

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THETFORD TOWN COUNCIL,
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KING'S HOUSE, THETFORD, ON
WEDNESDAY, 28TH JUNE 2011,
STARTING AT 7 P.M. WITH THE OPEN FORUM

Present:

The Mayor, Councillor D G Mortimer, Chairman

Councillors:

Mrs S J Armes	R G Kybird
Mrs B J Canham	T J Lamb
C Clark	B J Skull
D M Crawford	M G Spencer
Miss C A Fulford	Mrs P A Spencer
J A Harding	D W R Sully
T J Jermy	S N H Wright

Open Forum

Mr Stuart Wilson presented a demand from himself and nine other electors for a parish poll on the moving of the bus station. His attention was drawn to item 67/11(c) on that evening's agenda and it was agreed that further consideration might be given then to his demand.

Mrs Margaret Rutter complained about the failure of a certain market stallholder to display a hygiene certificate when trading. The Town Manager agreed to look into this.

AGENDA

Note from Town Clerk: The first six items below were listed as items 59/11 to 64/11 inclusive in the published agenda. Owing to duplication of numbering, these have been re-numbered 64/11A to 64/11F inclusive, with this decision taken by the Council at its meeting on 27th September 2011.

64/11A DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Mayor, Councillor D G Mortimer, declared a personal interest in item 67/11(b) below by virtue of being acquainted with the owner of Spring House.

The following declared precautionary, personal interests in item 67/11(c) below as members of the Thetford Society: The Mayor, Councillor D G Mortimer, and Councillors Mrs S J Armes, Miss C A Fulford, R G Kybird*, M G Spencer, B J Skull and S N H Wright.

Councillor C Clark declared a precautionary personal interest in item 67/11(c) as a member of Breckland Council's Development Control Committee.

Councillor R G Kybird declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 69/11(d) as a member of the Thetford Society, commenting that the matter under consideration had a material financial effect on the Society.

**When declaring said interest, Councillor Kybird commented that the Society, without reference to the full membership, had launched a campaign against relocation of the bus station. He had had no part in that decision and had not signed the resultant petition.*

64/11B MINUTES

Council Meeting held on 25th May 2011

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council Meeting, held on 25th May 2011, excepting those items dealt with following the exclusion of press and public [addressed under item 71/11 below], be confirmed as a true record and signed/initialled by the Mayor as Chairman. Minutes 12/11 to 19/11 inclusive referred.

Notwithstanding there being no 'matters arising from the minutes' item on the agenda, the Mayor as Chairman permitted the officers to provide one or two updates, including the following:

Minute 16/11 Update: Moving Thetford Forward Board: Level of Town Council Representation

The Town Clerk reported having received a response letter, dated 16th June 2011, from the Deputy Chief Executive of Breckland Council, Norfolk and South Holland District Council, Lincolnshire. He read out the following extract:

"Thank you for your letter to me dated 31st May 2011 regarding your Council's expression of interest in terms of having a greater level of Member interest on the Board.

At the Board meeting held on 20th May 2011, the Chairman requested that the Officer Working Group be tasked with a review of the current governance structure, and report back to the Board with options on the future strategic management and operation of Moving Thetford Forward.

The Officer Working Group is meeting on 30th June 2011, and structures will be part of the agenda for consideration and review. I will therefore table your letter to inform the Group of the Town Council's expression of interest."

Minute 17/11 Update: Reinstatement of Civic Links Committee

Responding to a question put by Councillor Mrs S J Armes, the Town Clerk responded that he had not himself made any direct approaches to Thetford Twinning Association to date regarding the Committee's reinstatement. That said, he was aware of the Association Chairman's wish to have exploratory discussions.

64/11C APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received on behalf of the Deputy-Mayor, Councillor Mrs P P Quadling.

64/11D COMMITTEE MATTERS

A. Committee Membership 2011/12

Rather than issue a revised document, the Town Clerk would add a note to the minute book under item 17/11(b), making reference to the following resolved matters:

Resolution 1

RESOLVED that Councillor D W R Sully's decision to join the Cemetery Committee, Finance Committee and Guildhall & Markets Committee be noted.

Resolution 2

RESOLVED that Councillor M G Spencer's decision to join the Finance Committee be noted.

