

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THETFORD TOWN COUNCIL,
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KING'S HOUSE, THETFORD, ON
WEDNESDAY, 27TH SEPTEMBER 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
Miss C A Fulford	D W R Sully
J A Harding	S N H Wright
T J Jermy	

Open Forum

Mrs C Brindle asked about the lack of effective perimeter site security at the former Cottage Hospital site. Responding, the Town Manager confirmed that she had contact details for the new owners and would relay this concern.

Mr Stuart Wilson, referring to the recent decision taken by the Moving Thetford Forward Board to uphold its commitment to relocation of the bus station/interchange, notwithstanding the recent parish poll result, asked whether this decision could be an agenda item at the Town Council's October 2011 meeting. He was told that the Town Council's Planning Committee's opposition to Policy TH5 - and, specifically, the proposed Minstergate/St Nicholas Street location - in the *Proposed Submission Thetford Area Action Plan* was expected to be confirmed at the Planning Committee meeting the following week (5th October) and assured that further comment on the Board's decision would most likely be passed later in the meeting (as proved to be the case, with a decision taken under item 239/11(b) below to write to Councillor J W Nunn in his dual role of Leader of Breckland Council and MTF Board Chairman).

Mr Dave Southwell asked whether the Town Council had been notified of the closure of Thetford's Pupil Referral Unit, pointing out that no new provision would be in place by October. The Town Clerk pointed out that, as such matters were not in the remit of town and parish councils, it was perhaps understandable – whilst being unacceptable to some – that no official notification had been received. It was confirmed that there would be more said on this topic under item 249/11(a) below.

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238/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs S J Armes declared a personal interest in agenda item 242/11(d) as a member of Thetford Garden & Allotment Club.

Councillor Miss C A Fulford declared a personal interest in agenda item 253/11, given her connection with the organisation of the Cricket Club event.

Councillor R G Kybird restated, for the record, the interests stated in minutes 165/11 and 200/11 from the Planning Committee, relating to items dealt with at those meetings.

239/11 MINUTES

(a) Council Meeting held on 26th July 2011

Update requested: Replacement bin at Canons Walk *[minute 139/11(b)(ii) referred]*

Responding to Councillors Miss C A Fulford and T J Jermy, the Town Clerk confirmed that that he would find out when installation was programmed for.

Updates provided by members

1. Moving Thetford Forward Board minutes *[minute 141/11 referred]*
Councillor Miss C A Fulford remained dissatisfied on her fundamental point, namely, that no MTF minutes were to be found on the MTF website. The fact that some MTF Board minutes might be included in the agenda packs for Breckland Council's Cabinet meetings, for example, was not, in her view, a satisfactory state of affairs. The minutes needed to be readily accessible on the MTF site.
2. Post-Southern Cross Situation *[minute 142/11 referred]*
Councillor Mrs S J Armes was pleased to report, for the record, that Mencap had bought out Southern Cross.
3. Thetford Academy South Site: Future Use *[minute 144/11(b) referred]*
Councillor S N H Wright looked forward to liaising with the Town Clerk over the convening of a meeting, now that County Councillor Mrs Chapman-Allen had provided a useful contact name.

Follow-up decision taken

Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations *[minute 147/11 referred]*

RESOLVED that a working party be formed to consider how to mark 2012, with interested members asked to signal their interest to the Town Clerk.

Final Resolution

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 26th July 2011, excepting those items dealt with following the exclusion of press and public [addressed under item 257/11(a) below], but including an annex paper relating to minute 145/11 [= Parish Poll Update], be confirmed as a true record and signed/initialled by the Mayor as Chairman. Minutes 136/11 to 149/11 inclusive referred.

(b) Special Council Meeting, held on 17th August 2011

Note:

These minutes were tabled, having been omitted from the published agenda as a result of an oversight by the Town Clerk.

Minute 179/11: Parish Poll Result

Councillor T J Jermy took the opportunity to express dismay and great disappointment at what he had witnessed at the Moving Thetford Forward Board Meeting on 22nd September 2011, a meeting attended by several town councillors.

Councillor T J Lamb echoed these sentiments, going on to express in strong terms what he considered to be, amongst other things, the “unbelievable disregard” of local opinion and a manifest failure on the part of advisers/consultants to be impartial in their approach. Councillor D W R Sully very much wanted to associate himself with Councillor Lamb’s remarks, which he felt were both appropriate and telling. Councillor Miss C A Fulford too was in complete agreement, being most concerned that a so-called independent person, currently involved in the present scheme proposed for the Anchor site, had dismissed the two other schemes presented to the Board at the meeting. This indicated to her a whitewash.

