

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THETFORD TOWN COUNCIL,  
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KING'S HOUSE, THETFORD,  
ON WEDNESDAY, 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2010,  
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	A Paines
M Brindle	Mrs P P Quadling
Mrs M P Chapman-Allen	B J Skull
T J Jermy	M G Spencer
T J Lamb	S N H Wright

Open Forum

No matters raised.

522/09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor S N H Wright declared a personal interest in item 525/09c, given his involvement/association with the Arts Centre and Dad's Army Museum proposals.

523/09 MINUTES

Council Meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2010

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2010, excepting those items dealt with following the exclusion of press and public (addressed under item 539/09a below) be confirmed as a true record and signed/initialled by the Mayor as Chairman. Minutes 440/09 to 450/09 inclusive referred.

Note: Under minute 443/09a (being the receipt and adoption of the Report of the Planning Committee meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2010), the word 'inclusive' would be inserted in the minute book copy before the word 'referred'.

524/09 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

## 525/09 COMMITTEE REPORTS

RESOLVED that the following reports be duly received and adopted, subject to any comments recorded below:

(a) Allotments Committee: 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2010

Minutes 459/09 to 466/09 inclusive referred, including the Recommendations at minutes 466/09b and 466/09c.

(b) Planning Committee: 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2010

Minutes 467/09 to 478/09 inclusive referred.

(c) Guildhall Committee: 16<sup>th</sup> March 2010

Minutes 489/09 to 498/09 inclusive referred.

Minute 494/09(b): Roller Shutters

It was noted that the Resolution, as drafted, was inaccurate and should, in respect of the area in front of the existing kitchen doors, have referred to the Committee's wish to move the doors rather than have shutters installed.

RESOLVED that this correction be recorded in these minutes.

Recommendations under minutes 495/09 and 496/09

These gave rise to the following comments.

Arts Centre Licence and Dad's Army Museum Lease

The view of the Finance & General Purposes Committee was reported by its Vice-Chairman, Councillor R F W Brame, who had chaired the Committee's meeting earlier that evening.

The Committee's advice to the Council was that, in order to protect the Guildhall Committee Chairman from any perceived 'conflict of interest', no commitment to any Arts Centre licence or Dad's Army Museum lease should be made prior to the receipt of formal proposals from both bodies - preferably under their respective letterheads - indicating how much rent they would be prepared to pay. Any negotiations could then follow on from that initial step.

RESOLVED that further consideration of the Recommendations included under minute 495/09 be deferred pending receipt of formal proposals from, respectively, the 'Arts Centre' and the 'Dad's Army Museum'.

Review of Venue Hire Operation

Regarding the two Recommendations under minute 496/09, Councillor Brame reported that the Finance & General Purposes Committee supported the first, which related to current hire charges being deemed VAT-inclusive, but took issue with the second, being of the view that the Stage Extension/Catwalk hire charge should be £80 and

not £40 for commercial hirers. It was acknowledged in the brief discussion that developed that a discounted rate would be available to organisers of some other events.

RESOLVED that the standard hire charge for the Carnegie Room Stage Extension/Catwalk should be £80.

A further brief discussion ensued over the reasoning behind the Committee's decision not to permit hirers to provide their own alcoholic beverages when not for re-sale. One member thought that, rather than being a 'resolved matter', this should have been presented to the Council as a Recommendation and open to challenge and/or further debate. The Town Clerk conceded that the member might have a point!

At least two members viewed the decision as unnecessarily restrictive, but the view that eventually prevailed was that, on balance, this practice was in the best interests of the Council. The Town Manager confirmed that, in any event, the contract with the current bar provider ruled out any change in practice, at least for the time being.

RESOLVED that this decision of the Committee be accepted as binding upon the Council until further notice.

(d) Planning Committee: 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010

Minutes 499/09 to 506/09 inclusive referred.

Regarding minute 506/09, it was agreed that reference should have been made therein to the Council's willingness to support any moves made by The Thetford Society to challenge the Inspector's decisions.

RESOLVED that this be noted in the minute book and The Thetford Society duly informed.

526/09 MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs P A Spencer, referred members to the lists of Events Attended and Forthcoming Events, included in the agenda papers.

