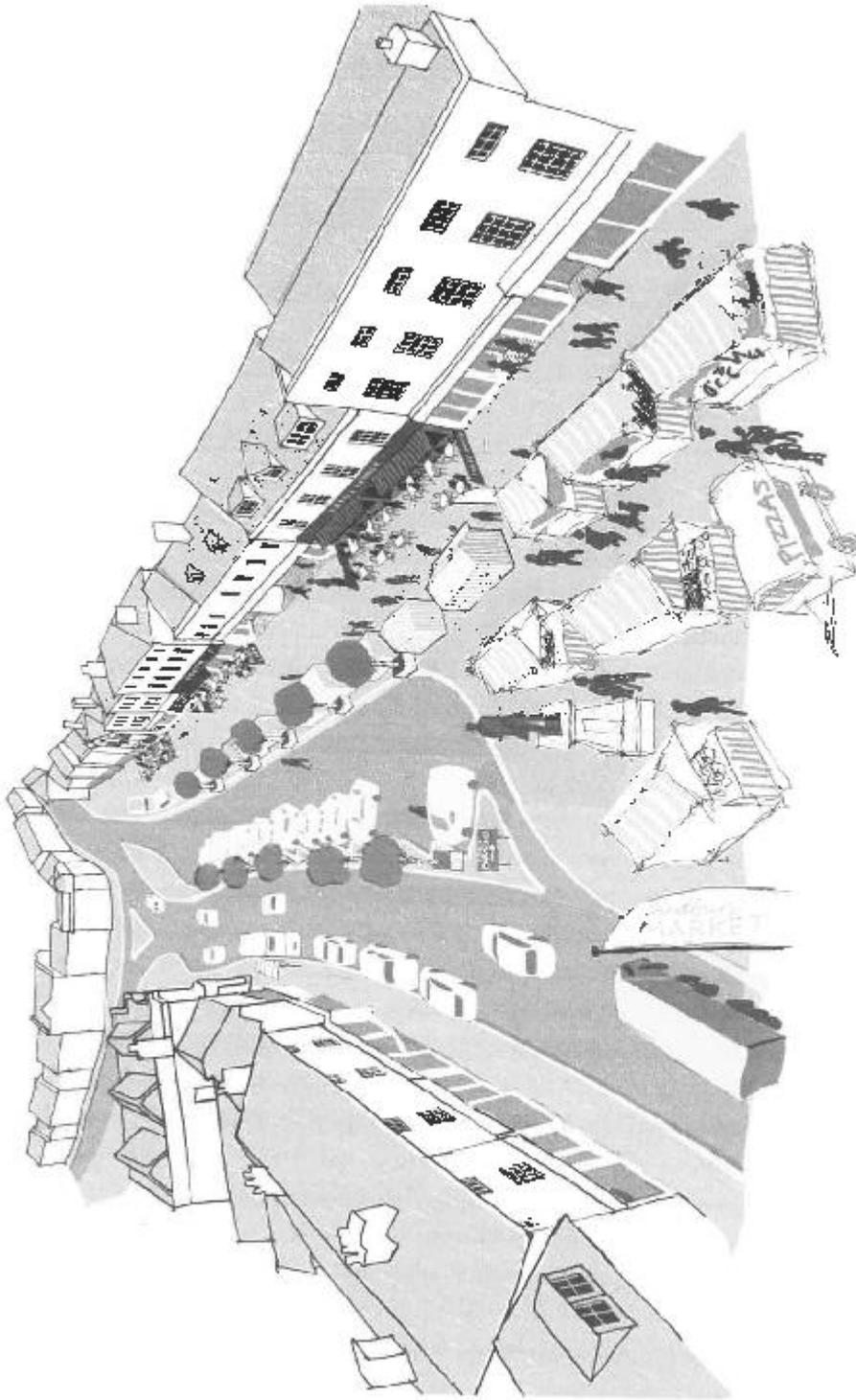
The members discussed whether there was a need for a separate advertising policy and, if so, what it should cover. An alternative option would be to have it as part of the press and media policy.