There was strong majority support for the sending of a letter to Councillor J W Nunn in his joint capacity as Leader of Breckland Council and Chairman of the Moving Thetford Forward Board.

RESOLVED that Councillor Lamb confer with the Town Clerk on the preparation and dispatch of a strongly worded letter, drawing attention to some fundamental concerns.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on 17th August 2011, excepting those items dealt with following the exclusion of press and public [addressed under item 257/11(b) below], be confirmed as a true record and signed/initialled by the Mayor as Chairman. Minutes 176/11 to 180/11 inclusive referred.

240/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors D M Crawford, Mrs P P Quadling, M G Spencer and Mrs P A Spencer.

241/11 PRESENTATION BY NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL’S HIGHWAY ENGINEER

Mr Paul Groom was invited by the Mayor to deliver his presentation on Third Party service delegation, entitled “Maintaining the Street Scene and Public Rights of Way – Could your Council and Community Play a Bigger Part?”

A copy of a letter received from County Councillor Plant had been included in the agenda papers, drawing attention to possible sources of funding for (a) highway improvements and (b) vehicle activated signs. Although not referred to in his presentation, Mr Groom did go on to refer to this briefly in the course of the subsequent discussion.

His presentation started with a reference to the arrangements with thirty local councils that Norfolk County Council - specifically, through the Highways Group of its Department of Environment, Transport and Development - currently had to cut grass. This was something that the Town Council might have an interest in, although Mr Groom was keen to point to the successful arrangement currently with Serco in Thetford (being the grounds maintenance contractor appointed by Breckland Council). Before making further reference to grass cutting, he provided some information on organisational structure.

In terms of local area contact liaison, Mr Groom as Highway Engineer was answerable to the West Area Manager. With each Area split in three, Thetford was part of Area West 3. Reporting to Mr Groom as Highway Engineer were a Highway Technician and Highway Inspector, all supported by a Customer Service Centre.

Mr Groom referred specifically to the valuable role of Highway and Community Rangers, who were in a position to encourage greater community involvement through a flexible approach, more responsive to local priorities and reliant to a degree on local feedback. Visits to a given parish were quarterly, with a single point of contact established.

Amongst works carried out under this system were:

- Highway inspections and defect identification
- Scheme briefs, both for minor works and more costly solutions
- Identification/ordering/checking/approval/payment of routine work
- Audit and estate road inspections
- Winter service management (principally gritting)

Major carriageway resurfacing, surface dressing, grass cutting, gully emptying, weed spraying and white lining were currently 'bought in'.

The annual budget for highway maintenance in Norfolk was currently £16.9million.

Mr Groom then devoted some time to describing the sort of arrangement that Thetford Town Council might wish to give thought to. Referring once more to grass-cutting, he pointed out that the minimum standard that must be achieved or bettered was 5 cuts per season.

Other work that might be undertaken would have to meet the following two criteria:

- i) it must not involve having to open up the highway;
- ii) it must be work that a 'non-specialist' could carry out, for example:
 - Footway gritting
 - Graffiti removal
 - Grip cleaning (to help drainage)

- Hedge cutting (with landowner's consent)
- Sign cleaning and/or sign repairs on minor roads
- Unauthorised sign and fly-posting removal
- Weed spraying

A key factor in much of this was the insurance aspect. Mr Groom was pleased to report that the County Council could potentially extend its public liability cover to protect, for example, local council operatives engaged in footway gritting.

A key question was one that Mr Groom was only too aware of, namely: can local councils be paid for carrying out such tasks? The simple answer at the moment was 'not necessarily'. Activities eligible for payment were currently grass-cutting and - as a result of a decision taken very recently - sign cleaning.

What the County Council was trying to establish at this point were levels of interest throughout the county in taking on additional work, be it on a paid or voluntary basis. Any further decisions on service payment would be for the County Council's Cabinet to take in due course.

The Mayor, Councillor D G Mortimer, thanked Mr Groom for his detailed presentation, going on to observe that he had heard no reference to administration costs. This point was conceded by Mr Groom. However, Mr Groom did not necessarily agree with Councillor Harding, when the latter concluded that the Town Council would, of necessity, require more staff.

Turning briefly to the letter received from County Councillor Plant, Mr Groom confirmed that there were two potential 2012/13 funding pots which town and parish councils could bid for a share of, with each pot containing £100k. As noted earlier, one of these was aimed at delivering small 'highway improvements' (including improved crossing facilities), the other at the provision of speed-sensitive, vehicle-activated signs.

