

SWAFFHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Wednesday 14th February 2007 at 6.45p.m. in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Swaffham.

Present: Mayor Cllr S. Matthews

Councillors: - Mr D. Butters, Mrs P Buxton, Mr D. Cannon, Mrs A. Greaves
Mrs T. Jennison, Mrs S. Lister, Mr F. Sharpe.

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

Public: - 20

1105. APOLOGIES & REASONS FOR ABSENCE.

- 1105.1. Cllr Baker (personal commitments)
- 1105.2. Cllr Sherwood (family commitments)
- 1105.3. Cllr Wise (in hospital)
- 1105.4. Cllr Stockdale (holiday)
- 1105.5. Cllr Mann (work commitments)
- 1105.6. PC Partridge (new duty pattern)

1106. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – for items included on the Agenda.

- 1106.1. Cllr Jennison declared a personal interest on item 1114.11.
- 1106.2. Cllr Greaves declared a personal interest on item 1111.2.
- 1106.3. Cllr Lister declared a personal interest on item 1113.3.
- 1106.4. Cllr Butters declared a personal interest on item 1113.3 and 1111.2.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 6.46p.m.
THE MEETING WAS RECONVENED AT 7.00p.m.

1107. MAYOR'S REPORT.

1107.1. The Mayor reported that she had attended the King's Lynn Mart today which was very enjoyable. There are several things coming up next month.

1107.2. A circular letter and consultation document from the Department of Communities and local Government (DCLG) has been received. It is a revised model of conduct for Local Authority members: A copy of this document was received earlier this week and copies have been circulated to Councillors.

<p>It was agreed for Councillors to give observations/comments to the Town Clerk by the 28th February. The responses are to be collated and sent to the DCLG by the 9th March 2007.</p>
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1108. POLICE REPORT

1108.1. The Town Clerk attended a meeting of the Safer Neighbourhood Inter Agency Group meeting at the Community Centre on 15th January. The next meeting will be on 26th February at the Community Centre.

1109. MINUTES

1109.1. The minutes of the Full Town Council Meeting of Wednesday 10th January 2007, amendments – page 569 second to last line of Play Area section should read

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“have our budget” - Public Toilet section second paragraph should read “If they went to a coffee shop would” – page 571 item 1090.2. 4th paragraph line 3 should read “They are” – page 572 item 1092.3 second line should read “was taken” – page 575 item 1095.6 first line should read “Advice has been” – item 1097.3 first line should read “Cllr Sherwood”. Following these amendments the minutes were signed as a true record by the Chairman.

1109.2. The minutes for the extraordinary meeting of 29th January 2007 were agreed and signed as a true record by the Chairman.

1110. TOWN CLERK REPORT:-

1110.1. Connection of electricity to the Buttercross.

Arrangements have been made for Woods of Norwich to remove the steps to the Buttercross on Monday 19th February to allow access for EDF Energy to connect the electricity supply on Tuesday 20th February. Drakes Electrical have confirmed that they will be present with EDF to complete the work required to the lighting and sockets inside the Buttercross.

1110.2. Swimming Pool Land Purchase.

The situation has not changed since last month. It is on-going and all will be revealed in due course.

1110.3. Larger Councils meeting at Thetford on 12th February.

Cllr Greaves, Cllr Butters, Cllr Jennison and the Town Clerk attended the Larger Councils meeting at Thetford on Monday of this week. There was a presentation on the East of England Regional Plan by John Williams who is the parish representative on the East of England Regional Assembly. He gave a very enthusiastic and enlightening talk regarding the regional assembly and how it works. He is also a Parish Councillor championing the work of the 1st tier in Local Government, with experience as a District and County Councillor. The regional assembly is the gateway to the funding streams for this area. Susan Glossop, Thetford Town Manager (who is employed by the Town Council) also gave a presentation on Thetford and the benefits of the Growth Point Status. It gave an insight in how a Town Council can play a more active role with both the private sector and with community groups, bridging the gap between this and the public sector. Mike Grayley gave a presentation on the Quality Council scheme. He stated that there is literature being produced that would be of interest to potential new councillors. This would be available prior to the Town Council's final Roadshow in March.

