

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THETFORD TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KING'S HOUSE, THETFORD, ON TUESDAY
29th SEPTEMBER 2015, STARTING AT 7.00 P.M. WITH THE OPEN FORUM

Present:

The Mayor, Councillor R G Kybird

Councillors:

S J Armes
M P Brindle
Mrs B J Canham
C Harvey
T J Jermy
J Newton
M S Robinson
S N H Wright

R F W Brame
C R P Burnett
D M Crawford
Mrs J Hollis
J C Moorman
Ms F Robinson
M Taylor

Officers present:

Town Clerk
Chris Crimmen

Maurice Howard
Committee Secretary

OPEN FORUM

QUESTIONS PRESENTED BY THE PUBLIC

Colin Armes stated he had not seen any improvement in the appearance of Spring Walk since this was raised last time. The Town Clerk stated that he has been assured that work to improve the area will start by the end of the month.

Corinne Fulford thanked the Mayor, the Mayoress and the Deputy Mayor for their attendance at all of the Thetford's Great Festival events which helped make the festival a great success. The Mayor in turn thanked Corinne Fulford, all of the Town Councillors who had helped and the Town Council staff for their contributions of time and effort.

Margaret Rutter stated that in the House of Commons recently the Under Secretary of State for Transport reported on traffic, speed limits and road signs in the vicinity of schools. She asked the Council to look into decluttering signs in Thetford and remove signs not in use. Councillor S Wright replied that he had requested NCC to remove the old CBC Academy signs and was told there was no money available to this. He did say the officer who told him this has now moved on so he will try again. Councillor J Hollis reported that on the Fairfield's estate there are school signs but she reported she has other traffic issues and has reported these to NCC and is awaiting their reply.

Minutes

- 439/15 DECLARATIONS OF ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS
None.
- 440/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
None.

441/15

MINUTES

Resolved the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 28th July 2015, excepting those items dealt with following the exclusion of press and public, to be addressed under agenda item 451/15 below, be confirmed as a true record and signed/initialled by the Committee Chairman (blue papers refers).

442/15

COMMITTEE REPORTS

To receive the following:

- a) Amenities Committee (299/15 – 317/15) 05/08/2015

RESOLVED: The Amenities Committee minutes were adopted as presented.

- b) Guildhall & Markets Committee (318/15 – 327/15) 06/08/2015

RECOMMENDATION: The full amount of the Guildhall Heating Reserve is moved into the Guildhall Complex Reserve.

RESOLVED: The Guildhall & Markets Committee minutes and recommendation were adopted as presented.

- c) Planning Committee (minutes 331/15 – 337/15) 11/08/2015

RESOLVED: The Planning Committee minutes were adopted as presented.

- d) Marketing & Communications Committee (minutes 338/15 – 350/15) 12/08/2015

RESOLVED: The Marketing & Communications Committee minutes were adopted as presented.

- e) Personnel Committee (minutes 351/15 – 364/15) 01/09/2015

RECOMMENDATION: That the Maintenance Budget be handed back to Finance, it being the more appropriate committee to deal with this.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy at Appendix 1 be accepted by Full Council.

After discussion this recommendation was referred back to the Personnel Committee for Appendix 1 to be corrected.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Bullying and Harassment Policy at Appendix 2 be accepted by Full Council with the exception that the option of Banning from any or all Committees be amended to state that councillors can be 'excluded' rather than banned and that this be 'for a period of up to 6 months'.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Whistleblowing Policy at Appendix 3 be accepted by Full Council.

After discussion this recommendation was referred back to the Personnel Committee for Appendix 3 to be corrected.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Compassionate Leave Policy wording at Appendix 4 be accepted by Full Council for inclusion in the Staff Handbook.

RESOLVED: With the exception of the two recommendations that were referred back for Appendix 1 and 3 to be corrected the Personnel Committee minutes and recommendations were adopted as presented.

f) Amenities Committee (365/15 – 378/15) 02/09/2015

RESOLVED: The Amenities Committee minutes were adopted as presented.

g) Guildhall & Markets Committee (379/15 – 388/15) 03/09/2015

RESOLVED: The Guildhall & Markets Committee minutes were adopted as presented.

h) Planning Committee (389/15 – 396/15) 08/09/2015

RESOLVED: The Planning Committee minutes were adopted as presented.

i) Cemetery Committee (409/15 – 417/15 and 419/15 – 424/15) 10/09/2015

The Cemetery Chairman proposed that the recommendation at agenda number 418/15 was taken below the line due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed. This was agreed by Full Council.

RECOMMENDATION: Same day burials be charged at the non-parishioner burial rate.

RECOMMENDATION: Six ashes internments be permitted per existing burial plot.

