

# Minutes Full Town Council (Ceremonial)

[Full Council Meetings](#)

Date	28/11/2023
Time	19:00 - 20:05
Location	The Carnegie; Cage Lane.
Present	Carla Barreto, Ann Blackburn, David Blackburn, Mike Brindle, Kristopher Brooks, Chris Harvey (Deputy Mayor), Terry Jermy, Terry Land, Mac Macdonald, Hazel McCambridge, Victor Peters, Matthew Stirrup, Ronald Wood, and Stuart Wright (Mayor).
Officers	Tina Cunnell (Town Clerk), Alan Yorke (Deputy Town Clerk and Finance Officer), Karen Robinson (Committee Clerk).

## **OPEN FORUM**

There were several members of the public in attendance who asked questions relating to:

1. A member of the public asked if questions could be asked of the Councillors regarding District and County issues. The Mayor replied that individual Councillors can be contacted via their specific websites and emails.
2. A member of the public asked about the charges for DIY waste being removed at the Thetford Recycling and Reuse Centre. The Chair of the Amenities Committee replied that Norfolk County Council (NCC) is still going through a process before they can stop charging.
3. A member of the public asked about environmental and green issues that the Council is addressing. The Town Clerk replied that there is a 'draft' strategy in place, currently and the approved version will be provided once completed.
4. A member of the public asked whether Councillors and the Town Clerk were attending mandatory courses. The Mayor replied that the Councilors are well informed and update their skills with planned courses, and the Town Clerk is unaware of any other training courses being imposed on Councils.

## **MINUTES**

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### **474/23 DECLARATIONS OF ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

None.

### **475/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies: Councillors David Evans, Douglas Jefferson, Adam Mitchell, and Stuart Terry.

### **476/23 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED: The minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023 be confirmed as a true record and signed/initialled by the Mayor.**

### **477/23 COMMITTEE MINUTES**

To receive the following:

Amenities Committee: 07/11/2023 (417/23 - 431/23)

**RESOLVED: The Amenities (Including Cemetery) Committee minutes were adopted as presented.**

Planning Committee: 14/11/2023 (432/23 - 440/23)

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

Venues and Markets Committee: 15/11/2023 (441/23 - 454/23)

**RESOLVED: The Venues and Markets Committee minutes were adopted as presented.**

Finance and Personnel Committee: 21/11/2023 (455/23 - 473/23)

**RECOMMENDATION:** Councillor David Blackburn proposed, and Councillor Mike Brindle seconded: That the restructuring changes numbered 1-5 above be adopted and recommended to Full Council.

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

#### **478/23 MAYOR'S REMARKS AND REPORT**

##### **Mayor of Thetford Councillor Stuart Wright**

##### **October**

28 Charles Burrell Museum Season Closing Day Event

##### **November**

2 BTO Awards Evening

4 Parkrun

5 Junior Parkrun

8 Service of Remembrance at East Wretham

11 Armistice Day two-minute silence and wreath laying  
Unveiling Fish Pass Memorial Plaque for Sean Ready

12 Remembrance Sunday Parade

Opening Fireworks event at Barnham Cross Common

17 Presentation and Launch of Thetford Rickshaw Revolution

22 RAF Mildenhall Thanksgiving Service at Ely Cathedral

The Mayor said that the Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday Parade was well attended and included Czech and Polish members of the public. The Council assisted the Royal British Legion with the event and noted the loss of John Waine. He also thanked the Councillors and staff for attending and assisting with the events.

The update was noted.

#### **479/23 TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES**

Councillor Mike Brindle reported that he had attended the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Citizens Advice Diss And Thetford (CADAT) and that the organisation is extremely busy and is experiencing a shortage of funds and volunteers and asked that Councillors publicise their plight.

Councillor Carla Barreto reported that she volunteers in an advisory capacity at CADAT. She also invited a delegation of Councillors to visit the Portuguese Embassy and Consulate in London to meet with the Ambassador at the end of January 2024 and extended the invite to Breckland Council representatives.

The report was noted.

#### **480/23 REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS**

Councillor Terry Land reported that he attended the Full Council at Breckland Council and asked the Deputy Leader about the Norfolk Flood Line, which was unavailable for serious floods in Thetford. He was assured that the telephone lines will be available at weekends. He also spoke with the Breckland Scrutiny Committee regarding former social houses being sold off without Ward Councillors knowledge.

Councillor Robert Kybird reported that Cabinet approved three consultations for Thetford:

- Thetford Conservation Area as a draft consultation.
- The Breckland Design Guide.
- The Breckland Local Development Scheme.

He also informed the Councillors of the following:

- The Public Health Funeral Policy has been approved which sets the rules for when the Council pays for the funeral or not and how to recover costs.
- The Local Council Tax Deduction Scheme has been refreshed.
- A new House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing Policy has been approved with increased fees for monitoring HMO's and landlords can apply for a one-year or five-year licence depending on whether they abide by all the rules and are responsible.
- There is a training session on Zoom delivering management policies regarding governance and audit on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023.
- He also reminded the Council that Planning objections will only be considered if they are related to matters of Planning Policy, which includes the Thetford Area Action Plan in addition to the Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.
- He provided clarification regarding the sale of Council houses whereby different social housing providers have different rules and do not have a statutory duty to inform districts when houses are being sold.