1110.4. BRECKLAND COUNCIL LIAISON MEETING - The Mayor, Deputy Mayor, the Town Clerk and the Deputy Town Clerk met with Ray Johnson who is the new liaison officer, replacing Andy Wright. There were a number of topics discussed all of which will be on future agendas as they are moved forward. This list is for information only at this stage:-

- Recreation Ground Toilets.
- Waste Recycling Credits.
- Removal of one car parking space in Theatre Street Car Park, to accommodate the improved footway from the car park to the town centre.
- Lynn Road development Section 106.
- Toilets and Play Areas letter of intent needed for the extraordinary meeting on 29th January.

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- Conveyance for the Buttercross.
- Conveyance for some areas within the Shambles.
- Potential development sites within the town.
- Plowright Place
- Swimming Pool site legal agreement

1110.5. COUNCILLOR ROADSHOW - On Wednesday last week 7th February the 2nd Councillor Roadshow was held at the Community Centre. This was attended by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Cllrs Butters, Jennison, Lister and Sharpe, plus the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk. There was interest shown by six potential candidates for the forthcoming election in May, these were added to a similar number who were interested at the first event in November. The next Roadshow will be at the Assembly Rooms on Wednesday 21st March 7pm – 9pm.

1110.6. RECREATION GROUND – An order has been placed with SMP Playgrounds for £15,000 worth of new play equipment for the Recreation Ground. This money has come from Icen Partnership. The Town Council gave delegated authority to the Recreation Ground Committee to decide what equipment to purchase and the placement of them as it has to be completed by the 31st March.

1110.7. WORKLOAD - It should be noted that in particular, items 8.2 relating to the proposed sale of surplus allotment land and subsequent side issues, item 12.3 the proposed transfer of Play Areas, Public Toilets and TIC to the town, also item 15.1. (a) issues related to the conciliation meeting regarding access to and from the Council Chamber are all very time consuming at present. These three issues alone are taking up 75% of the Town Clerk's time and as such this impacts on all the support staff.

1110.8. STANDING ORDERS - This issue was drawn to the Town Clerk's attention by Cllr Ian Sherwood as the level of business seems to be increasing year on year. It is important that some issues are given sufficient time on the Council agenda. In order to do this it may be necessary to have a slightly earlier start, to aim to complete all public business by 9pm and all confidential business by 9.30pm. The Mayor would have the discretion at 9pm to take only urgent items at this point and move other issues to a future agenda. If there is a substantial amount of the agenda remaining, then it may be necessary to adjourn the meeting and re-convene within a 7-day period. This would avoid Councillors having to absorb reports and take important decisions late into the evening after a long meeting. Cllr Cannon proposed and Cllr Buxton seconded to start at the same time (6.45pm) but to finish the meeting at 9.30pm with a reminder at 9p.m.

It was agreed to keep the start time of the Full Council meeting at 6.45p.m. but to finish the meeting by 9.30p.m. with a reminder at 9.00p.m.

1111. PLANNING/DEVELOPMENT CONTROL:

1111.1. Notification of Decisions from Breckland Council:-

3PL/2005/1675/F Planning permission granted for proposed conversion of existing barn to 2 holiday lets and garage. Pedlars Home Stables, Norwich Road. Miss. Pam Brackley.	3PL/2006/1791/F Planning permission granted for proposed lounge and en-suite extension. Sunset, Princes Street. Mr. & Mrs. J. Marengi.
3PL/2006/1738/LB Refusal of Listed Building Consent for conversion of existing coach house to dwelling. Coach House, Glaisedale House, 23 Station Street. Mr. & Mrs. R. Chapman.	3PL/2006/1745/F Planning permission granted for the demolition of existing garage. Erection of extensions and detached garage. (Written confirmation received for an amended scheme to rebuild demolished garage as attached, not detached)

Page 583 3PL/2006/ 1879/F Refusal of planning permission for proposed New chalet bungalow, 9 Beech Close. Mr. & Mrs. Anscombe.	3PL/2006/1849/F Planning permission granted for the Erection of glass roof conservatory. 24 Shepherds Fold. Mr. Neil Hammond.
3PL/2006/1592/F Planning permission granted for proposed New dwelling and associated garage. Site adjacent to Mill House, Mill Lane. Mrs. P. Eller	3PL/2006/1291/F Planning permission granted for the Raising of roof level & associated works. 1 Gordon Terrace. Mr. M. Green

