

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THETFORD TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KING'S HOUSE, THETFORD, ON TUESDAY
25th FEBRUARY 2020, STARTING AT 7.00 P.M. WITH THE OPEN FORUM

Present:
The Mayor, Councillor B J Canham

Councillors:

C Barreto
M P Brindle
D M Crawford
J Hollis
M Robinson
S N H Wright

R F W Brame
C R P Burnett
D J Hodgkinson
T J Jermy
M Taylor

Officers present:
Tina Cunnell
Roz Barnett
Chris Crimmen

Town Clerk
Deputy Town Clerk
Committee Secretary

OPEN FORUM

A resident stated that the sharps bin at the bus station had not been emptied and there were used needles overflowing onto the floor. He had reported this issue to Breckland District Council and NCC but after three days nothing had been done. He said that the bin had now been removed. The Deputy Town Clerk reported that this matter had been confusion between three tiers of Government. Thetford Town Council had written to NCC in August but when this situation was reported in the press NCC discovered the TTC had applied for the licence to install the bin but the Matthew Project had agreed to empty it. The Council had no staff trained to empty the bin so it has now been removed. Councillors agreed to raise this matter at the next STAG meeting.

Minutes

807/19 DECLARATIONS OF ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS
None.

808/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Apologies were received from Councillors C Harvey and J James.

809/19 MINUTES
RESOLVED: The minutes of the Council Meeting held on 28th January 2020, excepting those items dealt with following the exclusion of press and public, to be addressed under agenda number 820/19 below be confirmed as a true record and signed/initialled by the Committee Chairman

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on 11th February 2020 be confirmed as a true record and signed/initialled by the Committee Chairman.

810/19 NOMINATIONS FOR MAYORAL YEAR 2020/21
There was one nomination for Deputy Mayor.
Councillor D Crawford nominated Councillor M Brindle and was seconded by Councillor B Canham.
RESOLVED: Councillor M Brindle was elected Deputy Mayor elect.

There was one nomination for the Mayor.
Councillor B Canham nominated Councillor M Robinson and was seconded by Councillor R Brame.

RESOLVED: Councillor M Robinson was elected Mayor elect.

811/19

COMMITTEE REPORTS

To receive the following:

- a) Personnel Committee (minutes 719/19 – 732/19) 04/02/2020

Recommendation: Full Council adopt co-option policy with the amendment that the absolute majority is changed to a majority of votes cast.

Note: This recommendation was overturned at the Special Personnel Committee meeting held on the 11th February 2020 and was not adopted by Full Council.

RECOMMENDATION: That Thetford Town Council adopt the Staff Handbook.

RESOLVED: The Personnel Committee recommendation and minutes were adopted as presented.

- b) ALP Committee Minutes (minutes 732/19 – 742/19) 05/02/2020

RESOLVED: The ALP Committee minutes were adopted as presented,

- c) Civic Committee (minutes 745/19 – 754/19) 06/02/2020

RESOLVED: The Civic Committee minutes were adopted as presented.

- d) Special ALP Committee (minutes 755/19 – 758/19) 11/02/2020

RECOMMENDATION: That Thetford Town Council accept the tender of £33,201.01 for the initial year with annual inflationary increases over the five-year period (Nominal Code 5440) from Company A who achieved the highest score on the price and quality.

Councillor T Jermy declared an interest in this recommendation and abstained from voting on this item.

RESOLVED: The Special ALP Committee recommendation and minutes were adopted as presented.

- e) Planning Committee (minutes 764/19 - 773/19) 11/02/2020

RECOMMENDATION: That Thetford Town Council hold a public consultation to gather appropriate street names.

Note: Councillor R Brame proposed and Councillor B Canham altered this recommendation to the wording above which was voted for by the Full Council.

RESOLVED: The Planning Committee minutes and the altered recommendation shown above were adopted as presented.

f) VEM Committee (minutes 774/19 – 786/19) 17/02/2020

RESOLVED: The VEM Committee minutes were adopted as presented.

g) Finance Committee (minutes 787/19 – 802/19) 18/02/2020

RECOMMENDATION: That Thetford Town Council adopt the report on the status of the budget for the ten months ended 31st January 2020.

RECOMMENDATION: That Thetford Town Council adopt the schedule of payments for January 2020.

RESOLVED: The Finance Committee minutes and recommendations were adopted as presented.

h) Special Personnel Committee (minutes 803/19 – 806/19) 21/02/2020

RESOLVED: The Special Personnel Committee minutes were adopted as presented.