Two resolutions resulted from Mr Groom's presentation and the subsequent discussion:

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the Amenities Committee give thought to any opportunities that might be taken in the context of the imminent transfer of some open space and several play areas;
- (b) the Road Safety Committee be tasked with looking at where improved crossing facilities and/or vehicle-activated signs might bring significant community benefit.

242/11 COMMITTEE REPORTS

RESOLVED that, with the exception of (f) below, the reports of the following meetings be received and adopted, subject to any amendments/corrections to the unconfirmed minutes referred to below:

- (a) Planning Committee: 3rd August 2011

Minutes 165/11 to 175/11 inclusive referred.

- (b) Cemetery Committee: 24th August 2011
Minutes 182/11 to 188/11 inclusive referred.

185/11: Extension Development Project

In the course of a brief discussion, the Mayor wondered whether members might be agreeable to conferring executive powers/delegated authority upon the Cemetery Committee, given the urgency this Project now had.

Whilst other members could accept the need to prioritise this Project, they wanted there to be a clearer indication of overall cost before agreeing to the Mayor's proposition. The Cemetery Committee was asked to look at this at its next meeting, scheduled for 11th October 2011. Subject to what might be agreed at that meeting, the full Council would perhaps be in a position to reflect further on the Mayor's request at its next meeting on 25th October 2011.

- (c) Planning Committee: 7th September 2011
Minutes 200/11 to 207/11 inclusive referred.

- (d) Allotments Committee: 14th September 2011
Minutes 208/11 to 215/11 inclusive referred, including a Recommendation under minute 211/11.

Day/Date of Meeting

In the unconfirmed minutes, 'Tuesday 13th September' had been recorded. This would be corrected in the minute book version.

211/11: Matter Arising – Progress on Six Recommendations

The Town Clerk confirmed that a report was in preparation.

- (e) Guildhall & Markets Committee: 16th September 2011
Minutes 216/11 to 227/11 inclusive referred, including Recommendations under minutes 219/11, 220/11, 221/11, 222/11, 223/11, 224/11, 225/11, 226/11 and 227/11 referred.

Corrections made

It was noted that the minute book version would see 'Jeremy' changed to 'Jermy' and 'Trustees' changed to 'Councillors'. One or two minor typographical/presentational changes would also be made.

222/11: Sessional Caretaker Recruitment

It was agreed that the Guildhall & Markets Committee should liaise with the Personnel Committee over the drafting of a job description.

224/11: Carnegie Room – Architectural Brief

RESOLVED that, in the wording of the Recommendation, the phrase 'through a tendering process' be inserted after the word 'Architect'.

(f) Finance Committee: 20th September 2011

The Committee Chairman, Councillor D W R Sully, proposed that this report be dealt with under item 258/11(c) below following the exclusion of press and public. This was agreed to.

243/11 CORRECTION TO COMMITTEE MINUTE

RESOLVED to note that, in minute 122/11 from the Guildhall & Markets Committee meeting held on 19th July 2011, reference had been made in the minute book version to the minutes of the two meetings received by the Council on 28th June 2011 under minute 62/11. In the unconfirmed minutes accompanying the agenda, the meeting held on 14th June 2011 had been referred to, but not the meeting held on 22nd June 2011.

244/11 CIVIC LINKS COMMITTEE: ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

The decisions arrived at under this item were as follows:

RESOLVED that the following be the Committee members:

The Mayor (*ex officio* member)
Councillor Mrs S J Armes
Councillor Mrs B J Canham
Councillor Miss C A Fulford
Councillor T J Jermy
Councillor R G Kybird
Councillor Mrs P P Quadling
Councillor B J Skull

RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs P P Quadling be the Chairman of this Committee, with a meeting to take place soon with the Chairman of Thetford Twinning Association to consider future aims and aspirations.

Note: See the decision taken under item 249/11(b) below to bring into being a 'Marketing, Communications & Civic Links Committee', still under the chairmanship of Councillor Mrs Quadling.