1111.2. Planning applications:-

3PL/2007/0020/F Erection of 8 terraced dwellings following demolition of function room. Land adjacent Lydney House Hotel, Norwich Road. Jetspark Ltd NO OBJECTION	3PL/20070084/LB Construction of 8 terraced dwellings following demolition of function room. Land adjacent Lydney House Hotel, Norwich Road. Jetspark Ltd NO OBJECTION
3PL/2007/0070/D Erection of 74 bedroom carehome. Jack Boddy Way, Ecotech Park. Swaffham Partnership NO OBJECTION	3PL/2007/0105/CU Change of use from agricultural land to domestic garden. Brake Hill Farm, Brandon Road, Mr. Andrew Head NO OBJECTION Cllr Butters declared a personal interest as he knows the applicant.
3PL/2006/1641/LB Erection of satellite dish. 16 Lynn Street. Matthew and Darren Harvey.; NO OBJECTION – but would prefer to have it placed on the back of the building.	

1111.3. Copies of Planning Enforcement have been received and are listed below.

SW Plastics – Enforcement of Advertising Signs.	White Hart Public House – Enforcement of unauthorised signs.
Land at the rear of 3C Market Place – Enforcement of ISO Container	

1112. FINANCE:

1112.1. Accounts for Payments for February 2007.

The list of Accounts for payment was circulated to Councillors. See Appendix 2.

It was unanimously agreed to accept the accounts as listed

1112.2. Progress report relating to proposed disposal of surplus allotment land and subsequent correspondence including:-

A list of allotment holders has been circulated to Councillors This shows progress of where the office is with serving notice, receiving correspondence and meeting with individual tenants, moving tenants and taking vacant possession.

Each letter received will be dealt with as listed on the published agenda. There are a number of additional letters which are also included and the Town Clerk guided the Council through the issues raised. A further additional letter was received from a newly formed organisation “Swaffham Community Allotments and Leisure Gardeners’ Association” this has been circulated to Councillors. It advises of a public meeting to be held in the Assembly Rooms on Monday 5th March. It is stated that this group look forward to establishing a sound working relationship with the Town Council.

It was agreed to note the content of the correspondence and for the Clerk to respond to the points raised.

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1112.3. Receipt of acknowledgement letters from Government Office East.

There have been two identical letters received from Government Office East relating to the disposal of allotment land at Days Field and at Shoulder of Mutton. A copy of one letter relating to Days Field has been circulated to Councillors. Regular progress reports will be given to the Council.

1112.4. Correspondence from and to Mr. & Mrs. T. Cotton has been received and circulated to Councillors. It relates to the Shoulder of Mutton allotment site and the Freedom of Information Act. This letter is very detailed, two pages of A4 and has in part been responded to by the Town Clerk. There are eleven points raised under the Freedom of Information Act which the Clerk has to respond within 20 working days which expires on 1st March. The Council has given consideration to alternative allotments which are currently in a bad condition; estimates are before the Council for consideration later on the agenda. Notification has been given that Mr. & Mrs. Cotton would be lobbying the Secretary of State regarding consent for developing this site.

It was agreed for the Clerk to give an appropriate response as required under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

1112.5. Correspondence from and to Mr B. Cocksedge has been received and circulated to Councillors. It relates to a compensation claim for his allotment site on the Shoulder of Mutton. Mr. Cocksedge is disappointed at being given notice to vacate his allotment at Shoulder of Mutton, as permission was given in September 2006 to erect a 10' x 20' poly-tunnel. He is suggesting that to remove this would cost £200 for another cover. £108 has been spent on new raspberry canes plus fruit trees. He has also erected double gates and created a grassed area to park his car. He is requesting compensation when he moves allotment.

It was agreed for a compensation payment of £250 is made for the cost of the new cover for the poly tunnel and a contribution towards the fruit trees. This will be made on the day of vacation subject to the allotment being left in good condition.

