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Minutes of the Full Town Council meeting held on Wednesday 8th March 2006 at 6.45p.m. in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Swaffham.

Present: Mayor Cllr. J Stockdale
Councillors: Mrs C Baker, Mr D Butters, Mrs P Buxton, Mr P Darby,
Mr B Emmerson, Mrs A Greaves, Mrs S Lister,
Mrs S Matthews, Mr I Sherwood, Mr L Wise.
Town Clerk: Mr R Bishop
Assistant Town Clerk: Mrs R Noble
Community Police Officer: P.C. A Partridge
Public: 11

952. APOLOGIES & REASONS FOR ABSENCE.

- 952.1. Cllr Frances Mann, un-available
- 952.2. Cllr. D Cannon, work commitments

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 6.48P.M.

THE MEETING WAS RECONVENED AT 6.50P.M. *See Appendix 1*

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

- 953.1. Cllr. B Emmerson declared a personal interest on 10.2. as he is a member of the British Legion.
- 953.2. Cllr. D Butters declared a personal interest on 9.3. as he is Chairman of the Museum.

954. MINUTES – WEDNESDAY 8TH FEBRUARY 2006

954.1. page 479 item 943.2. should read he is against planning application number 3PL/2006/0221/D

Subject to this amendment the minutes were signed as a true record by the Chairman.

955. MAYOR'S REPORT.

955.1. The Mayor briefly reported on the events he had attended in the past month.

955.2. The Mayor spoke about the Fairtrade Towns campaign being encouraged by the Convent of the Sacred Heart School, and suggested the Council pass a resolution at a future meeting.

956. POLICE REPORT – P.C. Partridge in attendance.

956.1. P. C. A Partridge reported there had been 38 crimes in the past month which is reasonably low.

956.2. A discussion took place relating to safety issues on the corner of Station Street and Northwell Pool Road, cars parking on the corner restricts access for pedestrians especially disabled people. P.C. Partridge stated that it is an enforcement issue as yellow lines includes paved areas the other side of the lines.

956.2. A discussion took place relating to the entrance into Beech Close at the junction from White Cross Road. It was suggested that double yellow are put on the junction to restrict the amount of traffic which is normally parked there. It was proposed that the Clerk write to the Highways Engineer and the Police with regards to double yellow lines on the

junction of Beech Close and Whitecross Road. P. C. Partridge stated he would support this.

It was unanimously agreed that the Clerk write to the Highways Engineer and the Police with regards to double yellow lines on the junction of Beech Close and Whitecross Road.

956.3. A discussion took place relating to Drugs/Needles near a tree which is covered in ivy and a den has been made under it at the rear of Netto's car park and Whitsands Road. It was suggested that the ivy is cut away. P. C. Partidge stated he has already contacted Netto's but would welcome the Council contacting as well. It was proposed that the Clerk write to Netto's requesting they cut the ivy down within 28 days or the Council will look at alternate ways of removing the ivy.

It was unanimously agreed that the Clerk write to Netto's requesting they cut the ivy down within 28 days or the Council will look at alternate ways of removing the ivy.

957. TOWN CLERK REPORT

957.1. The Spring Seminar held at the George Hotel in Swaffham yesterday was attended by three councillors, Ben Emmerson, David Butters and Shirley Matthews, Shirley in her capacity as President & Chairman of the Norfolk County Association, plus the Assistant Town Clerk Rosie Noble and myself. There was a full day of training covering important subjects such as Local Area Agreements, the New Code of Conduct, Diversity, Newsletters and Websites. The speakers came from Norfolk County Council, South Norfolk District Council, Norfolk Constabulary, National Association of Local Councils and RSe Consulting. The event was attended by around 100 people; with a mix of Councillors and Clerks.