**Events attended since the last meeting**

**February**

24<sup>th</sup> Charles Burrell Humanities School: Opening of Hair & Beauty Salon

**March**

5<sup>th</sup> Women's World Day of Prayer at St. Cuthbert's Church

5<sup>th</sup> Prince's Trust Programme: Renovation of gardens at Fryers Walk

- 5<sup>th</sup> The Mayor of Attleborough's Civic Reception (Councillor Vera Dale)
- 6<sup>th</sup> The High Sheriff's Justice Service at St Margaret's Church Kings Lynn (Mr Robert Carter)
- 13<sup>th</sup> Thetford Festival Club: Suffolk Male Voice Choir  
Concert in the Carnegie Room in aid of Help for Heroes
- 17<sup>th</sup> Attendance at production of Link-Up publication
- 17<sup>th</sup> Attendance at Thetford Grammar School's Lollies Musical
- 19<sup>th</sup> Attendance at St Winnold's breakfast hosted by the Mayor of Downham Market (Councillor John Doyle)
- 19<sup>th</sup> Attendance at Connie Ilott's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday party
- 20<sup>th</sup> Attendance at Thetford Library's 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations
- 20<sup>th</sup> Attendance at the Mayor of Sudbury's Charity Ball (Councillor Adrian Osborne)
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Attendance at Thetford Grammar School's Governors' Meeting
- 26<sup>th</sup> Attendance at the Mayor of Newmarket's Civic Reception (Councillor Jane Bailey)

#### 527/09 TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES

##### Thetford Tourism and Heritage Partnership

Councillor S N H Wright reported that £1K had been awarded to the Partnership through the 'Participatory Budgeting' process, as funding support for the Festival scheduled for the end of August 2010.

##### Thetford Task Force

As Chairman of the Task Force, Councillor D G Mortimer was prevailed upon to report on its most recent meeting although, as the Town Clerk confirmed, he was under no such obligation, given that he served on the Task Force as a Breckland Councillor and not Town Councillor.

What emerged in the course of a discussion was that some 'single-hatted' town councillors remained unhappy at being unable to participate in Task Force meetings. In line with the Task Force constitution applying currently, there were only two places provided for town councillors; the other town councillors entitled to attend meetings were there by virtue of their district or county councillor status.

Councillor Mortimer confirmed that he would relay this continued concern of some to the powers-that-be at Breckland Council and report any response received at the next Town Council meeting.

#### 528/09 REPRESENTATION ON BARNHAM CROSS STEERING GROUP

A letter from Flagship Housing Group's Strategic Projects Manager, dated 19<sup>th</sup> February 2010, had been included in the agenda papers. The Council was being asked to formalise its involvement with the Steering Group.

RESOLVED that Councillor T J Jermy be nominated as the Town Council's representative on the Barnham Cross Steering Group.

#### 529/09 COUNTY COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

There were no reports.

#### 530/09 RECENT EVENTS AND MEETINGS OF OTHER BODIES ATTENDED BY THE TOWN CLERK AND/OR TOWN MANAGER

This was a new agenda item, responding to interest expressed by some members.

The Town Clerk reported that, on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2010, he had attended the *Looking after war memorials* event, organised by the War Memorials Trust in Cambridge. His understanding was that Thetford Town Council had always considered itself responsible for the upkeep of the town's memorial in the Market Place; formal 'ownership' was not really an issue.

The Trust was well placed to advise town and parish councils on maintenance and upkeep; a key message conveyed at the event was: there are no rules when it comes to commemorating/'memorialising' the casualties of war. It was for each community to agree an approach.

On 9<sup>th</sup> March, the Town Clerk had attended the Larger Councils Meeting in Aylsham, organised by the Norfolk Association of Local Councils. 'New Standing Orders' was one of the less riveting topics.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> March, he had attended a regular meeting of town clerks from the five Breckland market towns with the Chief Executive of Breckland Council.

In the absence of Councillor R G Kybird, the Town Council's representative on the *Moving Thetford Forward* (hereinafter 'MTF') Board, the Town Clerk presented his own report on the Board Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> March, touching on the various topics covered.

The Town Manager then presented a lengthy list of events and meetings she had been involved in, including:

- (i) hosting of Workshop, led by consultants from Urban Delivery and attended by MTF Board Members;
- (ii) meeting with *Healthy Living Town* staff and others to programme the 2010 Family Sports Day, being planned for August Bank Holiday Monday;
- (iii) monthly meeting with the Deputy Chief Executive of Breckland Council;

- (iv) interviewing, as a member of the interview panel, for the post of MTF Growth Point Manager;
- (v) member of a panel brought together by the organisers of a Common Purpose Matrix leadership course to answer questions about Thetford's future challenges
- (vi) meeting with the Chief Executive of the Heritage Economic & Regeneration Trust (= HEART), with a view to its assisting the Thetford Heritage & Culture/Tourism Thematic Group (one of seven MTF thematic groups), £5k funding having been secured from the East of England Development Agency for a scoping study, aimed at assessing Thetford's potential to develop a 'heritage' promotional product; she had gone on to secure £10K funding from MTF to commission a full feasibility study, which would follow on from the scoping study;
- (vii) attended the meeting of Norfolk Archaeological Service's Advisory Committee, which had been preceded by a tour with commentary of part of the Priory ruins;
- (viii) invited to attend a meeting of the Barnham Action Group to provide input into the play area scheme they are planning with monies arising out of the Sweyn Close development;
- (ix) attended the MTF Learning Group meeting, which had addressed the high school 'closures' and academy consultation process;
- (x) attended Thetford Business Breakfast Forum meetings, making use of her regular agenda slot to update attendees - 60 businesses represented - on current activities;
- (xi) attended Women in Business lunch at the Deer's Leap: 45 attendees.

