

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THETFORD TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KING'S HOUSE, THETFORD, ON TUESDAY
27th OCTOBER 2015, STARTING AT 7.00 P.M. WITH THE OPEN FORUM

Present:

Councillors:

S J Armes (Chairman)
M P Brindle
Mrs B J Canham
Mrs J Hollis
J Newton
M Taylor

R F W Brame
C R P Burnett
C Harvey
T J Jermy
Ms F Robinson

Officers present:

Town Clerk
Chris Crimmen

Maurice Howard
Committee Secretary

OPEN FORUM

QUESTIONS PRESENTED BY THE PUBLIC

Corinne Fulford thanked the Council for providing her with a full pack for the meeting. She was disappointed that not all the minutes are yet on line but does understand the minutes from 2006 are taking time to transfer from the old website. She drew attention to a statement on the Amenities Meeting that seemed to state the Council were producing a Neighbourhood Plan. The minute wording will be amended when they are reviewed under item number 561/15d. She reported the clock was showing the incorrect time on both faces and added the car park side had never shown the correct time. The Town Clerk replied he had been informed that morning the clock was incorrect and given instructions for it to be corrected.

Margaret Rutter reported there was cause for concern in 1 in 6 of Norfolk Schools. Delays in case reports by Norfolk Children's Department have been deemed inadequate following a recent report. She asked why our County Council, with all its resources and partnerships' have not provided an effective service for our children. Councillor T Jermy stated that the Town Council shares her concerns but have little power to hold NCC to account.

Margaret Rutter asked why there was a delay in the transfer of the play parks when the Thetford and Brandon Times reported this matter had been finalised on 23rd September 2015. The Town Clerk replied that he was not aware that any date had been agreed. There had been a hold up following receipt of plans for the Richard Easten play park which showed the Town Council assuming much greater land than had been originally expected. The original agreement was for the play park only. However, he was now investigating if the 8 original play parks could be transferred independently in order to speed up the process.

Minutes

558/15 DECLARATIONS OF ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS
None.

559/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor D M Crawford, R G Kybird, J C Moorman, M S Robinson and S N H Wright.

560/15

MINUTES

Resolved the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 29th September 2015, excepting those items dealt with following the exclusion of press and public, to be addressed under agenda item 569/15 below, be confirmed as a true record and signed/initialled by the Committee Chairman (blue papers refer).

561/15

COMMITTEE REPORTS

To receive the following:

a) Guildhall & Markets Committee (minutes 456/15 – 465/15) 01/10/2015

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

b) Civic Links Committee (minutes 466/15 – 477/15) 05/10/2015

RECOMMENDATION: That up to 20% of the Mayors Allowance, if underspent, at the Mayors discretion can be transferred to the Mayors Charity or other worthy cause.

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

c) Personnel Committee (minutes 478/15 – 491/15) 06/10/2015

RECOMMENDATION: The Compliments Comments and Complaints Policy at Appendix 1 be approved by Full Council.

RECOMMENDATION: The Whistleblowing Policy at Appendix 2 be approved by Full Council.

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

d) Amenities Committee (minutes 492/15 – 511/15) 07/10/2015

RECOMMENDATION: The water feature should be left drained down and switched off. No further action should be taken with regards to replacement of equipment in the water feature and options for the future of the area should be developed further.

RECOMMENDATION: The Finance Committee transfer the unused portion for year 1 of HLS Scheme Budget to year 2.

RESOLVED: The Amenities Committee and recommendations were adopted as presented.

e) Planning Committee (minutes 525/15 – 532/15) 13/10/2015

RESOLVED: The Planning Committee minutes were adopted as presented.

f) Marketing & Communication Committee (minutes 533/15 – 545/15)
14/10/2015

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

g) Finance Committee (minutes 546/15 – 557/15) 20/10/2015

RECOMMENDATION: To adopt the financial report for the six months ending 30th September 2015 and the schedule of payments for September 2015 included therein.