RESOLVED: The Cemetery Committee minutes and recommendations (with the exception of agenda number 418/15, to be taken below the line) were adopted as presented.

j) Finance Committee (minutes 425/15 – 438/15) 22/09/2015

RECOMMENDATION: To adopt the Month 5 report and to approve the schedule of payments therein.

RECOMMENDATION: To formally receive and adopt the External Audit Report.

RECOMMENDATION: To adopt the debtors policy and the resulting changes to Financial Regulations as per Appendix 1.

RECOMMENDATION: To amend Financial Regulations as per Appendix 2 but to include amendments to this as follows:

- Section 4 to also state that “the reserves are to be spent on the specific purpose stated. If the reserve is not to be spent on the specific purpose originally stated then this must be referred back to the Finance Committee” for further discussion.
- Section 14.2 (c) the inclusion of a part (ix) to state “All tenders to be formally minuted at subsequent meetings of the relevant committee”. This is intended as a formal recording of significant expenditure but not a formal approval of the expenditure which would have been received at a previous Full Council meeting.

443/15

MAYOR'S REMARKS AND REPORT

To receive enclosed lists of Events Attended and Forthcoming Events.

The Mayor reported that it had been a very busy summer and thanked the Deputy Mayor and all of the Councillors who had supported these events. He drew the Councils attention to forthcoming events in November, especially the Firework Spectacular and the Remembrance Ceremony, the Remembrance Concert and the Sunday Parade. The Christmas lights switch on will be on 27th November 2015 and the Mayors Carol service will be on 18th December 2015.

Events attended since the last meeting

Mayor of Thetford Councillor Robert Kybird

August

- | | |
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| 9 | The Mayor of Watton Civic Service |
| 15 | V J Day Wreath Laying Service FEPOW tree
V J Day Commemoration and Parade King's House
Interview with BBC Radio 4 re Dad's Army
Melford Common Fun Day
Norfolk County Council Service of Remembrance & Reception
Commemorating 70 th anniversary of V J Day |
| 17 | Look East Interview re Dad's Army
Anglia News Interview re Dad's Army |
| 18 | Mustard TV Interview re Thetford Festival |
| 20 | Thetford Festival Preview Evening |
| 21 | Radio Norfolk Interview re Thetford Festival
Funeral of John Fisher
Judging schools "Udder Art" competition
Water Works Workshop
Thetford's Great Pantomime Dame Pageant |
| 22 | Parkrun Conga World Record Attempt
Craft Fair at the Salvation Army
Morris Dancers King St Square
Festival bake-off Thetford WI
Film: To Begin the World Over Again the Life & Times of Thomas Paine |
| 23 | Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Knettishall summer fair |
| 24 | Thetford's Great Elvis at Zaks |
| 25 | London Overspill Project at Ancient House Museum
Coin Striker Day
Festival Combat Day at the Charles Burrell Centre |
| 26 | Discovery Day Fossils & Dinosaurs at Ancient House Museum |

- Map music workshop
- 27 Under 8's Elmer the Elephant story and colouring in session at Thetford Library
- Mini Museum Club Splish Splash Splosh at Ancient House Museum
- 28 Water works at the BTO
- 29 Parkrun - Fancydress Theme: Memories of Thetford
- Fairyland Trust at Thetford Garden Centre
- 1940s Fun Day at Dad's Army Museum
- Bell Ringing Full Peal noon - 225th anniversary of the bells
- The Mark Skinner Treasure Hunt
- 30 BTO open day
- Historical Character Walk

September

- 1 Knit & Knatter and Card Weaving at Ancient House Museum
- Film: Teen Take Film Kids in Museums
- Play: A Battle Won By Kiara Hawker
- 2 Jail & Bail Kings House and Small Court
- Stone Curlew Roost Spectacular at Cavenham Heath Reserve
- 3 Rambler's Walk - Thetford Viking Trail
- 4 Battle of Britain Cocktail Party at RAF Honington
- 5 Parkrun - Fancydress Theme: Freestyle
- Adult Town Crier Competition and prize-giving
- Monksgate Multiple Yard Sale
- Thetford Garden & Allotment Club Annual Show & Scarecrow Festival and prize-giving
- Redcastle Community fun day
- Kilverstone fun day
- Farewell to the Middlebrook family at the Albion Public House
- 6 Charles Burrell Centre Open Day
- Water Works Judging and Prize giving
- The Big Onion Festival, Elveden walled garden
- 8 Age UK Norfolk Annual General Meeting and lunch
- 9 Riversdale Queen's Tea Party in celebration of becoming the longest reigning British Monarch
- Mayor of St Edmundsbury Parade & Sunset Ceremony
- 12 Heritage Open Day
- Tour of Britain
- 13 Iceni marathon
- 14 Opening of Battle of Britain Week at City Hall, Norwich
- Chairman of Norfolk County Council Battle of Britain Reception
- 17 Link-Up Recording Evening (talking newspaper for the Blind)
- 18 Thetford Grammar School Speech Day with Jim Bacon
- 20 Battle of Britain Service plus civic guests
- Mayor of Hadleigh Civic Service
- 21 Thetford Lions World Peace day
- 23 Norfolk County Scout Council Annual General Meeting Dereham
- 24 1940s dinner and dance at the Deers Leap, Thetford
- 25 Thetford & District Dementia Support Group Annual General Meeting
- Chairman of South Norfolk District Council Civic Reception
- 26 University Campus Suffolk Graduation Ceremony
- Royal Air Forces Association Thetford Branch Battle of Britain Band Concert
- 27 The Mayor of Ipswich Sunday Service

