

SWAFFHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Open Spaces & Amenities Committee meeting of the Town Council held on Wednesday 7th November 2007 at 6.30p.m. in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Swaffham.

Present: - Cllr Shirley Matthews (in the Chair)

Cllrs:-

Mr D. Harman, Mrs T. Jennison, Mrs S. Lister, Mr F. Sharpe, Mrs J. Skinner and Mrs Sue Polaine-Leonard(SCALGA).

Town Clerk:	Mr R. Bishop
Deputy Town Clerk:	Mrs M. Meyrick
Public:	0

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

1.1. There were no apologies for absence.

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

2.1. Cllr Harman declared an interest on item 6.1.

3. MINUTES

3.1. The minutes of the Open Spaces meeting for the 19th September 2007 were agreed and signed as a true record by the Chairman.

4. TOWN CLERK REPORT

4.1. Allotments

The vast majority of the work has now been completed at the allotments as these were pre-conditions outlined by the Secretary of State Hazel Blairs. The Town Clerk had met with members of SCALGA; Ian Robinson, Christine Wright and Sue-Polaine-Leonard. In order to allow this meeting to take place the deadline for submitting details to GO East was extended until 19th November. It was an extremely positive meeting where it was agreed that if certain undertakings were agreed by the Town Council prior to a decision by the Secretary of State then SCALGA whilst remaining opposed to the sale of surplus allotment land, would be reasonably satisfied that the Council had done all they could to meet the pre-conditions. The Town Clerk would prepare a draft of the undertakings, allowing SCALGA the opportunity to comment and an amended version would then be presented to the full Council for approval at their meeting on Wednesday 14th November. This information would then go to GO East by the 19th.

The undertakings involve ploughing allotments at the point it is required, keeping vacant allotments clear, improving access to the allotments, supply of manure at the point when it is required and the type required, also numbering allotments. Numbering the allotments will not start until week commencing 19th November.

Other issues discussed involve allotment regeneration, having a rolling four year plan for improvements and management, the use of some of the capital from the allotment sale and car parking areas for each of the two remaining areas.

4.2. Campinglands - Cemetery - Churchyard

The Campingland hedge has now been cut and in general things have gone well with the contractor this year.

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There is an issue at the Cemetery which the Committee ought to have a view on and make a Recommendation to full Council next week. The query from Patricia Lacey is as follows:-

Re- Emma Durham and Jessie Manning - Section F, Row C

A query has been received from a family member of 2 people that have been buried in the cemetery. They are buried side by side and have a curb stone around them enclosing them together. The request is whether the family are able to plant bulbs or shrubs and if free standing memorial vases can be placed within the curb stone area.

There is another issue – the family are asking who owns the grave space, whether or not they were purchased graves. If they are not they want to know if they are able to purchase them now.

It was agreed that the committee members would each take a look at the grave in question before the next Full Council meeting and so a decision could be made at that meeting.

4.3. The large mirrors and the parquet flooring which are stored at the Chapel were discussed. It was suggested that an auction house would be asked to take a look at the items for valuation. The outcome of this would be reported at a future meeting.

4.4. Town Centre – including street furniture

The hanging basket issue continues following meetings with Mr. John Longhurst who is the Head of Operations at County Council. The Town Clerk is expecting a call to arrange a site meeting very soon to ascertain which columns can and can't be used next year, licenses will be required to allow this to happen. In the longer term as street light columns are replaced the Town Council could consider upgrading from a standard to a stronger column with the necessary fixings to allow hanging baskets. They could also identify areas which could be considered for their own columns to hang the hanging baskets.

It was reported that all the flowers in the tubs near the job centre have been stolen which distressed the town gardener greatly.

It was agreed that an article be placed in the local press and then advise Full Council of the action taken.

Most of the remaining street furniture has been received. There has been slight confusion over seats near the Fish and Chip Shop and the Sports Shop on the North side of the Lynn Road, these will be re-located in an area in front of the side of the Job Centre.