RESOLVED

That those members who have an interest in, or experience of, advertising pass their suggestions to the Town Clerk, who will compile options for consideration at the next meeting of this committee.

The meeting concluded at 8:35 pm

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Chairman



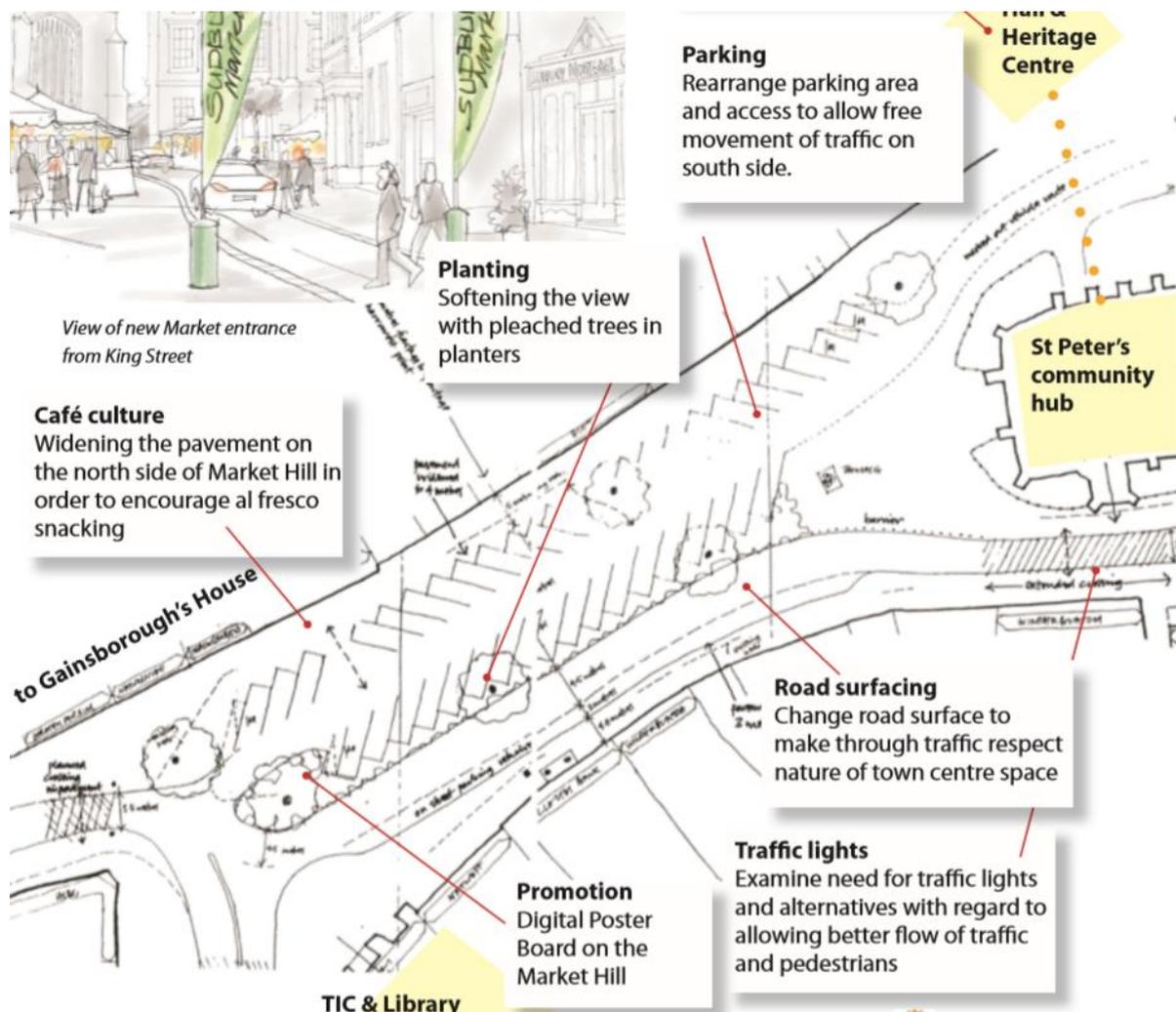
Rough Concept for Market Hill Revamp
Roder Murray 15/06/2021

Review of Town Council Vision document.

