Needham Market
Town Council
Needham Market town Council Office, Community Centre, School Street, Needham Market, Suffolk IP6 8BB
01449 722246
https://www.needhammarket-tc.gov.uk/
Town Clerk/RFO: Georgina de Cova
Assistant Clerk: Jessica Green

Needham Market Town Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday 13th October 2026

Held at: The Green Room, Community Centre, School Street, Needham Market. Meeting started at 19:00

Councillors Present:

C Goodchild (Chair), K Hunter, I Mason, J Reardon, R Piper, J Matthew, T Cooke, G Blake, G Rogers and R Wetherell

Also in Attendance:

G de Cova (Town Clerk and RFO), and 2 members of the public. Cllr Piper was also in attendance in his capacity as a District Councillor

NMTC/26/121 Apologies for Absence

Cllrs Harrison (prior commitment), Barrance (prior commitment) and Clennell (illness) had all sent apologies in advance of the meeting.

Cllr Blake proposed that the apologies be accepted. Seconded by Cllr Hunter. All in favour.

It was **Resolved** to accept the Apologies for Absence.

NMTC/26/122 To receive any Declarations of Pecuniary or Non-Pecuniary Interests by Members

No declarations were received.

NMTC/26/123 To approve any Dispensations with respect to Disclosable Non-Pecuniary Interests

No dispensations were applied for.

NMTC/26/124 To receive reports, if any, from the County Councillor and District Councillor

It was noted that there was a vacancy for the County Councillor role within the Bosmere Division of Suffolk County Council, as such there was no report from the County Councillor.

A report from the District Councillors had been circulated ahead of the meeting. Updates included information regarding support available through the Mid Suffolk Nature Recovery Fund, planning reform proposals.

Members also discussed the current position regarding the Duck and Teapot site following the operator entering administration. It was confirmed that a number of parties had expressed an interest in taking over the site.

NMTC/26/125 To welcome newly appointed Councillors and note the receipt of Declarations of Acceptance of Office

Members welcomed new Councillors Ross Piper and Gary Rogers, both of whom had signed their Declarations of Acceptance of Office prior to the meeting.

NMTC/26/126 To receive and confirm the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 8th September 2026

Minutes from the previous meeting had been circulated to all councillors in advance of this meeting. Cllr Hunter proposed the minutes be confirmed. Seconded by Cllr Reardon. All in favour.

It was **Resolved** to confirm the minutes of 8th September 2026 as an accurate record.

NMTC/26/127 Matters arising from the Minutes of the previous meeting

No matters were raised that were not otherwise covered elsewhere in the agenda.

NMTC/26/100 To receive questions from any members of the public present

A representative from the Community Centre was in attendance who spoke regarding the office accommodation arrangements. Members noted the comments and confirmed that the matter would be considered at the relevant agenda item. Concerns were also raised relating to the usage of the Community Centre car park and toilets for events happening on the Former Middle School Field, which were having an impact on booked events within the Community Centre. It was suggested that consideration be given to look into alternate parking and toilet provision for the users of the Middle School Field. Members acknowledged the concerns of the Community Centre and agreed that it should be considered further.

A second member of the public commented that concerns regarding issues at Needham Lake were widely discussed by residents and that there was a perception that insufficient action was taken to address problems within the area. It was noted that the Lake remains the responsibility of Mid Suffolk District Council, and that any antisocial behaviour should be reported to the police.

NMTC/26/101 To receive a report from the Town Clerk

The Clerk reported that CCTV installation at the Crowley Park area is scheduled to take place in the coming weeks. It will consist of two static cameras and one pan, tilt and zoom camera in order to ensure a wider coverage of the area. It was also reported that Kompan should be attending the younger children's play area at Crowley Park on 22nd October to complete the repairs on the rope bridge. It was confirmed that progress was being made with obtaining proposals for both the Older Children's Play Area on Crowley Park and the installation of some outdoor gym equipment.

