

SWAFFHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Town Assembly held on Wednesday 27th April 2005 at 7.00p.m. in the Town Hall, Swaffham.

Present: Mayor Cllr P. Buxton (in the chair)

Councillors:- Mrs C. Baker, Mr D. Butters, Mr D. Cannon, Mr P. Darby,
Mrs A. Greaves, Mrs S. Lister, Mrs S. Matthews,
Mr J. Stockdale, Mr L. Wise.

Clerk:- Mr R. Bishop.
Deputy Clerk:- Mrs M. Meyrick
Police Constable:- P.C. Andy Partridge
Iceni Partnership:- Mr T. Dickens

Public:- 20

1. MAYOR'S WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

1.1. The Mayor welcomed everyone to the new council chamber which is proving to be very useful and pleasant. The whole set up is much better and accessible for all. I refer to this year as the year of the build with the Assembly Rooms, the new community centre, a new surgery and the school where we will have a new building looking to the future of Swaffham.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

- 2.1. Cllr Emmerson.
- 2.2. Cllr Mann
- 2.3. Cllr Sherwood.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – for items included on the Agenda.

- 3.1. Cllr Butters declared an interest on item 5.g.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4.1. The minutes of 28th April 2004 Annual Town Assembly, amendment – page 141 paragraph 10, the park was bequeathed by Dorothy Greenhoe, subject to the amendment the minutes were agreed by those present and signed as a true record by the Mayor.

5. REPORTS OF COUNCILLORS – on the work of the Town Council during 2004/2005

a) The Recreation Ground - Deputy Town Clerk.

The Recreation Ground was given to the town to provide an area for recreation for everyone to use. Sadly over the years the play equipment has become old and outdated. With the installation of the skateboard park it became evident that the recreation ground needed much, much more.

The recreation ground committee which consists of 6 councillors and 5 members of the public was formed to put forward a project to provide a community area to be used by all. This community facility will be targeted for everyone to use, young and old. The project includes up to date play equipment including an assault course, a garden area with seating, dog walking area, toilets, lighting and CCTV.

The overall scheme has been broken down into smaller projects and dedicated committee members have been assigned to a particular task to carry out research on costs and materials etc. Further consultation with the public and community groups in the town is needed before the committee is ready to approach grant funders for the money we need, this could be as

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much as half a million pounds. The Town Council has set aside £50,000 as match funding so this is a good start.

The committee meets on a regular basis and welcomes anyone to come along to a meeting and take part in the discussions. If anyone is interested in being involved with this project please contact me Michelle Meyrick at the Town Hall.

b) Business in Bloom - Cllr B. Emmerson.

Business in Bloom was started over a cup of coffee with Stuart Clarke the former manager of McDonald's and Cllr Emmerson. This has been running for the past seven years and has proven to be a worth while competition as it helps to enhance the wonderful display put on by the Town Council, thanks to Mike Dye the Town Gardener.

Cllr Emmerson would like to thank Mattie Jarrod who is the franchise holder at McDonalds who has carried on the sponsorship after Stuart left. Discussions have taken place recently to discuss a new format for the Business in Bloom competition because of the lack of entrants in last year's competition. It is hoped that a new format will encourage more people to take part to help enhance the town centre.

Thanks was given to all those business who have taken part in the past including Mike Dye for his hard work and Mattie Jarrod for his sponsorship.

c) Planning Matters – Cllr D. Butters.

There have been 78 planning applications considered since the last Town Assembly. The majority of these have been for extensions, conservatories and other modifications to improve existing properties. The next most popular was building a new property in the garden of an existing dwelling.

On all planning applications, Breckland Council is the actual planning authority, the Town Council have the opportunity to object but usually there is no objection. The planning authority has to take note of our objection, more so now than before because of changes in legislation.

Planning laws have changed this last year, and will continue to change. It is not easy to keep up with this, as my colleague Breckland councillor Paul Darby will probably agree. The Internet and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister helps to keep me informed. Anyone can learn from the ODPM website, or Breckland.gov.uk, that is also helpful.

