

SWAFFHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Town Council meeting held on Wednesday 19th January 2005 at 6.45p.m. in the Methodist Church Rooms, Swaffham.

Present: Mayor Cllr P. Buxton

Councillors: - Mrs C. Baker, Mr D. Butters, Mr D. Cannon, Mr P. Darby,
Mr B. Emmerson, Mrs A. Greaves, Mrs S. Lister, Mrs F. Mann,
Mrs S. Matthews, Mr I. Sherwood, Mr J. Stockdale, Mr L. Wise.

Clerk: - Mr R. Bishop
Deputy Clerk: - Mrs M. Meyrick

Public: - 8

747. APOLOGIES & REASONS FOR ABSENCE.

747.1. There were no apologies for absence.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 6.45
THE MEETING RESUMED AT 6.53 (see Appendix 1)

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

748.1. Cllr Butters declared an interest on item 9.2 – relation of person working for Shopmobility.

749. MAYOR'S REPORT.

749.1. The Mayor reported on the Civic Events she had attended in the past month.

Attended the Presentation of Certificates, Swaffham College
Attended the Ecotech Centre Evening of Traditional Christmas Cheer
Attended the annual Christmas Party of the Swaffham & District Mental Health Association in the Merle Boddy Centre
Attended the Churches Together Town Carol Service at the Catholic Church
Visited the following on Christmas morning and wished staff and patients/residents seasonal greetings on behalf of the Town Council: The Community Hospital Old Maltings The Paddocks Westfields Holmwood House Meadow House
The Town Crier, Kerry Hart, accompanied me to the first three
Attended the Swaffham Players Pantomime "The Sleeping Beauty" which again included all ages and was of the usual high standard of festive entertainment.
Attended the 10 th Anniversary Celebrations of the Swaffham St. John Ambulance Service which included the presentations of certificates to the Badgers and the Grand Prior certificates recognising the outstanding achievements of two of the cadets, Amy Fields and Kirsty Doddington. The Divisional Superintendent, Robert Rowling, moves on to a new role and his wife, Sue, takes on the Swaffham position.

750. BRIEF UPDATE from Icen Partnership re-commencement of work in the Town Centre.

750.1. A computer generated image of what the 1st phase will look like when work is finished was circulated to Councillors. Icen Partnership Chairman Mr Tony Dickens reported that the paving shown in yellow on the image will be a natural colour. This phase will begin on 31st

Page 334

January and last for around 20 weeks finishing early June. Work will start at Pit Lane end. There will be some Saturday working but restrictions will be in place, no cutting or dust etc. The public will be kept well informed with weekly site meetings and a bulletin newsletter for shops and stallholders before work takes place. Safe access will be maintained at all times. During this project all the trees on the eastern side will be removed. They will be replaced by semi mature trees in the autumn with metal guards. There will be temporary signage directing people to alternative parking. There will not be for any highway work to take place other than kerbstones, there should not be any adverse affect to the town.

There followed a number of questions from Councillors: -

Cllr Stockdale – Will the car parking spaces be marked?

Tony Dickens – They will be marked when the whole phase is finished.

Cllr Stockdale – Is there enough room for delivery lorries to get to the rear of the Greyhound pub?

Tony Dickens – We have been informed by the experts that there will be enough room.

Cllr Lister – stated that she has had 4 - 5 people phone with concerns relating to the tree removal.

Tony Dickens – We proposed 2 trees to be removed to allow a lorry bay in front of Impson Butchers but Breckland Council informed us they were concerned as they were becoming dangerous because they had not been maintained properly. The aspect was that as many were London plains they will reach an unsuitable height and width. It was not a proposal by the Partnership.

Cllr Lister – Who will the trees belong to?

Cllr Mann – stated that she was not satisfied with the answer to the lorry question. Why 5 months is it going to take that long?

Tony Dickens - The bank holidays will be excluded

Cll Wise – Will this area be available for the auctions?

Tony Dickens – Yes subject to some work in particular areas.

Cllr Emmerson – stated that the Council agreed for this to happen in Council. The Council were told there would be no disruption on a Saturday.

Tony Dickens – They will only be working in the areas when work is going on. All work will be in the designated areas.