B. Committee Reports

RESOLVED that the reports of the following meetings be received and adopted:

- (a) Guildhall & Markets Committee: 14th June 2011
Minutes 24/11 to 29/11 inclusive referred.
- (b) Planning Committee: 15th June 2011
Minutes 36/11 to 50/11 inclusive referred.
- (c) Finance Committee: 21st June 2011
Minutes 51/11 to 58/11 inclusive referred, including Recommendations under minutes 55/11, 56/11 and 58/11.
- (d) Guildhall & Markets Committee: 22nd June 2011
Minutes 59/11 to 63/11 referred, including one five-part Recommendation under minute 61/11 and four Recommendations (one single, two eight-part and one two-part) under minute 63/11.

Referring to part 3 of the 61/11 Recommendation, the Council recognised the need to identify which charities and community groups might be approached regarding market stall use.

Referring to the first 63/11 Recommendation, the Council acknowledged the need to discuss with the Heritage Lottery Fund the potential inclusion of the Guildhall (not the Carnegie Room, which did not meet HLF criteria) in a major refurbishment project, encompassing more than one building in the town.

Minor typo

Under part 3 of the final 63/11 Recommendation, the fourth word would be corrected to 'agreed' in the minute book.

The Mayor, Councillor D G Mortimer, referred members to the lists of Events Attended and Forthcoming Events, included in the agenda papers.

Events attended since the last meeting

June

5	Band Concert King's House Gardens
9	Thetford Academy New Build Briefing/Consultation
11	Thetford Garden & Allotment Club Summer Show Prize Giving
	Royal British Legion 90 th Anniversary Celebrations
15	President's Sporting Club & Essex Disabled Sports Experience Day
19	Mayor's Civic Service
20	Meeting with Neil Stott, Chief Executive of Keystone
	Thetford Grammar School viewing students A Level & GCSE work
24	RAF Mildenhall Pre-Reception & Change of Command Ceremony
	Ancient House Museum World War Two Exhibition
	Civic Reception
26	Thetford Open Gardens
27	Thetford Grammar School Governors Meeting

Events Attended By The Deputy Mayor Councillor Mrs Pauline Quadling

19	The Desert Rats Association Wreath Laying Ceremony
27	Regalia talk to 3 rd Thetford Cub Scouts

64/11F TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES

Thetford Music Project

Councillor Miss C A Fulford reported that the End-of-Year Concert was taking place on 14th July.

65/11 REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

County Councillor Mrs M P Chapman-Allen reported on the following:

Schools

Norwich Road School Planning Application

This was for modular accommodation and associated works, but the fencing referred to was not the fence to the front of the premises that had been the subject of concerned, local comment some months ago.

Disappointing Ofsted Reports

Queensway Community Junior School had been placed on special measures, whilst Admirals Junior School had been issued with a Notice to Improve.

Thetford Academy

The process to appoint the new Principal was underway and the Academy was very keen to promote itself within the community. The feasibility study for the new building was progressing well and the 9th June 2011 briefing session at the North Campus - by invitation to a cross-section of the community - had been very well attended and received.

A Dean of Students was due to start in two weeks, at a time when overall attendance was showing huge signs of improvement. There had been a very successful Year Eleven Prom Night the previous Friday. On Thursday of the following week, there would be a prize-giving ceremony for students.

There was confirmation now that Thetford Academy would have a share of windfall funding from Norfolk County Council; the Academy's share would be £113k and help enhance local service provision and learning support.

Proposed Biomass Power Station (Mundford Road)

Norfolk County Council had requested additional detailed information from the applicants, but had yet to receive a response. If no information were forthcoming soon, the application might well be refused.

Green Britain Bike Week

The Leader of Norfolk County Council had issued a press release the previous week, giving his backing to Green Bike Week (18th to 26th June 2011). As a very keen cyclist himself, he was campaigning to maximise the number of roadworthy bicycles as part of "Britain's Biggest Bike Fix". Councillor Chapman-Allen had forwarded to him details of Keystone Development Trust's Green Ventures bike shop; he had been very interested to learn of this great example of good local practice.

Big Conversation

The Big Conversation had come under scrutiny that day at the Cabinet Scrutiny meeting with an examination of its effectiveness and assessment of lessons to be learned.