245/11 MAYOR'S REMARKS AND REPORT

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

July

31 The Mayor of Attleborough's (Councillor Karen Pettitt)
Civic Service

August

9 Talk at the Ancient House Museum

18 Presentation for the Front House Gardens Winners

20 Colonel Christopher Kulas, RAF Mildenhall's Summer
BBQ

21 The Royal British Legion Dedication of new Standard &
Service

Band Concert

The Mayor of Watton's (Councillor Michael Wassell)
Civic Service

25 Meeting with Lady Kay Fisher & Elizabeth Truss MP to
discuss the bus station

September

3 Thetford Garden & Allotment Club Annual Show Prize
Giving

4 Thetford Players "Three in the Air" play at the Forgotten
Garden (part of the Thetford Festival)

5 Martial Arts Group photographs for food parcels being
sent out to the troops in Afghanistan

6 Talk at the Rotary Club

8 The High Sheriff of Norfolk (Georgina Holloway) 'At
Home' Event

9 RAF Honington Battle of Britain Cocktail Party

15 Funeral Service for Councillor Alf Harvey (Watton Town
Council)

Opening of Thetford Raj Restaurant

16 Opening of Pets at Home shop

Thetford Grammar School Speech Day

18 Thetford Battle of Britain Service & Reception

21 Coffee with The High Sheriff of Norfolk (Georgina

Holloway) before her 'Tour of Thetford'

22	Funeral Service for Bill Croxen
	Mayor of Downham Market 'Mayors at Home' Event
24	Opening of B&Q Shop
25	Band Concert

Events Attended By The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Mrs Pauline Quadling

3 September	Keystone Development Trust 'Dig This' Family Archaeology Day
21 September	Official opening of the Breathe Easy Group

246/11 TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES

Councillor Miss C A Fulford reported on the following:

(a) CCTV Group Meeting (25th August 2011)

Amongst the topics covered had been cycling in King Street and the installation of a special camera in a town central location. Regarding the former, it had emerged that it was not possible to enforce an outright ban on cycling owing to the continued 'highway' status of the central carriageway element. As regards the camera, it was improving the quality of life of one local resident, who had been contending with anti-social acts over a considerable period.

(b) STAG Meeting (8th September 2011)

There had been an update provided on the issue of 'civil parking enforcement'.

Councillor S N H Wright reported on the following:

(c) Thetford Tourism and Heritage Partnership

The recent Heritage Open Day events organised in Thetford had proved to be very successful. Although King's House had only been open for 2 hours, it had provided an additional attraction.

Councillor R G Kybird reported on the following:

(d) Moving Thetford Forward Board Meeting (22nd September 2011)

The key decisions taken by the Board had been:

- i. upholding the decision to locate the new Bus Interchange on the Minstergate/St Nicholas Street site;
- ii. restating the commitment to redevelop the Anchor site.

Given the dissatisfaction felt by a majority of members present over these decisions, Councillor Kybird's report prompted a discussion over another matter decided at the Board Meeting, namely, the status of the new body, on which Councillors T J Lamb and T J Jermy had been chosen to sit as the Town Council's representatives.

There had been a supposition that the MTF Board would itself be disbanded on 22nd September, with a new 'Overview and Scrutiny Board' set to assume a slightly different role. In fact, the MTF Board was now set to continue with its present membership, with a newly formed 'MTF Programme Delivery Panel' to become responsible for providing key scrutiny of all project delivery activities being undertaken on behalf of the MTF Delivery Partnership.

Picking up once more on comments passed under item 239/11 above, there was interest in having a say in the nomination of the new Panel's 'Third Sector/Community Representative'. After some discussion, in the course of which proponents of having both a 'Third Sector' and a 'Community' Representative had their say, it was:

RESOLVED that, as a result of the recorded vote detailed below, Thetford Town Council nominate Mr Stuart Wilson as an appropriate Third Sector/Community Representative to serve on the MTF Programme Delivery Panel.

Those voting for this:

Councillor C Clark
Councillor T J Jermy
Councillor T J Lamb
Councillor D W R Sully

Those abstaining:

The Mayor, Councillor D G Mortimer
Councillor Mrs S J Armes
Councillor Mrs B J Canham
Councillor Miss C A Fulford
Councillor J A Harding
Councillor R G Kybird
Councillor B J Skull
Councillor S N H Wright

247/11 REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

No reports were received.

248/11 REPORTS FROM THE TOWN CLERK AND TOWN MANAGER ON THEIR ATTENDANCE AT ANY EVENTS AND/OR EXTERNAL MEETINGS OF NOTE

Town Clerk

The Town Clerk had nothing of note to report.

