

SWAFFHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the inaugural Open Spaces & Amenities Committee meeting of the Town Council held on **Tuesday 29th November 2005 at 7.30pm** in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Swaffham.

Present:- Cllr J Stockdale (in the Chair)

Cllr C. Baker, Cllr P. Darby, Cllr B Emmerson, Cllr. A Greaves, Cllr S. Lister

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

1. To receive apologise for absence.

1.1. There were no apologies for absence.

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

2.1. Councillors were reminded of: -

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors please note that members are asked at the relevant point on the agenda to declare any interests they may have in any of the items on the agenda. The Parish Councils (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2001, requires that declarations include the nature of the interest, and whether it is a personal or prejudicial interest. In the case of prejudicial interests the member must withdraw from the room while the matter is discussed, ie; if a member of the public, who knows all the relevant facts, would view your personal interest in the issue being discussed to be so great that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest, then you must leave the meeting, and cannot seek to influence any decisions made.

2.2. Cllr Darby declared a personal interest in the garden science trust as he is the Town Council's representative.

3. Election of CHAIRMAN & VICE CHAIRMAN – for 2005/06.

3.1. The Mayor started the meeting in the Chair until this point. The committee were advised that the Chairman and Vice Chairman can then be chosen by the Committee, the Mayor & Deputy Mayor can be considered as candidates.

3.2. Chairman's election.

Cllr Lister proposed and Cllr Greaves seconded for Cllr Stockdale to be chairman.

It was unanimously agreed to appoint Cllr Stockdale as Chairman of the Open Spaces Committee.

3.3. Vice Chairman's election.

Cllr Lister and Cllr Baker seconded for Cllr Emmerson to be vice chairman.

It was unanimously agreed to appoint Cllr Emmerson as Vice Chairman of the Open Spaces Committee.

4. Brief outline of Terms of Reference by the Town Clerk

4.1. This outline included the principal of using Project sub-committees, Working Parties, Partnership working, Grant funding and the implications of the new "Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005".

4.2. The committee were advised that delegated authority has been given to the committee within standing orders approved by the full council in May 2005.

(Consisting of the Mayor & Deputy Mayor as ex-officio members, plus seven Councillors.) The Committee to meet at least twice a year in January or February and July or September, or as required. The Committee deals with general management issues related to reviewing Council policy and the delivery of services (e.g. grounds maintenance contract, health & safety). This is in respect of the Civic role of the Mayor, nominating Honorary Citizens, year on year management of the Allotments, Campinglands, Cemetery, the Churchyard, Market, Northwell Pool, the Buttercross, War Memorial, Pedlars Sign, Street Furniture and the Recreation Ground. The Town Council would be referred to if items of major expenditure over £500 or any variance away from budgeted figures of more than £250 and any proposed change of use for any amenities as listed. The day to day, management issues are dealt with by the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk, policy amendments would need to be approved by full Council.

4.3. The “Clean Neighbourhoods & Environments Act 2005 brings new powers to Town and Parish Councils to issue fixed penalty fines for Litter, Graffiti and Fly Posting. To issue dog control orders (where none is set by their District Council). The issue of street lights and hanging baskets were also discussed. Cllr Greaves proposed and Cllr Emmerson seconded to request these items be placed on a Full Council agenda.

It was agreed to request that the issue of the new street lights and hanging baskets be placed on a future full council agenda along with the issue of not being informed that the criteria as set by Norfolk County Council.

5. OPEN SPACES – issues reports and recommendations by the Town Clerk

5.1. Recreation Ground Committee

The Recreation Ground Committee was launched in January 2004 and ideally this would have emerged out of the Open Spaces Committee had it existed at that time. In future a brief report of progress will be given to the Open Spaces Committee. The purpose of having project sub-committees is to give sufficient time to go into detail to carry out the research, development, consultation and groundwork necessary to take a project from the ideas stage, through to funding and implementation. It is envisaged that sub-committees of this type will have a lifespan, they will involve members of the public in addition to councillors and at the point of project delivery they could either disband or evolve into something quite different. In the case of the Recreation Ground the sub-committee have already discussed the possibility of creating a “Friends of the Recreation Ground”, this is to be decided at a later date.

The big issue at present with the Recreation Ground has been the completion of the Business Plan; this has been a massive task to co-ordinate by the Deputy Town Clerk as lead officer. This is a lengthy document that will provide the key to whether grant funding is forthcoming from various sources or not. In recent weeks progress has been made and the draft has emerged. The next task is putting together the applications themselves. The success or failure of grant applications will determine the delivery timescale, but the aim at present is for work to commence on site in the third quarter of next year.

5.2. Market Committee

The Market Committee works mainly as a working party with the Market Superintendent, Deputy Town Clerk and Town Clerk to ensure that licenses are granted or revoked when necessary. The new incentive scheme has been agreed by full council to try and encourage greater numbers of traders back to the market and farmers market in the coming year. But much more needs to be done to build up not only the traders but the support for the traders week by week, month by month. There were a number of suggestions from committee members to look at for the future including: -

- A park and ride facility.
- A strategy for the future of both markets to then take to full council.
- To use a working party to look at a particular issue.