Town Clerk – Assurances have been received from Mott Macdonald as they confirmed that there would be no noise or dust. The actual work that would be of disruption will not go on a Saturday. It could be done in less time than 5 months but because of the market it will be done in short chunks to allow us to move the market.

Cllr Darby – Are the trees going to be maintained? I would like to see those 15-20 foot so they are not over bearing. Will the areas up to the properties be included with paving?

Tony Dickens – The maximum height will be 10 metres. It is unlikely they will be any higher than the present trees. Some owners have been given the option to take over highway rights so they would be included in the scheme at a later stage, some have taken it up and some have not.

Cllr Butters – stated that it would be nice if the fence on Richmond plain on the greyhound side is replaced too!

Cllr Stockdale – Observed from the minutes from the Icenis last meeting that Terry Drake is to be asked not to put the Christmas lights in the trees.

Tony Dickens – We didn't think it was a good idea for the lights to be put up the way they have. It is up to Norfolk County Council to decide not the Icenis Partnership.

Cllr Darby – The lighting pole on the island, is there going to be replacement lighting?

Tony Dickens – The only lighting to be changed will be on the roundabout.

Cllr Darby - Can some lighting for the middle of the market be dedicated lighting to shoot straight into the market place.

Tony Dickens – It will be officers of Breckland Council and Norfolk County Council who will look into the lighting of the town as well as Theatre Street.

Page 335

Cllr Butters – It would be better if the signage for lorry traffic is directed to the A1065 up near the Pedlar Sign as the railings by the traffic lights are getting damaged..

Tony Dickens – This has been raised by the working party, Norfolk County Council determine Strategic signing and they will do that next year not this year.

Tony Dickens – If there are any queries that come up during the course of the work they are to be directed to the Icen office on 01760 722800.

751. MINUTES:

751.1. The minutes for the Extraordinary meeting of 25th November 2004 were agreed and signed as a true record by the Mayor.

751.2. The minutes of the Full Council meeting of Wednesday 15th December 2004 – amendment – page 326, item 734.3. to delete anti, subject to this amendment the minutes were agreed and signed as a true record by the Mayor.

751.3. The minutes of the Finance meeting of Wednesday 8th December 2004 will be distributed at the next Full Council meeting on the 9th February 2005.

752. TOWN CLERK REPORT:-

752.1. Cemetery Memorial Bench query – A letter has been received and distributed to Councillors from Mrs. Jones. Mrs Jones is asking who is responsible for the upkeep of the bench that her family had placed in the Cemetery as a memorial to Brian Jones.

It was unanimously agreed that the Town Council is responsible for the maintenance of memorial benches in the Cemetery.

752.2. The paintings have been removed from the Assembly Rooms and have been put into storage. The larger of the two will be auctioned on 11th February by Keys of Aylsham. The Clerk is in the process of obtaining an estimate for the cleaning and restoration of the painting the Council wish to restore. This will be placed on a future agenda.

752.3. The Clerk will bring the Council fully up to date with the negotiations for the Swimming Pool Land at the February Town Council meeting. He appealed to members of the Council and SPA to be patient. If efforts are made to short cut the circuit in addition to what the Town Council are trying to achieve or trying to hurry things along this could jeopardize the end result that we are all working for.

753. JUSTICES LICENCE – applications.

Paul Anthony Clayton and Denise Mary Clayton – Romford House Restaurant, 5 London St. Transfer of Licence.

754. PLANNING/DEVELOPMENT CONTROL:

754.1. Planning Decisions Breckland Council:-

3PL/2004/1651/F Planning permission granted for the removal of existing fence and construction of 2 metre high brick wall – H2m x 225D x 22.3L, 4 Mangate St; Miss H.S. Hand.	3PL/2003/1901/O Outline planning permission for the redevelopment of existing site with residential development and ancillary works. No. 18 & land adjacent Lynn Road. RMC Group Services Ltd.
---	--

754.2. Planning Applications:-

3PL/2004/1992/LB Mrs. J. Taylor, Wood Farm, North Pickenham Road. Change of use of rural buildings to 4 residential units. Within cartilage of listed building. NO OBJECTION	3PL/2004/1991/F Mrs. J. Taylor, Wood Farm, North Pickenham Road. Proposed change of use of rural building to residential. NO OBJECTION
---	---

