

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THETFORD TOWN COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KING'S HOUSE, THETFORD, ON TUESDAY  
31<sup>st</sup> JANUARY 2107, STARTING AT 7.00 P.M. WITH THE OPEN FORUM  
Present:

The Mayor, Councillor T J Jermy

Councillors:

Mrs S J Armes

M P Brindle

Mrs B J Canham

C Harvey

Mrs J James

J Newton

M S Robinson

S N H Wright

R F W Brame

C R P Burnett

D M Crawford

Mrs J Hollis

R G Kybird

Ms F Robinson.

M Taylor

Officers present:

Tina Cunnell

Sarah Lewis

Chris Crimmen

Town Clerk

Deputy Town Clerk

Committee Secretary

Also present to speak on 602/16:

Ben Armstrong

Ground Technology

OPEN FORUM

QUESTIONS PRESENTED BY THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from the public.

Minutes

The Mayor introduced Councillor Jane James recently elected to serve Thetford's Castle Ward in the January by-election and welcomed her to the Council.

600/16 DECLARATIONS OF ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS  
None.

601/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE  
None.

602/16 BURIALS IN THE NEW CEMETERY  
Ben Armstrong from Ground Technology, the company who advise the Council on the requirements of the Environment Agency on soil and groundwater contamination issues addressed the Council. He reported that the latest tests show that the nitrates levels have remained the same but have not increased. He had advised the Council to start burying in new parts of the new cemetery to alternate burials. He then answered Councillors questions regarding the limit of burials:

- Will the planting of the cherry trees help? – Yes, eventually when they mature.
- Does the siting of companies surrounding the cemetery increase the nitrate levels in the cemetery? – This is difficult to know without readings taken by those companies.

- The Council have a current limit of 25 burials each year, could that be increased to 30? – He advised the Council that a meeting with the Environmental Agency would be beneficial as it would enable the Council to put their questions to them and received specific answers.
- Some farmers had the same nitrate issue and solved them by running off the nitrates into drains specifically designed for this purpose, could the Council do this – He answered this would be worth thinking about.

The Mayor thanked Ben Armstrong for his report. It was agreed to arrange a meeting with the Environmental Agency as soon as possible to be able to decide the way forward.

603/16

#### MINUTES

Resolved the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2016, excepting those items dealt with following the exclusion of press and public, be addressed under agenda item 618/16 below, be confirmed as a true record and signed/initialled by the Committee Chairman (blue papers refers).

Resolved the Special Council Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2016 be confirmed as a true record and signed/initialled by the Committee Chairman (white paper refers).

604/16

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS

To receive the following:

a) Planning Committee (minute numbers 492/16 – 501/16) 13/12/2016

**RESOLVED: The Planning Committee minutes were adopted as presented.**

b) ALP Committee ( minute numbers 509/16 – 526/16) 04/01/2017

**RECOMMENDATION:** The ALP Committee agreed that the £10,000 of Natural England grants money and the £6,000 from Historic England be used as a contingency fund for the castle steps which will increase the total budget for the project to £98,723.

**RECOMMENDATION:** A sub group of Councillors Mrs B Canham, R Kybird, J Newton and ALP Officer will develop a 5-10 year maintenance programme on ALP assets and report back to the Committee.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the ALP Officer requests 5 year maintenance costs as a precondition of taking on the play parks however if this is not possible the Councillors stated that they still wished to take on the parks and have the matter resolved by the end of April.

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

c) Planning Committee (minute numbers 527/16 – 534/16 10/01/2017

**RESOLVED: The Planning Committee minutes were adopted as presented.**

d) VEM Committee (minutes nubers 535/16 – 548/16) 11/01/2017

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Council keep the market in the current location and authorise the VEM Officer to investigate ways of making the market more sustainable and viable in the short to medium future.

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

e) Cemetery Committee (minute numbers 548/16 – 560/16) 16/01/2017

**RECOMMENDATION:** Thetford Town Council carry out the necessary repairs to the Cemetery Cottage as soon as possible after obtaining quotations for the work to be carried out. The work should not exceed £7,000 and any shortfall would be requested from reserves.