5.3. Cemetery – including overview of Work Experience Project.

The Cemetery Improvements and Chapel Restoration Project have been on the cards for sometime now. As time has dictated how soon staff time could be devoted to such a project to possibly include a wall and gates at the front, kerbing and surfacing work to the drive, restoration of graves/grave stones programme, fencing, trees, seats, chapel restoration with electricity supply to the chapel and to the garage workshop and water supply also to the garage workshop. It was reported that there is budget funds to pay for a quantity surveyor to cost out the project as a whole.

5.4. Churchyard

An extra-ordinary meeting in May followed on from a site meeting in April. A number of different issues have been highlighted as follows:-

- Boundary ownership around the churchyard, who is responsible for what?
- Where is there shared responsibility with the Parochial Church Council?
- What about the County Council who have to maintain the rights of way and footpath network?
- There are rabbits to deal with.
- Tree pollarding programme in progress.
- Grass cutting and general maintenance of the churchyard.

Cllr Lister proposed and Cllr Emmerson seconded to go to full council for the start of dialogue with the diocese to clear the old part of the churchyard for ease of maintenance.

| |
|---|
| <p>It was unanimously agreed to request to be placed on a Full Council agenda the issue of dialogue being started with the diocese to discuss the maintenance of the churchyard.</p> |
|---|

5.5. Northwell Pool

There is scope for an improvement project at Northwell Pool to involve consultation with residents, Anglian Water and Norfolk County Council to work in partnership with the Town Council. There is management of ducks, the pool, the woodland area and turning the road into a pedestrian area. Preliminary discussions have taken place with Norfolk County Council and some work is programmed to take place and vehicular access will be prevented by an amendment to traffic orders. Consultation with the residents of Northwell pool, letter to go out detailing what is going to be done, ask for comments and then invite them to a meeting.

5.6. Campinglands

Part of the Campinglands is currently recovering from being a builder's compound following the building of the new Community Centre. The area is subject to a grass cutting contract, again this has not been so good this year so we are looking to improve matters with the contractor next year. Other issues to consider are hedge cutting, access for the grass cutter via the Community Centre car park and maintenance of the log posts to keep cars off the area.

5.7. Allotments

The allotment sites always cause healthy discussion and the Open Spaces Committee need to assume the role of looking closely at all our allotment sites. The Allotment Review document the Clerk prepared a couple of years ago needs to be updated with an issues report and a further action plan. There is a steady decline in the need for allotments, although the Council's policy on increasing rents over the past two or three years has yielded an increased income. All options should be considered including consolidating allotment holders to certain areas and disposing of surplus land. The current policy is to keep a budget for expenditure to below the income that comes in via allotment rents. There is a letter and reply regarding various issues from Mr. Dennis Horton. The allotment sites are as follows:-

- Days Field
- Tumbler Hill

-
- Four Acres Field
- Shouldham Lane
- Shoulder of Mutton

Other ideas were discussed such as a pet cemetery and a recycling centre but a lot more research would have to be conducted.

5.8. Town Centre – licenses, street furniture and floral displays

The Town Centre enhancement programme has highlighted a number of issues in respect of additional street furniture and licensing. A licence would have to include all current street furniture and the flower tubs in various locations. One plan can cover the whole of the town centre, so this is something that will be done towards the end of the enhancement programme. The Council also have a notice board to erect in a suitable location in the town centre, this is the current bus shelter on the Boots side of Market Place and this is being converted by Norfolk County Council.

5.9. The Shambles

There is still some legal information to tie up with Breckland Council before the Town Council can call themselves the largest land owner in the Shambles area. Breckland are conveying four small pieces of land to the Council. This is an area where Cllr David Butters has done considerable research and he might want to be involved in any sub-group or working party.

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

6.1. Mayoral duties including the Mayor's Reception

Appointment and term of office:

Swaffham Mayor must give priority to the Town Council where there is a conflict of interests. The Town Mayor will normally have acted as Deputy Town Mayor during the year prior to him or her appointment as Town Mayor. (Please refer to Standing Orders for election year). The Town Mayor is appointed at the Annual Town Council meeting in May and holds office for the following twelve months.

Duties:

The Town Mayor is expected to act as an ambassador for the Town of Swaffham and to make him or herself available throughout his or her year of office. The Town Mayor is required to act as Chairman at the monthly Town Council Meetings, the Finance and General Purposes Meeting and the Annual Town Assembly. The Town Mayor is expected to attend as many official functions as possible. On occasions when he or she is unable to attend an official function, the Deputy Town Mayor should attend.

The Town Mayor is required to liaise with the Town Clerk in respect of urgent matters, which might arise between meetings and preparation of the agenda for Town Council meetings (N.B. It is the duty of the Clerk to sign the summons and prepare agendas.).

Civic Exchange (Town Twinning)

The Town Mayor is required to attend all functions in connection with the civic exchange visits to Swaffham undertaken by representatives of the Towns of Hemmoor and Couhe Verac. The Town Mayor is expected to lead the Swaffham delegation on civic exchange visits to Hemmoor, Germany and Couhe Verac, France and to attend liaison committee meetings with the Twinning Association and the Town Council. Travel expenses will be by the Town Council.