Written by Councillors Bennett, Ayres and Murphy.

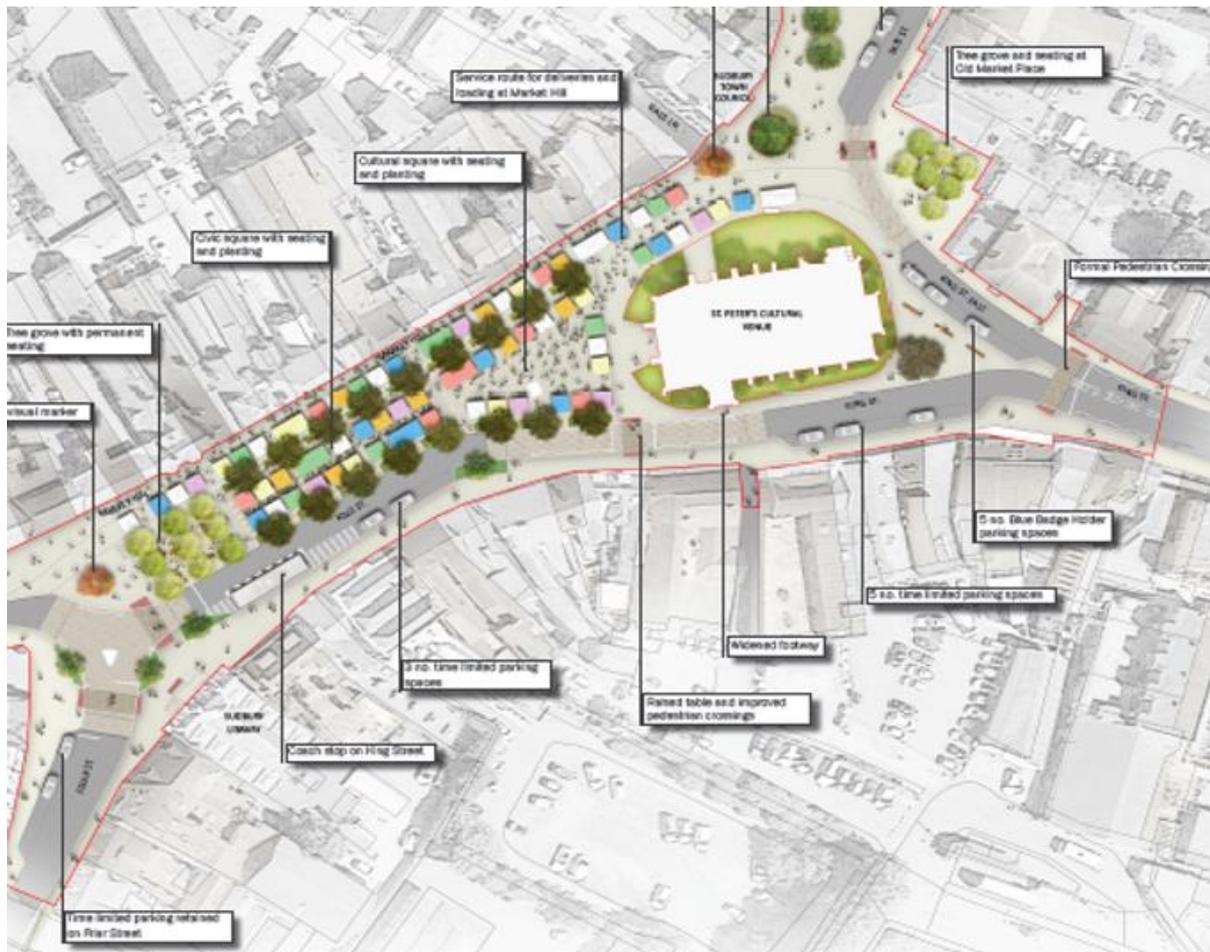
The working group was set up by the Policy Committee in 2021 to review and report back on the Ambitions for the town centre focusing on the Market Hill and Hamilton Road Quarter around the bus station. The Ambition document was created towards the end of the previous Council 2015-2019.