Although the Town Council are not the planning authority, the council acts as a local watchdog, passing on information to Breckland when neighbours see something going on, or going up, that they object to, or have not been informed about.

Planning is a serious business, but sometimes applications can make us smile. Recently, one application – drawn up by a professional architect – referred at length to a disused railway line from the Town Centre to Turbine Way. Perhaps the Market Cross is a redundant railway turntable! The same architect in another application said that the A1065 was a good cycle route for mothers and toddlers. Statements such as these will not cause the applications to be thrown out, unfortunately.

d) Swimming Pool Association – Cllr D. Cannon.

The Swimming Pool Association together with the Town Council have planning consent for a leisure building to include a swimming pool on the Ecotech site. Following a meeting with the landowners some 3 weeks ago an offer has been made by them for the sale of the land to Swaffham Town Council. The negotiations are still at a delicate stage. Breckland District

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Council have been kept full informed at all stages of the negotiations and their officers have stated that it is unlikely to be any objections to using their access roads to the site especially if we make a small proportion of the roadway to Highway standard. This would be subject to a Section 106 agreement. As the Town Council's representative on the Swimming Pool Association I will continue to follow advice from SPA and with the invaluable help of the Town Clerk I am certain this land will provide the home for a Swaffham Swimming Pool in the not too distant future.

e) Civic Exchange – Cllr B. Emmerson.

Last September there were 60 guests from our twin Towns Couhe and Hemmoor who visited Swaffham. Thanks is given to all those who hosted and looked after them, it was a great success. On the Saturday morning a meeting of council's and twinning reps from the three towns took place. In the evening the Town Council hosted a Civic dinner and dance at Lynford Hall. Speeches took place which had to be translated but our own Mayor Pam Buxton did us proud when she gave her speech in all three languages. It was the first time that a Mayor has been able to achieve this, well done Pam.

On the Sunday Michelmas Fayre took place but unfortunately Kings Lynn held a larger calibration and some of the things which were booked pulled out at the last minute. In the Assembly Rooms there were community organisations with information displays and goods for sale. There was a Town Criers Competition in the morning, a pram push by the Swaffham Lions, a Yard of Ale competition and in the afternoon the Dereham Town Band played in the Buttercross. The evenings entertainment was organised by the Twinning Association who put on a Race Night with buffet, all the proceeds went to the Swaffham and Litcham Home Hospice. Cllr Emmerson would like to thank Ray Fraser and his team for the help they gave; a good time was had by all.

Since then an invitation to a celebration of the 750 year charter of Warstade has been received that will be attended by 10 representatives of Swaffham which will be led by the current Mayor Pam Buxton. Warstade was the German Town Swaffham was first twinned with 37 years ago. A shield will be presented to remember the 750th anniversary visit.

Everyone that attends a Twinning visit pays their own travel expenses but with the kindness and friendship shown by the hosts visitors will have nothing else to pay.

f) Town Hall & Museum Enhancement – Town Clerk.

In the Clerk's report at the Town Assembly last year he said that he hoped that this year the Council would be in the new Council Chamber at the Town Hall and would be looking forward to the re-opening of the Museum later in the year. The Town Council are in the new Council Chamber, but the road has been a long one and for the Museum there is a way to go yet, but we remain hopeful of an autumn re-opening sometime in October later this year.

The Council generally believe that the builders have done a good job. What the Council have now, to what they had twelve months ago is a much improved clean practical working building that will serve the town well for a number of years to come. The work on site has been well documented in our quarterly newsletter and in the local press. Work began on site back in July, continuing through the wettest August on record. There had been unforeseen expense in the form of a well, a large cavernous hole and soft soil resulting in footings being required three times the depth of normal footings. Problems were uncovered where the new building met the old. Prior to building works commencing the Council agreed an additional contingency of £50,000, this was exceeded by a further £15,000 to resolve further unforeseen problems and the extended budget has been met.

