

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THETFORD TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KING'S HOUSE, THETFORD, ON TUESDAY
19th APRIL 2016, STARTING AT 7.00 P.M. WITH THE OPEN FORUM

Present:

The Mayor Councillor R G Kybird

Councillors:

M P Brindle
D M Crawford
Mrs J Hollis
J C Moorman
Ms F Robinson

Mrs B J Canham
C Harvey
T J Jermy
J Newton
M Taylor

Officers present:

Maurice Howard
Emma Kelly
Chris Crimmen

Town Clerk
Deputy Town Clerk
Committee Secretary

Also in attendance for agenda number 1120/15

David Robertson Norfolk Historical Environmental Service

Neil Featherstone Thetford Town Council Land Management Agent

Minutes

- 1118/15 DECLARATIONS OF ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS
None.
- 1119/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs S J Armes, R F W Brame, C R P Burnett and S N H Wright.
- 1120/15 CASTLE HILL AND MOTTE
The Chairman welcomed David Robertson (Norfolk Historical Environmental Service) to present on the HLS requirement and subsequent proposals for Castle Hill. Neil Featherstone (Thetford Town Council Land Management Agent) was also in attendance to answer questions. The meeting was closed for the presentation.
David Robertson stated that Castle Hill is unique in Norfolk and is the 2nd highest in the country. As such, it is of National significance and is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. It has been monitored regularly by the Norfolk Monuments Management Project of which he is part and he was pleased to report that he had seen dramatic improvements since 2007. As a result the Castle had been taken off the Heritage at Risk register. He briefed how the erosion scars had worsened and had photos from 2002/2007/2010/2015. As a result of the potential risk to the public in climbing of the hill and the need to ameliorate the damage being caused it had been felt that the only solution would be to provide steps. Working with National England, the Town Clerk and other interested parties instigated a tender for the delivery of metal steps. As a result, in order to secure funding to assist the process, the Town Council Land Management Agent had been tasked with getting this scheme entered into the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme once accepted by David Robertson. Following the deadline of the tender it became apparent that the specification would need to be amended so that the involvement from two separated companies could be

facilitated. Mr Robertson produced an initial design provided by one of these companies as an indication of the likely incursion onto the site.

He reported that Historic England “have already accepted the idea of the steps in principle. It will be a major visual change, it will attract a fair degree of interest and it will also be highly visible. The balance here is that the visual impact would need to be accepted in return for the increased use of the site and the visitor gain, plus the reduction in the erosion. This would also solve one of the long running access issues”.

Scheduled Monument Consent would be needed before applying for planning permission. He summarised his presentation on Thetford Castle: Importance and opportunities

- The Castle is nationally important.
- It is a designated heritage asset by Historic England.
- By Natural England.
- It is a Norfolk Monuments Management Project.
- Well managed by Thetford Town Council at present.
- Steps on motte are essential to preserve the castle.
- HLS Funding secured to assist with costs.
- This is a one-off opportunity as the funding is time limited.

The Chairman opened the meeting to questions. Committee members expressed a range of views for and against the scheme. Questions were answered by David Robertson, Neil Featherstone and the Town Clerk:

- Were there any options to repair the scar?
- Why was metal chosen over wood?
- Could stone be used for the steps?
- Has there been a public consultation?

It was decided that once tenders have been received and more detail is available, then, as part of the required Planning Application public consultation would be instituted. In addition to this a public consultation would be arranged in one of the Town Council venues. Councillor R Kybird proposed and Councillor M Brindle seconded that Thetford Town Council continue the tendering process allowing the archaeology aspect of the tender to be treated as a specialist provider and be commissioned directly therefore allowing submission of the tenders for the stairs to be made on a competitive basis with at least two tenders being received. When a planning application is made a public consultation will be arranged.

RESOLVED: That Thetford Town Council continue the tendering process allowing the archaeology aspect of the tender to be treated as a specialist provider and be commissioned directly therefore allowing submission of the tenders for the stairs to be made on a competitive basis with at least two tenders being received. When a planning application is made a public consultation will be arranged.

The Chairman asked Councillors if they agree to take the item 1121/15 below the line due to the confidential nature of the item. This was agreed by Council.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was resolved 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.

1121/15

LAND MANAGEMENT EXPENDITURE

This item was below the line due to the contractual nature of the discussion.

The Town Clerk reported that the initial contract for the Land Management Agent had not included provision for work required for the entry of Castle Park into the HLS Scheme. As a result the Town Clerk presented the number of hours spent on this over and above the agreed contract. Invoices received in excess of £500 without a purchase order number and over and above the Town Clerks authority for emergency expenditure will in future not be considered. In addition the number of hours that would be required to see the tender and subsequent work through to completion. The total sum amounted to £2,462.70.

RESOLVED: To agree additional payment for work already completed and future work to the Councils Land Management Agent for work over and above the original contract. The amount would be paid for from the ALP budget or failing that money being available from General Reserves.

1122/15

ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

1123/15

PRESS RELEASES

None

Chairman.