Ambitions document view of the Market Hill.



The Ambition document which is Policy of the Town Council had tried to balance introducing some café culture, reducing congestion caused by vehicles reversing into the flow of traffic on Market Hill while also having some environmental enhancement via some tree planting while parking remained on non-market days and with plentiful space for the twice weekly market.

The Babergh DC and Suffolk CC Vision document that involved pedestrianisation of the Market Hill (see below) involved no consultation with members of the Town Council.



On reviewing the Ambition document, we propose that the principles set in the Town Council Ambitions document are the best approach. We see the Market Hill as a multi-functional, adaptive

space which could enhance residents and visitor experience especially in summer but also acknowledges the needs of older and less mobile residents who require parking as well as the limitations of the UK climate on the use of this space all year round.

We recommend that:

1. The parking bays on the Market Hill north side are removed to allow the pavement to be widened. This would allow café culture in front of premises all year round if businesses wanted outdoor seating without affecting pedestrian flow.
2. The bay near Goal Lane entrance and before the pedestrian crossing point is kept for vehicle loading as well as skip location for market waste.
3. The use of trees and planters to stop cars parked on Market Hill reversing into the flow of traffic. This would add greening and softening whilst also shade.
4. The central Market Hill would have only 1 line of parking. Consideration should be given to this being blue badge only.
5. The market and farmers market could use the parking area throughout the year Thursday & Saturday as well as last Friday of each month (should we keep the STC market every Friday?).
6. The Market Hill would have no parking in the summer months so that café culture could be expanded and temporary seating areas could be set up for hospitality premises. Potentially extra markets could be added in the summer as well as performances.
7. The Market Hill parking would be available early September – early May.
8. An attractive barrier method would be needed to temporarily restrict access to the Market Hill while allowing deliveries and market stall holders access.
9. Plans for a coach stop on the south side of Market Hill are supported.
10. Additional planting in Old Market Place and near the Town Hall are supported.
11. There needs to be consultation with stakeholders i.e. retailers, hospitality sector, banks, market stallholders, farmers market, St Peter's Venue, Gainsborough House and the public so a scheme with widespread support is advanced.

The Hamilton Road Quarter was seen as a mixed use development within the Ambition document (see below)

Aspirations for how this key area of the town centre should develop include:

- Establishment of infrastructure to encourage a non-food anchor store and satellite, branded retail shops to underpin existing town centre retail economy.
- A multi-screen cinema complex to add to the night-time economy
- Housing and offices at first floor level
- Redevelopment of Borehamgate to create prime access to the complex and present an enhanced retail frontage to Great Eastern Road
- Create a walking link from the rail station to the Market Hill



Sudbury Town Council

Hamilton Road Quarter

With removal of the bus station from this site the town centre has the chance to expand to meet the demands of the current 92,000 catchment and Sudbury's future growth.



The Covid pandemic alongside the significant increase of on-line retail, increased home-working as well as the closures by national chain retailers and leisure providers makes redevelopment as envisaged more difficult.

However, a mixed use development is still seen as key to regenerating this area though an increased residential element may be required.

The group believe that part of the site towards Bank Buildings could provide an urban park/green space. A place where people can sit in peace and quiet with trees and attractive landscaping. An additional oasis in the town centre.

A walking link from the Market Hill to the rail station is important.

The group also believe that regeneration of this area needs to include the enhancement of the buildings/area currently used by a garage and carpet store.

There is an urgent need for the District Council to talk to the Town Council on future plans.