#### Other Meetings Attended

- MTF Board (as lead officer of the Heritage & Culture/Tourism Thematic Group);
- New Business Watch Scheme.

In conclusion, the Town Manager summarised the £62.2K funding she had been instrumental in securing over recent weeks from various sources:

- ✓ £12K: for Market Place re-re-(sic) surfacing - from Breckland Council
- ✓ £18.2K: Section 106 monies for Castle Park play area - from Norwich Road development (facilitated by Breckland Council)
- ✓ £5K: from HEART (above details referred)
- ✓ £6K: for August Bank Holiday Sports Day (above details referred)
- ✓ £21K: for Heritage feasibility study (above details referred), railway station posters and town leaflets - all from MTF Revenue Allocation

She would report at a future meeting on her bids for MTF Capital funds.

RESOLVED that the information received be noted and that future agendas make provision for 'forthcoming events for officers' as well as reports on events etc attended.

#### 531/09 ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10

The Town Clerk had included a brief paper, dated 26<sup>th</sup> March 2010, in the agenda documents, the main purpose of which was to give Committee

Chairmen an opportunity to contribute to the Annual Report, which would be a 'fuller' document than the 2008/9 one.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk's paper be noted.

532/09 MEETINGS CALENDAR 2010/11

The Town Clerk had included a draft document in the agenda papers, drawing members' attention to there being several committees without set dates.

RESOLVED that the document be noted and Committee Chairmen encouraged to propose further dates.

533/09 PREPARATIONS FOR MAYOR-MAKING 2010/11 AND ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

The Town Clerk and Town Manager were not intending to go through the order of proceedings ahead of the April Council meeting, when any ceremonial matters of points of protocol could be raised.

It would be, in essence, a case of 'business as usual'.

RESOLVED that the situation be noted.

534/09 CIVIC LINKS MATTERS

(a) Invitation from Skawina

Copies of a letter from the Mayor of Skawina, dated 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2010, had been included in the agenda papers. This set out the programme of events taking place during the period 22<sup>nd</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> June 2010, when a Scout Jamboree was being organised to mark One Hundred Years of Polish Scouting. Included in the festivities would be the unveiling of a partner town sign post.

As far as civic involvement was concerned, Thetford Town Council was being asked to send representatives, who would be 'hosted' from 24<sup>th</sup> June for a three-night stay.

RESOLVED that note be taken of Councillor Mrs P P Quadling's wish, as Mayor-Elect, to attend the above event in June 2010. The intention would be for Councillor D G Mortimer to accompany her as Escort. The Town Clerk would present to the April 2010 Council meeting a summary of costs likely to be incurred.

(b) Letter from the Chairman of the Twinning Association

Copies of a letter received from Mrs Bullock, dated 1<sup>st</sup> March 2010, had been included in the agenda papers.

This raised three matters:

### Tree Planting in Memory of Barrie Nutt

RESOLVED that the request for a possible site in King's House Gardens be referred to the Staniforth Trust.

### Storage of Twinning-Related Portable Items

RESOLVED that, as a first step, the Town Clerk discuss with Twinning Association representatives the potential volume of items being referred to and in need of storage away from Association members' homes.

### Marking 50 Years of Thetford's Civic Links in 2012

RESOLVED that any consideration of how to mark 2012 be deferred until the autumn.

### (c) Proposed Link with Inagua

Copies of two 10<sup>th</sup> March 2010 e-mails had been included in the agenda papers. The later one had been sent to the Town Manager by Norfolk Museums Service's Archive Support Services Manager, who, earlier that day, had been in receipt of information sent by a former employee of the Bahamas Tourist Office). In short: the prospect of Thetford's twinning with Inagua, the southernmost district of the Bahamas, was being floated.

In discussion, members were not persuaded that this was a realistic step.

RESOLVED that an attempt be made to make the authorities in Inagua aware of Thetford Town Council's deep appreciation of Mayor Minns' cultural heritage, on the clear understanding that what was being contemplated was potentially no more than a simple 'friendship' link, along the lines initially established with Skawina.