4.3. Northwell Pool

This report is from the Project Officer:-

The Town Council has been successful with a grant application to Norfolk County Council. Thus, we are in a position to implement an 8K project to improve the physical environment and improve the amenity value of the area.

What will this project involve?

- 1) Placing vegetated, floating eco-islands in the centre of the pond with duck houses.
- 2) The concrete edges will be vegetated with a variety of plants.
- 3) Humane duck management (egg removal from nests).
- 4) Tidy up of environment in area.

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The benefits of this project will be to improve the look of the area substantially, increase bio-diversity and give the ducks more areas to socialise. The project will be implemented in the spring once the risk of severe frost has passed.

How did we get to this point?

Consultation with the public during 2006 and subsequent engagement with a wide variety of stakeholders...Anglian Water, Norfolk County Council's Environment and Highways Departments, the Police, Council's Open Spaces Committee, Breckland Community workers, tree surgeon, pest control, bio-engineers. All in all over 120 emails, 20-30 phone calls, and a dozen meetings and site visits to get to this point.

Ongoing Plans

Include...i) putting a boardwalk over the edge of the pond along New Sporle Road, ii) finalising a management agreement with Anglian Water and Highways such that Town Council takes over day to day management of the area and iii) re-examining use of road under the embankment. The latter could include putting in a dual-use cycling and pedestrian zone and creating more green space in that area for people to enjoy. A lot of potential...

4.4. The Shambles

This report is from the Project Officer:-

The main area of progress has been to evaluate results of last year's consultation exercise. In the longer term there are a number of possibilities for improving the Shambles, equally there are a number of challenges such as land ownership, multiple rights of way, sense of entitlement concerning parking rights, eclectic architecture etc. The Town Plan is the obvious route through which to explore options for this area, a complex issue and needs to be integrated into broader strategies for the town's development.

There was concern shown regarding the tarmac area in front of the dry cleaners and the Chinese takeaway which appears to be badly crumbled.

It was agreed that the Town Clerk write to the businesses asking them to maintain the area.

5. CIVIC AMENITIES – issues reports and recommendations by the Town Clerk &/or Deputy Town Clerk unless stated

5.1. The most recent Market meeting was to discuss issues relating to the proposed Auction in the Town Pit. The new auctioneer Karl Bennett will be erecting a marquee on the Friday afternoon prior to the auction on the Saturday. Permission has been obtained from Breckland Council to allow this to happen. The size of the marquee has been reduced to 50' x 30' to fit into the Town Pit area. A request was made to keep the sides of the marquee open over night for security purposes, but for insurance purposes the sides must be securely fixed as high winds could cause problems for the marquee. The new Business Forum made representations regarding the Jeweller Mr. Parker who is in close proximity to the proposed site. The Deputy Town Clerk met with Mr. Parker and Mr. Hudson from the Business Forum, and subsequently following further discussions with the auctioneer the Town Clerk and the Deputy Town Clerk have met again with Mr. Parker. The marquee is fireproofed; it will be situated to the edge of the Greyhound boundary and is approximately 5' away from bollards at the Southern edge of the site. It will be close to Mr. Parker's boundary so as not to allow anyone to hide or get around the rear of the marquee. It is 14' high to the apex and 7'6" high at each side. The Business Forum has also objected to the loss of car parking on the Friday afternoon. The Town Council will have a site presence

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throughout the Friday of a car park supervisor who will be monitoring/enforcing the two hour parking. He will also record the number of vacant spaces on the hour. This has been agreed with Breckland Council.

5.2. Recreation Ground Project Sub-Committee

The Sensory Garden Project is on the final short list for the Peoples Millions Lottery bid in conjunction with ITV. Committee member Anne Greaves and other committee members will be filming for the programme on Wednesday 21st November, at 10.30am on the Recreation Ground. This will be shown on the following Tuesday 27th November at 6pm on Anglia News. The Committee need as many votes on the day by telephone. If the project has not received enough votes then another project will get the grant. Congratulations should be recorded to the Recreation Ground Committee and in particular to the Deputy Town Clerk as Lead Officer for all the hard work involved in getting this far. The submission was regarded as the best received by the representative of the Big Lottery and this played a part in getting the project moved from being on the Reserve list to being on the programme. Help was requested from anyone who could help on Tuesday 27th to raise the profile and help to circulate the telephone number to as many people as possible. The voting number won't be available until the morning of the show.