The Mayor's Benevolent Fund

1950 - As far as I can establish, from the records that are available, the Mayor's Benevolent Fund Committee was first established in 1950 by the then Mayor, Councillor Norman Green, and consisted of various dignitaries, businesses, organisations, the fund's Bank Manager, local Clergy, the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Town Clerk. Unfortunately, I cannot find any minutes or paperwork to explain why the fund was established and what its objective was.

1979 - The only set of minutes I have start in 1979 through to the current day, all of which have been confirmed by the Chairman (the Mayor). In 1979 the committee consisted of The Mayor, 2 Town Councillors, The Town Clerk, and 7 other members from various bodies/organisations, including the fund's Bank Manager as Treasurer, Social Services, and the local Clergy.

At a meeting of the Committee dated the 31st October 1979, members discussed the "Future of the Mayor's Benevolent Fund" where the secretary (the Town Clerk) advised members that in a letter dated the 11th March 1976, the Town Council advised the Committee that they wished for the Mayor's Benevolent Fund to continue to operate the annual Christmas distribution of food vouchers. It was resolved at that meeting as follows.

That with effect from December 1979 the distribution of vouchers be issued only to applicants living alone and being 70 years of age and over, except in special cases which would be considered in detail by the committee.

Given the above information, you would be led to assume the fund was set up to assist the elderly of the town at Christmas with a food voucher of an agreed amount.

Since 1979 the Town Council have made a grant to the fund, which has increased considerably over the years. Initially the grant given started at £100 and was increased annually by approximately £50 until 1987 when it changed and was increased annually by £100. This continued until 2014 when the grant being given by the Town Council was £3,000. In 2015 the grant was reduced to £1,500 where it has remained to date.

Looking through the annual statements of accounts it appears that funds were raised as follows.

- a) **Sudbury Town Council** - Grant
- b) **Sudbury Municipal Charities** - Grant (this ceased in 2003 as the fund had a substantial balance)
- c) **Annual Civic Service** – Church Collection (this started in 1982 and continues to date)
- d) **Various Charity Events run by the Mayor**
- e) **Various groups/organisations** – Donations

Over the years this has considerably reduced with the main contributor now being the town council grant.

1981 - At a meeting of the Committee dated the 22nd September 1981, members again discussed the "Future of the Mayor's Benevolent Fund" when members were advised that the funds were

diminishing each year as fewer donations and grants were being received. It was resolved as follows.

That with effect from December 1981, the voucher distribution be issued only to applicants living alone and being 80 years of age and over (at 1.11.1981), except in special cases which will be considered in detail by the committee.

1983 - In November 1983, the then Mayor, Councillor Tony Moore proposed "Aid to One Parent Families" which was agreed at that meeting. It was resolved that the committee would consider giving grants, totalling £250, to needy or one parent families residing in the town after liaising with Social Services. Looking at the minutes I can see grants were given annually until November 1986, when the committee agreed to discontinue the scheme to distribute grant aid to one parent families. However, a modified scheme was introduced where the Mayor and Treasurer were authorised to consider any special cases for single parent grant aid submitted by Social Services and that funds of up to £100 were made available to assist any urgent and deserving cases.

Also in November 1983, The Mayor, Councillor Tony Moore, requested that the committee approve giving a grant to assist with the cost of organising his Christmas Party for the Elderly & Disabled being held at the Town Hall on Wednesday 7th December 1983. The Committee agreed to give a grant of £50, which continued until 1994, when the grant had increased to £200. Grants for the Christmas Parties were stopped because of the substantial balance in the Charity Account (previously called the Mayor's Caring Sunday Account) from where the Christmas Parties were funded.

1995 - At a meeting dated the 6th November 1995, the retiring Town Clerk, Clive Finch, resigned as Hon. Secretary. The committee agreed to appoint the new Town Clerk, Sue Brotherwood, as the Hon. Secretary and Teresa Seddon (now Elford) as Assistant Hon. Secretary.