3PL/2005/0031/O Mr. D.M. Bealey, 11 Heckling Close. New Dwelling NO OBJECTION 6 VOTES FOR WITH 2 AGAINST AND 4 ABSTENTIONS	3PL/2005/0036/LB Mr. & Mrs. Scott, Stratton's, 4 Ash Close. Alterations to form new guest bedroom including dormer link to rear of building. NO OBJECTION 9 VOTES FOR
3PL/2005/0035/F Mr. & Mrs. Scott, Stratton's, 4 Ash Close. Alterations to form new guest bedroom including dormer link to rear of building. NO OBJECTION 9 VOTES FOR	

754.3. Details of consultation on the Community Plan for Breckland 2005 – 2015 have been circulated to Councillors. Any comments Councillors wish to make must be done by the 11th February 2005. There were none made at the meeting.

755. FINANCE:

755.1. Accounts for Payments for January 2005 (see Appendix 2).

The list of Accounts was circulated to Councillors.

It was unanimously agreed to accept the accounts as listed.

755.2. Ratification of a grant for £200 to shop mobility.

This was a decision the Council took at the last meeting but as it involved finance it is a requirement for it to be on a published agenda.

It was agreed to grant £200 to Shopmobility

755.3. A letter from the Swaffham Access Group has been received and circulated to Councillors requesting a grant of £200. Cllr Matthews proposed and Cllr Emmerson seconded to grant a £200 grant.

It was agreed for the grant £200 to the Swaffham Access Group.

756. JUBILEE HERITAGE PLAN.

756.1. Copies of minutes/reports from Icen Partnership have been circulated to Councillors.

756.2. The Clerk attended a Town Centre enhancement meeting yesterday, Cllr Shirley Matthews was also in attendance. The finer detail of the work happening on the ground, the programme of works and timetable was discussed. There will be weekly liaison meetings with the contractor and Icen to which the Clerk or Deputy will attend, as we try to manage and minimize the inevitable disruption to allow Market Traders to continue trading. There will be some cost implications to the Council of temporary signage to direct the general public to the traders that may have to move to an alternative site. It has been promised that it will only affect small numbers of traders at any one time and as such a decision will be taken at the discretion of the Market Superintendent in consultation with both the Clerk and/or the Deputy to use the most appropriate alternative site from week to week. It is inevitable and unavoidable that on occasion Pedlars Car Park will be used on a Saturday for this reason. The Market rights extend into this car park and as stated at the Annual Traders Meeting earlier in 2004, the Town Council will do their utmost to allow their licensed traders to continue trading, as it is their livelihood. In many cases decisions will have to be made very quickly, with no time to call meetings, so it is essential that the Town Council give the delegated authority to the Town Clerk to manage this in conjunction with the Market Superintendent and the Deputy Town Clerk. Cllr Emmerson proposed and Cllr Greaves seconded to give delegated authority to the Town Clerk.

It was unanimously agreed to give delegated authority to the Town Clerk to manage the market while the town centre enhancement is taking place in conjunction with the Market Superintendent.

756.2. Progress report on the building of the Town Hall extension.

There has been a further delay of two weeks with the Town Hall extension. The Clerk has been keeping the Mayor informed of all the up to date information, notification of the latest delay was

Page 337

received on Monday 10th January one week before the move was due to take place. All users were immediately contacted and circulated with an amended schedule to keep their services open i.e. Breckland, Registrar, Citizens Advice and Age Concern. The Town Hall will now be closed from Friday 28th January at 1pm re-opening on Monday 14th February at 9am with the new opening hours.

756.3. A request has been received St Raphael to hold their annual Christmas bazaar in the Town Council Chamber.

It was agreed to allow St Raphael to hold their annual Christmas Bazaar in the Town Council Chamber.

757. To receive GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE:

757.1. Notification of 750th anniversary of Warstade from Hemmoor has been received. As there are only 10 places it was requested for Councillors who wish to go to show their interest. The Council are to liaise with the Twinning Association as to which Councillors will be attending.

757.2. A request from the Eastern Daily Press under the Freedom of Information Act has been received and circulated to Councillors along with a reply from the Town Clerk. The legislation and the guidance on the Freedom of Information Act are quite extensive. The Clerk will be held responsible if any information is withheld that is due to any member of the public and that he will also be held responsible if any information is given out that should not be given to members of the public. The Clerk stated that he believed in making as much information available to both Councillors and to the general public. In general it helps if people understand how decisions are made, why decisions are made and how the actions are carried out and services are delivered, then in theory it should make life easier. In practice getting to that point is very time consuming. But it is two years since the Town Council agreed its publications scheme under the Freedom of Information Act. This will be available at some point in the next month on the web site.