### 535/09 LETTER FROM THETFORD DOLPHINS

A copy of a letter, dated 15<sup>th</sup> March 2010, received from Thetford Dolphins' Club Secretary and headed "Charles Burrell High School re-build", had been included in the agenda papers.

Members expressed concern at the prospect of the Academy facilities not including a new pool. The Town Clerk had commented in his report under item 530/09 above to a remark passed by a member of the Academy project team at the MTF Board meeting in reference to the pool issue. It appeared thought would be given to, quote, "how to sustain in the new-build arrangement". This did not quite tally with what the Dolphins' Secretary recorded in his letter as being said at a recent consultation evening, namely: "it is unlikely that a new pool will be built".

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk send a letter to the Director of Children's Services at Norfolk County Council (to be copied to the relevant Cabinet Member), expressing the Town Council's alarm at

hearing that there might be no provision for a new swimming pool in site plans for the Thetford Academy venture and seeking confirmation as to whether this could indeed be a possible outcome.

#### 536/09 DRUG USE IN PUBLIC TOILETS

The Town Clerk reported on recent incidents at both the Cage Lane and Bus Station (aka Bridge Street) public toilets, relaying information provided by the Works Supervisor.

Prompted by the discovery on more than one occasion of 'drug paraphernalia' in the disabled toilets at both locations, the latter had had a meeting with representatives from the local police and the Matthew Project (a charity dealing with substance misuse issues, with a base in Tanner Street) to consider actions that might be taken.

A key concern apparently being expressed to the Matthew Project by those described as their 'service users' was their fear of being observed on CCTV when using the designated needle bins, which were situated to the side of the respective toilet blocks. The Works Supervisor had informed the Matthew Project that neither bin was in view of the cameras.

He wanted, through the Project, to arrange some 'safe handling' training for Council staff.

Stickers had been posted at Cage Lane, alerting members of the public to the need to inform the Council in the event of encountering insanitary facilities or, more to the point, any dangerous items.

The toilet cleaner was now linked to the Business Watch radio scheme. As far as CCTV protection was concerned, he had been instructed to contact the CCTV operator prior to entering either facility.

Another possible control measure being looked at was the introduction of 'blue lighting', which had proved effective in Norwich, it seemed.

RESOLVED that the actions taken be noted. As regards a letter appearing in that week's issue of the *Thetford and Brandon Times*, complaining about the insanitary state of the Bus Station toilets, the Town Clerk was instructed to respond to the Letters Page Editor without delay.

#### 537/09 FINANCIAL MATTERS

Recommendations were received from the Finance & General Purposes Committee, resulting in the following:

- i) 2009/10 Financial Report for 11 months ended 28<sup>th</sup> February 2010  
(Note: the agenda mistakenly referred to 2010/11.)

RESOLVED that the above Report - to be annexed to the minutes of the Committee's meeting held earlier that evening - be received.

ii) Any other recommendations

Those relating to Guildhall Committee matters had been reported by Councillor R F W Brame under minute 525/09c above.

The Committee's final Recommendation resulted from its further consideration of a Five-Year Strategic Plan and would be set out in its minute 521/09.

RESOLVED that the Council support the Committee's wish to see the Council 'maximise the return' on its property assets, accepting that it did not necessarily need to confine itself to its existing property portfolio and that what could not be ruled out was the generation of additional sources of income through future acquisition(s).

538/09 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.

539/09 MINUTES

(a) Council Meeting: 24<sup>th</sup> February 2010 – items addressed following the exclusion of press and public

RESOLVED that the minutes of these items be confirmed as a true record and signed/initialled by the Mayor as Chairman. Minutes 451/09 to 453/09 inclusive referred.

(b) Special Council: 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2010

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2010, subject to Councillor S N H Wright's name being added to the list of attendees, be confirmed as a true record and signed/initialled by the Mayor as Chairman. Minutes 479/09 to 484/09 inclusive referred.

(c) Special Council: 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010 be confirmed as a true record and signed/initialled by the Mayor as Chairman. Minutes 507/09 to 511/09 inclusive referred.

540/09 COMMITTEE REPORTS

RESOLVED that the following reports be received and adopted:

(a) Personnel Committee: 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2010

Minutes 429/09 to 432/09 inclusive referred.

(b) Finance & General Purposes Committee: 24<sup>th</sup> February 2010

Minutes 433/09 to 439/09 inclusive referred, including the Recommendations at minutes 437/09 and 438/09.

(c) Personnel Committee: 1<sup>st</sup> March 2010

Minutes 454/09 to 458/09 inclusive referred, including the Recommendation at minute 458/09.

(d) Personnel Committee: 10<sup>th</sup> March 2010

Minutes 485/09 to 488/09 referred, including the Recommendation at minute 488/09.

Chairman