1996 – On the 5th November 1996, the Hon. Secretary advised members that, at present the Mayor's Benevolent Fund issues Christmas Vouchers to persons living alone and who are aged 80 years and over, except in special cases which were considered in detail by the Committee, this excludes all sheltered housing (**although I am unable to find any proof in the minutes, that sheltered housing should be excluded**). In past years Springlands Sheltered Housing at First Avenue had been wrongly included in the distribution list. This could not continue, unless all Sheltered Housing was to be included, which would make the number of applicants extremely high, thus making the individual vouchers almost worthless. At the meeting members revised the qualifying conditions as follows.

- a) That residents of Sheltered Housing must not be included in the distribution list***
- b) That persons living alone and who are aged 80 years and over, except in special cases, regardless of their income are eligible (I believe the form had previously requested the applicant to declare any dependants and savings)***

The Hon. Secretary also advised members that there was no record of an actual Committee Structure and requested that a formal resolution be made as to this structure. Members were also advised by Mrs. Sylvia Cann (a former Town Councillor & Mayor) that in 1984 she had been

elected as a life member of the committee. As the relevant minutes did not record that fact, the Hon. Secretary requested that members vote on the matter again for the record. The matters were resolved as follows.

a) That after detailed discussions it was agreed that as Mrs. Cann had previously been elected as a life member of the committee, this matter should now be recorded in the minutes.

b) The Committee Structure would now be made up as follows: -

The Mayor of Sudbury	Vicar of St. Gregory's Church
The Deputy Mayor of Sudbury	Vicar of All Saints Church
The outgoing Mayor of Sudbury	Hon. Treasurer – Mr. P. Scrivens (Bank Manager)
Mrs. S.D. Cann (former Mayor)	Hon. Secretary – Mrs. S.M. Brotherwood (Town Clerk)
Mrs. V.E.A. Moulton (former Mayor)	Assistant Hon. Secretary – Mrs T.J. Seddon (now Elford)

1999 – At a meeting on the 9th November 1999, the existing Hon. Treasurer, Mr. P. Scrivens, resigned from the Committee and Mrs. S.M. Brotherwood appointed as the Hon. Treasurer and Mrs. T.J. Elford appointed as Hon. Secretary.

2002 – At a Special Meeting held on the 15th April 2002, members were requested to discuss the Policy & Strategy for the Mayor's Benevolent Fund. Since the standard of living had improved over the years, people were now living much longer, and the list of applicants now exceeded 100. If the list continued to increase and the voucher value remained at £30 the fund would not be able to meet the £3,000 expenditure needed. Following discussions several proposals were put forward as follows.

- a) To keep the age limit at 80 years of age and reduce the voucher value from £30 to £25 per person**
- b) To keep the age limit at 80 years of age and limit the voucher allocation to 100 applicants**
- c) To amend the age limit to 85 years of age and keep the voucher value at £30 per person**

It was resolved as follows.

It was agreed, unanimously, that the age limit would be kept at 80 years of age and the value of the voucher would be reduced from £30 to £25 per applicant.

2014 – On the 5th November 2014, following the resignation of the Hon. Treasurer, Mrs. S.M. Brotherwood, Mrs. Jodie Budd was appointed as the new Hon Treasurer. Also, at that meeting members were requested to discuss the signatories for cheque payments, which were currently only signed by the Hon. Treasurer. It was agreed at the meeting that the following two members be appointed to sign cheques.

- 1. The Hon Secretary – Mrs. Teresa Elford**
- 2. The Hon Treasurer – Mrs. Jodie Budd**

It was also agreed that as the balance in the funds account was considerably low, the list of applicants would be limited to 100.

2017 – In January 2017, a substantial donation of £5,000 was received from Graeme Weir increasing the balance of the fund considerably.

2018 – At a meeting on the 7th November 2018, Mr. Adrian Osborne was appointed as a committee member to replace Mrs. Valerie Moulton who was no longer able to attend meetings in person owing to ill health. Due to the generous donation made by Graeme Weir the voucher value was also increased from £25 to £30.

2019 – In December 2018, a further donation of £1,000 was received from Graeme Weir.