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There are still minor issues within the building to resolve and a new sound system to install, but we are getting there. Problems with the lift have been well documented, but we are assured that this meets the minimum requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act. The Access Group carried out an Access Audit and the criticisms were answered fully by the Architect. The Council are currently seeking final clarification on points raised at the last Town Council meeting two weeks ago by the Access Group and there will be a report at the May meeting. In the meantime we are awaiting the final certificate from the Building Inspector.

The Museum Enhancement has been underway for some time now, with the appointment of a Museum Manager last June and an Education Officer starting in January of this year. The Directors are working behind the scenes to kick start the next stage of the refurbishment programme. Planning permission and listed building consent will be sought very soon, and works will be out to tender in due course. The Museum itself closed last September and various artefacts have been placed into storage. The Museum owes a great deal to the dedicated group of volunteers that support the Museum with everything that they do.

The paperwork associated with meeting the criteria for procurement and objective 2 funding direct from Europe is very detailed to say the least. But we look forward to the refurbishment being completed later in the year and a more interactive up to date Museum when it finally re-opens.

g) Swaffham Museum Ltd – Cllr D. Butters.

This year has been a year of upheaval and various problems, not least of which was this New Town Hall extension. The museum closed earlier than normal, as mentioned in last year report, with "PILLS AND POTIONS" being popular again.

The museum has obtained the services of Hetty Thornton as Education Officer and she is really doing an excellent job. She is also standing in for our popular manager, Philip Smith, who is on sick leave. We are looking forward to his return. In the meantime, Kate Morrison has joined the museum on a temporary basis helping Hetty and filling in for Philip while he gets fully fighting fit.

The design for the new £25,000 Howard Carter display is being worked on now and we hope it will prove to be a spectacular experience, attracting people from far and wide, who will then visit the rest of the museum and learn about **Swaffham**. This way, more people will see the displays on the town than previously. Next year I am hoping to see in excess of 7,000 paying visitors. We nearly got there before, but most of that was achieved in one exhibition in only three months. It is possible, it will happen.

It would be of benefit to all concerned and this is why commercial sponsorship to further support and enhance the displays would be welcome.

That figure will be for the first year, I want us to beat that the next year. All this will be good for the town, the market, and the shops.

In the midst of all this, I am writing another book, proceeds to go to the Friends of the Museum. In one chapter, I have looked at the Pedlar story and the facts as we know them and the law of the time and come to the conclusion that our Mr. Chapman was not as honest as he should have been. This dishonesty greatly benefited the Church and the town. This book will not be out until late 2007 at the earliest. There will also be an extended version on the museum's website. This will include details not thought suitable for the book, which will be in the schools' libraries.

h) Market & Farmers Market – Cllr B. Emmerson.

The Saturday Market is so important to this Town; it brings in people from all over the area. We all know that this past year has not been a good year, as the weather seemed to hit with rain and wind on most Saturdays. A sad note is that one of our market traders who had three stalls in the middle has had to give up through illness, but these it is hoped will soon be filled. The enhancement will bring new life to the market, as long as you the public supports its. We can not afford to loose our market so please support the market.

The Town Council have had reports of theft and intimidation on the market and find it disappointing that these incidents have not been passed onto the police, please if you see anything report it, the more that is reported will help to get more of a police presence on a Saturday. Thanks are given to the market superintendent for the work he does which at times is not easy.

The monthly Farmers Market is held on the first Wednesday each month. This again has been hampered by the bad weather and we have lost a few stalls, but the market superintendent has been visiting other Farmers markets hoping to encourage some of them to come here. Also the Town Council has agreed to allow quality crafted stalls to attend on these days.

The Town Council is currently looking at different ways to encourage more stall holders to attend our Farmers Market to give you the public a variety of high quality goods. There is a Farmers Market a week today so put it in your diary for a visit; there is an assortment of goods to be had, and it's a good place to meet friends.

i) Finance – Town Clerk.