Civic exchanges will take place ever two years in September as follows:-

| | |
|-------------|---------------|
| Swaffham | 2004 and 2010 |
| Couhe Verac | 2066 and 2012 |
| Hemmoor | 2008 and 2014 |

Chain of office

The Town Mayor is responsible for the Mayors Chain while being insured by the Town Council. He or she is required to wear the Town Mayor's Chain of Office on the following occasions only:-

1. At all Town Council Meetings (this does not include the Budget meeting in December)
2. At the Annual Town Assembly.
3. At all formal engagements/civic functions to which he or she has been invited as Town Mayor (permission is required from the Town to be visited).

6.2. Honorary Citizen nominations

The Honorary Citizens of the Town are Col Saul Harris (deceased), Col John Boag, The Suffolk & Norfolk Yeomanry, Mrs. Toni Groom and finally Mr. Jack Boddy (deceased). The protocol agreed for nominations of Honorary Citizens is as follows:-

1. The Council should allow a period of time for nominations to be put forward. From the nominations only one Honorary Citizen should normally be awarded in a 4 year term (a maximum of two in exceptional circumstances).
2. The nominee should be resident in Swaffham for 25 years or more.
3. A range of significant contributions to the well being of the town.
4. No more than 1 presentation evening for the 4 year term in conjunction with the Civic Service or the Mayors Reception.
5. Minimum of 75% of Full Council must agree to the proposed Honorary Citizen and 9 Councillors must be present at that meeting.
6. Nominees from Swaffham electors as well as Councillors but the final decision will be made by the Council.

6.3. Town Crier – review & replace or not?

The Town Crier predicament has been well documented. The Town Council had a mixed view back in September of whether they should replace the Town Crier Eddie Godden who lasted just 12 weeks, following on from Kerry Hart who had been Town Crier for 7 years. The total cost each year for this honorary position was under £500. The questions to consider are

- 1) Do we replace the Town Crier?
- 2) If we do then do we review the protocol for a Town Crier and
- 3) Is £500 a realistic budget for the Town Crier.

If the answer to 1 is no, then 2 and 3 are irrelevant. If the answer is yes, then a recommendation would have to go forward to full council with a suggestion of when etc...

Cllr Stockdale proposed and Cllr Greaves seconded to recommend to Full Council not to replace the Town Crier position but put the decision in abeyance.

It was unanimously agreed to recommend to Full Council not to replace the Town Crier position but put the decision in abeyance.

6.4. Town Pound –

Cllr David Butters has prepared some background information on the Town Pound. This is an area that is claimed by the adjacent property owner who states that it is on her deeds. There is a plaque on the wall that states it is the property of Swaffham Town Council. The Council need to decide whether they wish to dispute this, whether they are the owners and if so what they plan to do with a Town Pound in the future.

It was unanimously agreed to recommend to Full Council to challenge the householder over ownership of the Town Pound.

6.5. Town Clock

The maintenance of the Town Clock is the responsibility of the Town Council. It was essential to have access to the clock at times which suited the staff, also for health & safety reasons for staff to be able to lock the door behind them. In the past there have been discussions about digitalising the clock so that it doesn't break down so often. It is suggested that we obtain prices for this and bring a proposal to the council when an improvement project is fully costed out under best value principles. Cllr Lister proposed and Cllr Greaves seconded to go to the town estate for a grant to electrify the clock.

It was unanimously agreed after research is carried out that a grant be applied for to the Town Estate to improve the mechanism of the Town Clock.

6.6. Pedlar Sign

The Pedlar Sign has been recently refurbished by Wayland Prison this past year. The total cost was a donation of £250 to a charity of the governors choosing. There was also some work carried out to repair the base. The Town Clerk has had a recent discussion with Highways to try and reduce the height of the road signs that currently obscure the Pedlar sign when looking from the Lynn Road direction.

6.7. The Buttercross

The Buttercross has had some repairs carried out this past year on a cracked column, plus some painting of columns. The Council have started to put money aside for remedial works on the Buttercross as and when they are required. It could be that an inspection from a specialist to assess future maintenance, say every five or six years would be a sensible approach to take. The Open Spaces Committee could come up with a policy for how this is managed.

6.8. War Memorial

The war memorial is the shared responsibility of the Town Council and the Royal British Legion. The cost of maintenance and lighting falls onto the Town Council. There are floral displays in the vicinity and litter often collects in on or around the war memorial. The most recent work carried out on the memorial was the additional name added, but similar to the Buttercross is that there is a regular inspection programme that should be in place to ensure that the general condition is kept to a good standard or repair. Research would have to be carried out into who owns the war memorial and when the Town Council took on the responsibility of maintaining it.

7. Date of next meeting.

7.1. The meetings according to standing orders are due to take place in January or February and July or September. It was recommend that February would be a good time for the next meeting to report on progress, then to settle into the six monthly cycle. It was agreed the next meeting would be Tuesday 28th February at 7.30p.m.

Meeting closed 9.00pm.

_____Chairman