812/19

MAYOR'S REMARKS AND REPORT

The Mayor reported she had started the 7th anniversary Park Run where 300 runners had turned up from as far afield as Sudbury and Lowestoft. She had attended RAF Marham which had a very impressive museum.

Events attended since the last meeting

Mayor of Thetford Councillor Mrs Brenda Canham

January

30 Dinner followed by a performance of Blithe Spirit at West Suffolk College

31 Thomas Paine Birthday Dinner at the Thomas Paine Hotel

February

12 Visit to RAF Marham

14 Official Opening of King's Lynn Mart

22 Starting the 7th Anniversary Parkrun

Deputy Mayor of Thetford Councillor Mark Robinson

February

12 Launch of Duleep Singh Trail at Ancient House Museum

List of Forthcoming Events

9 March 2020 Commonwealth Day Ceremony outside King's House

8th May 2020 VE75 Event

9th May 2020 VE75 Street Party on the Market Square

10th May 2020 VE75 Church Service at St Cuthbert's Church

813/19

TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES

Councillor M Robinson reported:

- At the annual general meeting of Keystone on 8th February 2020 it was reported that Riversdale is closing for essential H&S repairs.
- Jack Weaver has been appointed Partnership Manager of Greater Thetford Partnership and will start work on 30th March 2020.
- The next meeting of the Greater Thetford Partnership meeting is on 21st April 2020 with a public forum starting at 6.30 pm.

- NCC roadworks A11/A134 junction costing £50,000.
- Breckland District Council have ringfenced £250,000 from the Market Town Initiative to divide between the 5 market towns for sustainable projects.
- Councillor B Canham reported that one of the residents of Bury Road Alms House has died so there will be a vacancy to fill.

814/19

REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Councillor R Brame reported:

- He attended a special meeting of the Boundary Commission.
- He could not attend NCC Full Council he had attended the funeral of a resident of Ford Place who died recently and was one of the last surviving Japanese prisoners of war.

Councillor J Jermy reported:

- He attended NCC Budget setting meeting where he spoke to change the 16,000 streetlights to energy efficient bulbs saving £1m per annum.
- He reported the Councillors allowance was increased by 2%.
- He spoke about the general street clutter in and around Thetford such as street signs that cannot be read, bus signs, rubbish and an old pipe buried in the pavement.
- Breckland Council are very pro-actively fining culprits who have been caught fly-tipping. All money received goes into literature written in plain English to discourage residents who litter the town.
- Councillor J Hollis reported on the Lady's Estate badly needs road sweeping and drain cleaning.

Councillor M Robinson reported:

- Councillors that do have issues around the town should email County and District Councillor to let them know so something can be done quickly.
- He reported there have been 68 grant applications to BDC for VE Day Celebrations.

At this point Councillor C Burnett left the meeting.

815/19

REQUEST TO JOIN CEMETERY COMMITTEE

The Town Clerk reported she had a request for Councillor C Harvey to join the Cemetery committee.

RESOLVED: That Councillor C Harvey join the Cemetery Committee.

816/19

BOUDICA VACANCY

The Chair asked Councillors to discuss and agree if Council want another round of co-option for the Boudica Vacancy or request an election from Breckland District Council. The following points were discussed:

- An election is the only way forward.
- Whatever is decided is must be done quickly.
- The priority is to get a councillor appointed as quickly as we can and that way is by co-option but if that fails we agree to an election.
- It would be quicker with an election and the council would get a result.

In the discussion above two proposals were proposed and seconded.

1. That the Council agree to co-option but if this fails the Council automatically request an election.
2. That the Council ask Breckland District Council for an immediate election.

The proposals were taken in order. Number one was defeated and number two was carried.

RESOLVED: That Thetford Town Council asked Breckland District Council for an election to elect a Councillor for the Boudica Ward vacancy to be carried out as soon as possible.

817/19

FUTURE PROOFING THE COUNCIL CHAMBER

The Town Clerk reported on the second paper (see Appendix A) following a meeting on 13th February 2020 and that there was £8,300 in reserves which included £2,300 for carpeting. There followed a discussion on the report and the following points were made:

- Changing the table around with members having more room for the public who then will sit in front of the windows.
- The stone mantle shelf should not be removed.
- The working party should be congratulated on a through report.
- Replace the mantle shelf with a narrower shelf.
- A discussion followed and the report was accepted by apart from alterations to the fireplace.

