

Minutes
Amenities Committee
Democratic Services

Date 05/03/2024
Time 18:00 – 20:00
Location King's House, Council Chamber.
Present Carla Barreto, David (Ieuan) Evans, Chris Harvey,
Terry Jermy (Chair), Mac MacDonald, Hazel McCambridge (Vice Chair),
Stuart Terry and Terry Land.

Officers Alan Yorke (Acting Town Clerk),
Nick Thompson (Town Team Manager),
Karen Robinson (Committee Clerk).

Members of the public There were seven members of the public in attendance.
the public

OPEN FORUM

A member of the public complimented the Council on the improvements to Castle Mound and the ramparts, regarding land management and the mindfulness of birds and wildlife but was concerned about the lateness of the work being done. The Chair replied that the contractors were appointed months ago but consent was required by English Heritage which took longer than anticipated to obtain. Work had commenced earlier than the previous year. He also said that mapping of nests is being shared between the Council and other relevant organisations.

MINUTES

722/23 DECLARATIONS OF ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Councillor Mac MacDonald declared a non-pecuniary interest in the use of Ramsey Close, as he is a Councillor for the area and is part of Norwich Road Residents Association. (Agenda number 732/23).

Councillor Terry Jermy declared a non-pecuniary interest in the Small Grant Application for the Abbey Action Group, as he is the Ward Councillor and assisted with the completion of the Application Form. (Agenda number 730/23)

723/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies: Councillor Mike Brindle.

724/23 MINUTES AMENITIES COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting held on 6 February 2024 which were received by Council on 27 February 2024, are a true record and signed/initialled by the Committee Chairman.

725/23 TOWN TEAM MANAGER'S REPORT

The Committee discussed the report from the Town Team Manager, which was circulated prior to the meeting:

- Thetford's Spring Clean as part of the Keep Britain Tidy Campaign 2024: The event will take place on Friday 22nd March & Saturday 23rd March 2024. The meeting point for this event will be the Thetford Market Place at 9.30am on both mornings.
- The Town Team has been checking the fish pass daily, following the recent high-water levels of the river, and will be carrying out the much-needed repairs now that the water levels have dropped.

- The Grazing licence has just been officially signed and finalised by our new grazier, who is scheduled to have animals on sites from 1st April 2024.
- The Chair reported that Norfolk County Council approved the Thetford Town Council Parish Partnership application for phase 2 of the Nuns Bridges trod - £25,000 and a further £20,000 for road safety projects in Thetford. This will include 30mph roundels, traffic calming on Bridge Street, additional signage on London Road, and Brandon Road near the Golf Course.
- The Committee thanked the Education Officer and the Town Team Officer for the tree planting undertaken recently with local schools.

Action points:

1. Councillor Mac MacDonald requested a supply of graffiti wipes; and for the data that has been captured on the Speed Awareness Monitor (SAMS2) to be passed to the Safer Thetford Action Group (STAG).
2. Town Team Manager to forward details of the Breckland dog warden to all Councillors to assist with enforcement and provide more dog fouling stickers/signs.

The report was noted.

726/23 BURIAL ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

The Committee noted the report from the Burial Administrator, which was circulated prior to the meeting.

727/23, PRELIMINARY FINANCIAL REPORT (AMENITIES)

The Committee discussed the preliminary Amenities Financial Report for the eleven months ended 29 February 2024, which was circulated prior to the meeting:

- Open Space Maintenance Budget was increased by £19,000.00.
- Revenue is on target.
- Vehicle Leasing has been exceeded incurring higher costs due to the switch over from old vehicles to rental ones.
- Play Parks expenditure exceeded budget due to routine maintenance and the repairs of vandalised equipment.

The Financial Report was noted.