RECOMMENDATION: Full Council indicate a preference of the level of precept, 0%/2.5%/5%, taking into account the proposed growth in the expenditures of individual committees.

RECOMMENDATION: Thetford Town Council accept a three year contract for Business Mobiles.Com that included the cost of the phones and mobiles of £15,595.56.

RECOMMENDATION: Thetford Town Council consider altering their policy to include property on their Investment Policy.

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

562/15

MAYOR'S REMARKS AND REPORT

Events attended since the last meeting

Mayor of Thetford Councillor Robert Kybird

September

30 Bin it For Good Presentation
Breckland Chairman's Reception

October

3 Andrew Francis Funeral Service Open Day
Quiz night fundraiser for Louise Cook
4 Mayor of Sudbury Annual Civic Service
6 Regalia Talk to Norwich Civic Association
7 Thetford Business Breakfast at The Bell
9 Mayor of King's Lynn Charity Horse Racing Evening
11 Mayor of St Edmundsbury Suffolk Harvest Festival
15 Dereham – Dementia Friendly Town Launch
16 Mayor of Downham Market 'Mayors at Home' and Civic Reception
18 High Sheriff of Norfolk Justice Service at Norwich Cathedral
Mayor of Stowmarket Civic Service
20 Walmington Court 3rd Birthday – Assisted living
21 Mayor of King's Lynn Trafalgar Supper
22 Lay wreath at Duleep Singh's grave to mark the 122nd anniversary of his death

25 Mayor of Needham Market Civic Service

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

4 Thetford (Breckland) Lionesses 27th Anniversary Lunch at Thetford Golf Club

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 10.45 a.m.)
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

563/15

TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES

Councillor J Newton reported he had attended the latest STAG meeting and the police had set 3 priorities for the next period:

- Illegal street drinking.
- Bury Road HGV traffic.
- Barnham Common.

Councillor Mrs J Hollins reported she had attended various meetings at Breckland Council. She continues to regularly patrol the Ladies Estate and was pleased to report the fly tipping had ceased but litter and dog fouling is still a problem. She had attended the Duleep Singh memorial.

Councillor Mark Taylor had also attended the STAG meeting and had advised the police that they should identify the hot spots in town that give the police a lot of trouble and concentrate on these areas.

Councillor Mrs B Canham reported she had attended a charity quiz night. She had attended the 3rd anniversary of the Benjamin Foundation in Thetford. Along with the Mayor and other Councillors she had attended a service at Duleep Singh's grave to mark the 122nd anniversary of his death.

564/15

REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Councillor J Newton reported regarding the Planning application for Tanner House. He had e mailed a number of recommendations but this application is not going to committee as it had run out of time.

Councillor R Brame had attended a meeting in Dereham for a Transformation and Commercialisation Task & Finish Group. This was very interesting but there was nothing in the meeting regarding Thetford at this point.

Councillor T Jermy reported that many of the current meetings that he had attended at County Hall were all to do with Finance and Budgets. Every meeting reviewed areas where savings could be made on areas such as Fire Stations, Libraries and Bus Services. These had been told to prepare the budget on the assumption that they will only receive 75% of their money. There will not be a 25% cut but budgeting this way means there is then some degree of flexibility. He had attended a Policy Resources meeting the day before that had decided there will not be any cuts to Fire Stations, Libraries and Child Services. There will be substantial cuts as NCC has to save £185 million over the next 3 years. Councillors are

spending great amounts of time looking at where cuts should be made, it was very depressing. He reported NCC were putting too much money into reserves to pay off long term debt and officers had calculated the Council could put in up to £10 million less. He was disappointed this was voted down. On a positive note the old Elm Road former Adult Services Department premises in Thetford are being looked at by NCC to spend capital to renovate them. This would save NCC money in the long run as they are currently transporting day care children to Norwich.

