

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AMENITIES COMMITTEE HELD IN KINGS HOUSE,
THETFORD ON WEDNESDAY 7th SEPTEMBER 2022, STARTING AT 2.00 PM.

Councillors:

C Barreto, M Brindle, D Crawford, S Dowling, C Harvey, T Jermy (Chair),
B Tullett, S Wright

Officers:

A Yorke (Deputy Town Clerk and Finance Officer), N Thompson (Town Team Manager),
K Robinson (Committee Clerk)

There were 3 members of the public in attendance.

MINUTES

282/22	<u>DECLARATIONS OF ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS</u> None.
283/22	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> Councillors R Brame, D Hodgkinson (Vice Chair) and K Parker.
284/22	<u>MINUTES</u> RESOLVED: The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 6th July 2022, which were received by Full Council on 26th July 2022 are a true record and be signed/initialled by the Chairman.
285/22	<u>FINANCIAL REPORT UPDATE</u> The Finance Officer presented the Financial Report for the month ended 31 August 2022. It was noted that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playparks expenditure of approximately £15,000 is a carryover from 2021/22 where it was resolved at a Full Council level that this expenditure will be funded from Reserves. • Expenditure for tree work maintenance were included but still waiting for tree survey results. There may be additional costs incurred after the survey is completed. • Repairs to St Peter's clock - overspent budget. • Toilets expenditure incurred due to maintenance contracts. <p>Clarity was provided on which buildings were subject to oversight by the Amenities Committee. The Committee noted the financial report.</p>
286/22	<u>COMMITTEE OFFICER'S REPORT</u> The Town Team report, which was circulated to members of the Committee before the meeting and included the following matters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graffiti – There is significant graffitiing of Council properties. The Town Team have attempted cleaning the items and have reported the issue to Norfolk Police and submitted CCTV evidence. • Street furniture audit map is nearing completion.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playparks – Works Team are monitoring and performing minor repairs. • Grazing – Grazier considering removal of livestock due to dog attacks on Barnham Cross Common. • Ford Meadow, Castle Park and Ramparts – Mechanical cutting to be considered. • Barnham Cross Common – Water supply to both sides of the Common higher than budgeted amount. • Mill Lane seeding – Signage has been erected. • Public toilets –Team reviewing services, including open and closing of sites. <p>The Town Team manager reported that where vandalism occurred, the costs are logged to explain to residents the cost of vandalism.</p> <p>Thetford Town Council has recruited 2 further staff members to further resource the Works Team.</p> <p>Action point: Officers to invite Norfolk Police to the next committee meeting to discuss graffiti issues and dog attacks on Barnham Cross Common.</p> <p>The report was noted.</p>
287/22	<p><u>PLAYPARK REPAIRS TENDER</u></p> <p>The Committee discussed the plan for repairs of playparks. Councillor T Jermy proposed and Councillor D Crawford seconded.</p> <p>RECOMMENDED: That Full Council approves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the contract be awarded to Company 2 at a cost of £97,711 (excluding Vat). • That £40,000 is taken from Reserves to complete Phase 1 in this financial year (as included in the approved budget for 2022/23).
288/22	<p><u>ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY CONTRIBUTION</u></p> <p>The Committee discussed actions and projects to support the Environment Strategy contribution delivering a greener council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage our woodlands and commons sustainably e.g., charcoal, sell wood. • Improve open spaces for wildlife. Plant hedging and trees and champion native Breckland species. • Increase community activities such as litter picks and conservation work to educate about the environment. • Management plans for open spaces. • Support wildlife surveys and initiatives. • Plant food trees and bushes where appropriate for community free food. • Biodegradable tree guards. • Bird and bat boxes. <p>The Committed noted that some of these had already been considered by the Committee and therefore it was appropriate that it adopt and further implement these actions and projects in order to support the Environment Strategy contribution.</p>

