

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**10<sup>th</sup> December 2025**

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 6**

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION QUESTIONS/STATEMENTS**

**QUESTION/STATEMENT NUMBERS: -**

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**Question 1 – David Sedgwick to ask the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Business and Regeneration?**

Dear Councillors.

Nuneaton Arts is the charity that, amongst other things, manages the Abbey Theatre. In January 2023, following an unsuccessful bid for Levelling Up funding for a new arts hub in the town, the charity approached the council with a view to renew the lease on the theatre which had expired in 2013.

This would provide the charity with security of tenure, enable financial planning and give greater access to external grant funding.

In March 2023 Councillor Kristofer Wilson, the then leader of the council, agreed that this would be done and that he was “taking up the issue of the lease with the relevant officers”.

And so the saga begins, with Nuneaton Arts consistently chasing the council to move things forward and being given a multitude of excuses and reasons for delay. This prolonged time has, understandably, led to irritation, frustration and, at times, anger.

Following local elections in 2024 another meeting was held with the new council leader, Councillor Christopher Watkins alongside Councillors and cabinet members Nicky King and Tim Jenkins. Verbal assurances were again given that the new leadership was wholly in support of renewing the lease.

What is particularly frustrating in the delay is that we note since March 2023, when we first reached out to the council, that the council has either agreed or progressed leases for at least 7 other of their properties, namely:

- Bulkington Sports and Social Club - July 2023.
- Bedworth Civic Hall - September 2024.
- The Saints - March 2025.
- Indian restaurant in Abbey Street - September 2025.
- Newdigate Colliery and District Sports and Social Club - October 2025.
- Use of Leisure Box as Padel courts - October 2025.
- Nuneaton Town Football Club - November 2025.

Where are we with progress on the theatre lease today? We don't know.

The last update we had was with Maria Bailey in September but she has now left the council and there has been no response from the council to two subsequent requests for an update.

We are, in our opinion, no further forward.

If anything we have taken a step back as, following a request from the council, we made a payment of £3000 in June 2025 towards the cost of a lease valuation

calculation and, six months on, this has still not been carried out. This is not acceptable business practice.

Over the last two and a half years the council's handling of the lease renewal can only be described, at best, as shambolic and inept.

What commitment and reassurance can the council give to a realistic date for the lease to be agreed and completed?

If this cannot be done, can we expect to be having discussions with different cabinet members following the local elections in 2026, or with whatever unitary authority comes in to being in 2028?

**Question 2 – Nicola Fentiman to ask the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Enforcement?**

At the previous council meeting, I asked why the community facilities and associated buildings at Hawkesbury Village — which are physically complete — remain unopened and unavailable for public use. This is not just the village community building and orchid & allotments. This also includes other public footpaths. For example the paths above the mine shifts close to Heritage Drive, have been recapped and pathways base work completed over 18 months ago. This land is still fenced off and due to this the paths ways are overgrown just like the allotments.

At the last meeting, the only explanation given was a lack of legal capacity. This is not a sufficient justification for inaction on a major Section 106 obligation affecting an entire community.

As this position has significant consequences for the residents of Hawkesbury, can the Council please provide:

1. A clear timetable for when the legal work required to bring these facilities into public use will be completed;
2. Confirmation of whether the developer has met, or breached, its Section 106 obligations for the community building, allotments and associated infrastructure on the Hawkesbury site
3. Details of what action the Council has taken since the last meeting to progress this matter.

The community needs assurance that this issue is not being indefinitely delayed and that the Council is actively addressing its responsibilities.

**Question 3 – John Blackburn to ask the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Enforcement**

How much has been spent by NBBC on salary costs for planning enforcement legal officers since May 2021 when a section 106 deed for the Hawkesbury old golf course was signed by the council and what is the estimated salary cost of employing a permanent legal officer for planning enforcement (rather than a succession of locum

temporary posts) to improve the service to electors since the conditions this deed were breached over two years ago?

**Statement 4: County Councillor Keith Kondakor submitted a statement to Council**

I need to make a statement about the surface water attenuation pond number 6 on the Callander Farm phase 2 development by Taylor Wimpey. The site is commercially called Meadow Green and is adjacent to the existing St Nicolas Park estate and Bellway Phase 3 (Royal Park), off The Long Shoot.

Concerns were raised in the summer that the ponds on the south west corner of the development were not draining properly, after a summer storm in July, due to the inlets and outlets being obscured with green silt control mesh. I raised this with the WCC flood team and NBBC planning. Nothing gets done as it seems the two councils assume it is a matter for the other one. In October I did get a response from the developer stating the mesh is cleaned twice a year.

Then the evening before Storm Claudia was due to arrive I was informed that the water in the pond in the corner was already at it's rim and slowly spilling towards the back gardens on St Nicolas Park estate. In the dark, it was clear that the level of the silt screen mesh was higher than the side of the attenuation pond. I pushed the mesh down slightly so that the pond would flow more into the outflow. During the day of Storm Claudia I monitored pond 6 to ensure that it did not overflow from the side again.

After the event I have now looked again at the planning documents and it is clear that the west side of pond 6 should have been raised to prevent it overflowing from the side toward the gardens of existing housing. The ditch on the old field boundary between Meadow Green and Bellway Phase 3 is full of water and barely draining. I have, of course, notified the county council and they will talk to the borough council but I have little hope of either council getting it sorted this winter. That is why I am making a statement rather than asking a question.