*Note: Following the presentation under agenda number 603/16 regarding burial numbers in the new Cemetery the Chairman reviewed the resolution on the Cemetery Committee minutes 555/16 as follows:*

**RESOLVED: That no further burials are accepted in January 2017 and only 2 burials are accepted in February 2017.**

*After a discussion Councillor R Kybird resolved a change to the resolution (in red below) and this was agreed by Full Council:*

**RESOLVED: That no further burials are accepted in January 2017 and only 2 burials are accepted in February 2017. Subject to Officers discretion from March 2017 onwards, the 12 month rolling average limit of 25 burials per year will determine the number of burials each month and bookings will not be taken until the last week of the preceding month.**

**RESOLVED: After the change to the resolution shown above the Cemetery Committee minutes and recommendation were adopted as presented.**

f) Personnel Committee (minute numbers 561/16 – 572/16) 17/01/2017

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Full Council consider the production of a Corporate plan, and decide the Councils priorities in order to set Town Clerks objectives for appraisal by end of February.

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

g) Civic Committee (minute numbers 573/16 -584/16) 18/01/2017

**RECOMMENDATION:** Thetford Town Council accept the amended Civic Policy (see appendix A).

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

h) Finance Committee (minute numbers 587/16 – 599/16) 24/01/2017

**RECOMMENDATION:** To adopt the financial report for the eight and nine months ending 30th November 2016 and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016 and the schedule of payments for November and December 2016 included therein.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Thetford Town Council retrospectively formulate a contract with:

- Leaping Hare for the commission on ticket sales of £317.30.
- The band hire for the Mayors Ball at a cost of £1,800.

**RECOMMENDATION:** To task all committees with considering transfer to reserves at the yearend together with a reason at their next committee meetings.

**RECOMMENDATION:** To accept the revised Financial Regulations as presented.

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

605/16

MAYOR'S REMARKS AND REPORT

The Mayor reported a recent visit to Nova Training who had held an open day. They currently have 24 young people who are under training and being upskilled for entry into apprenticeships or work. He felt that Councillors could mention the work being done on their visits to resident meetings. He stated that Norfolk was above average in the UK for apprentices placed and Breckland were the highest in Norfolk. The Town Clerk said she had a meeting with them recently and had agreed to take work experience placements when the opportunity presents itself. She felt they gave out a very positive message. The Mayor had circulated a list of events attended by himself and the Deputy Mayor (see Appendix A).

606/16

TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES

Councillor F Robinson reported she had attended the Croxton Road Residents Association who discussed their play park.

Councillor J Newton reported that he had attended the STAG meeting and Graham Parker was voted in as Chairman and Mac Macdonald as Vice Chairman. STAG priorities were agreed as:

1. Anti-social behaviour including street drinking, cycling in pedestrian only areas and drug related activities.
2. Anti-social behaviour relating to motor vehicles.

Councillor R Brame had attended the Greater Thetford Development Partnership Community Sub Group and was asked by a member of the public which authority was responsible for the drainage ditches at the Water Meadows as they are full of rubbish. He discovered that this was the responsibility of Breckland Council who issued a works order to clean up the area. He was also asked if the Town Council notice board can be used to display times and agenda for the GTDP and other public meetings for residents who are not on public and social media. He would arrange for this to happen. He also visited the Norwich Road Community Association who are a very proactive group. They talked about putting up a notice board and access to Barnham Cross Common and Councillor R Brame answered their concerns.

Councillor M Taylor added to the STAG report regarding the HGV's that will be rerouted from East Harling. He had spoken to NCC Highways who will check out the danger at the top of Hurth Road where school children have to cross.

Councillor M Robinson reported that the Keystone Trust is holding their AGM at the Abbey Centre on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2017. The Chairman congratulated Councillor M Robinson for organising the TARA Awards and it was a very successful evening.

Councillor M Brindle reported he had set up a meeting of Cloverfield Residents and over 30 residents attended and a committee was set up to address some of the issues raised.

Councillor Mrs B Canham reported that the Redcastle Play Park will be opened on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

Councillor T Jermy reported the CBC Ltd had recently undergone a full audit from Lovewell Blake. They pointed out that CBC Ltd needed to have an asset register to establish the assets which were there when the school was taken over. He reported that there is a public meeting of the Greater Thetford Development Board on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2017. He had attended 2 planning workshops on the vision and purpose of the board which he found very useful.

607/16

#### REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Councillor D Crawford reported he had attended many meetings at Breckland Council and NCC. This week he had been on a panel to select the Head of HR for NCC.

Councillor M Robinson said he was pleased to report that Thetford Town Council had been awarded £8,000 on the NCC Market Town Investment Fund. He had also been part of the Legal Service review working together with South Holland Council to give a more flexible service by finding ways of working together.