Town Manager

Her report had been included in the agenda papers. This made reference to the following:

- Meeting with Forest Heath District Council's Strategic Development Officer to consider tourism partnership working in the Brecks
- Attendance at the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership Conference
- Attendance at the Manufacturing Excellence Club's quarterly meeting, held at Hethel Engineering Centre
- Feasibility meeting to consider CCTV coverage of the Castle Park Play Area
- Meetings with Heritage Lottery Fund (relating to St Peter's Church)

249/11 ITEMS REQUESTED BY COUNCILLORS

Councillor Miss C A Fulford had requested the following item:

- (a) Provision for Alternative Education in Thetford: Key Stage 3 and 4 Pupils (= 14-16 year-olds)

The particular concern brought up in the course of the discussion was a clearly perceived lack of support/provision for excluded students, particularly now that the Pupil Referral Unit (hereinafter 'PRU') in Elm Road had closed. In order to access alternative arrangements being put in place by Norfolk County Council, excluded students would have to travel quite long distances (King's Lynn being the most likely destination).

Councillors were unhappy with the lack of local provision and, in the course of the discussion, the Mayor adjourned the meeting to permit Mr D Southwell from Zone for Learning to comment.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk agree with Councillor Fulford the text of a letter of concern to be addressed to Children's Services, Norfolk County Council. This would indicate the Town Council's understanding that the PRU had not only offered an alternative education provision for pupils excluded from mainstream education but had also provided a wide-ranging support service within the schools themselves. In summary: the PRU had been not only a place of learning for the excluded students but also a support mechanism for the schools, the pupils and their families. A major concern for the Town Council was that the consequences stemming from closure might not be fully realised for some years.

The following questions would be posed in the letter:

1. What level of local consultation had taken place prior to the decision to close the PRU?
2. Who, locally, had been consulted to obtain a community viewpoint?

3. Why, when Thetford was earmarked for 5,000 new homes, had it borne the brunt of cuts?
4. Why, in the new provision, had Thetford and the surrounding area only featured as an 'add on' in the tendering process?
5. What would happen to students in the immediate area, should the 25 full-time-equivalent spaces allocated to the new provision ever be full?
6. What was happening to students currently Permanently Excluded in this area, given that the new provision that should have started in September 2011 was not going to be starting until after half-term at the earliest?
7. How would students be able to travel to King's Lynn, Norwich or Gorleston within the maximum 45-minute travel time specified in Norfolk County Council's tender document? It appeared that the new provider was either not intending or had no funds available to set anything up for these students in Thetford.

Councillor T J Jermy had requested the following three items:

(b) Establishment of Two New Committees

Councillor Jermy's initial proposition had been to create separate Committees dedicated to the following:

- (i) Marketing & Communication
- (ii) Regeneration & Economic Development

Marketing & Communication

After some discussion, it was:

RESOLVED that a new 'Marketing, Communication & Civic Links Committee' be created, with the membership to be that agreed under item 244/11 above for a reinstated Civic Links Committee. It was agreed that Councillor Mrs P P Quadling should chair this new Committee.

Regeneration & Economic Development

RESOLVED that the Amenities Committee extend its remit to encompass (without any name change) 'regeneration, tourism and economic development'.

(c) Reinstatement of the St Peter's Church Task & Finish Group

RESOLVED that the Group be reinstated with the following membership:

Councillor Mrs B J Canham
 Councillor Miss C A Fulford
 Councillor T J Jermy
 Councillor R G Kybird
 Councillor T J Lamb
 Councillor S N H Wright

(d) Town Centre Youth Club

Councillor Jermy had set out his thoughts in an agenda paper, headed: 'Creation of a weekly youth club at the Carnegie Room in Thetford'.

Whilst this item had been aimed initially at having the Town Council consider a funding commitment to the provision of a town centre venue in its name, Councillor Jermy's paper was a very detailed proposal for a weekly venture that quickly found favour with a clear majority of the members present.

RESOLVED that the Town Manager be tasked with inviting expressions of interest in line with the brief set out in Councillor Jermy's paper.

250/11 NEW ART GALLERY PROPOSAL

RESOLVED that this item be moved 'below the line' (see below).

251/11 FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF ST PETER'S CHURCH

Copies of a 'four options' report (with related attachments) from the Town Manager had been included in the agenda papers; her recommendation was Option 2. After some discussion, it was:

RESOLVED that Option Two be pursued. This was to go out to tender for an architect to draw up two sets of plans. The first set would be for 'feasible short-term interventions', enabling the Church to be used by the community sooner rather than later. 'Short term interventions' would include lighting, heating and a temporary covering over the existing floor.

The second set of plans would be aimed at long-term use. What was envisaged was a Church being put to use by the community whilst a bigger scheme was worked up, with a Heritage Lottery application in mind (proof of community use was a key funding criterion and there would also be a requirement to form a Friends of St Peter's Group).