Councillor Jane James reported that:

- The deadline for proposals for the Road Safety Community Fund ended on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2023. 30 miles per hour speed roundels have been installed at various points around the town, to advise drivers of changed speed limits.
- Additional requests for repeater 20 mile per hour roundels to be requested to include Rosecroft Way and Charlock Road on the Cloverfields Estate
- She is happy to support the Council's use of the Speed Awareness Monitor (SAM2), with additional input from the residents' groups and the Safer Thetford Action Group (STAG).
- The Highways Engineer accompanied Councillor Jane James in mid-November to assess footpath reinstatements and tree issues on Castle Street, which have been dealt with to residents' satisfaction. Drain issues, road and footpath condition issues in the Woodlands Estate area, the Norwich Road Estate, Cloverfields, and Old Croxton Road, and the town centre have also been assessed. A deep clean of road drains still needs to be done to reduce the flooding risk.
- The Thetford track at Green lane is still awaiting hogging work to be done to improve drainage, and this will link town centre and supermarkets with the Kingsfleet development.
- The Highways teams reacted promptly to a wall collapse in Grove Lane, and Councillor Jane James thanked residents for contacting the Council.
- She attended a meeting with Liz Truss, Councillor Stuart Wright, and some residents regarding what measures can be deployed to ease the challenges on the Nuns'

Bridges, damage to that historic structure, and congestion issues and this is work in progress.

- She also attended the Anti-Bullying Conference held at The Carnegie this month where young people spoke of their experiences and their positive attitude to overcoming the impact of bullying and challenging bullying behaviour.
- She continues to support the Breckland Youth Advisory Board.
- Norfolk County Council (NCC) will provide 27 gritters on Norfolk's roads this winter.
- Warm and Well Winter Campaign launched this month, which supports Norfolk residents in choosing the correct health service for their needs, offers hardship and mental health support, winter wellness and resilience.
- "Your Norfolk Magazine" has been reinstated and includes an article about getting Winter ready.
- NCC is awaiting a legislative process regarding the removal of charges at Thetford Recycling and Reuse Centre but is hoping to commence late 2023/early 2024.

Councillor Terry Jermy reported that:

- He accompanied Councillor Jane James on a walk around Thetford. The Road Safety Fund from Norfolk County Council (NCC) allocates £10,000 to each Norfolk County Councillor over and above their local members budget for small scale highways projects. Thetford West will have roundels installed to reinforce the 30 for Thetford Campaign to convey the road safety message on every road into Thetford.
- NCC has been asked to cost proposals for a permanent fixed flashing speed sign on the A11, where there is a significant speeding issue in this area.
- Bridge Street and Thetford Grammar School has got rumble strips that have worn away and road markings to slow down cars have deteriorated.
- NCC is looking into a potential solution to the road safety crossing on the Brandon Road for the Thetford Golf Club
- Improved bus services for the town commence on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023, with a bus service to Norwich being instigated, with a National cap of £2.00 per person, each way.
- A 'new' rate for town-wise services will be capped at £1.50 per journey, within the Thetford Boundary.
- There are some areas in Thetford that have no bus service in operation and this needs to be looked at to improve coverage across the town.
- Abbey Residents' Group has been looking into the regeneration and liaising with Planning at Breckland Council and need a representative to come and talk to the Residents' Group plus Councillors, and to establish a process for residents and Councillors to comment or object, when it happens. The Leader of Breckland is due to meet with residents in the near future.
- He attended the Scrutiny Committee and noted various presentations including one regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI) and is concerned about digital exclusion for many of our residents. Access help from Breckland Council and NCC advises residents to go to various websites, but allowances should be made for those people who prefer to use telephones.
- Devolution will be discussed at Cabinet on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and at the Full Council Meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023, where they will be debating whether or not to have a directly elected leader for the county of Norfolk. The current process is that the leader is selected by 84 County Councillors. The question will be asked if the public can choose to vote for a directly-elected leader. This will be a significant change for the County of Norfolk if it is voted in.
- Costs are increasing for the Norwich western link road near Western Longville, and the NCC share is more than £100 million pounds. The Government has significantly

funded the project by contributing 85% of the total bill. This item will also be voted on at Cabinet on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

The reports were noted.

#### **481/23 PRESENTATION FROM BRECKLAND COUNCIL**

No update was provided on key Breckland Council matters impacting on Thetford, as the Councillor Sam Chapman-Allen was unable to attend due to an administrative oversight by the Council officers. The Council agreed to request Councillor Sam Chapman-Allen to the Full Council meeting in February 2024.

#### **482/23 COUNCIL RESPONSE TO NORFOLK POLICING BUDGET 2024/25**

The Councillors discussed a Council response to the Norfolk Policing Budget 2024/25 Consultation:

The Town Council would also like to ensure that there is a greater commitment from Norfolk Police to support the Safer Thetford Action Group (STAG). Attendance by Norfolk Police is fundamental to the success of this initiative.