565/15

PRECEPT CONSULTATION

The Town Clerk reported that the Finance Committee had requested that they would like Full Council to indicate a preference on potential precept increase following on from the individual committees four year strategy requirements. The Town Clerk had tabled a summary of income and expenditure for the four years ending 31st March 2019. This outlined four scenarios looking forward showing the effect on each year's budget should there be no increase in the precept, a 0%, a 2.5% increase, a 5% increase and a 6% increase. Councillor T Jermy, Chairman of the Finance Committee, stated that in a departure from the normal process he was asking Councillors to give the Finance Committee their thoughts on the precept prior to the November Finance meeting. There followed a discussion when Councillors looked at how these increases would affect the Council Tax on a Band D property. Councillor T Jermy had tabled a document showing areas where savings could be made to the proposed budget. Following a discussion Councillor R Brame proposed and Councillor Mark Taylor seconded that all the Town Council Committees should review their 2015/16 budget proposals with a view to determining additional savings measures and income opportunities to recommend to the Finance Committee. This will then allow the Finance Committee to make their recommendations to Full Council regarding the budget and therefore the precept. There followed a vote. For the proposal 10 votes. Abstained 1 vote. The motion was carried.

RESOLVED: That all the Town Council Committees should review their 2015/16 budget proposals with a view to determining additional savings measures and income opportunities to recommend to the Finance Committee. This will then allow the Finance Committee to make their recommendations to Full Council at the meeting on 24th November 2015 regarding the budget and therefore the precept.

566/15

INVESTMENT POLICY

Councillor T Jermy, Chairman of the Finance Committee, reported that the Council already own property but the current Town Council's Investment Policy excludes property investment as part of their portfolio. He went on to ask if Councillors would like to have the option to purchase property to add to the portfolio. If there was a wish to do so the Finance Committee would find out from similar council's their experience of purchasing property and give some options for Council to consider. The Town Clerk pointed out that any investment in property meant that any future property and sale would restrict the use of the reserve purely to capital expenditure, thereby limiting the flexibility of expenditure for future Councils. He went on to say he did feel s we currently invest in property that that our Investment Policy is effectively wrong and does need a review. There followed a discussion. Councillor T Jermy proposed and Mrs B Canham seconded that the Council agree in principle to include property as part of the Investment Portfolio and the Finance Committee should return with a recommendation

to Council outlining the way forward. There followed a vote. For the proposal 10 votes. Abstained 1 vote. The motion was carried.

RESOLVED: The Council agree in principle to include property as part of the Investment Portfolio and the Finance Committee should return with a recommendation to Council outlining the way forward.

567/15 COUNCIL SUPPORT TO THETFORD AWARDS RECOGNISING ACHIEVEMENT EVENING

Councillor M Robinson was due to request support from the Town Council for its awards ceremony. Unfortunately he had not been able to get back in time from his holiday for this meeting. This item will be discussed at the November Council meeting.

568/15 QUEENS 90th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

The Deputy Mayor reported that the Mayor was aware that surrounding councils were holding events to celebrate the Queen's 90th Birthday over the weekend 11th/12th June 2016. She asked if Councillors would agree in principle to fund and support an event to celebrate the Queen's 90th Birthday. A vote was taken. For the proposition 6 votes. Against 2 votes. Abstained 2 votes. The motion was carried.

RESOLVED: The Council agree in principle to fund and support an event to celebrate the Queen's 90th Birthday.