957.2. Over the past couple of years everyone has been working together to try and achieve Quality Council status. The Clerk stated that he was quite happy to use the word WE because whilst the application is mainly down to quality tests on how the staff administrate the council, what our procedures are, how we communicate with the electorate and if the staff have the relevant qualifications and engage in training. It is also down to the councillors, how they conduct themselves, whether they are proactive in getting things done for the town, whether they truly represent the town and whether the Council as a whole works with the Mayor and the Town Clerk and the support staff. The Clerk was pleased to report that the Council does on all counts and the Quality Council award is the first in the Breckland District, the fifth overall. The bulk of the work in putting the application together; in the form of a portfolio of evidence, was carried out by Assistant Town Clerk Rosie Noble, even though the Deputy Town Clerk Michelle Meyrick & the Town Clerk are the ones that carry the qualification. The staff are rightly proud of Rosie's piece of work but the award I believe should be shared by everyone, because without each other the Town Council would not be what it is today. Pam Tallon wrote in her Swaefa's Way column a few months back that she already thought Swaffham had a quality council, now this is confirmed. Cllr. P Darby thanked all the staff for getting the award and The Mayor thanked the Clerk for all the hard work.

957.3. The Town Clerk reported he has had a request from Cllr. Ian Sherwood in his capacity as a District Councillor for a regular column in the quarterly newsletter. In our discussions my initial thoughts were that providing the three district councillors alternated their contribution or made a joint contribution, there is no problem with it. The Clerk recommended that providing there is enough editorial space that a regular contribution would be encouraged from our district and county councillors in future editions of in touch with your town.

It was unanimously agreed that a District Council column is placed in the Newsletter as it would keep parishioners up to date.

957.4. The Clerk reported a meeting with the Directors of the Icen Partnership has been provisionally booked for Wednesday 29th March in the Council Chamber. For the benefit of the public the Council met on 22nd February behind closed doors, to discuss the future of partnerships and a full and frank discussion reached the point where it is now necessary to meet with the Directors of the Icen Partnership in a further private meeting. The Council also met with the Partnership back in January. The outcome of this meeting may be made public, as deemed appropriate.

Following a short discussion it was agreed to change the date as there were several Councillors who would be unable to attend the meeting on Wednesday 29th April. The Clerk stated he would circulate alternate dates instead of the 29th March. Cllr. P Darby proposed and Cllr. B Emmerson seconded to move the date to the earliest opportunity.

It was agreed to change the date as there were several Councillors who would be unable to attend the meeting on Wednesday 29th April. The Clerk would circulate alternate dates. The date would be moved to the earliest opportunity.

957.5. The Clerk reported on 28th February all the Clerks of the five market towns were invited to Dereham to meet with the senior management team. The Clerk and Deputy found this an extremely useful meeting, as did the Clerks from the other towns. The aim is to establish a closer working relationship and one of the burning issues was Local Strategic Partnerships and Local Area Partnerships. At present Parish & Town Councils are excluded from LSP's and this is being seen as a democracy bypass in favour of unelected groups making decisions by consensus. Other issues discussed were assets currently in the possession of Breckland may be passing down to the towns, such as toilets. Breckland presence offices and the services that they give to the towns, and how they can be improved. These are being re-branded as Customer Service Centres, Training was focused on, particularly on standard issues and how Breckland and the Town Council's can assist in improving the isolation felt by the villages. Finally, there was a discussion on the forthcoming white paper coming soon on Local Government Re-organisation.

957.6. The Clerk reported it is hard to do justice to the main issue that is, and will continue to dominate our administration for the remainder of March – this is the Recreation Ground Heritage Lottery Fund Grant application. The Clerk and Deputy attended a meeting at the HLF head office in Cambridge recently this gave an extremely tight deadline of 31st March to meet stage one of a two stage grant process. A lot of hard work has gone into this project over the past two years. An excellent business plan is in draft, but this amounts to no more than about a third of the application itself. There was an encouraging meeting with Sport England last week and have another meeting with HLF next week. The Town Clerk stated that he had moved things around in the office to give the Deputy Town Clerk the time she needs to complete the work, this is the reason she is not here this evening, as it is important that all of us support her at this crucial time. The HLF application has a six month assessment process, during this time all the other match funding has to be confirmed, so again it will be a case of piecing together every little bit of this project. In summary, this is a difficult, encouraging and exciting period of time, there are highs and lows as the process unfolds. The Town clerk appealed to Councillors to keep their visits to the office to a minimum in the next couple of weeks, be patient, support us and we will do our best to not only meet this deadline but to help Michelle to deliver this project.