The Clerk has spoken to Peter Williamson regarding this request, as it concerns the money from the sale of the allotments, the loans and investments. His intentions are to bring out all the necessary information that may previously have not been made clear to the general public. The problem may be that a great deal of the information has already been in the public domain at various times but co-ordinating and making sense of all this information is difficult at best, misunderstood or taken out of context at worst, thus reflecting badly on the Town Council. This request is specific to Swaffham and is part of a County wide campaign highlighting the Freedom of Information Act and more information can be made available from January this year.

Further correspondence has been received from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and a summary from one of the Town Council's journals will be circulated at the next meeting in February. In summary the Town Council have no choice but to comply with the Freedom of Information Act and in general this kind of transparency should be welcomed and encouraged. There followed a brief debate where Councillors expressed their concern and disappointment in a further request on a well aired subject.

757.3. A letter has been received and circulated to Councillors from Mrs L. Dahl regarding cars parked in the town Cemetery. The Town Clerk stated that a possibility of providing gates has been mentioned previously as part of an enhancement project for the Cemetery, this will come to the Council at some stage as a recommendation when costings have been fully sourced and the grant situation fully appraised. There followed a brief debate with no conclusion.

757.4. A letter has been received and circulated to Councillors from Mrs S. Polaine-Leonard regarding a complaint which has been referred to the Trading Standards.

Page 338

757.5. A letter has been received and circulated to Councillors from Janet Webb who used the Assembly Rooms for a Save the Children Craft Fayre. There was no action agreed.

757.6. A letter has been received and circulated to Councillors from Nicholas Potts Funeral Services requesting the Council's no objection to the removal of Mr Wilfred Cleaver from Swaffham Churchyard and for his remains to be placed into Swaffham Cemetery.

It was agreed in principle for the interment of Mr Wilfred Cleaver's remains to Swaffham Cemetery following information being sought from the Home Office.

758. REPORTS BY REPRESENTATIVES OF OUTSIDE BODIES.

758.1. To receive Community Group, Club, Charity, Society or Agency reports.

Cllr Greaves thanked members of the Council who produced items for the Olive Tree Project.

759. BRECKLAND COUNCIL.

759.1. There is a new Licensing Act introduced by Central Government. Local authorities will be taking over the responsibilities. Cllr Sherwood is Chairman of one of the sub committees and there are representatives from over the whole of the district. Guidelines have been received from Central Government; fees will be set by the government not the district. Voluntary organisations at the moment can carry on as they are. The new way will be much simpler.

759.2. There has been concern from Councillors about the possibility of a short stay traveller's site in Swaffham. The Scrutiny Panel discussed at their meeting on the 11th a strategy for gypsies in Norfolk as Central Government are asking for all authorities to look into this. This issue will go to full scrutiny tomorrow following recommendations from the Social and Environmental Sub Committee. The view taken will be to have managed and organised sites rather than unorganised and unmanaged sites in Breckland. Reassurance was given to Councillors and the public at this point that no sites have been identified; the views of the public will be brought forward. There followed a lengthy discussion.

It was reported that the meeting in Breckland was both disappointing and disturbing. Evidence was asked for to show that Swaffham and Thetford were a vulnerable area and to justify the proposed sites. To date no reports have been received.

Cllr Sherwood reported that it is not the job of the Scrutiny panel to decide policy. Breckland have not made their minds up with sites, they will go through the consultation when it does.

The Town Clerk confirmed that comparative data with other areas was requested as the Breckland officers stated that this is what they took their information from. The notes from the meeting back in July have also not been received.

759.3. It was reported that April will see the start of a new cleaning contract. The contract will be discussed at a joint meeting of the Cabinet and the Scrutiny Committee tomorrow.

760. NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL.

760.1. Information has been received and circulated to Councillors regarding an East of England Plan: Consultation meetings. This item is to be placed on the February agenda.