Councillor J Newton had asked a question at the Breckland Full Council meeting regarding the Public Space Protection Order. The Chairman indicated that due to the complexity of the question this should have been put in writing. He was told this was put in writing in August 2016. He was told he would receive a written answer in 5 days but has not received anything yet. He has since learned that this will now go to cabinet on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

Councillor M Taylor stated that both the Police and Breckland Council have been blaming each other for the lack of progress on the PSPO. They have been using the 101 system for data but Councillor M Taylor felt that the public had lost faith in this system and were no longer using it. Both Councillors are fighting on as a Public Space Protection Order was needed in Thetford.

608/16

#### HEALTH & SAFETY

The Town Clerk reported that the Loan Workers tracking system and panic buttons that operate from mobiles phones has been ordered and as soon as the system goes live staff training will take place.

609/16

#### GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Councillor R Kybird had circulated a sub-group report (see Appendix C) that considered the contents of the LGBCE guidance on community governance and to set out those relevant issues they wish considered by the District Council in asking for a review. As a result of the discussions the group thought it polite and relevant to offer to meet with the Parish Councils prior to any formal submission. In the meantime Officers would be asked to agree with the District Council's Manager for Democratic services the correct wording to be included in a Council resolution requesting a review. Following a discussion Councillor M Brindle resolved and Councillor R Brame seconded:

**RESOLVED: Thetford Town Council agree that prior to submission of any formal request to the District Council, the working party meet with representatives of the two Parish Councils, namely Croxton plus Kilverstone and Brettenham to discuss the content of the Town Council request set out above.**

The sub-group felt that in practical terms 3 representatives from each of the two Parish Councils and the relevant district Councillors be invited as observers, Jane Bishop, William Nunn, Sam Chapman-Allen. The sub-group are also happy to consider an independent Chair for the meeting if requested by either Parish.

**RESOLVED: Thetford Town Council agree the substantive content of the recommendations in this report and instruct officers to agree the necessary wording for the resolution to follow consultation with the Parish Councils.**

- 610/16 BRECKLANDS HOMELESS & HOUSING STRATEGY  
It was noted by the Council that a consultation of Breckland Councils Homeless & Housing Strategy had taken place and Councillors had the opportunity to contribute to the consultation.
- 611/16 CORPORATE PLAN  
The Town Clerk outlined in detail the production of a proposed Corporate Plan. She had based this on the plan for Dunstable Town Council as she felt this was a good model to follow. Working 3 years ahead and reviewing the immediate past year this lets Councillors and Staff know how they have performed against plan. The Chairman opened a discussion and the following points were made:
- Excellent idea, can be published on our website
  - Gives focus and structure
  - Shows what we were going to do and what we did
  - Good for Staff and Councillors
  - Not reactive but proactive
- Councillor R Brame resolved and Councillor Mrs S Armes seconded:  
**RESOLVED: That Thetford Council produce a Corporate Plan and task all Committees to put forward their priorities by the end of February for the Mayoral Year 2017/18. The Chairs of all the Committees will then meet with the Town Clerk and select the final priorities that will go into the final plan.**  
There followed a vote. For the resolution = 9 votes. Against : 3 votes. Abstained 2 votes. The resolution was carried.
- 612/16 MAYORS ALLOWANCE  
The Chairman opened a discussion to agree to move core Civic events from the Mayoral Allowance back to the Civic budget and to agree more appropriate description of the 'allowance'. After a brief discussion it was agreed to return this matter to the Civic Committee for them to recommend the way forward.
- 613/16 NEW MEMBER OF CIVIC COMMITTEE  
The Town Clerk reported she had received a request from Councillor D Crawford to join the Civic Committee. This was agreed by Council.  
**RESOLVED: Councillor D M Crawford was appointed to serve on the Civic Committee from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2017.**  
The Chairman asked Councillor Mrs J James which committees she would like to serve on and she replied that she would like to join the Finance and Civic committees. This was noted and an agenda item would be added to the February Council meeting for this to be formally agreed.
- 614/16 THETFORD MUNICIPAL & UNITED CHARITIES  
The Town Clerk had circulated a letter from Thetford Municipal & United Charities requesting that Thetford Town Council put forward 4 representatives to serve as Trustees. After a discussion it was agreed to nominate the Mayor of the Day, the Deputy Mayor of the Day and Councillors Mrs S Armes and Mrs B Canham.
- 615/16 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS  
LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP SCHEME - 'WET BRECKS'  
The Town Clerk tabled a letter of support of the proposal for a new Landscape Partnership Plan focussing on the 'Wey Brecks'- Fenland boundary and River valleys. After a discussion the contents were noted by the Council.