There are a number of draft policies for Education, Access, Training & Development, Volunteers and Equal Opportunities. These have been prepared specifically with the Recreation Ground project in mind, as they are all required for the Heritage Lottery Fund application. In order to submit Stage One of the Application on time by the 31st March, the Town Clerk requested that the Council should formally adopt the draft policies in the knowledge that they will not be used between

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this meeting and the April meeting. All the policies have been adapted from various models and are therefore using the correct terminology. Then you can debate, amend and agree the final version at the April meeting. The Town Clerk recommended to formally adopt the draft policies en-bloc in principle, but to review and agree the finer detail at the April meeting.

It was unanimously agreed to accept the policies as draft & review at the April meeting.

957.7. The Clerk informed the Council that photographic evidence of the Recreation Ground is still required for the project.

957.8. It was suggested for two or more Councillors to be vetted by Police as there are only two Councillors at present who have been. This will be part of the evidence required for young people. It was agreed any Councillors wishing to be vetted by the Police (CRB check) to give their names to the Clerk.

It was agreed any Councillors wishing to be vetted by the Police (CRB check) to give their names to the Clerk.

957.9. A question was asked on the land purchase for the swimming pool, the Clerk stated this will be worked on following the meeting next week with HLF and he will produce a detailed report next month.

The Clerk to produce a detailed report on the Land Purchase for the Swimming Pool next month.

957.10. A question was asked about when the bus shelter would be in place. The Clerk stated that Peter Cudby from Norfolk County Council has the information to carry out the work, but we do not have a date at present.

957.11. A question was asked about the duck pond at Northwell Pool, the Clerk stated this would be on the agenda for the Open Spaces meeting and a consultation meeting with the residents need to be arranged.

957.12. The Clerk reported the road closure is going ahead, the traffic order is in progress.

957.13. It was reported there are a lot more posters around the town on lamp posts etc. and on the bus shelter by Waitrose.

The Clerk stated he would arrange to have the posters in the town and on the bus shelter at Waitrose removed.

958. PLANNING/DEVELOPMENT CONTROL:

958.1. To receive notification of Decisions/Information from Breckland Council:-

3AG/2005/1917/F Planning permission granted for the change of use to car showroom and alteration to existing building. Swaffham Car & service centre, Castle Acre Road. Trevor Greef (Motor Services) Ltd	
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958.2. To receive and consider the following planning applications:-

3PL/2006/0167/F To replace existing timber building with new one (used for reception & tourist information point) Breckland Meadows Touring Park, Lynn Rd. Mr. A. Bull NO OBJECTION	3PL/2006/0220/F Single storey extension. 51 Mill Farm Nurseries. Mr. & Mrs. Allen. NO OBJECTION
3PL/2006/0209/LB External illuminated shop sign. ARC Dental Laboratory. Mr. Robert Fox OBJECTION	3PL/2006/0251/O Proposed building plot for single dwelling. 8 Oaks Drive. Mr. & Mrs. R. Young. OBJECTION
3PL/2006/0211/A Illuminated shop sign. 25a Market Place. Robert Fox OBJECTION	P/Y/3/2006/3006 Construction of new single storey 6 th form block within whole school site. Hamond's High School. NO OBJECTION, COMMENT

958.3. To receive and comment on any late applications received at the Mayor's discretion.

3PL/2006/0286/F Erection of two 2 storey dwellings. No. 1 Campingland. Development Insight Ltd. OBJECTION	3PL/2006/0290/D Erection of dwelling and detached garage. 11 Hickling Close. Mr. P.R. Bealey & Miss L.M. Freestone OBJECTION
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958.4. Correspondence re- 95 Market Place; Tattoo Land was circulated to all Councillors.

958.5. Tree preservation orders for St. Peter & St. Paul's Church was circulated to all Councillors.

958.6. Correspondence re-50 Market Place: The Goldmine Signage/illumination was circulated to all Councillors.

958. FINANCE:

958.1. Accounts for Payments for March 2006.

On the accounts List Number 312 should be nil, and there are no amounts in Number 314.