NMTC/26/102 To receive and adopt the External Audit Report 2025/26

A copy of the External Audit Report for 2025/26 had been circulated ahead of the meeting. Cllr Hunter proposed that the External Audit Report for 2025/26 be adopted. Seconded by Cllr Mason.

It was **Resolved** to adopt the External Audit Report for 2025/26

NMTC/26/103 To consider the measures required to address the matters raised in the External Audit Report 2025/26 and agree any actions required

Members noted that future AGAR section approvals would be completed in the correct order, and that the issue relating to staffing costs had been corrected within the accounting system ready for future reporting. The figures would be restated in the 2026/27 AGAR. No further action was required.

NMTC/26/104 To receive an update on repair works previously agreed and to consider and approve any further quotations or works required

The Clerk informed members that quotations had now been resubmitted or reconfirmed as still valid by three contractors. Following a discussion, Cllr Hunter proposed that the contractor who submitted Option 2 be appointed, subject to the Clerk being satisfied that the specification met the Council's requirements. Seconded by Cllr Mason. All in favour.

It was **Resolved** to appoint the contractor, subject to the verification of the specification.

NMTC/26/104 To discuss and agree the installation of self-closing gates at Crowley Park Younger Children's Play Area

Councillors discussed the installation of self-closing gates at the Younger Children's Play Area in Crowley Park following a recent event locally. Cllr Blake proposed that self-closing gates be pursued, and costing obtained for a future meeting. Seconded by Cllr Mason. All in favour.

It was **Resolved** to progress the investigation for self-closing gates and obtain costings.

NMTC/26/104 To receive and adopt the Tree Management Policy as recommended by the Governance and Finance Committee

Councillors considered the draft Tree Management Policy for adoption, as recommended by the Governance and Finance committee. The policy establishes a risk-based approach to tree management, maintenance and replacement. Cllr Hunter proposed that the policy be adopted. Seconded by Cllr Cooke. All in favour.

It was **Resolved** to adopt the Tree Management Policy.

NMTC/26/104 To consider commissioning a survey of the Council's trees

Councillors considered commissioning a professional survey of all Council-owned trees. The survey would establish a baseline record of the Council's tree stock, identify maintenance requirements and support compliance with the newly adopted Tree Management Policy. Cllr Cooke proposed that a tree survey be commissioned. Seconded by Cllr Reardon. All in favour.

It was **Resolved** to commission a survey of the Council's trees.

NMTC/26/104 To consider concerns regarding a Council owned tree on Crowley Park and agree any action

Councillors considered correspondence received regarding a tree adjacent to residential properties at Crowley Park.

Following discussion, Members agreed further professional advice was required before reaching a decision and requested information regarding the condition of the tree and future maintenance implications. Councillors agreed to defer a decision until the requested information was obtained

NMTC/26/105 To receive and approve the accounts for payment and confirmation

Councillors had been sent the Accounts for Payments and Confirmation ahead of the meeting. The invoices were checked against confirmation print out from the bank to ensure accuracy. Cllr Hunter proposed that the Accounts for Payment and Confirmation be approved. Seconded by Cllr Mason. All in favour.

It was **Resolved** to approve the Accounts for Payment and Confirmation.

NMTC/26/106 To consider Grants/Donations for 2026/27

NMTC/26/106a Needham Market Community Council

The Council considered a request from Needham Market Community Council for the support with the removal of a diseased cherry tree at the School Street Play Area. Cllr Wetherell proposed that the Council fund the removal of the tree on the condition that a replacement tree is planted. Seconded by Cllr Cooke. All in favour.

It was **Resolved** to fund the removal of the tree, subject to replacement planting.

NMTC/26/106a Christians Together

The Council considered a request from Christians Together for financial support towards a community pancake event. Councillors concluded that insufficient information had been provided. Cllr Hunter proposed that the applicant be asked to resubmit the request with more information. Seconded by Cllr Mason. All in favour

It was **Resolved** to ask for further information before the application be reconsidered.

