

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THETFORD TOWN COUNCIL, HELD IN  
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KING'S HOUSE, THETFORD,  
ON WEDNESDAY, 29<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2009,  
STARTING AT 7 P.M. WITH THE OPEN FORUM

Present:

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs P A Spencer, Chairman

Councillors:

G P Balaam	D G Mortimer
R F W Brame	Mrs P P Quadling
M Brindle	B J Skull
Mrs M P Chapman-Allen	M G Spencer
J A Harding	S N H Wright
T J Jermy	

Open Forum

The Council was made aware of an opportunity to feature in the Thomas Paine Commemorative Quilt.

146/09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor M Brindle declared a prejudicial interest in item 151/09(b) as a founder member of Thetford Youth & Community Chess Club. He was not present for the discussion of or vote on this item.

Please refer to item 164/09 below for details of another declaration of prejudicial interest.

147/09 MINUTES

Council Meeting: 24<sup>th</sup> June 2009

The unconfirmed minutes of the above meeting had been included in the agenda papers.

Proposed by Councillor D G Mortimer and seconded by Councillor G P Balaam, it was:

RESOLVED that the minutes of those items addressed by the Council before the agreed exclusion of press and public at the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2009 be confirmed as a true record and signed/initialled by the Mayor as Chairman.

148/09 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors S H Chapman-Allen (work-related), R G Kybird, T J Lamb and A Paines.

## 149/09 COMMITTEE REPORTS

To receive the following reports:

(a) Planning Committee: 1<sup>st</sup> July 2009

In the absence of both the Committee Chairman and Vice-Chairman, Councillor D G Mortimer, seconded by Councillor G P Balaam, proposed the following resolution:

RESOLVED that the report of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2009 be received and adopted.

(b) Allotments Committee: 8<sup>th</sup> July 2009

Proposed by Councillor M G Spencer and seconded by Councillor G P Balaam, it was:

RESOLVED that the report of the meeting of the Allotments Committee, including the recommendation at minute 115/09, be received and adopted (the text of the adopted, revised Tenancy Agreement, annexed hereto, refers).

(c) Planning Committee: 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2009

In the absence of both the Committee Chairman and Vice-Chairman, Councillor D G Mortimer, seconded by Councillor G P Balaam, proposed the following resolution:

RESOLVED that the report of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2009 be received and adopted.

## 150/09 MAYOR'S REPORT

In an introductory statement, the Mayor, Councillor Mrs P A Spencer, made it clear that she expected the loyalties of those present to rest with the Town Council. She recognised that those town councillors who were also members of the district and/or county council could be faced at times, when voting on a particular issue, with the difficulty of knowing which hat to wear. That said, she wanted to remind members present that, as elected representatives, they all had to conform to standards and any perceived bringing of the Council into disrepute would be reported to the Monitoring Officer, who was accountable to the Standards Board for England. She also made clear that, when dealing with matters below the line, these must 'remain in the Chamber'; she did not want members to find themselves in the embarrassing position of having to answer questions on confidential business put by members of the public outside the Chamber.

She then referred members to the lists of events attended and forthcoming events, included in the agenda papers.

### **Events attended since the last meeting**

#### **June**

Friday	26 <sup>th</sup>	Civic Reception
Saturday	27 <sup>th</sup>	Lay wreath for Veterans & United Services Armed Forces Day
Sunday	28 <sup>th</sup>	Thetford Society Strawberry Tea
Tuesday	30 <sup>th</sup>	Thetford Education celebration of partnership work in Thetford

## **July**

Thursday	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Thetford Grammar Junior School prize giving
Sunday	5 <sup>th</sup>	Mayor of Swaffam Cllr David Harman Civic Service
Thursday	9 <sup>th</sup>	High Sheriff of Norfolk Robert Carter Cocktail Party
Friday	10 <sup>th</sup>	Riversdale handing over of the restoration of the quiet area completed by the Princes Trust programme run by the Norfolk Fire & Rescue Services
Saturday	11 <sup>th</sup>	Lord Mayor of Norwich Celebrations
Sunday	12 <sup>th</sup>	Mayor of Diss Cllr Jane Trippett-Jones Civic Service at St Mary's Church Diss
Tuesday	14 <sup>th</sup>	Start off 1909 single crank compound engine from Burrell Museum on its journey to Mr Stearn at Stowmarket
Thursday	16 <sup>th</sup>	Mayor of Ipswich Cllr David Goldsmith At Home
Friday	17 <sup>th</sup>	Chairman of Forest Heath Cllr Malcolm Smith Civic reception
Sunday	19 <sup>th</sup>	Mayor of St Edmundsbury Cllr Pat Warby Civic Service
Wednesday	22 <sup>nd</sup>	Link Up Talking Newspaper for the Blind meeting
Thursday	23 <sup>rd</sup>	11.30am Home Start AGM 2.30 pm Manufacturing Excellence Club meeting
Friday	24 <sup>th</sup>	Norfolk Wildlife Trust opening of Langmere Hide at East Wretham
Sunday	26 <sup>th</sup>	Photo-shoot at Duleep Singh Statue with team cleaning the statue

## **Deputy Mayor**

- Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> Dinner with Commander Nick Bray RAF Honnington
- Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> Photo-shoot of handover of cheque to Norfolk Fire & Rescue Services Youth Development Team Mayor's Charity 08/09.