Subject to these amendments the payments were agreed.

958.2. A letter from Mrs. R. Rix requesting a Dog Bin at a grassed area at the end of Heathlands estate, bordering the Rugby Club was circulated to all Councillors. The Clerk stated that a dog bin would cost £150.00 Cllr. I Sherwood proposed and Cllr. B Emmerson seconded that the Clerk purchase a dog bin for the grassed area at the end of Heathlands.

Cllr. I Sherwood proposed and Cllr. B Emmerson seconded that the Clerk purchase a dog bin for the grassed area at the end of Heathlands.

958.3. A letter was circulated to all Councillors to consider further correspondence from Mr. W. J. Palmer Chairman of Myers Playing Field with regards to a request for grant assistance.

As there is still no specific request for an amount of money from the Council. Just a contribution towards the estimate of £5,000 needed to do urgent work, following a short discussion Cllr. P Darby proposed and Cllr. S Lister seconded the Clerk to write to Mr Palmer again to ask who they have asked for grant funding and to forward the names of the contractors the Council use for their hedge cutting and tree maintenance.

It was unanimously agreed the Clerk to write to Mr Palmer again to ask who they have asked for grant funding and to forward to names of the contractors the Council use for their hedge cutting and tree maintenance.

958.4. A letter was circulated to all Councillors to consider a request for a charity stall outside the Assembly Rooms, on Saturday 15th April from the Friends of Swaffham Community Hospital. It was proposed that the Friends of Swaffham Community Hospital to hold a Charity Stall.

It was unanimously agreed for the Friends of Swaffham Community Hospital to hold a Charity Stall. The Clerk to liaise with the Market Superintendent as to where the Friends of Swaffham Community Hospital can have the stall.

958.5. Completion of audit notice for 2004/05; from external auditor Roger Hill, Audit Commission was circulated to all Councillors. The Clerk reported another clean audit. Roger Hill from the audit commission only raised the fact that the accounts were approved on the 5th October which was the Finance meeting as the agenda for September was too long, and this should have been done before 30th September. The Clerk stated this will be addressed this for the current financial year and target the July meeting rather than the September meeting so that there is no lapse.

958.6. Details of the maintenance contract for the Church Clock which were requested at the last meeting were circulated to all Councillors. The Clerk stated all options are being looked at and Cllr. D Butters is doing some research.

959. JUBILEE HERITAGE PLAN.

959.1. Correspondence with Icen Partnership was circulated to all Councillors.

959.2. The Clerk stated a list of defects has been passed on to the architect as the first 12 months have passed of our occupation here in the Town Hall extension. After a further tendering process the hard standing area is now in hand, Cllr Dave Cannon's offer of supplying some of the brick-weave paving has saved the Council approximately £500.

The latest correspondence from Mrs. Dorothy Dickens and the Clerk's acknowledgement have been circulated to all Councillors. He had intended to give an interim report on the

access issues and alternatives open to the Council, but to receive such a detailed letter so close to sending out the papers to Councillors made this impossible. The Clerk stated he has to be careful how he report to Councillors because there is an implied threat in every letter now to take action under the Disability Discrimination Act. Mrs. Dickens clearly does not want to attend a further meeting to discuss anything other than a replacement lift. The Town Council have previously made their position clear. It is difficult to respond under these circumstances, as every word seems to be so closely scrutinised. In some ways it may clarify matters if Mrs. Dickens did take matters further, so that an independent assessment could be made. For the Council to move their meetings to another venue would be an admission that the Town Hall does not meet DDA requirements. The Clerk stated his only recommendation to Councillors at this point is to wait until they receive his report before they make any further decisions. He informed the Council there are a lot of demands on our time in the office this next month or so and he will not rush the report, if he need to defer it again, he will. He will also contest very strongly any claim that either the Town Council or himself are discriminating against anyone.

It was unanimously agreed to wait until the Town Clerk is ready to report to the Council on Access issues.