The Town Council's finances continue to be under a close scrutiny and quite rightly so. Councillors were given a copy of the Receipts and Payments for the year to 31st March 2005, the final accounts in the form of Income & Expenditure, Statement of Accounts and the Balance Sheet should be ready to present to the Council at the June meeting. This past year has seen a great deal of change in the Council's finances and the year ahead will see further changes, as we come to terms with the benefits that Quality Council status can bring to the Town of Swaffham. The aim is to achieve this by the Autumn, as we have been carefully laying the foundation over the past 18 months or so for our application to be made this June/July.

Some of the changes within the finances are temporary, as the work on the town centre enhancement has reduced the income received from Saturday Market, some traders have left the market, some have taken holidays, others have been moved or are being moved, but at present there is no casual trading spaces. The net result is that not only is the income much less, but the expenditure is slightly higher, thus resulting in pressure being applied to the Council's budget. As income from the Market is used by your Council to provide many of the services in the town, for example the Floral Displays in the Town Centre looked after by our Town Gardener.

The budget meeting is one of the most important meetings your Council has each year, this is held every December when they decide what they are going to spend in the course of the next financial year. This in turn sets the amount that is required from the Precept, in the financial year just started on 1st April your Precept has increase by £7,500 to £137,500 meaning that it will cost each Council Tax Payer £57.51 at Band D. A similar sized town such as Downham Market for an example has a Band D rate of £93.84 and with much less amenities run or funded by the Town Council. A budget though in many cases is no more than a best guess at how things will go in the course of the year ahead, there are many things that can go wrong. The Clerk had already given an example of the Saturday Market. It is difficult to predict the

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income and expenditure for this, the projected budget may need to be amended as the year progresses.

The Town Council have heard the Clerk on more than one occasion mention their General Reserves and their Match Funding Budget; these are extremely important for different reasons in the years to come. The General Reserves need to be at a level that can support the activities of the Council, in terms of working capital to allow the Council to operate from day to day and then there is always that unforeseen expense. It usually happens very soon after the budget is set. Match funding is becoming increasingly important in order to attract grant funding from outside of the town. The Recreation Ground is just one project, there are many more that could be in the pipeline. If the match funding is not available when the grant funding is there, then Swaffham will lose out at the expense of neighbouring towns. This is a fact and these are the reasons why both General Reserves and Match Funding are so important this year, next year and every other year to come.

The Internal Auditor Brian Clements continues to monitor everything the Town Council does, keeping everything in order and we in turn appreciate his input. A new account will be introduced called the Capital Projects account within the computerised accounting system; this will help the Council identify their capital expenditure and separate this from their revenue expenses. The Internal Auditor this week had been overseeing our VAT return for the Quarter and reports back to the Town Council on a regular basis, at least once every quarter.

Finance is always an area of Council business that provokes a debate, thirteen Councillors, thirteen different opinions and then there is our officer input. The electorate should rest assured that in the end the decisions are always taken with the best interests of Swaffham at heart.

6. OTHER REPORTS:-

a) Icen Partnership – Chairman Tony Dickens.

The building of the new Community Centre is on target and progressing well with contractors, H Smith of Honingham. There have been no major construction problems and we are expecting work to be completed by September. We are planning an official opening event to take place in October, but before this the Lynn News will be helping the Partnership to promote a two stage competition for naming the new building. Firstly people will be invited to suggest a name, and then a short-list of three will be published for people to vote on. There will be a prize for the person who originally suggested the winning name.

Work on renovating the Assembly Rooms began in January with contractors Quinn Construction of Holme Hale. At last year's Town Meeting it was reported that we had secured less than half the funding that we bid for to refurbish this building and consequently we would be working to a very tight budget from the outset. The building has now been completely stripped out and all sorts of hidden secrets have come to light, some good, some not so good. Extensive dry rot was revealed in window frames and in some roof timbers. All the windows will have to be replaced rather than repaired as originally planned.

The contractors have uncovered:

- A Victorian fireplace in the small function room.
- Two semi-circular windows above the entrance doorways.
- Old decorative plaster frieze work which we will try and replicate around the large hall.

Where possible we will seek to incorporate all the revealed features in the refurbishment building if funds allow. We have been able to make savings on the community centre budget from contingency money that has not been needed and we can transfer this to the Assembly Rooms to help pay for additional works.