616/16

PRESS RELEASES

A press release will be issued by the Deputy Town Clerk on burials in the new Cemetery,

617/16

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.

618/16

COMMITTEE REPORTS

To receive Committee minutes recorded below the line.

a) Full Council (minutes 479/16 – 480/16) 29/11/2016

**RESOLVED: The Full Council minutes were adopted as presented.**

b) ALP Committee (minutes 514/17) 04/01/2017

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

c) Civic Committee (minute 586/16) 18/01/2017

**RESOLVED: The Civic Committee minutes were adopted as presented.**

Chairman.

Agenda Number 601/16 - Appendix A

COUNCIL MEETING: TUESDAY 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017

MAYORS REMARKS

Events attended since the last meeting

Mayor of Thetford Councillor Terry Jermy

December

- 2 RAF Lakenheath & RAF Mildenhall Yuletide Winter Reception
- 4 Trophy Presentations at Thetford Athletics Club
- 6 Thetford Methodist Church Christmas Tree Festival
- 8 King's Lynn Mayor's At Home Event
- 9 Thetford Business Forum Christmas Dinner  
Mayor's Christmas Quiz Night
- 11 Forest Heath Christmas Carol Concert
- 14 Visit to NRP Art Group  
Prince's Trust Final Presentation  
Thetford Singers Christmas Concert
- 16 Opening of Ancient House Museum Pulpware Exhibition  
Mayor's Carol Service
- 21 Breathe Easy Christmas Party
- 22 Thetford Voices Christmas Carol Concert
- 25 Mayor's Christmas Day visits

January

- 6 Open the Short Mat Bowls Club at Charles Burrell Centre
- 11 Judging Thetford Young Enterprise Challenge at Keystone
- 12 Chairman of Breckland Council Civic Service at St Nicholas Church Dereham
- 19 Thetford Business Forum Breakfast
- 20 Thetford Players Pantomime 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs' at the Carnegie Room
- 25 NOVA Training Open Day
- 27 TARA Awards at the Carnegie Room

Events attended by the Deputy Mayor of Thetford Councillor Denis Crawford

November

- 30 'Carols Around The Tree' at Thetford Grammar School

January

- 28 Thetford Salvation Army Anniversary Concert by Ipswich Citadel Band at St Cuthbert's Church
- 29 Thetford Salvation Army 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Weekend Services and Lunch followed by Songs of Praise

List of Forthcoming Events

- 11 March 2017 Mayor's Ball
- 13 March 2017 Commonwealth Day
- 9 May 2017 Mayor Making/Annual Town Meeting

## Agenda Number 609/16 – Appendix B

Thetford Town Council  
Governance sub-group 4.30 pm Monday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2017  
Robert Kybird Chairman  
Sylvia Armes  
Roy Brame  
Mike Brindle  
Brenda Canham  
Jenny Hollis  
Stuart Wright

### Summary

It having been previously discussed at a planning meeting, the sub-group was set up under the chairmanship of Robert Kybird. The group have been asked to consider the contents of the LGBCE guidance on community governance and set out those relevant issues they wish considered by the District Council in asking for a review. As a result of the discussions the group thought it polite and relevant to offer to meet with the Parish Councils prior to any formal submission. In the meantime Officers would be asked to agree with the District Council's Manager for Democratic services the correct wording to be included in a Council resolution requesting a review.

### Request for Community Governance review.

On 5th July 2012 the District Council adopted as a set of planning policies the Thetford Area Action Plan.

As part of this process an enlarged settlement boundary for Thetford was established, this included the entire area of the Thetford Sustainable Urban extension, and Arlington way, currently part of Brettenham

Subsequently outline planning permission has been given for the Urban extension.

The Urban extension is phased, and initial phases are primarily in the Parish of Croxton, later phases in the combined Parish of Kilverstone and Brettenham.

Phase 1 includes the area of Land bounded by the Thetford to Norwich Railway line and the A1075 Thetford to Watton Road.

This land is contiguous with the existing Admirals Estate forming part of the Parish of Thetford, and as regards vehicular travel distance is closer to Thetford Town Centre facilities than the village hub.