The result of the other grant application in conjunction with Breckland Council will be known in December. Things are progressing very well but it is difficult to tell whether this one will be successful

5.3. Town Group – Town Plan

The following report is from the Project Officer:-

The Town Group is currently engaged in the conduct of a 'Market Town Healthcheck' which is a nationally recognised method of conducting an appraisal of the town. The information collected through this process will inform the writing of a Plan for the town's future development. Four Working Groups (Economy, Social and Community, Environment and Transport) are collecting the data for the Healthcheck. Eleven representatives drawn from each of these groups comprise the Formal Town Group, which is the forum for discussion and decision making. Since April there have been 3 meetings of the broad Town Group and one meeting of 'The Eleven'. In addition, the Working Groups have held their own meetings.

Various overarching surveys are ongoing to support this process: Visitor Survey, Youth Survey (good progress and some interesting results to date). A Business and Employee Surveys are about to be started as well as the carrying on with the Main Survey which is open to all who live/work in Swaffham. The data collected from these surveys will be fed into the Healthcheck worksheets and the Final Report. The data will also be important in guiding the Town Group's thinking when it comes to proposing a Vision for the town and ultimately in tying everything together in the form of a Plan for the Town for, say, the next decade. The process has been supported by grants from Breckland, the Norfolk Rural Community Council and match funding. The Council are currently engaged in writing a grant application to EEDA to further support the Healthcheck, if successful this will enable the Council to extend the appraisal process into the town's migrant and traveller communities, which would provide the Town Group with some groundbreaking research.

The Way Forward?

The 4 working groups are aiming to complete their initial research in the New Year. Then the groups will bring their findings together through the Formal Town Group. The Group will then seek to identify a Vision for the future of the Town and then to construct a truly integrated

action plan which draws upon the evidence and ideas of each of the four groups. All being well a full draft of this plan will emerge during the summer of 2008. Ultimately the aim is to identify a clear vision and strategy so that Swaffham doesn't fall into the trap of many market towns that have gone about things in a piecemeal way and lacked a clear sense of purpose.

6. CIVIC AMENITIES

6.1. Honorary Citizen & Citizen of the Year criteria

It was agreed by the Town Council at the October meeting for a review of the Honorary Citizen Policy and for a proposal to go back to full Council. Similarly for a policy on Citizen of the Year to be drafted by the Open Spaces Committee and for a proposal to be taken back to full Council. There followed a lengthy discussion on both of these issues.

It was agreed to make a recommendation to Full Council in respect of the Citizen of the Year Award as follows: -

- a) Open to all age groups.**
- b) The nominee must carry out a service to the community.**
- c) Closing date of entries to be at the end of February.**
- d) Nominees are applicable for work carried out in Jan-Dec of previous year or before.**

It was agreed to make a recommendation to Full Council in respect of the Honorary Citizen Award as follows: -

- a) Must have lived in Swaffham for at least 5 years.**
- b) Closing date of entries to be at the end of February.**
- c) Any award to be presented at the Mayors Reception.**

6.2. Mayoral duties including the Mayor's Reception and Civic Service

The Assembly Rooms has been booked for the Mayor's Reception on Friday 17th April 2008.

6.2. Pedlars Sign - The Buttercross - Town Clock - War Memorial.

The only issue at present relates to a proposal by the Royal Naval Association to erect a further plaque on the War Memorial to recognise all those who have died in service after the Second World War. A meeting has been set up between all the parties concerned on 21st November to discuss the wording of such a plaque.

7. Date of next meeting.

7.1. The next scheduled meeting is on Wednesday 23rd January 2008

Meeting closed 7.32pm.

_____ Chairman