728/23 PRELIMINARY FINANCIAL REPORT (CEMETERY)

The Committee discussed the preliminary Cemetery Financial Report for the eleven months ended 29 February 2024, which was circulated prior to the meeting:

- Income is significantly down on budget due to lower burial activity.
- Chapel Maintenance has incurred minimal spend to date but there is no backlog of maintenance currently, as the Works Team monitor the building and address any issues that arise when needed.

The Financial Report was noted.

729/23 REVIEW OF THE PROPOSED PROJECTS BUDGET FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2025

The Committee discussed the proposed projects budget for the year ending 31 March 2025, which was circulated prior to the meeting:

- Fire Risk Assessments project has been allocated £75,000.00 as identified in a recent review.
- Thomas Paine Plinth to be included if affordable.

Action Point: The Town Team Manager to re-visit quotes regarding the Thomas Paine plinth.

The update was noted.

730/23 SMALL GRANTS

The Committee considered two Small Grant Applications that have been previously circulated to Committee Councillors:

Abbey Action Group – funds requested to support the group and wider community with campaigning costs, legal and professional fees, venue hire costs etc. The Committee were content that the use of the grant was within the scope of the Small Grants Framework.

Councillor Chris Harvey proposed, and Councillor Stuart Terry seconded.

Enable Thetford – funds requested to organise a Well Being Fayre to help the older people of the town to have a better quality of life.

Councillor Stuart Terry proposed, and Councillor Carla Barreto seconded.

RESOLVED: That the two Small Grant Applications be approved.

731/23 UPDATE ON HIGHER LEVEL STEWARDSHIP PAYMENTS FROM THE RURAL PAYMENT AGENCY(RPA)

The Committee discussed an update on the possibility of entering into a new agreement with the RPA to fund our Higher-Level Stewardship work on our open spaces, as circulated in a document prior to the meeting.

Action Point: Acting Town Clerk to proceed with entering into a new agreement.

The update was noted.

732/23 USE OF RAMSEY CLOSE AS AN ALLOTMENT SITE

The Committee discussed the feedback received as part of the consultation on Ramsey Close, which was circulated prior to the meeting and noted the following:

- Thirty-five responses were received to the Council's consultation.
- There is a legal process to change the covenant, Breckland Council is seeking legal advice, and costs will be incurred.
- There is safety aspect to be accounted for as the land is close to the railway line and the current fencing is unsuitable.
- Further suggestions included acquiring additional play equipment, upgrading the Fairfields play area, and approaching the local school to request usage of the facilities on their land.

Action Point: Town Team Manager to investigate the height of suitable fencing to be erected if play equipment is installed.

The Committee requested that the following proposals be considered:

1. The proposal is determined by Full Council once the covenant investigations are completed.
2. Conversations with the residents are to continue, whilst the covenant issue progresses.
3. The Council pursues alternative options for improved play area provision in the area.

Councillor Terry Jermy proposed, and Councillor David (Ieuan) Evans seconded.

RESOLVED: That the proposals above be approved, noting that the land is subject to a covenant.

733/23 UNLOCKING THETFORD'S POTENTIAL FUND

The Committee reviewed all of the applications received, which were listed in a document circulated prior to the meeting:

- Twenty applications have been received which have conformed to the adapted Small Grant Policy criteria, but still require a detailed review to ensure total compliance.
- A few organisations did not return their applications within the deadline, so the Committee has requested that the time be extended to accommodate any groups that requests an application form but had not yet returned it.
- The final list of successful applicants will be presented at the Amenities Committee meeting in April.

Action Point: Acting Town Clerk to contact the organisations that had not returned their applications.

Councillor Chris Harvey proposed, and Councillor Stuart Terry seconded.

RESOLVED: That the participatory budget session be deferred until a final list of applicants to be put forward to the public vote, and consequently, a date when the public meeting to vote will be held.

734/23 USE OF BARNHAM CROSS CAR PARK AS A ROAD REPAIR COMPOUND

The Committee discussed a request to use the Barnham Cross car park as a compound for road repair work being undertaken on Bury Road:

- Councillors expressed concerns regarding the area being re-instated to its current form.
- Assurance required that vehicles do not impede on the Common itself.
- Spaces to be left for use by residents and visitors to the site.
- Remuneration desired from Norfolk County Council.