959.3. The Town Clerk reported the Museum contract was awarded last week and the successful contractor EVERGREEN BUILDING SERVICES started work on Monday of this week 6th March, it is a 24 week programme that concludes on Friday 18th August. He stated he would be prepared to go through the financial details with councillors on an individual basis. The contract is within the extended budget agreed back in December. A contract has also been awarded for the work on the Howard Carter Room being funded by WREN, a company called Motivation have been the successful contractor. An additional grant of £50,000 has been awarded from the Heritage Lottery fund, specifically targeted at the new displays and educational interpretation panels needed in the refurbished Museum. There is a lot of hard work to go with the Museum project, and more volunteers will be required particularly those with painting and decorating skills around the months of July, August and September.

960. GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE:

960.1. The 01/06 edition of Norfolk Link – NCAPTC was circulated to all Councillors.

960.2. Correspondence passed on to Norfolk Constabulary was circulated to all Councillors.

960.3. A request from the Royal British Legion to march through the town on Sunday 14th May for an annual Group Rally & March was circulated to all Councillors. It was proposed that the Clerk write to the British Legion granting their request to march through the town on Sunday 14th May and asking them to inform the police.

It was unanimously agreed that the Town Clerk should write to the British Legion granting their request to march through the town on Sunday 14th May and asking them to inform the police.

960.4. Correspondence from Mr. C. Maclean regarding the embankment adjacent to Northwell Pool was circulated to all Councillors. The Clerk reported the Northwell Pool project will eventually move forward, when time allows us to carry out the consultation, research and grants searches required.

960.5. Correspondence from Rev. John Smith relating to the Church Clock, pigeon debris in the belfry and other Church related issues was circulated to all Councillors. The Clerk reported the recent correspondence concerns mainly the poor state of the belfry that was drawn to our attention by Smiths of Derby. The build up of pigeon debris is a problem

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which is clearly a health & safety issue that needs to be dealt with by the Parochial Church Council before any further work is carried out on the Church by anyone. The Clerk reported he will arrange a meeting with John Smith in the next week or so to continue and clarify the dialogue, Cllr. I Sherwood supported this meeting and hoped it would bring forth a solution.

960.6. Correspondence from Mr. & Mrs. Paul Ison relating to the Town Pound, Tree Pollarding in the Town Centre, Lights on the Market Cross, Access to the Museum and the banner at the front of the Town Hall, the wooden plaque in the Council Chamber, the Shambles and the Assembly Rooms was circulated to all councillors.

The Clerk stated he has spoken with Mr and Mrs Ison at length on the telephone and have replied on all issues raised. Cllr D. Butters reported on his findings in relation to the town Pound, he stated it was important to the town and it was part of the towns history that should remain. It was proposed by Cllr P. Darby, seconded by Cllr L. Wise to carry out a search at the Land Registry.

It was agreed unanimously to carry out a search of the Town Pound at the Land Registry.

It was unanimously agreed that the plaque in the Council Chamber is taken down and stored until the Museum opens.

The Clerk was instructed to remove the plaque in the Council Chamber.

960.7. A circular letter inviting a Town Council representative to attend a briefing on 3rd April 1am – 12noon at Wymondham regarding raves and unlicensed music events was circulated to all Councillors. The clerk asked Councillors if they were interested in attending to let the office staff know.

961. BRECKLAND COUNCIL.

961.1. The Clerk reported on a meeting with Ray Johnson on 1st March regarding public toilets and give initial consideration on local management by the Town Council.

The Council had an extremely good meeting with Breckland Council property manager Ray Johnson last Wednesday 1st March. Swaffham was the first of the five market towns to be visited regarding the public toilets. He will be presenting a report to the Cabinet in due course. The issues for the Council to decide are as follows:-

- 1) If they would like to take on the public toilets following an upgrade and manage them locally. The councillors present at the meeting were suitably impressed at the new interior design.
- 2) The Council could decide to continue using the current contractor or use an alternative; they would not be tied to the existing contract.
- 3) The ownership of the fully upgraded toilets could be passed to the Town Council with a commuted sum. This would need to be invested and the interest used to maintain the toilets in the foreseeable future.
- 4) Ray Johnson fully appreciates that it is a case of finding the right commuted sum.
- 5) One issue to take account of is that upgrading is unlikely to happen if the Town Council do not agree to take on the toilets and in fact there is every likelihood of closure, as this is not a statutory function for Breckland (neither is it for the Town Council).

