

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THETFORD TOWN COUNCIL,
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KING'S HOUSE, THETFORD,
ON WEDNESDAY, 29TH APRIL 2010,
STARTING AT 7 P.M. WITH THE OPEN FORUM

Present:

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs P A Spencer, Chairman

Councillors:

G P Balaam
R F W Brame
M P Brindle
J A Harding
T J Jermy
R G Kybird

D G Mortimer
A Paines
Mrs P P Quadling
B J Skull
S N H Wright

Open Forum

No matters raised.

567/09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor S N H Wright declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 578/09(ii) in his capacity as Chairman of the Friends of the Thetford Dad's Army Museum. He remained in the Chamber throughout, having been prepared - under the provisions of Clause 12(2) of the Code of Conduct - to make a representation and/or respond to questions on the proposal. In the event, what resulted at the meeting was immediate acceptance by the Council, with no discussion, of a detailed Recommendation from the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

568/09 MINUTES

Council Meeting held on 31st March 2010

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 31st March 2010, excepting those items dealt with following the exclusion of press and public (addressed under item 580/09 below), be confirmed as a true record and signed/initialled by the Mayor as Chairman. Minutes 522/09 to 538/09 inclusive referred.

569/09 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors Mrs M P Chapman-Allen, S H Chapman-Allen (work-related absence), T J Lamb and M G Spencer (work-related absence).

570/09 COMMITTEE REPORTS

RESOLVED that the following reports be duly received and adopted:

(a) Planning Committee: 14th April 2010

Minutes 541/09 to 548/09 inclusive referred.

(b) Amenities Committee: 21st April 2010

Minutes 549/09 to 559/09 referred.

571/09 MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs P A Spencer, in the final such Report of her Mayoral Year, referred members to the lists of Events Attended and Forthcoming Events, included in the corrected agenda papers (a replacement document having been sent out under the latter heading).

Events attended since the last meeting

Note: The Mayor was on holiday from 4th - 12th April.

April

- 16th Mayor's Ball in Carnegie Room
- 22nd Princes Trust Team 38 Presentations in Guildhall
- 23rd St George's Day Concert
- 24th Mayor of Diss's Charity Ball (Councillor Jane Trippett –Jones)

Event attended by the Deputy Mayor Councillor John Harding

3rd April Opening of Burrell Steam Museum and Starting Off Miniature Rally

572/09 TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES

Barnham Cross Steering Group

Councillor T J Jermy updated members on progress made with various schemes to improve the housing stock.

573/09 COUNTY COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

There was nothing reported.

574/09 RECENT EVENTS AND MEETINGS OF OTHER BODIES ATTENDED BY THE TOWN CLERK AND/OR TOWN MANAGER

The Town Clerk reported on three events he had attended:

1. 20th April: Barnham Cross Common Management Committee

At this meeting, also attended by Councillors G P Balaam and Mrs M P Chapman-Allen, consideration had been given to improving the perimeter security of the SSSI in light of the ongoing traveller incursion. Whilst it had previously been assumed that reinforcing the existing bunding/ditching through widening/deepening was the only recourse, there were precedents elsewhere in the country – including in Norfolk – of Secretary of State's approval being obtained to fence certain sensitive areas of common land. The Town Clerk was making preliminary enquiries of the relevant central government department, although a response would be delayed owing to the imminent General Election.

2. 21st April: Society of Local Clerks Course on *Granting, Exercising & Transferring the Exclusive Rights of Burial.*

Four Town Council officers had attended this event and not only because it was held in Thetford's Large Court. Owing to the acknowledged need to introduce some improved procedures, the Town Clerk had seen merit in the entire King's House office complement being made aware of what was required, given that any one of them might have to deal with some of the scenarios and situations covered by the course tutor, a representative from The Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management.

Any significant changes of procedure warranting Council approval would first be referred to the Cemetery Committee.

3. 29th April: Moving Thetford Forward Board Meeting

As the Town Council's voting Board Member, Councillor R G Kybird, had been unable to attend, the Town Clerk was reporting on that day's Meeting, also attended by the Town Manager.

There had been a very positive report on progress made with studies on improving the housing stock on residential estates. The Town Clerk reported on various examples cited across the town.

On the wider point of play provision on existing estates, it had been observed by the Peddars Way Board representative that this would have to be funded by, quote, "value generated from Thetford North", unquote. It was not quite clear to the Town Clerk whether this meant there was a commitment to replacing in due course existing equipped play areas by that means.

Now that the residential scheme off Canterbury Way on land adjacent to the railway station had been approved (against the wishes of the Town Council, which had wanted the land to be given over to a rail station car park extension), the aim was to have that ready to occupy by May 2011.

Breckland Council was agreeing a contract with a hostel management provider for the future management of John Room House, with the emphasis to be on meeting the varying needs of single homeless people.

In response to the critical views expressed by the Thetford Society on a range of issues and given coverage in local print media, it had been agreed to have MTF Board and officer representatives meet with Thetford Society representatives on 12th May 2010. When asked by the Board Chairman for local Board representation, the Town Clerk had proposed Councillor Kybird. This was agreed by the Board, with Mr Jo Pearson named as 'alternate', if it transpired that Councillor Kybird was unavailable.