It would be essential to engage an architect with experience of Heritage Lottery rules and regulations. It would also be necessary for the Town Council to identify an organisation, able and willing to oversee the day-to-day running of any operational activity both in the short as well as the long term.

252/11 CONSULTATION ON LIBRARY OPENING HOURS

Copies of a letter received from the Head of Norfolk Library and Information Service, dated 21st July 2011, had been included in the agenda papers.

RESOLVED that the contents of the letter be noted.

253/11 APPLICATION FOR CONCESSIONARY HIRE RATE: CARNEGIE ROOM

It was accepted that this item should have been headed 'Application for a Donation'.

RESOLVED that Thetford Cricket Club benefit from a £100 donation to assist with covering costs incurred in organising its 8th October 2011 fundraising event.

254/11 REQUEST FOR FUNDING SUPPORT: THETFORD YOUTH & COMMUNITY CHESS CLUB

Copies of a letter from the Club, dated 23rd August 2011, had been included in the agenda papers.

RESOLVED that, in line with the practice of recent years, £100 be paid to the Club to assist with covering the costs of organising its Annual Chess Tournament, in which young players from Spijkenisse had, as ever over recent years, taken part.

255/11 FESTIVE SEASON 2011/12: OFFICE CLOSURE PERIOD

RESOLVED that this be referred to the Personnel Committee as an item for its 4th October 2011 agenda.

YOUTH COUNCIL RECESS

There were no Thetford Youth Council representatives in attendance.

256/11 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 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.

257/11 MINUTES

- (a) Council Meeting: 26th July 2011 - items addressed following the exclusion of press and public

RESOLVED that minutes 150/11 to 152/11 inclusive be confirmed as a true record and signed/initialled by the Mayor as Chairman.

- (b) Special Council Meeting: 17th August 2011 – items addressed following the exclusion of press and public

RESOLVED that minute 181/11, together with the unnumbered 'additional item' relating to a proposal to take on the former *Upstairs in the Guildhall* premises, be confirmed as true records and signed/initialled by the Mayor as Chairman.

258/11 COMMITTEE REPORTS

(a) Personnel Committee: 1st August 2011

It was noted that the report of this meeting had been received at the Special Meeting of the Council held on 17th August 2011 under minute 181/11 (as referred to under the previous agenda item above) and that, consequently, there had been no need to include it under this agenda item.

The Town Clerk had apologised earlier in the day for his forgetfulness and any resultant confusion caused.

(b) Personnel Committee: 6th September 2011

Minutes 189/11 to 199/11 inclusive referred, including Recommendations under minutes 193/11, 196/11 and 197/11.

197/11: Employee Handbook

The Committee Chairman, Councillor T J Jermy, confirmed that, whilst reference would be made in the Handbook index to all policies, these would - depending on their length - not necessarily be integrated within the core text, but have the status of 'stand alone' annex documents.

RESOLVED that the report of this meeting be received and adopted.

(c) Finance Committee: 20th September 2011

Minutes 228/11 to 237/11 inclusive referred, including seven Recommendations under minute 232/11.

232/11: 2011/12 Five-Month Report - Toilet Operation

RESOLVED that, in the wording of the first Recommendation under this item, the phrase 'for a six-month trial period' be inserted in the second line between the words 'operation' and 'as'.

RESOLVED that the report of this meeting, subject to the amendment agreed in the previous Resolution, be received and adopted. The Five-Month Report, as annexed hereto, was duly received.

259/11 FORMER COSY CARPETS BUILDING

A copy of NPS Group's letter of 20th April 2011 had been included in the agenda papers, with the agenda item referring to the decision taken before the May 2011 local elections to defer responding until after said elections. Now that a decision appeared to have been taken regarding the Bus Interchange's occupying the adjacent site without any 'operational reliance' on use of the building, it was agreed to be an appropriate time to pass comment.

In the course of a brief discussion, members agreed that the Town Council should indicate to NPS that it had a continued interest in developing the building for some yet-to-be-agreed use, especially bearing in mind that another organisation within the town was believed to have a definite use in mind, which might not necessarily be one that the Town Council would endorse.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk indicate this to NPS Group in an appropriately worded letter.

260/11 THETFORD CEMETERY: PAYMENT REQUEST

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ITEM BROUGHT BELOW THE LINE: ART GALLERY PROPOSAL

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ADDITIONAL ITEM: UPDATE ON PERSONNEL MATTERS

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Chairman