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The most visible part of the regeneration is the Town Centre enhancement. This is being carried out in partnership with Norfolk County Council's Planning and Transportation Department who provided half the funding. Stage 1 of the programme began in February but work was immediately delayed by snow and bad weather. The decision to remove the London Planes was reluctantly made after long debate and consideration of alternatives. The trees will be replaced in the autumn by semi-mature specimens using three varieties. Our choice are Amelanchier (Robin Hill), Alnus incana Laciniata (a type of Grey Alder), and Malus trilobata (a type of crab apple).

We are aware that some businesses have experienced a drop in trade but this is almost inevitable when any maintenance works are being carried out. In anticipation of this the Partnership will be taking strong measures to promote the town and its many attractions throughout 2006 to draw local people and visitors back in. We have funding within the regeneration package to organise events and produce promotional material to market the town and its new facilities over a wide area and through the tourist information service.

The skateboard park has settled down with good usage and very few reported incidents. We are coming to the end of a successful year of support for the young people's Hassled Group. They have produced regular newsletters giving information, opinions and encouraging youngsters to take a more active role in the community. We are looking for continuation funding to identify what young people want and what the obstacles are in getting their opinions listened to and acted upon.

In partnership with Ecotech we have opened the Icenima with regular Friday night showings of recently released films. Attendances have been variable but we had over 500 questionnaires returned supporting this venture so we will be looking to improve publicity and try to ensure that the films chosen are what people want to see. A specialist film club has also been set up and there will be showings for members and guests on the first Tuesday and Wednesday of each month.

Our support of Village Appraisals continues. A very successful Funding Fair was recently organised in Narborough. We have supported local business by running workshop sessions on 'Starting up a Business' and 'Women into Business'.

b) Police Report – P.C. Andy Partridge

The total crimes for the year are 716 for the town alone. Average crimes are 2.5 a day. This is a reasonable figure considering the size of the town. Burglary dwelling is high. There is crime in the town and we need to take a joint approach. Swaffham now has a Community Support Officer who's primary job would be to deal with anti-social behaviour. First area in county for a dispersal order, this has been assessed it and it is felt that it has had a reasonable effect. The police station is never shut despite people thinking it is. It is open 8 and 3.30 Monday to Friday. There is a police drop in post at the London Street post office; this does not take the place of the police station and is not staffed by police officers but by post office staff.

c) Breckland Council - Cllr P. Darby.

The Ecotech has now got 99% takeup for its units. Businesses that are run by Breckland have a 99% take up on those as well. There will be new security barriers installed for the Ecotech site which will be electronically controlled by the businesses. It is nice to see the Ecotech being used for such things as the cinema, a centre to draw people into the town. Consultation is ongoing for the local development framework, if anyone knows of any land for the building envelope please let district councillors know. The council tax for the county is the lowest in the country. A new committee has been set up to deal with the new laws on licensing for pubs and clubs etc. The waste contractor is a company called Serco. They will be responsible for

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collecting the wheelie bin rubbish and cleaning streets. The three Councillors in Swaffham have been given cameras to take pictures of the worst places in the town; Serco will then get those areas cleaned up over a 2-3 month period. Please let the councillors now or direct at 01362 656878 direct line to report recycling clearing of rubbish etc for any area that needs attention.

d) Norfolk County Council - Cllr S. Matthews.

The council tax this year was up 2.5%, it is hoped that this will not go over that for next year. There is a lot going on in Swaffham in relation to footpaths and roads etc, bus stops, pavement improvements and the market place. The speed limit on Norwich Road will be coming down from 50mph to 40mph in May. In the New Year the Town Council were approached to comment on widening the footpaths on Watton Road the study is now finished and is in the process of being priced. Whitecross Rd is scheduled to be resurfaced and London Street. A new Sixth Form Centre is being built at Hamond's High School. There will be changes in the road for which the school has been wanting for years. Not only is the 30mph been put in there will be a cycle way made on the pavement. The Toucan crossing and Zebra crossing planned for Watton Road will be done in the summer holidays. After many highs and lows, the re-organisation of the schools will take place in our cluster this September. Last years budget talked about having new fire engines Swaffham has theirs.

8. QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR.

Mr Alby White – I apologise for being late but there was an accident on Watton Road.

Mrs Monica Riegar-Ridd – Thank you for what you have done Cllr Matthews, also the wonderful job you have managed to do on Whitsands Road but I wish people would use it and not the other side, would it be possible to have double yellow lines there so two cars can pass safely?

Cllr Matthews – There is a new 30mph down by the school I appreciate that it takes some people some time to get used to it.

Mrs Barbara white – Sandringham Way needs to be put on the list to be cleaned by the District Council. When is something being done about the play area on Merryweather? Children are getting under the wire fencing.

Cllr Matthews – Rospa who inspect play equipment are involved at the moment. Taylor Woodrow is currently doing the job; Breckland has not taken it over it yet. Rospa and Breckland are arguing over some particular points.

Mrs Barbara White – There was a way through at the top of the estate into Watton Road where the bank is, so people could cross over onto the wider part

Cllr Matthews – The crossing will be near the entrance.

Mrs Toni Groom – £1000 had been donated by Safeway supermarket, I wonder if Waitrose have been approached, could they be asked as well?

Mayor Buxton - They are doing a lot of contribution at the moment.

Mrs Toni Groom - I have been hearing of a lot criticism about people being pounced on by the traffic warden when they park in the unloading bay by Boots. As it is not used as an unloading bay on a Saturday could it parking be allowed?

PC Partridge - We have overviewed it with highways, the unloading bay is Monday to Saturday and that is the way it will remain. When the regeneration is finished the parking regulations will be revamped. Parking restrictions in the town will be enforced by the new traffic warden.

Mrs Marion Clements – I would like to ask Cllr Matthews if the Council jurisdiction could extend from Greenhoe to Filby Road that stretch of pavement.

Cllr Matthews – This will be done.

Mrs Marion Clements - The lighting is non existence down there – this has been like this for several years.

Cllr Matthews – pavements are being done this August.

Mr Lawrence Wright – The traffic on Lynn Road is a concern. There are 20 cars parked there every week, this causes chaos.

PC Partridge – Where there are double yellow lines there is parking restriction.

Mr ??? – I have been an allotment holder for several years why have the allotment doubled from £10 to £20, are you planning work up there as the allotment account looks healthy?

Town Clerk – The administration of the town council staff is not allocated at all – 5 large allotment sites around the town that do take a lot of managing. Each time an area needs cleaning it costs more to clear than we get in.

Mr Lawrence Wright – You need to check sites before they are taken up and then inspect them again some time later down the line.

Barbara White – Will the traffic warden be as rigorous at the top of Watton road as well?

PC Partridge – It is grossly unfair to say that no one is doing anything about it, I personally have given tickets. If we had the power to remove the vehicle they would not park there. I have in the last 2 months issued more tickets than in the past 30 years as well as the traffic warden; this is an area where tickets will be issued.

Cllr Matthews – about 18 months ago a tremendous effort was made by the police and the wardens to speak to the people that live there.

Mr Tony Dickens – Cllr Matthews are you happy with how the County Council have responded to the Countryside Rights of Way Act? A forum was established with a range of people to produce a draft rights of way improvement plan, including access for everyone and reviewing all inaccessible barriers. The County Councils response was to reject this plan; all they agreed to do was to replace 1 style per year. This is a disgraceful response to this act. Many more Councils are doing more around the country. The council must respond properly to this act.

Cllr Matthews – I am not aware of this.

Mr Tony Dickens – With regards to the Town Hall and the access report; the architect had given a full response which he has but I wouldn't like it to assume the access group are happy with this because they are not.

Town Clerk – I thought we were going to go over this at the next meeting. Full response accepted by the town council but not the access group.

Cllr Cannon – This is a police question – With regards to drug related some people say we have a drug problem in the town.