The Clerk recommended to the Council that the Council agrees in principle to the toilets being taken on by the Town Council. The town receives an upgraded amenity that will be managed locally and the opportunity of negotiating a suitable commuted sum for future

maintenance. Cllr. S Matthews proposed and Cllr. I Sherwood seconded that the toilets are taken on by the Council in principle.

It was unanimously agreed that the toilets are taken on by the Council in principle, subject to agreeing the commuted sum and after refurbishment.

961.2. Cllr. I Sherwood reported that for the second year running Breckland has taken the low cost honours with the annual charge for a Band D property set at £59.14. He went on to say that William Nunn, Leader of Breckland Council, said, "I am delighted that once again we have earned the accolade of the district with the lowest Council Tax in the Country."

961.3. It was reported that an alternate organisation sourced to take on the 60 year lease of the Merle Boddy Centre.

961.4. Cllr. I Sherwood reported he would be taking part as a volunteer in the survey during the summer on the Peddars Way Trail.

961.5. Cllr. Sherwood also reported he would be taking part on the 16th March in the Rough Sleepers Count in Swaffham, and he thanked the Town Council for providing facilities for a base.

962. NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL.

962.1. Correspondence re- Watton Road Zebra Crossing was circulated to all Councillors for information only.

962.2. Correspondence re- Norfolk Bus changes was circulated to all Councillors for information only.

962.3. It was reported that there is now a new leader at Norfolk County Council.

963. To notify of the DATES and changes of forthcoming meetings & receive any items to include on the AGENDAS OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS:-

693.1. Tuesday 21st March 2006 at 7.00pm Open Spaces Committee (*in the Council Chamber*)

693.2. Wednesday 29th March 2006 at 7.00pm (provisional date for meeting with Icen Partnership (*in the Council Chamber*) **NOW POSTPONED**

693.3. Wednesday 12th April 2006 at 6.45pm Full Council (*in the Council Chamber*)

693.4. Wednesday 19th April 2006 at 6.30pm Relief in Need (*in the Council Chamber*)
at 7.30pm Finance & General Purposes Committee

693.5. Wednesday 26th April 2006 at 7.00pm ANNUAL TOWN ASSEMBLY – (*in the Assembly Rooms*)

693.6. Friday 28th April 2006 – MAYOR'S RECEPTION – (*in the Assembly Rooms*)

There followed two minutes silence for PAST MAYOR, Mr B Barton-Jones who served on the Council for a number of years, although he suffered for a long time he still took an interest in what was happening in the town at all times.

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

694.1. The Clerk informed the Council that the Deputy Town Clerk had reported the details of a former employee of the council's Pension appeal to you as an option at the last meeting. She was unaware that the Council actually have no option to participate in the Pension Appeal which has a three stage process similar to a grievance procedure. The Council pay £100 per hour to look at each case. The average case is 2-3 hours. Our case is quite complex and having spoken to Chris Harding today he is suggesting that we may need to take further legal advice when we receive his response due to the complexity.

Chris Harding is the Specified Person – Norfolk LG Pension Scheme at stage one of the process. John Briscoe is the Specified Person – at the 2nd Stage and the Pensions Ombudsman 3rd & final stage (who has extensive powers).

694.2. The Clerk asked the Council if they had any objection to Cllr. David Butters, using temporary office space in the Council Chamber during building works for the Museum. He recommended that Cllr butters should be allowed to use the Council Chamber except when meetings or bookings were in the Chamber.

It was unanimously agreed for Cllr. D Butters to use temporary office space in the Council Chamber during building work for the Museum.

The meeting closed at 9.05p.m.

Chairman.....

Appendix 1

I Bubbear – When is the deadline for questions for the Town Assembly meeting?

Town Clerk – This will be 2 or 3 days before the agenda is sent out, 17th April.

D Horwell – Could there be a dog bin in the lane leading to Shouldham Lane allotments?

Town Clerk – Will look into the possibility.