Events attended by the Deputy Mayor of Thetford Councillor Mrs Sylvia Armes

August

- 22 Judging the WI Bake Off Cake Competition
- 23 Variety Evening
- 26 MAP Music Workshops
- 27 MAP Music Workshops
- 28 Thetford sings Gospel
- 30 Mr Bagshaw's Home Movies

September

- 4 Songs from the Movies
- 5 MOASE (music on a summers evening), Lake House

List of Forthcoming Events

- 1 November Firework Spectacular
- 4 November Annual Remembrance Ceremony at the War Memorial, St Ethelbert's Church, East Wretham (commencing at 10.45am)
- 6 November Remembrance Concert, Carnegie Room
- 8 November Remembrance Sunday Parade
- 27 November Christmas Light Switch On Event
- 18 December Mayor's Carol Service, St Cuthbert's Church

444/15

TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES

Councillor B Canham reported, as the Town Council representative to the Grammar School she, together with the Mayor and Mayoress, had attended the school speech day. It was an excellent afternoon and reports from parents were complimentary regarding the new Headmaster. She had also attended her first meeting of the Charles Burrell Museum and reported that following changes to Breckland Council the museum had lost their funding to replace the doors and renovate the outside of the museum. The Council had displayed the Council Civic Regalia at the recent Heritage Open Day and had received around 50 visitors. She thanked the Town Crier who had helped to attract visitors to Kings House.

Councillor T Jermy reported that as one of the three Town Council trustees on the board of CBC Ltd he had attended the Open Day in September to showcase the facilities at CBC and there were around 2,000 visitors. The centre is advertising for a full time Deputy Manager. The centre has requested the old signs for the South Campus Academy be removed but they are still waiting for this to happen. Any new signs will have to be paid for and a quotation is awaited.

445/15

REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Councillor D Crawford reported he had attended 17 meetings last month. At one of the meetings he was pleased to hear that in Norfolk 7 year old children have been scored as above average in the UK for reading skills. Councillor T Jermy reported that one of the most interesting meetings he had attended was on recycling centres where there was a proposal on the table to close all centres on Bank Holidays. This was narrowly defeated by 9 votes to 8 votes. Waste currently costs NCC 40 million pounds per annum but it was disappointing to learn that there was only a 43% recycling rate. Therefore, he felt that so Councillors should encourage everybody to try to improve this rate.

Councillor J Newton had attended various meetings as well as Planning training. At the Cabinet meeting he was asked about the bye laws regarding horses on the common which he could not answer. Councillor J Hollis was at the same meeting and she confirmed that they had stated Breckland Council were not obliged to carry out enforcement. The Town Clerk replied that when Thetford Council had issues with horses on the common our solicitor confirmed that any local authority has the authority to act. He went on to state that if a local authority did not act to remove the horses they could be forced to do so. The solicitor reported there was a precedent set to support this action.

Councillor J Hollis had also attended the Planning training. She had been regularly walking around the Ladies Estate reporting litter and fly tipping. She was pleased to report that the whole area is beginning to look much tidier. She had also walked around the Munford Road Allotments to familiarise herself with the area.

Councillor M Taylor reported he had attended the Breckland Council audit meeting. He had asked; in view of the refugee crisis if Breckland Council has a plan to deal with large numbers of refugees. He was given the name of the officer who would deal with this matter so that he could receive an answer to his question.

446 /15

MAYOR MAKING PROCEDURES

Councillor M Robinson reported on the meeting of 17th July 2015 and presented the decisions arrived at concerning the future procedural system for Mayor Making. An e mail from the Town Clerk dated 17th July 2015 had been tabled outlining the decisions. There followed a discussion but it was pointed out by Councillors that as half the Council had not seen this e mail until just before the meeting they did not have time to consider the matter. Councillor M Brindle proposed and Councillor R Brame seconded that a Special Full Council meeting should be called, giving at least two weeks' notice, with the proposed changes sent out with the agenda so that Councillors can give due consideration prior to the meeting.