2020 – On the 11th November 2020, following the further donation made by Graeme Weir the committee agreed to increase the voucher value from £30 to £40. Also owing to the COVID-19 pandemic and the amount of elderly people still isolating, members agreed to extend the expiry date on the vouchers for 2020/21 by an extra month expiring on the 28.2.2021.

Notes

- 1. It should be noted that prior to 2015 the Mayor's Benevolent Fund was not included in the Sudbury Town Council accounts so was never viewed by the external Auditors. However, since 2015 the fund has been included in the Town Council accounts and viewed by the external Auditors, but no questions or concerns have ever been raised about the fund.**
- 2. Over the years the committee has decreased in size and is now only made up from members of the town council, including 2 members of staff, Adrian Osborne (although a member of the town council was asked to sit on the committee in his own right) and Canon Rev. Cheryl Collins representing both St. Gregory's and All Saints Churches.**
- 3. The addresses of the list of applicants indicates that those on the committee, especially members of the town council, are made up from the wards they represent. Whilst this is not wrong, there could be many more qualifying residents in the town who are not included on the list.**
- 4. Currently the list comprises of the same applicants each year, with a considerable amount from Banham Drive and Weavers Court.**
- 5. As there are currently no qualifying rules, other than anyone who is over 80 years of age and lives alone in Sudbury (excluding Sheltered Accommodation) can apply for a voucher.**
- 6. Publicising the fund would without doubt attract more applicants, but the only fear doing that might mean we would be inundated with applicants.**
- 7. I also know that we have at least two applicants on the list who spend the voucher and give the items to families who, they feel, are in need. We currently have no way of knowing if someone is a deserving applicant.**

The Mayor's Benevolent Fund has changed over the years and should now be looked at closely by the town council to see if it is still viable. As the Town Council are the main contributor to the fund, consideration should be given to the fact that public money is being given to a fund that distributes to a limited number of people in the town.

Teresa Elford
Mayor's Secretary/Event Co-ordinator
& Hon Secretary for the Mayor's Benevolent Fund

25th May 2021

Questions:

What is the legal status of this fund?

What is the current purpose of this fund?

How can we prove that distribution is not biased in favour or against any groups?

Who are the people most in need of help in Sudbury?

Is there a better way to help those in need in Sudbury?

Recommendations:

If the fund is to continue, the Full Council should approve a charter describing what the fund is for and how it will be administered.

Alternatively this fund could be closed.

The Mayor's Charity Account

During the Mayoral term of office, the Mayor may wish to adopt one or more charities to raise funds on their behalf. However, it must be stressed that such an undertaking is secondary to the function of the Mayor and therefore the setting of fundraising targets is to be avoided. This is because the use of monetary target can lead to the "Mayor's Charity" becoming almost an overriding preoccupation of the Mayoral Year, which can detract from the role. This is not intended in any way to disparage the remarkable fund-raising achievements of some previous Mayors.

The Charity Account is used by the Mayor of the day to hold money raised* throughout the year and then distributed to their chosen charities at the end of the Mayoral year.

*Money raised can derive from various sources such as.

- a) Charity events hosted by the Mayor, such as a coffee morning, curry night, or dinner dance.
- b) Donations given by individuals to the Mayor for their chosen charity(s).
- c) Auction of flowers from civic events, such as Mayor Making and the Annual Civic Service.

Currently, the Charity Account is also used for the income and expenditure for hosting a charity event. For example, if a Mayor was to hold a Charity Curry Night, then all ticket money would be paid into the account, along with any money raised at the event, such as holding a raffle on the night. Any expenses from the event would also be paid from the account, for instance, the restaurant invoice to cover the meals, raffle prizes and draw tickets.

Up until 2016 the account was also used for the income and expenditure for the Senior Citizens Christmas Party with the town council annual grant being transferred into the charity account and all the expenses being drawn from the account as well. This stopped when the council agreed that as the town council were the main source of finance, the event would no longer be known as the "Mayor's Christmas Party for Senior Citizens", but as the "Town's Christmas Party for Senior Citizens". This meant that all the income and expenses went through the main Town Council's current account.