#### 151/09 INTERNATIONAL CIVIC LINKS MATTERS

- (a) Invitation to Hürth International Day: Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup> September 2009  
The Town Clerk referred to the invitation received from Hürth's Mayor by means of a letter, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2009. This year's international coming-together was indeed limited to a single day's festivities.

RESOLVED that no member of the Council attend the above event.

- (b) Funding requests for Thetford Open Chess Tournament  
The Town Clerk's paper, dated 24<sup>th</sup> July 2009 referred.

RESOLVED that:

- i) a payment of £100 be made to Thetford Youth & Community Chess Club to help defray costs incurred in hosting young players from Spijkenisse
- ii) a payment of £90 be made to Thetford Twinning Association to help defray the travel costs of young players from Skawina

The £190 total would be charged to the *International Civic Links* line of the Council's operating budget 2009/10.

#### 152/09 TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES

There were no reports from representatives.

#### 153/09 COUNTY COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Neither County Councillor present had anything to report, but County Councillor Mrs M P Chapman-Allen took the opportunity to comment on the recently announced cuts in Growth Point Funding, expressing great disappointment with this central government decision.

#### 154/09 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

Councillor M Brindle had requested this item, believing it to be incumbent on the Town Council to, at the very least, re-state its previously adopted position. As a recently elected member, he was pleased to have had an opportunity to see, prior to that evening's meeting, copies of the three letters sent by the Town Clerk to the Boundary Committee. These were dated 29<sup>th</sup> November 2007, 4<sup>th</sup> June 2008 and 25<sup>th</sup> September 2008 respectively and had all resulted from Council discussions that had taken place in each of those months. Councillor Brindle was impressed by the thoroughness with which the Town Council had considered the implications for Thetford and the degree

to which it had drawn particular attention to the needs of Norfolk's fourth largest settlement population.

The Town Clerk handed out copies of all three letters to those present and the following resolution resulted in due course, being supported by 11 of the 12 members present, with only Councillor Mrs M P Chapman-Allen - who asked for her name to be recorded in this minute – voting against.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk communicate to the Unitary Structures Team at the Department for Communities and Local Government, ahead of the submission deadline of 18<sup>th</sup> September 2009, the Town Council's continued commitment to all the views expressed in the afore-mentioned three letters, with all said views to be re-stated.

#### 155/09 HEALTHY TOWN PROJECT

Councillor T J Jermy had requested this item owing to his growing concern over the lack of visible progress being made 'on the ground'. Notwithstanding the recent opportunity he had had to meet with the Programme Manager of the Thetford Healthy Town Programme (he thanked the Town Manager for arranging this), he remained concerned. Invited by the Mayor to comment, the Town Manager expressed some of her own concerns and there was general agreement around the table that a meeting could only assist with greater understanding of the issues involved and the seeming approach being adopted, which certainly needed to be scrutinised, if not challenged.

RESOLVED that the Thetford Healthy Town Programme Manager be invited for a meeting, most likely in early September and possibly preceding a Planning Committee meeting.

*Afternote: This is now scheduled for 14<sup>th</sup> October 2009 at 6 p.m.*

#### 156/09 BARNHAM CROSS COMMON MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Town Clerk's paper, dated 24<sup>th</sup> July 2009, referred.

RESOLVED that, prior to making any funding commitment to any management study, the newly elected Chairman of the Management Committee, Neil Featherstone (the Brecks Partnership Manager), be invited for a discussion on both the narrower and wider contexts. There was scope for studies either to be limited to SSSI management or to address much wider-ranging – in territorial terms – issues; for example, river corridor matters.

#### 157/09 RECREATIONAL FACILITY ON THE ABBEY ESTATE

The Town Clerk's paper, dated 24<sup>th</sup> July 2009, referred.

RESOLVED that, before any commitment to the maintenance of a new facility on the Abbey Estate was contemplated, the Town Clerk raise with Breckland Council at senior level the need to re-establish

momentum on the transfer of play facilities and open space. Members were not persuaded that the stated reason given some months previously for putting negotiations 'on hold' - namely, the need to await the outcome of local government reorganisation - could continue to be given as a reason for inaction.