289/22	<p><u>GRAZING TENDER</u></p> <p>The Committee discussed the document that was circulated prior to the meeting regarding criteria for the grazing tender. Suggestions for improving the circulated document include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tidying up the last sentence of the opening paragraph. • Explaining the acronym HSL. • Specifying the start and end date. • Lessening the restrictiveness of the tender requirements. Rather allow prospective tenderers to provide suggestions that will enable a grazing tender to be adjudicated based on suggestions. This will include types of breeds and frequency of grazing. • Allowing segmentation of the areas to be grazed. <p>Action point: Committee Officers to revise tender document and to circulate to the Committee before the next meeting.</p> <p>The grazing tender document was noted.</p>
290/22	<p><u>COMMITTEE OFFICERS UPDATE</u></p> <p>A member of the public has contacted the Council requesting permission to fund-raise to assist with repairs on a play parks.</p> <p>Action point: Committee Officer to contact the member of the public to request a proposal be submitted to the Committee.</p>
291/22	<p><u>COMMITTEE PRIORITIES FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 23/24</u></p> <p>The Committee discussed the following priorities for 23/24:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play parks • Refurbishment of toilets • Implement solution to fish pass • Thetford in Bloom – front garden competition and awards ceremony • Townwide floral displays – Anglia in Bloom Competition • Refurbishment of Thomas Paine statue • Improvements to paths and rivers <p>The Committee Officer reported that funding for projects to be assessed in November during the budgeting process.</p>
292/22	<p><u>THETFORD IN BLOOM UPDATE</u></p> <p>The Committee discussed an email/document that was circulated prior to the meeting by the Chairman, noting:</p> <p><u>2022 Competition:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good level of nominations. • Use of social media and in-house certificates successful. • Thank you letters to sponsors and entrants had been sent. <p><u>Planning for 2023.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press release required for nomination process and post-event. • Timing of judging to occur before end of July and communicated. • All Amenities Committee members to be invited to awards ceremony at either King’s House or Guildhall. • Provide reasoning for judging decisions. • Notifying timing of awards ceremony to be communicated earlier. • Letter of thanks to all entrants.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photos from winning gardens to be displayed for comparison. <p>The update was noted.</p>
293/22	<p><u>APPROVAL OF SMALL GRANTS</u> The Small Grant Application was distributed to the Committee prior to the meeting. The Committee Officer reported that there is no Constitution or Governing Body Policy in place.</p> <p>Action point: Committee Officer to contact the applicant for re-submission of the application.</p>
294/22	<p><u>REVIEW MOWING REGIME</u> The mowing regime document, detailing the results of a public consultation, was circulated prior to the meeting. The areas discussed and regime proposed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Plain, St Barnabas Close to Bury Road and Lady Gentle Meadow – Reduce mowing to once or twice per year. • Melford Common, Nun’s Bridges, Nunnery Drive, Barnham Cross Old Playing Fields – Mowing regime to remain as per contract. <p>Action points: Committee Officer approach Breckland Council as these areas are cut by their contractors. Officers to inform the public of reasons for less cutting and encouragement of wildflower meadows.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to implementation in Spring 2023.</p>
295/22	<p><u>HIRE OF OPEN SPACES</u> To discuss the applications received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wheels on the Field (18 June 2023) • Use of Melford Common (18 September 2022) • Use of Melford Common (19 - 25 September 2022) • Fireworks Event (6 November 2022) <p>It was noted that there was initially a double-booking on 18 September. Whilst the Committee supported the first-come first serve approach adopted by officers it was hoped that a compromise between the two applicants could be reached. The Deputy Town Clerk was asked to contact both applicants to see whether a compromise could be reached and to provide feedback to the Committee.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Wheels on the Field and the Fireworks Event could take place, subject to the appropriate risk assessments and insurances being provided. RESOLVED: That the use of Melford Common be approved for both events (taking into account the possible compromise referred to above).</p>
296/22	<p><u>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</u> The Committee asked that the following matter be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Small Grant Scheme be promoted on social media platforms.
	<p>Items 288/22 and 291/22 were discussed at the end of the meeting. Standing Order (3.w) was suspended so that the meeting could be</p>

	extended beyond the 2-hour time limit to accommodate these two agenda items. Councillor D Crawford proposed and Councillor M Brindle seconded.
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Chairman.