760.2. Notification of a temporary closure U30-045 Shambles South Road 10th Jan to 9th July 2005. This is the road in front of the Assembly Rooms to allow a works compound to be situated for the refurbishment.

Page 339

760.3. A letter has been received and circulated to Councillors regarding theft of roadside signs. These signs will be replaced and Norfolk County Council was asking for details of any missing signs in Swaffham.

760.3. The Town Council's opinion was sought regarding a proposed Footway Conversion on Brandon Road to create a shared use cycle/pedestrian facility.

It was agreed to have NO OBJECTION to this proposal.

760.4. The Review Panels are looking at all the budget figures and partial settlement of figures have been received. In last years budget there was a sum for new fire engines and Swaffham has just received theirs.

760.5. The government understands that the failure of the P.F.I. was not the Council's own making so they are allowed £56 million of capital grant funding. The P.F.I. was for £92 million which means there will still be a shortfall but it is not quite so big because there was money for 25 years of structural maintenance included. The Council has gone back to government with further figures and it is hoped to attract more funding.

760.6. The independent adjudicator has decided the Council is to pay Capita £2.2 million for breaking the contract held with them. They were employed originally by the last administration as a private firm to do the pay-roll and streamline financial systems. The Council felt it could run these much cheaper.

760.7. Concerned was expressed regarding Social Services cuts which meant that some Day Centres have lost their hot meals. Cllr Matthews was asked to look into this.

761. To notify of the DATES of forthcoming meetings & receive any items to include on the AGENDA OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS:-

761.1. Wed 9th February 2005 at 6.45pm Full Council at the Town Hall (*in the new Council Chamber*).

762. ADMISSION TO MEETINGS ACT (PUBLIC BODIES) 1960 – following the exclusion of the public and press:

762.1. The Town Clerk reported that the post of receptionist has been advertised through the Job Centre and up to today there had been 16 applicants. 8 applications have been short listed for interviews to take place on Thursday 23rd January, next week. The Town Council made the decision to employ a part time Receptionist/Clerical Assistant for 24 hours each week under the government 'new deal' scheme. Subsequently it was agreed to bring forward the appointment date to 31st January in order for that person to be in place from the day the new office opens. Not all the applicants qualify for the government scheme and those that do may not be suitable. The Town Clerk requested the delegated authority to appoint the most appropriate candidate to fill this vacancy. If this person can be employed under the 'new deal' scheme then the appointment will take place as previously agreed on 31st January. If not, then cost savings could be made to not add further cost to the salary budget. Cllr Wise proposed and Cllr Butters seconded to accept the Clerks recommendation

The vote was lost with 4 votes for and 6 votes against with 1 abstention for the Town Clerk to have delegated authority to appoint the most appropriate candidate to fill the vacancy of Receptionist/Clerical Assistant.

762.2. Legal advice has come back from our solicitors and a letter setting out the terms and conditions of the Museum part of the contract has been set out, we are awaiting a response. In

respect of the Structural Engineer, this will be dealt with in the next couple of weeks and I will advise him accordingly.

The meeting closed at 8.43 p.m.

Chairman_____

Appendix 1

Ivan Bubbear – SPA Association – On October 18TH I attended a meeting of the Development Control Committee where a planning application for land for a swimming pool site was agreed but had a condition of a 106 agreement. I would like to know if that has been actioned. The follow on action we understand is that negotiation was to take place with the land owners, we know a letter had been sent to them. The agents responded on the 26th October, I spoke to them on Monday and they have had no response. They had written again in January as they were meeting with the land owners shortly.

Town Clerk – I will be giving a full report at the February meeting. Planning permission is not given until the agreement is in place. I have forwarded this to solicitors at Cambridge as well as a third party, it does not help the situation when SPA contacted them direct, it adds to the workload every time. Things are moving in relation with other things at the same time. The legal company from Breckland have been in touch and are dealing with it. We can't give a copy of a legal agreement as it does not exist.

Ivan Bubbear – I note your point of contacting – it was years ago I opened up discussion – I did not think it was a problem contacting them as our Chairman was not able to give an update.

Town Clerk – I gave a report to your Chairman prior to that meeting. I am moving things forward as fast as we are able to.

Mr Stewart Clapton – Queen Street – 2 streetlights that were replaced have been out since they have been put in can something be done about this?

Town Clerk – This will be reported to Norfolk County Council on your behalf.