Fire & Rescue

Following the introduction of two new Heavy Rescue Pumps at King's Lynn and Norwich, two additional HRP's would be joining the fleet very soon, with one to be based at Thetford Fire Station. This was excellent news, given the large number of road traffic accidents attended. A fully kitted-out vehicle cost about £300k and would help save lives.

Armed Forces Day

Councillor Chapman-Allen expressed her pride at living in this area of the country, where the public had shown such support for the parades in King's Lynn (RAF Marham) and Bury St Edmunds (RAF Honington).

66/11 REPORTS FROM THE TOWN CLERK AND TOWN MANAGER ON THEIR ATTENDANCE AT ANY EVENTS AND/OR EXTERNAL MEETINGS OF NOTE

The Town Clerk had nothing of note to report.

The Town Manager made reference to the following meetings:

- 31st May 2011: Mini-Roundabout off Market Place: to agree flower planting arrangements (with Norfolk County Council Highways and local sponsor).
- 15th June 2011: Update meeting with Healthy Living Town Coordinator.
- 15th June 2011: MTF Project Group Meeting for the town centre enhancement scheme.
- 21st June 2011: Raked Seating at Carnegie Room: appearance, accompanied by the Mayor, before Breckland Council's Match Funding Panel (this followed site visits in the preceding weeks by potential raked seating suppliers).

67/11 ITEMS REQUESTED BY COUNCILLORS

(a) Parish Boundaries

Councillor Mrs S J Armes was proposing that an urgent meeting be convened to seek agreement with Croxton Parish Council and Breckland Council regarding future boundaries to the North of Thetford.

In the discussion that ensued, the need to engage also with Brettenham & Kilverstone Parish Council was recognised.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk write to both parish councils, expressing Thetford Town Council's interest in convening a meeting of all three councils at the earliest opportunity.

(b) Unauthorised Work on Land Adjacent to Nuns Bridges

Councillor Mrs S J Armes was requesting that action be taken, following the unauthorised work in the immediate vicinity of Nuns Bridges, whereby the owner-occupier of Spring House would be required to have the area

returned to its previous condition; furthermore, that a legally binding agreement be arrived at regarding any rights of way over this piece of land.

In the discussion that ensued, the Town Clerk reminded members that Mr Stasiak was not on record as seeking to establish a formal right of way over the land.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Council's solicitor, notify Mr Stasiak formally of:

- (a) the Town Council's insistence on having him restore the land to its previous state without delay;
- (b) the Town Council's wish to formalise, by means of a document signed by both parties, Mr Stasiak's right to 'occasional' vehicular access.

(c) Views on Moving the Bus Station

Councillor C Clark was asking for a show of hands, whereby Town Councillors would indicate whether they supported the Bus Station being moved to Minstergate/St Nicholas Street.

The following recorded vote resulted:

For the move

Councillor R G Kybird
Councillor B J Skull

Against the move

Councillor Mrs S J Armes
Councillor C Clark
Councillor D M Crawford
Councillor Miss C A Fulford
Councillor J A Harding
Councillor T J Jermy
Councillor T J Lamb
Councillor D W R Sully
Councillor S N H Wright

Abstentions

The Mayor, Councillor D G Mortimer
Councillor Mrs B J Canham
Councillor M G Spencer
Councillor Mrs P A Spencer

It was at this point in the meeting that the poll proposal made by Mr Wilson in the Open Forum was re-addressed, with Mr Wilson passing the Town Clerk a note, indicating the Council's obligation to agree the wording of the poll question before the meeting ended. The Town Clerk was by now no means certain that correct procedure was being followed and wished to consult the relevant legislation. However, as no decision to adjourn proceedings was forthcoming, he recommended that the Council

consider there and then the wording of the question, in case it transpired that everything was, despite his misgivings, in order.

The question proposed by Mr Wilson was as follows:

Should the bus station move from the town centre Anchor site to the smaller site between Minstergate and St Nicholas Street?

Councillors thereupon agreed to vote on the acceptability of this wording, with 9 voting in favour.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk establish whether what had taken place amounted to a legitimate demand for a parish poll, binding on the Town Council.

(d) Melford Common Funfairs: Parking Controls

Councillor Miss C A Fulford was seeking the introduction of more effective parking controls owing to local residents being inconvenienced on a regular basis.

In the course of the discussion that developed, the Town Manager briefed members on the present arrangements with the fairground operator.