Action Point: Town Team Manger to contact Norfolk County Council with the concerns discussed above.

Councillor Mac MacDonald proposed, and Councillor David (Ieuan) Evans seconded.

RESOLVED: That the request be approved, subject to the issues being discussed further with Norfolk County Council.

735/23 "EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO PLAY"

The Committee discussed a proposal on whether and how best to make our playparks fully inclusive to everyone:

- The Town Team Manager reported that the Council owns nest swings which are in Redcastle Play Area (Canon's Walk) and Castle Park.
- Smaller pieces of equipment can be purchased.

Action Points:

1. Committee Officers to obtain a list of selective pieces of equipment to be discussed at the next Amenities Committee meeting.
2. The Mayor to sign the pledge to investigate further options of this policy.
3. Invite Thetford YAB to present to a future committee meeting.

Councillor Stuart Terry proposed, and Councillor Mac MacDonald seconded.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Council pursues the policy, subject to the Mayor signing the pledge at Full Council.

736/23 HEALTH & SAFETY MATTERS

The Committee discussed an update on any health & safety matters that have arisen since the last meeting:

- Councillor Chris Harvey expressed concern regarding the high-level rivers and floods in Thetford and asked whether the Council could purchase pop up advisory signage.
- The Committee noted that there is minimal street lighting in the Kingsfleet development and residents has requested this be reconsidered.

Action Point: The Town Team Manager to obtain signage to be provided regarding the flooded areas in Thetford, especially the rivers and Butten Island.

The update was noted.

737/23 CORRESPONDENCE

To update the Committee on any correspondence received:

- An email had been received regarding the Fish Pass during the recent flooding issues.
- Norfolk Orienteering Club has submitted an application to use the Council's open spaces on 20th April 2024, but require guidance on suitable car parks within the town.

The correspondence was noted.

738/23 ACTION POINTS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

To review the action points carried forward from previous meetings.

MINUTE REFERENCE	ACTION PLAN	PROPOSED DATE
60/23	Letter to be written to Environment Agency (EA) to reduce frequency of groundwater monitoring.	In progress. Contact now made with Environment Agency and past groundwater monitoring reports have now been submitted to the EA. The EA are currently updating their files. To be completed by 31st December 2023.
332/23	Town Team Manager to contact NCC and Thetford Academy regarding the refurbishment of the underpass at Croxton Road.	In Progress and continually communicating with NCC. NCC officer to update in April 2024
338/23	Officers to investigate any other options identified in the discussions relating to the renewal of the Council's fleet.	Still in progress.
427/23	Schedule a review of the Cemetery Rules.	To be completed by 30 th June 2024.
496/23	Town Team Manager to liaise with Councillor Hazel McCambridge and Ian Woodward to develop a Wildflower Meadow Action Plan, to include enhanced litter picking and monitoring.	Still in progress

644/23	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Councillor Mac MacDonald to advise the Town Team on the locations of redundant signage requiring collection. 2. Town Team Manager to investigate correct naming of Frederick's Wood. 3. Town Team Manager to publicise the success of the clearing work that they had done on social media using before and after photos. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Still in progress, awaiting a map from Councillor Mac MacDonald. 2. Still in progress. 3. Started doing this.
652/23	Letter to Norfolk Highways be amended as per Committee decision	Acting Town Clerk to action ASAP.

The action points were noted.

739/23 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Committee discussed and agreed any consultation or media release required:

- Councillor Hazel McCambridge to contact Cloverfield Community Church regarding a cheque presentation.
- Promote the “Everyone Has the Right to Play” as a Press Release – information to be given to the Engagement Officer.

The Committee approved the media releases.

740/23 COMMITTEE OFFICERS UPDATE

None.

Chairman