1112.6. Correspondence from and to Mr I. Robinson has been received and circulated to Councillors. It relates to his allotment on Days Field. Over the past eighteen months he had invested in fencing to fend off rabbits. He felt it was unfair to dislodge tenants from a fully subscribed allotment, to transfer to a new site where they must start from scratch. The Town Clerk has responded in detail to these points, answering also a query regarding the proposed inspections, which are simply for the purpose of assessing the task at hand. The Clerk has also offered to meet with Mr. Robinson.

It was agreed that no further action is needed at this point.

1112.7. Correspondence from and to Mr M. Blakey has been received and circulated to Councillors. It relates to his allotment on Days Field. The Council received a letter from Mr Blakey informing of an immediate end to his allotment tenancy, he has also returned his allotment key and been refunded the three pounds seventy five pence. Councillors have also been circulated photographs of these two allotment sites and a second letter, this time by e-mail requesting that the first letter should be withdrawn, this has been acknowledged by the Clerk. Cllr Jennison proposed to let Mr Blakey have his allotment back for a year but there was not seconder. Cllr Cannon proposed and Cllr Lister seconded to accept his original letter to give up his allotment site.

It was agreed with 1 abstention to accept Mr Blakey's first letter to terminate his tenancy of the allotment site.

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1112.8. The Clerk recommended that the following be taken into consideration as policy: - 'Where an immediate end to a tenancy is desired by the tenant, the amount of rent paid in advance can be refunded if the allotment is left in a reasonable condition or this can be offset against any expenditure in clearing the allotment.'

It was agreed to include the above statement as Town Council policy.

1112.9. Correspondence from and to Mr M. Lane has been received and circulated to Councillors. It relates to his allotment on Days Field. This letter informs the Council of a move from Days Field to two allotments at Shouldham Lane. The paperwork is currently being prepared and has been signed by Mr. Lane. The other issue raised is the clearance of the alternative sites and the width of these sites that are currently not marked out.

It was agreed to continue dialogue with Mr Lane to ease his move of sites.

1112.10. Correspondence has been received from Mr & Mrs P.J. Clarke and circulated to Councillors. Mr. & Mrs. Clarke make the point that the town's people have not been consulted on the issue of whether the surplus allotment land should be sold. They have had their allotment for 27 years and outline the benefits of having an allotment, as a family and as a community. They strongly object to Council's wish to sell these allotments and to use them for development purposes and would like this noted. They believe that the elected members should take all of Swaffham resident's feelings into consideration before making a decision of this nature, and look at the whole picture, i.e. the enjoyment these allotments will bring to future generations and not just the money you gain now. The Council's attention is drawn to the poor condition of Mr. & Mrs. Clarke's allotment, taking into account the time of year it is.

It was agreed for the Council to note the contents of Mr & Mrs Clarke's letter and for the Clerk to respond in more detail to them.

1112.11. Estimates for clearance work on allotments at Tumbler Hill and Shoemakers Lane have been received.

a) Four Acres Field allotments 12a-21. To cut down all brambles, vegetation and light scrub, grind out stumps of small trees, clearing of all material i.e. tin, metal and general debris, placed into a heap or skip supplied by the Council. Once these operations have been carried out, final cultivating operations will take place and the area will be rotavated.

Cost - £1950+ VAT.

b) Shoemakers Lane allotments 37-50 approx. To cut down light vegetation only, followed by cultivating and rotavating. Should any debris be present, this will also be placed into a heap or skip provided by the Council.

Cost - £750 + VAT

c) Shoemakers Lane allotments 13-25. To cut down light vegetation and brambles in the corner, followed by cultivating and rotavating.

Cost - £1120 + VAT

It was unanimously agreed to accept the estimates as detailed above, using reserves until reimbursed by income from the sale of surplus land.

There will be further estimates to come for Tumbler Hill, but some work is in progress within budget. Clearing a small number of allotments at the top end of the site. The remainder will be subject to a substantial amount of work for clearing, levelling and ploughing etc.

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1112.12. Cllr Butters requested that the issue of a possible ransom strip at the shoulder of mutton to protect access to the Water Tower be put on a future agenda.

It was agreed to put this issue on a future agenda.

1112.13. The following late allotment correspondence has been received and circulated to Councillors for information only.

a) Mrs. S. Northern: The Town Clerk entered into correspondence but discovered that the three allotments at Days Field had not been paid for. The Invoice was sent on 20th October, a reminder sent on 20th December with a cut off date of 14th January. Subsequently the notice has been served to take vacant possession with immediate effect.