#### 158/09 HEALTH, SAFETY & WELFARE POLICY STATEMENT

A copy of the signed, revised document, dated June 2009, had been included in the agenda papers for formal adoption. What the Town Clerk was now proposing was a further, very minor revision to the first page.

RESOLVED that the further revised document, dated July 2009 and annexed hereto, be signed by the Mayor and Town Clerk and thereby adopted by the Council.

#### 159/09 TRAINING POLICY ADOPTION

The Town Clerk's covering paper, dated 24<sup>th</sup> July 2009, referred.

RESOLVED that the Policy Statement, annexed hereto, be signed by the Mayor and Town Clerk and thereby adopted by the Council. The Town Clerk had referred in his paper to the fact that, through this adoption, the Town Council would be meeting the final criterion set by the *Quality Status* Assessment Panel. The awarding of *Quality Status* would follow from this decision.

#### 160/09 ST PETER'S CHURCH

The Town Clerk's covering paper, dated 24<sup>th</sup> July 2009, referred. In that, he had corrected the reference made on the agenda to papers received 'from the Diocese': these had, in fact, been issued by the Church Commissioners. He had also included a copy of a letter received from the Council's solicitor, which raised several points of a 'precautionary nature'. Members present did not deem these to be any cause for concern.

RESOLVED that the documents referred to above be noted and the Town Clerk authorised to proceed with the transfer of ownership in consultation with the Council's solicitor.

#### 161/09 FINANCIAL MATTERS

The Vice-Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, Councillor R F W Brame, presented recommendations in respect of the following, resulting from the Committee's meeting held earlier that evening:

(a) Financial Report for the First Quarter 2009/10 (= as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2009)

RESOLVED that the above Report be received (as annexed to the minutes of the Committee's meeting, referred to above). The Town

Clerk was asked once again to compliment the Finance Manager on her clarity of presentation.

(b) King's House Cottage Tenancy

RESOLVED that, as far as securing the Town Council's agreement to underwrite any perceived loss of income to the Staniforth Trust was concerned (as a consequence of the property's lying vacant), a time limit on any such arrangement would need to be negotiated with the Trust. This would be addressed by the Trust at its next meeting.

(c) Remembrance Concert Funding

The Town Clerk was seeking clarity from the Council regarding the 'status' of this annual event. At present, it still remained unclear as to whether, in terms of funding, it was 'in the Mayor's gift' (i.e. discretionary to a degree) or an official Council event, to be budgeted for out of the precept.

RESOLVED that, from now on and including this year's event, the Remembrance Concert be categorised as a Town Council event, organised in close association with the Royal British Legion ( a form of 'joint venture'), with eligible expenditure to be covered by the Town Council. The prevailing view expressed was that the people of the town would expect no less of its Council.

162/09 GUILDHALL COMPLEX CONCESSIONS

RESOLVED that the concessions suggested for events being organised by Thetford Youth Council and the Thetford Singers respectively (details as set out in the paper included with the agenda under this item reference) be approved.

163/09 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded for the 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.

164/09 MINUTES

Precautionary Declaration of Interest

Councillor Mrs P P Quadling declared a precautionary prejudicial interest in items (c) to (e) below owing to her personal circumstances. In the event, she did absent herself from the Chamber when a discussion arising out of the minutes appeared to be developing.

(a) Council Meeting: 24<sup>th</sup> June 2009 – items addressed following the exclusion of press and public

Proposed by Councillor D G Mortimer and seconded by Councillor G P Balaam, it was:

RESOLVED that the minutes of those items addressed by the Council following the agreed exclusion of press and public at the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2009 be confirmed as a true record and signed/initialled by the Mayor as Chairman.

(b) Finance & General Purposes Committee: 24<sup>th</sup> June 2009

Proposed by Councillor R F W Brame and seconded by Councillor M Brindle, it was:

RESOLVED that the report of the meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2009 be received and adopted.

(c) Personnel Committee: 26<sup>th</sup> June 2009

Proposed by Councillor R F W Brame and seconded by Councillor G P Balaam, it was:

RESOLVED that the report of the meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2009, be received and adopted.

(d) Personnel Committee: 14<sup>th</sup> July 2009

Proposed by Councillor R F W Brame and seconded by Councillor G P Balaam, it was:

RESOLVED that the report of the meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2009, including the two recommendations contained within minute 120/09 [the first of these being a 'two-parter', i.e. comprising a part (a) and a part (b)] be received and adopted.

(e) Personnel Committee: 20<sup>th</sup> July 2009

Proposed by Councillor R F W Brame and seconded by Councillor G P Balaam, it was:

RESOLVED that the report of the meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2009, be received and adopted.

Councillor D G Mortimer took the opportunity at this point to raise with the Town Clerk two matters not on the agenda.

Chairman