PC Partridge – The drug offences that appear on the crime figures are the ones that are detected. We need for people to advise us with information of numerous public sources and not just the police. Information is put together before any pro active action is taken. When intelligence does come in there is a long and laborious work taken place before any action is carried out.

Cllr Cannon – I have had people that have given me address which now have crime numbers.

Cllr Greaves – At the Icen cinema there is a children's cinema club open. This is a venture between Waitrose and the Ecotech and the Icen supports it. The first attendance was pretty low last Saturday which was 12 people including adults. Waitrose will not support it if people don't use it.

Mr Richard Clarke – It is disappointing to see so few people here with so much going on in the town. Is it because people think you don't listen to them.

Cllr Lister – Perhaps the people of Swaffham are happy with what we are doing. If there is a complaint people will tell us about it.

Cllr Greaves – At every meeting there is 15 minutes for the public to tell us what they are not happy with.

Mr Richard Clarke – Why did the public part of the meeting change from the end to the beginning of the meeting? You do not get a chance to comment on what the meeting is about.
Mayor Buxton – I have always tried to let people speak.

Paul Darby – The council cannot go back on a decision made in a meeting for 6 months. If it was at the end a member of the public might have something to say and it would be too late.

Town Clerk – It is very rare that the full 15 minutes have been taken up.

Mr Tony Dickens – You did have a question time at the beginning and the end this resulted in meetings being very long and people were getting tired. A comment that has come up in a debate may be very useful at the end.

Mrs Toni Groom – You could have 10 minutes before and 10 minutes after.

Cllr Greaves – The public have access to the town hall. They have 4 ways to bring it up, speak to a councillor, come into the town hall, come to the town assembly or come to a meeting.

Mr Toni Groom – There is a difference between listening to someone and agreeing with them, if some people make a lot of noise about something doesn't mean that the people that make those decisions will go along with it.

Mrs Barbara White – Some people have said to me that when they have written letters that people do not get a response from the town hall staff.

Mayor Buxton – There is now in place a system to respond to letters with the new members of the staff.

PC Partridge – The communication between Norfolk Constabulary and the Town Council in the past year has greatly improved both verbally and by letter.

Helen Schofield – What are the rules of shops selling the items on the pavement? An electric buggy could not get through and had to go on the road, this is really not safe.

PC Partridge - The shops in question have got permission to do what they do. I am fairly sure that this was checked some years ago that this was in order but I will check again on the amount of land they are allowed to use.

Cllr Wise – The cars that park there tend to abuse the situation by parking their bumpers right over the pavement taking up space.

Mr Tony Dickens – This area will be widened in the future under the regeneration scheme.

Cllr Darby – You have to park within the restrictions of the parking space, is there some law.

PC Partridge – After the regeneration the parking bays will be going the other way. When the parking bays are lined they are only then enforceable and you will receive a ticket.

Mrs Marion Clements – I endorse what Helen Schofield has said. I walked down one of the access lanes to the motor shop and that pathway was completely blocked with baskets etc. Also as I was coming out onto the footpath there was a lady in a motorised scooter who was going so fast I had to jump out of the way.

Cllr Butters – The pathway between the shops is a public right of way and should not be blocked up.

Cllr Geaves – I am pleased to hear that Norfolk Constabulary have a traffic warden who sounds formidable, independent and strong.

Mr Richard Clarke – Are there any plans for the precinct? As this is privately owned could there be a compulsory purchase order made?

Mr Alby White – I would like to thank all the councillors for all their hard work since the last Town Assembly.

Mrs Sally Palmer – I would like to echo Mr White's comments for the support the Town Council have given to the young people of the town.

9. MAYOR'S CLOSING REMARKS.

Thank you to all the councillors and all the work you have put into it. I am very proud of the town and the councillors and to the staff for the work they do; they do more than they have to. And thank you to PC Partridge for staying for the duration of the meeting. I am disappointed we did not have more people here; they have voiced their opinions throughout the year.

Cllr Mathews – I thank you Cllr Buxton on behalf of my fellow councillors.

The meeting closed at 9.25p.m.

Chairman_____