RESOLVED that the Town Manager look into improved coning and signing arrangements through liaison with the local police.

(e) Budget Allocation: 2011/12

Councillor T J Jermy was asking the Council to agree to a sum of £40k being allocated to support activities, facilities and services for children and young people in Thetford. He had produced a paper, which had been sent to members in advance of the meeting. After some discussion, in the course of which various views were put forward, the following resolution was agreed:

RESOLVED that Councillor Jermy's proposal be given further consideration at the meeting of the Finance Committee, scheduled for 19th July 2011, with a Recommendation to Council to result from that meeting.

[Afternote: This meeting was subsequently rescheduled for 20th July 2011.]

68/11 ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11

The Town Clerk was not proposing to include any additional information to that covered in the 2009/10 Report.

RESOLVED that the scope of the 2010/11 Annual Report in terms of core content be in line with that established in the 2009/10 document.

69/11 GOVERNANCE AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

(a) Annual Return 2010/11

Section 1: Accounting Statements

In line with the Recommendation recorded in minute 56/11 from the Finance Committee, the Committee Chairman, Councillor D W R Sully, was recommending that the Council authorise the Mayor as Chairman and the Town Clerk as Responsible Financial Officer to sign Section 1 of the Report.

RESOLVED that the Mayor and Town Clerk be so authorised, a copy of the signed page being annexed hereto.

Section 2: Annual Governance Statement

The Town Clerk was proposing responses to the nine points covered in Section 2. It was agreed he should read each of the statements out, indicating his suggested response, thereby enabling the Council to give specific approval to each response. A copy of the resultant document, as submitted to the external auditor, is annexed hereto.

RESOLVED that the Mayor and Town Clerk be authorised to sign Section 2, with responses as agreed.

(b) Internal Audit Report 2010/11

The Council agreed to receive the Report on the understanding that the meeting with the Internal Auditor, referred to in Finance Committee minute 57/11, would be taking place. The Town Clerk reported that arrangements were in hand for a meeting on 13th July 2011.

RESOLVED that the Internal Audit Report 2010/11, as annexed hereto, be received.

(c) Review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

RESOLVED that the review be referred to the Finance Committee as a first step, with a possible subsequent referral to the General Purposes Committee not to be ruled out.

(d) Third Party Funding for Raked Seating Funding Bid

RESOLVED that the decision agreed at the last meeting as an off-agenda item (when the Council effectively committed itself to act as 'third-party funder' in the context of a WREN funding application), be ratified.

70/11 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 item 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.

71/11 MINUTES

Council Meeting: 25th May 2011 – items addressed following the exclusion of press and public

RESOLVED that minutes 20/11 to 23/11 inclusive, plus the section headed 'Other Matters Addressed, not Included in the Published Agenda' – dealing with two matters: raked seating for the Carnegie Room and St Peter's Church – be confirmed as true records and signed/initialled by the Mayor as Chairman.

72/11 COMMITTEE REPORT

Personnel Committee: 14th June 2011

RESOLVED that the report of the meeting of the Personnel Committee, held on 14th June 2011, be received. Minutes 30/11 to 35/11 inclusive received.

73/11 GUILDHALL BAR CONTRACT: PERFORMANCE REVIEW

The Town Clerk reported that he was satisfied that Mr Nembhard had fulfilled the requirements set out in his contract with the Town Council regarding donations to charitable and fund-raising bodies (details set out below*).

RESOLVED that the contract period with Unique Productions be extended up to and including 31st March 2013, with no further payment to the Council required.

*Total donations paid to date = £1,002

Payment Breakdown Summary

- £410: Six Leaping Hare events in period December 2010 to June 2011, with donations to meet premises costs associated with providing the Tourist Information Office.
- £372: Five Dad's Army Museum events in period December 2009 to August 2010, with donations paid into Dad's Army Statue Fund.
- £60: Two Mayoral events in 2010/11, with donations benefiting the Mayor's Charities.
- £50: One Mayoral event in 2009/10, with donation benefiting the Mayor's Charities.
- £35: Donation to Thetford Players arising from their January 2011 performances.
- £30: Leaping Hare event (February 2011), with donation benefiting Bowel Cancer Charity.
- £30: Beer Festival (May 2010), with donation benefiting the British Trust for Ornithology.
- £15: Royal British Legion Event (November 2010).

Chairman