Councillor Mrs Chapman-Allen, in attendance at the Board Meeting, had suggested that a senior Breckland officer attend the Town Council meeting on 26th May 2010 to brief town councillors, but the Town Clerk had wondered whether that would be necessary, given that there were two public events scheduled for earlier in May, namely, the Neighbourhood Forum on 17th May and the Adademy/Forum meeting on 24th May, which most - if perhaps not all - town councillors would be attending.

A Progress Report on the Bus Interchange Project had been included in the Board papers and would be one of the agenda items at the following week's meeting of the Town Council's Planning Committee. The Town Clerk mentioned one or two key points.

As far as the Skatepark Project was concerned, a group of young skateboarders had been expected to attend a meeting with project officers the previous day but had pulled out at the eleventh hour. Consequently, constructive feedback from 'practitioners' was awaited still.

The initial Archaeological Report on the Anchor/Forum site would be received by mid-May, but it had already been accepted that further site investigation would be required following the demolition phase. As far as land assembly negotiations were concerned, progress had been somewhat halting but completion was now said to be achievable by the end of June 2010.

Concluding his report, the Town Clerk handed over to the Town Manager, who provided a detailed update on her recent activities, including some information and figures already covered in the minutes of the last meeting under item 530/09. What was new was, in particular, an update on the two capital projects she had been working on, namely:

- i) Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme 2 (= 'HERS 2' for short): Enhancements of the built environment, shop fronts and heritage buildings
- ii) Enhancements to the 'Square' outside Boots

Both had been approved by the Moving Thetford Forward Board, which had agreed to commit £300k to the former and £500k to the latter.

Apart from her regular duties, which included liaison with actual and potential contractors, the Town Manager covered various meetings and events she had organised and/or attended, including:

- Discussion with an interior designer about the feasibility of 'curtaining' the Guildhall windows
- Briefing session with the consultant working on behalf of central government on the Academy/Forum Project

- Moving Thetford Forward Project Delivery Group, Dereham
- Launch of Benjamin Foundation 'Meet Up' Cafe
- Presentation on the Castle Park play area in Dereham (part of Breckland Council's 'Celebration of Play')
- Manufacturing Excellence Club Meeting
- Quarterly Meeting of Association of Town Managers, Bury St Edmunds.

In conclusion, she reported that the opportunity would be taken, when securing the Anchor and Bus Interchange sites by means of perimeter boarding to treat these as hoardings, on which not only progress reports on how Thetford was moving forward could be presented, but also artwork displayed.

The Mayor thanked the Town Clerk and Town Manager for their informative reports.

575/09 MEETINGS CALENDAR 2010/11

RESOLVED that the revised schedule be included in the documents for adoption at Mayor-Making on 12th May 2010. The key change was that there would be a week's interval between meetings of the Finance & General Purposes Committee and the regular monthly meetings of the full Council.

576/09 PREPARATIONS FOR MAYOR-MAKING 2010/11 AND ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

The Town Clerk asked members to signal any changes to, in particular, Committee Membership in 2010/11, whilst accepting that this did not necessarily have to be agreed before 12th May. There were one or two changes reported and these would be reflected in the papers going out the next week.

The Town Manager would be liaising with Thetford Grammar School over the choice of musical interludes to 'punctuate' the ceremonial sequence of events.

577/09 CIVIC REPRESENTATION TO SKAWINA

RESOLVED that Councillor D G Mortimer represent the Council at the June 2010 festivities, with travel costs and any authorised incidental expenditure to be covered by the International Civic Links budget.

578/09 FINANCIAL MATTERS

Recommendations from the Finance & General Purposes Committee in respect of the following six matters (resulting from that Committee's meeting held earlier that evening under agenda items 564/09 and 565/09) were assented to, with no dissenting voices:

i) 2009/10 Year-End Report

RESOLVED that the Report to be annexed under Committee minute 564/09 be received and adopted.

ii) Dad's Army Museum Lease Proposal

RESOLVED that the lease arrangement under terms to be set out under Committee minute 565/09(a) be approved.

iii) Thetford Arts Centre: Proposed Use of Small Court in the Guildhall

RESOLVED that the lease arrangement under terms to be set out under Committee minute 565/09(b) be approved.

iv) Guildhall Complex: Conditions of Hire and Application Form

RESOLVED that the documentation to be annexed under Committee minute 565/09(c) be approved.

v) Memorial Bench Policy

RESOLVED that the documentation to be annexed under Committee minute 565/09(d) be approved.

vi) Applying for Donations

RESOLVED that the documentation to be annexed under Committee minute 565/09(e) be approved.

579/09 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.

580/09 MINUTES

Council Meeting: 31st March 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 539/09 to 540/09 inclusive referred.

581/09 COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance & General Purposes Committee: 31st March 2010

RESOLVED that the report of this meeting be received and adopted. Minutes 512/09 to 521/09 inclusive referred, including the Recommendations at minutes 516/09 and 521/09.

Additional Item (not included on published agenda)

582/09 RED LION UPDATE

The Town Clerk reported on the meeting with the Council's tenant that had taken place the previous day, a meeting attended by several councillors and the Council's solicitor. Further solicitor's advice was now awaited.

RESOLVED that the situation be noted.

Chairman