In order to keep a strict record of all income and expenditure in the account, a separate excel sheet is kept for every event that is held and a running total of the amount raised for charity.

There is a separate cheque book for the Charity Account at Lloyds Bank, which currently must be signed by any two Town Councillors.

Questions:

Should this account continue with its current role of raising funds for charities?

Should the account be used to run an event, meaning for the purposes of income and expenditure?

Teresa Elford
Mayor's Secretary/Event Co-ordinator

7th June 2021.

The Mayoral Expenses Budget

The Local Government Act 1972 states that –

“A parish council may pay the chairman for the purpose of enabling him to meet the expenses of his office such allowance as the council think reasonable” (Section 15(5) of the Local Government Act 1972)¹

There is no set formula for deciding the level of the civic expenses. Mayoral budgets vary dramatically across the country and the amount does not always match the size of the authority. Some small Councils make a large budget available and vice versa. Some Councils expect the Mayor to meet all expenses of the office, including personal hospitality, civic hospitality, and civic gifts, whilst others may draw (or have officers draw) upon other Council funds to meet these expenses.

The Mayoral Budget is allowed to be “reasonable”, although most Councils do not calculate what “reasonable” is – they merely increase the allowance by inflation or some other fixed indices²

Since 2013 the Sudbury Town Council annual Mayor’s Allowance has remained at £3,500, before this it was increased by £100 each year. The actual amounts spent on expenses over this time were;

2013 - £2,710.53
2014 - £ 978.77
2015 - £2,723.94
2016 - £1,308.80
2017 - £2,407.27
2018 - £1,318.35
2019 - £1,025.90
2020 - £ 307.04

What can the Mayoral Budget be used for?

The Local Government Act 1972 does not stipulate the type or category of expenditure for which the civic expenses may be used by the Mayor, except that it is for meeting the “expenses of their office”. There cannot be a universally accepted list of items “acceptable” for purchase out of the Mayoral Budget. Some of the more general items would include: -

*Mileage and car parking costs; Church service collections, Raffle tickets at events; Correct dress for civic events (e.g., this may include the need for new clothing for not only the Mayor but for the Mayoress/Consort; flag day flags, poppies, etc; sending flowers; Personal hospitality (including lunches and dinners); Babysitting expenses; One-off events held by the Mayor*³

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1972/70/section/15>

² Civic Ceremonial Guidance by Paul Millward Fifth Edition 2007 – page 71

³ Civic Ceremonial Guidance by Paul Millward Fifth Edition 2007 – page 73

Previously the Mayoral allowance for Sudbury was held in an account for the Mayor to use as and when they wish. The May 2021 Finance Committee agreed that, in future, the funds allocated for the Mayor's expenses would remain in the general fund and be drawn down as and when required. The Mayor is expected to account for all expenses by providing receipts or an appropriate record of spending. There are a number of items that the Mayor is required to fund from this allocation, these are;

- **Mayor Making expenses** (includes caterers, drink and floral decorations if required) – Approximately £600-£1000 depending on the Mayor's guest list and refreshment choices.
- **Christmas Cards & Postage** – Approximately £500 (depending on amount ordered)
- **Christmas morning gifts** – Approximately £50

This leaves approximately half of the allocation left for other expenses.

Previously, any money left in the expenses account at the end of the term of office could either be transferred to the Charity Account to distribute to chosen charities or could be paid directly to the Mayor providing appropriate receipts were provided for expenses to cover that amount.

However, I recently attended a National Association of Civic Officers Training Webinar (which I am a member of), and reference was made to the inadvisability of public money being used to support Mayor's Charities and should perhaps go into general reserves. It is wrong that a charity receives a donation believing it to be from the Mayor, when in fact it is public money.

What we should have in place is a properly established Mayoral expenses budget, which is not routinely underspent. Advice given stated that any consistently underspent budgets should be cut as part of any savings targets.

Teresa Elford
Mayor's Secretary/Event Co-ordinator

11th May 2021.

Questions:

Have the 'Standards in Public Life' reports said anything to do with this?