447/15

LITTLE OUSE PROGRESS

Councillor S Wright reported that a meeting had been held with Ian Bliss of the Environment Agency who was supportive of the Little Ouse Project and wished for it to be included in their LEP backed, grander waterways bid for funding which includes the 'Great Ouse to Grand Union Link' from Bedford to Milton Keynes and the 'Fens Waterway Link'. The next stage would be the commissioning of a 'Waterspace' study which would cost c£30k. Breckland were being approached for assistance with funding this report.

The latest meeting of the steering group had occurred in early September and it was unfortunate not to have had Breckland Council officer representation at these meetings especially as Breckland is the planning authority for much of the route, a significant landowner and the owner of the historic navigation rights that once belonged to the Borough of Thetford. Whilst it was appreciated that a fully open navigable waterway could not be delivered overnight in the interim, many short term improvements could be made that would increase usage of the river corridor. These include;

- Improved riverside paths and cycle ways, not only alongside the river but links to it.

- Portage facilities for canoes around weir structures for canoes & kayaks.
- Canoe, kayak and row boat hire

It was hoped to raise the profile of the scheme with canoe hire open days and a leaflet about the project.

448/15 RIVERSIDE PATH UPDATE

The Town Clerk reported that the Riverside Pathway Project had been virtually completed and that Thetford Town Council had been asked for their thoughts on a potential opening ceremony. This would only go ahead once written permission from Abbey Homes to cross their land had been received. Pedestrian signs for the path have been ordered. The Town Clerk stated that attribution signs had been suggested and he read out the proposed wording and stated the logo's that would be displayed. Councillors were content with the wording and logo's. Indications had been given that there would be an underspend and Councillors asked that this be spent improving the disabled access to the start of the riverside pathway (Kilverstone End).

449/15 REVIEW OF TOWN COUNCIL COMMITTEES

The Amenities Committee had requested the Full Council should carry out a review of the structure and responsibilities of all Town Council Committees. There followed a discussion and Councillor R Brame proposed and Councillor M Brindle seconded that a Task and Finish Group consisting of the Chairman of each of the Councils committees be set up to review the structure and responsibilities of all Town Council Committees. Vice Chairman may attend meetings but in the event of a vote being registered there will only be one vote allowed for each committee.

RESOLVED: A Task and Finish Group consisting of the Chairman of each of the Councils committees be set up to review the structure and responsibilities of all Town Council Committees. Vice Chairman may attend meetings but in the event of a vote being registered there will only be one vote allowed for each committee.

At 9.15 p.m. Councillor Mrs J Hollis left the meeting.

450/15 THETFORD TOWN COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

The Town Clerk reported that the Town Council did not have a Constitution. This subject had been discussed in the September Personnel meeting and it was decided that this subject and a proposed Constitution be placed on the agenda for Full Council. There followed a discussion on the proposed Constitution that the Town Clerk had prepared and it was decided that a Constitution was not needed at this time. The Town Clerk is to review the website to ensure that all policies are available and up to date.

451/15 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.

452/15

COMMITTEE REPORTS

To receive Committee minutes recorded below the line.

a) FULL COUNCIL (minutes 294/15 & 298/15) 28/07/2015

RESOLVED: The Full Council minutes were adopted as presented.

b) CEMETERY COMMITTEE (minute 418/15) 10/10/2015

This recommendation was taken below the line due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed.

RECOMMENDATION: The rent on Cemetery Cottage will increase by 10%.

RESOLVED: The Cemetery Committee minutes and recommendation were adopted as presented. However prior to the next annual review of the Cemetery Cottage rent a full review is to be carried out with all options considered.

453/15

MARKET PLACE

(This matter is below the line due to legal implications).

The Town Clerk gave Councillors an update on the Market Place dispute. Following Breckland Councils decision to reject the earlier proposal this matter is currently being dealt with by Tribunal. The Town Councils Solicitor had prepared a brief which he intended to forward to a QC in preparation for potential future action. Once a decision has been made by the Tribunal the Councillors would be briefed on the outcome along with recommendations from the QC.

454/15

ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

a) E-MAIL COMPLAINT FROM MEMBER OF PUBLIC

The Town Clerk informed Councillors of an e-mail concerning various issues such as spitting, littering and street cleaning and the perceived lack of action by Town Councillors. It also discussed the boat at the Riverside. The Town Clerk stated that this had been added to next Amenities Committee meeting.

455/15

PRESS RELEASES

None.

Chairman.