NMTC/26/107 To receive reports from the following:

NMTC/26/107a Planning Committee

Cllr Hunter reported that the Planning Committee meeting immediately prior to the Town Council meeting had not been quorate and therefore no meeting could take place. Councillors discussed concerns regarding committee membership levels and acknowledged the need to ensure planning meetings remain quorate. An update was also provided regarding the former car sales site application, which may be considered by Mid Suffolk District Council in November.

NMTC/26/107b Governance and Finance Committee

Cllr Reardon reported that the Committee met on 6th October 2026. The main items considered by the Committee were the External Audit Report, Tree Management Policy and office accommodation arrangements, all of which had been referred to this meeting for decisions

NMTC/26/107c Community and Assets Committee

Councillors received a brief report, noting that there had not been a meeting of the Community and Assets Committee since the previous Town Council meeting.

NMTC/26/107c Employment Committee

Cllr Blake advised that recruitment for the RFO position had now closed and eight applications had been received. Interviews would take place during the next week. Members were also informed that work was continuing on proposals relating to a Town Warden/Caretaker role.

NMTC/26/107d Civic Events Working Group

The Clerk provided an update regarding Remembrance arrangements. Councillors were informed that representatives from Wattisham would attend this year's service and that final planning arrangements were progressing well. Cleaning of the war memorial had also been arranged.

NMTC/26/107e Climate Action Group

Councillors noted the minutes of the recent Climate Action Group meeting. The main discussion point of the meeting would be considered later in the agenda.

NMTC/26/108 To consider a proposal from the Christmas Fair Working Group

Councillors received a proposal from the Christmas Fair Working Group, requesting the authorisation for expenditure relating to promotional materials and activity trail prizes for the Christmas Fair. Cllr Hunter proposed that the Clerk be authorised to spend up to £200 on the project. Seconded by Cllr Balke. All in favour.

It was **Resolved** to authorise expenditure up to £200.

NMTC/26/108 To receive a proposal from Needham Market Community Centre, and to consider the recommendation from the Governance and Finance Committee

Councillors received a proposal from Needham Market Community Centre relating to the smaller office space within the Office Accommodation. Councillors agreed with the recommendation of the Governance and Finance Committee to retain the usage of the smaller office to support staffing arrangements, confidential meetings and future operational needs. Cllr Mason proposed that the Council retain the use of the smaller office. Seconded by Cllr Cooke. All in favour.

It was **Resolved** to retain the use of the smaller office.

NMTC/26/108 To receive an update from Councillors who are representatives for external bodies

Councillors received an updated regarding the Suffolk Association of Local Councils, including staffing changes and ongoing support provided to member Councils.

No further updates were received.

NMTC/26/109 To consider and agree Committee and Working Group appointments for Councillors Piper and Rogers

Following a discussion, Cllr Piper expressed an interest in joining the Planning Committee. Cllr Cooke proposed that Cllr Piper be appointed to the Planning Committee. Seconded by Cllr Blake. All in favour.

It was **Resolved** to appoint Cllr Piper to the Planning Committee.

NMTC/26/111 To discuss and agree current and future climate action activities within Needham Market

A final proposal had been received by the Climate Action Working Group relating to the creation of a wildflower meadow area on the Former Middle School Playing Field site. The initial proposal had been submitted to the Community and Assets Committee for review, with the Committee resolving to recommend that the Council support the project. The proposal detailed costs, maintenance arrangements and biodiversity benefits. Cllr Wetherell proposed that the project be approved. Seconded by Cllr Blake. All in favour.

It was **Resolved** to approve the wildflower meadow project.

NMTC/26/116 Matters to be raised by members

Members had requested that parking, toilet provision and football related matters be on a future agenda. Also requested were items relating to the Norwich to Tilbury Community Fund and speeding within the town.

NMTC/26/146 To confirm the Date, Time, and Location of the next Town Council Meeting.

It was confirmed that the next meeting of the Town Council will be on Tuesday 10th November 2026 at 7PM in the Green Room of Needham Market Community Centre

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Meeting closed at 20:50

Chairperson: ……

Date: ……