Councillor Terry Land proposed, and Councillor Mac Macdonald seconded:

**RESOLVED: That the letter attached as Annex A be approved.**

#### **483/23 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The Councillors requested that the following be publicised:

- Publicise the Thetford Conservation Heritage consultation.
- Publicise the Breckland Design Guide.
- Publicise the Breckland Local Development Scheme.
- Publicise bus service to Norwich being instigated, with a National cap of £2.00 per person, each way.
- Publicise the 'new' rate for town-wise services will be capped at £1.50 per journey, within the Thetford Boundary.
- Publicise the Mayors Carol Service - 8<sup>th</sup> December 2023.
- Publicise the Christmas Lights Switch On – 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023.

#### **484/23 COMMITTEE OFFICERS UPDATE**

None.

#### **485/23 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.**

#### **486/23 FULL COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MINUTES**

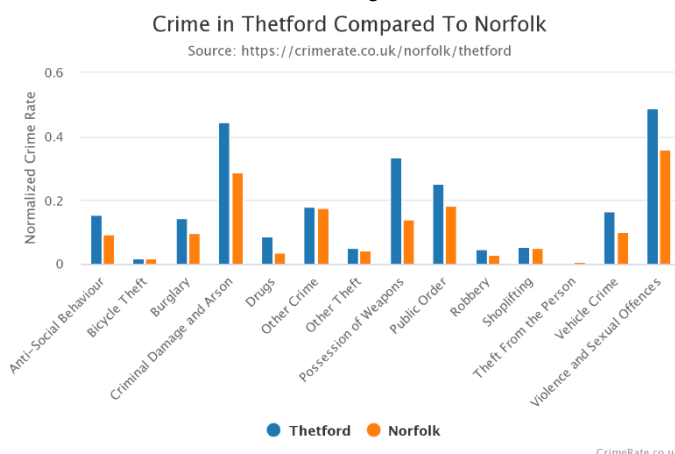
Finance and Personnel Committee – minute number – 473/23 – minutes approved.

## Chairman

### Annex A

#### Thetford Town Council response to consultation on policing budget for Norfolk

- Thetford Town Council believes that people feeling safe and secure at home and in their community is a core priority and must be a significant focus for Norfolk Police and Partner organisations.
- While there are a number of areas of focus in a complex budget, we would like to emphasise our view about:
  1. The importance of a visible policing in our communities. Without a presence residents can feel anxious, disposed and disempowered.
  2. We would also like to highlight a specific concern locally regarding County lines and drug-related crimes.
- Thetford is one of the biggest population centres in Norfolk. However, it appears to see less visible police presence than other areas. Our location on the A11 dual carriageway makes us particularly exposed to issues such as County Lines, and we do not believe enough is being done to address this. Visible policing has reduced significantly over a number of years, largely due to the scrapping of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). The cut of PCSOs has been noticeable across Norfolk, including here in Thetford where they were well-respected. They were also one of the most visible aspects of policing. Their presence acted as reassurance to the public and also an important touch point to connect the public to policing. They also provided additional benefits by collecting valuable community intelligence. The loss of this community policing aspect has been keenly felt. Figures show that from 2010 to 2019 the overall strength of the Norfolk constabulary has decreased (overall strength of 1597.5 in 2010 to 1594.8 in 2019). This is before even taking into account the cut in PCSOs. While numbers have been increasing in recent years, we have lost many officers with significant experience. We would encourage the Commissioner to develop engagement opportunities with the police and the community, building up those connections locally, helping the police to become part of the community.
- A core priority for Thetford Town Council is to make Thetford a great market town with an active High Street. To this end it is vital that the town is free from anti-social behaviour and that people feel confident that the streets are secure. Thetford Town Council have recently supported an extension to a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for Thetford. This has been a vital tool, aiming to help prevent anti-social behaviour in the town centre. Its success however relies heavily on there being sufficient personnel to enforce the rules and we feel the PSPO has not been as effective as it could have been because of capacity issues.
- Support agencies in the town are at their lowest for many years. We have seen the loss of the County Youth Service, Connexions, the Matthew Project and a whole range of other support services. Reducing services but increased demand puts intolerable pressure on those agencies that do remain. For example, drug and alcohol support service Change Grow Live (CGL) has more addiction casework now than it has had for years. As funding for support services has been reduced there is a danger that more and more people who need support will find themselves without, and this will undoubtedly increase pressure for the police. We ask the commissioner to consider additional services in Thetford to combat drug and alcohol addiction and youth crime to stop young people becoming involved with drugs at an early age and feeding the County Lines crisis.
- Latest statistics on crime show that Thetford has higher rates of various types of crime when compared to the rest of Norfolk, including anti-social behaviour, people possessing weapons and – most worryingly – violence and sexual offences. We welcome investment in services such as the Daisy Programme and would be keen to explore how Thetford residents could benefit further from these



services. We would be keen to learn what the police are doing to prevent these types of crimes from occurring.