The Admirals Estate was at one time part of the Parish of Kilverstone, as was the vast majority of the Cloverfields Estate.

Without Boundary review the existing village Parish Councils will end up with majority representation from new estates rather than the village core and risk losing the "local" from their representation. Furthermore, in the past, the Parish Councils have been established partially by co-optation and without competitive elections; such Councils lack the power of general competence that allows a wider remit of service provision.

### Precedent

There have been at least two prior occasions when the Parish Boundaries of Thetford have been extended to accommodate Urban Expansion. (Paras 15-17 of the guidance are relevant).

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has published (Mar 2010) a document "Guidance on community governance reviews."

Responsibility and ability to carry out such reviews now rests with the District Council (Para 8 b) of the guidance)

A review can be carried out upon request and must be carried out if a defined percentage of the voting population demand one in the form of a petition (Paras 40 -44 refer).

### Formal request

Thetford Town Council request a Local Governance review in respect of the settlement boundary of Thetford with a preferred outcome of including the entirety of the SUE within the Parish of Thetford.

We consider that paragraphs 45 and 48 of the guidance have particular relevance.

### Timing

The request is provided now to give adequate time for alternative election arrangements in 2019 including both the size of Town and Parish Councils, and the relevant warding arrangements. However see the recommendation to Council before submission of the formal request.

(Para 24 b) could delay this process *if a District wide review* is imminent).

### Size of Council

In considering the size of Town Council Thetford Town Council suggests an additional two Town Councillors in respect of that element of the SUE within Croxton Parish and a further two in respect of that element of the SUE within the parish of Kilverstone.

It is the view of the task and finish group that this should be phased as follows

Two additional Councillors initially, plus a further two upon the commencement of either phase 4 or 5 (those land areas currently in Kilverstone Parish)

Warding arrangements associated with the above recommendation, phase 1 Boudica ward +1 and Anne Bartholomew Ward +1, phase 2 Castle Ward +2. In each case the recommendation is for expansion of contiguous boundaries of existing wards into the SUE.

Notwithstanding the warding recommendation in the previous paragraph, the group felt that the separate single member wards should be folded back in to the adjacent 3 member ward to achieve consistency with District Councillor representation within the Town of Thetford.

It is ultimately for the District Council to recommend ward boundaries and representation. Thetford Town Council is of the view that existing wards should be expanded, to accommodate growth areas rather than have a short term position of wards with few residents.

### Material considerations

The Urban extension is expected to include allotments, a community hub, and regular public transport links into the Town Centre. Healthcare and secondary schooling lie within the Town of Thetford, as do myriad community hubs, organisations, shops, supermarkets etc.

Paras48, 63-64 of the guidance state the following

*48. Central to the concept of sustainable communities is community cohesion. The impact of community governance on cohesion is an issue to be taken into account when taking decisions about community governance arrangements.*

*63. Local communities should have access to good quality local services, ideally in one place. A parish council may be well placed to do this. With local parish and town councils in mind, effective and convenient local government essentially means that such councils should be viable in terms of providing at least some local services, and if they are to be convenient they need to be easy to reach and accessible to local people.*

*64. In responding to the requirement for effective and convenient local government, some parish councils are keen, and have the capacity to take on more in the provision of services. However, it is recognised that not all are in position to do so. The 2007 Act provides a power of well-being to those parish councils who want to take on more, giving them additional powers to enable them to promote the social, economic and environmental well being of their areas. Nevertheless, certain conditions must be met by individual parish councils before this power is extended to them.*

The majority phase of employment expansion also sits within the Town of Thetford, residents of the Urban extension might expect as far as possible, a single point of contact regarding local services.

### Other matters

Thetford Town Council is aware that the Town boundary extends partially around the village of Croxton, in particular runs through the property known as Croxton Park, the LGBCE make particular note that such anomalies should be resisted.

Recommendation to Council

To agree that prior to submission of any formal request to the District Council, the working party meet with representatives of the two Parish Councils, namely Croxton plus Kilverstone and Brettenham to discuss the content of the Town Council request set out above.

In practical terms we would suggest 3 representatives from each of the two Parish Councils. We suggest also that the relevant district Councillors be invited as observers, Jane Bishop, William Nunn, Sam Chapman-Allen. We are also happy to consider an independent Chair for the meeting if requested by either Parish.

Recommendation to Council

To agree the substantive content of the recommendations in this report and instruct officers to agree the necessary wording for the resolution to follow consultation with the Parish Councils.