There followed a proposal and seconder to keep the stone shelf on the fireplace. This was carried.

RESOLVED: That Thetford Town Council adopt the report on Future Proofing the Council Chamber with the exception that the fireplace remain unaltered.

There followed a proposal and seconder to accept the spend on future proofing the council chamber.

RESOLVED: That Thetford Town Council spend the £2,300 from the Kings House carpet reserves (nominal code 3162) and £6,000 on Office repairs reserve (nominal code 3161).

818/19

COMMITTEE OFFICERS UPDATE

The Town Clerk reported most of the Council reserves are in shares and are a long-term investment. She will speak to our Investment Consultants regarding the current financial climate.

The Town Clerk raised the fact that banks only guarantee £75,000 regardless of how many accounts are held so she will ask Finance Committee to investigate spreading funding across several banks.

819/19

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

None.

820/19

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

To consider resolving that, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded for any remaining items of business on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be discussed.

821/19

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councillors received and adopted Committee minutes recorded below the line.

Chairman

Appendix A

Agenda Number 817/19

Future proofing the council chamber

Second paper

Meeting Thursday 13th February 2020

Present:

Cllr S Wright

David Brooks

Cllr D Hodgkinson

Tina Cunnell

Following January Full Council, it was requested that the option of staying in the current location for the short to medium term (5-15 years) but updating the room to be further investigated.

The following areas were discussed:

- Refreshing décor
- Reupholstering chairs
- Replacing carpet
- Relocating or changing civic display
- Reversing seating arrangements to give more room for the public.
- Reviewing furniture
- Big screen TV rather than projector for information and displays.
- Approaching GWS Trust to allow subletting in order to recoup costs and add to venue portfolio.
- Electrics
- Additional step up to fire exit and removal of mantelpiece shelf

There is currently £8300 in reserves available for the improvements. £2300 for carpets and £6000 for repairs and maintenance.

Repainting of the chamber can be achieved within a short timescale, and in house to reduce costs. It is our part time and zero hours worker that have carried out the repainting of the old council offices and the registrar's offices in the past to a good standard at a fair cost, that would make the available budget achieve more.

Quotes can be obtained for reupholstering or to look at new chairs that could be used for presentations/meetings with all chairs in the room being the same except the top table.

The reversal of the seating so the Mayor is at the Parlour end would allow for a large screen TV on the wall behind them, but dais would have to be moved/removed and carpet repaired or replaced with new hardwearing carpet.

This would allow more room for the public with the additional space to put a small table with water tea and coffee for the public during meetings. There would be room for 20+ seats facing the mayor and screen.

The Civic display could be moved downstairs into hallway so more available for public viewing. With display and cabinets being reviewed and updated to make it more appealing. (Subject to permission from GWS Trust)

There were several options discussed for the tables:

- The officers table was low quality and out of character so can be removed. There is space for officers to have a table in the window alcove.
- The main table can have an extra leaf made or we could investigate high quality module furniture that would allow the set up to be changed for different events such as civic events and Heritage open days. It could also be changed to suit potential hirers.
- The top table to be retained or an extension from main table or part of a modular system.

When discussing the screen, it was proposed that a large wall mounted smart screen would be the best option removing the need for a projector and screen. These can now be rented at a low cost with the ability to renew TV after 12 months which would allow the chamber to keep pace with changes in technology.

Electrics are an issue with there being a lack of suitably positioned sockets and the removal of carpet would allow floor sockets to be placed in the room which would be more practicable than long cables under the carpets. The daisy chain electrical cables need to be addressed as an H&S issue.

Although the fire exit meets the necessary criteria it is quite a high step and another small step in the alcove would make evacuating people much easier.

The shelf on the fireplace is different stone to the fire surround (which is also a relatively new addition to room) was added later and several people have walked into or banged their heads on it. So, remove the shelf and buff up top of fire surround to remove this risk.

Officer actions:

- To present paper for full council for further comment and direction, and release of reserves where appropriate.
- To obtain quotes for electric socket and cabling upgrade.
- To obtain quote for fire exit step
- To obtain quote to remove mantelpiece and put right the fireplace top.
- To obtain quotes for carpet
- To arrange refresh of décor
- To arrange a councillor working group dedicated to new civic display via civic committee if appropriate.
- To approach Trust for any necessary permission