569/15 THETFORD ENTERPRISE PARK

Councillor T Jermy had tabled a report from the recent Greater Thetford Development Partnership (GTDP) meeting to discuss the implications for Thetford Town Council. The GTDP Board holds no funds and is not an 'accountable body'. That status rests with Breckland Council and therefore the Board acts as an adviser. There is approximately £400,000 of funding left over from the Moving Thetford Forward (MTF) programme. Anna Graves and Julie Kenneally (Breckland Council) had outlined the position with regards the Thetford Enterprise Park (TEP) and explained if this project came to fruition there would be anything between 2,000 and 4,000 jobs created. They had explained that there was a significant infrastructure requirement however and some form of public subsidy would be needed. They had been working on a 'blended' funding package that could see support from Breckland Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). As a result they asked if GTDP would recommend to Breckland Councils Cabinet that they allocate the residual funding to this package. This was supported by GTDP. Councillor T Jermy felt that Thetford Town Council should formally support this project. He informed the Council that Julie Kenneally, Director of Commercialisation, Breckland Council would be pleased to provide the Council with an update briefing at the November Full Council meeting. There followed a discussion and it was thought that this package would be good for Thetford and should be supported by the Council. Councillor M Brindle proposed and Councillor Mrs B Canham seconded that the Council support the proposed funding package and invite Julie Kenneally, Director of Commercialisation, Breckland Council to give an update meeting at the November Full Council. There followed a vote. For the motion 10 votes. Abstained 1 vote. The motion was carried.

RESOLVED: That Council support the proposed funding package and invite Julie Kenneally, Director of Commercialisation, Breckland Council to give an update meeting at the November Full Council.

570/15 COSY CARPETS LISTED BUILDING

The second matter to arise from the GTDP meeting was the future of the Cosy Carpet building and the implications for Thetford Town Council. Council T Jermy stated that he learned from the last GTDP meeting that NCC is keen to 'dispose' of this asset. He had argued at that meeting that it should be passed onto Thetford Town Council for nil cost and turned into a heritage centre. If Councillors feel the Council should support this then a task and finish group could be appointed to formulate a business plan looking at costs and income opportunities. There followed a discussion. It was felt that the MTF money, the subject of the previous agenda, was taken away from finishing the Cosy Carpet building and indeed the Charles Burrell Museum and both these projects should be completed with the original MTF money. Councillor Mrs B Canham proposed and Councillor M Taylor seconded that the Council set up a task and finish group to formulate a business plan looking at costs and income opportunities of turning the Cosy Carpet building into a Heritage Centre for the benefit of Thetford Town.

RESOLVED: The Council set up a task and finish group to formulate a business plan looking at costs and income opportunities of turning the Cosy Carpet building into a Heritage Centre for the benefit of Thetford Town.

571/15 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.

572/15 COMMITTEE REPORTS

To receive Committee minutes recorded below the line.

a) Full Council (minutes 451/15 – 455/15) 29/09/2015

RESOLVED: The Full Council minutes were adopted as presented.

b) Amenities Committee (minutes 510/15 – 511/15) 07/10/2015

RECOMMENDATION: The Council accept the Statutory declaration provided for Norfolk Road and instruct the solicitor to formalise the access by way of a deed which would also prevent further/additional claims in the future.

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

573/15 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

a) CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

The Town Clerk requested the Council to agree to the following Christmas opening times:

Thursday	24 th December 2015 – Open until 12.00 noon.
Friday	25 th December 2015 – Closed.
Monday	28 th December 2015 - Closed.
Tuesday	29 th December 2015 – Closed privilege day.
Wednesday	30 th December 2015 – Closed holiday required to be taken.

Thursday 31st December 2015 - Closed holiday required to be taken.
Friday 1st January 2015 – Closed.
Monday 4th January 2016 – Office reopened.
These dates were approved by Full Council.

b) SECTION 38 NOTICE BARNHAM COMMON

The Town Clerk reported he had received 5 objections to the proposed fence around Barnham Common. Two were from residents and three from: Open Spaces Society.

Natural England.

Historic England.

The Town Clerk stated the Councils reply to the notice had to be received by Monday 2nd November 2015 and he is working with the Councils Solicitor and Land Management Agent on the wording.

c) RIVERSIDE WALK

The Town Clerk reported that the path is now being used and at the Arlington Way entrance there are cycle route signs directing cyclists away from the path. The two “cycling prohibited” signs to be installed on the pathway have not yet been installed. The Town Clerk asked if the Council felt these should be delayed or installed immediately. It was felt by Councillors the path should be cycle free and the signs installed.

574/15

PRESS RELEASES

None.

Chairman.