It was agreed that no further action is required.

b) Mr. B. Baxter – Wishes to protest about the development of allotment land at Day's Field and Shoulder of Mutton sites. He suggests that the Council have shown a disregard for the tenants involved. He outlines the benefit of allotments and suggests that the use of allotments is growing countrywide. He is also pleased that a community association of town's people is being formed and will be looking to a complete regeneration of allotments in the town and protecting them for future generations.

It was agreed to note the content and for the Town Clerk to respond to all points raised.

c) C.J. Finch – Points raised are that the Council have never actively promoted allotment holding in the town, allowed sites to run down and this neglect has dissuaded people from applying for them. Allotments are an excellent recreational activity. The Council are selling off the land for short-term gain, ignoring the potential value of this site. These allotments form part of the local heritage, and members are asked to carefully consider responsibilities towards future generations.

It was agreed to note the content and for the Town Clerk to respond to all points raised.

d) Mr. M.P. Lucas a copy of correspondence to the Town clerk and with Cllr Pam Buxton. He is concerned that there has been no discussion with allotment holder's or townspeople about this decision. He feels this is a decision that the town should make not just the Council. Both sites in question have had no vacancies despite greatly increased rents in the last 5 years. Reference is made to long standing allotment holders, stating that there would be increased demand in the future if more homes are built with small gardens. He mentions a community association that is in the process of being formed plans a regeneration initiative to improve all sites with security, community facilities and improved access. A separate note refers to a 1998 white paper "The future of allotments" in which it recommends that a significant proportion of the proceeds from the sale of a site should be used to provide improvements to other allotment sites in the area.

It was agreed to note the content and for the Town Clerk to respond to all points raised.

e) Mrs. Sue Polaine-Leonard has responded to the Town Clerk's recent letter that followed a meeting with the Clerk. The meeting took place after Mrs. Polaine-Leonard had chosen a new allotment site at Shouldham Lane. Mrs. Polaine-Leonard wishes to pay for her new allotment. This is contrary to the recent discussion with the Town Clerk regarding a compensation claim and looking at ways to facilitate her

move to the new allotment. This included a discussion on the re-location of the play equipment which would not be going to the new allotment.

It was agreed for the Town Clerk to respond to the points raised reaffirming the date for the Council taking possession as Monday 14th January 2008.

Cllr Greaves stated that the Council is not removing the opportunity for townspeople to have allotments. We are not preventing people growing organic food in the fresh air. It was also pointed out that there will be 17.5 acres of retained allotment land at the moment the Council has 26 acres

1112.14 A request has been received and circulated to Councillors from the Royal British Legion Swaffham Branch. It is regarding a contribution towards the band on Remembrance Sunday, also a formal response regarding smartening up of the War Memorial itself.

It was agreed to set aside £150 IN 2007/08 for the Remembrance Sunday Band.

1112.15. The second request from the Royal British Legion Swaffham Branch relates to the general condition of the War Memorial itself. It is in need of a pressure wash to clean the memorial itself, but it is the railings that are in greater need of attention. The railings are looking very tired and have been repainted on a number of occasions. It has got to the stage where they either need the paint burnt off to start again, or to replace the railings with new. Late correspondence has been received from the Chairman of the Swaffham branch confirming that members would be willing to carry out the required work subject to the Council providing the necessary funds for materials.

It was agreed to: -

- a) carry out a pressure wash straightaway,**
- b) regular pressure washes at the end of October each year,**
- c) Cost out restoration of the railings using volunteer labour,**
- d) Cost out restoration of railings using professional labour,**
- e) Cost out replacement of railings,**
- f) Clerk to meet with the Chairman of Royal British Legion on site.**

1112.16. Details of attendance/booking for NCAPTC Spring Seminar & Update on Thursday 8th March 2007 at the Assembly Rooms have been received and circulated to Councillors. This annual training seminar includes updates on risk assessments, gypsies & travellers, building community trust and a general session entitled "what's out there for you?" This training event is open to all councillors but particularly relevant to chairmen and clerks. Any Councillors wishing to attend to contact the Clerk as soon as possible.

1112.17. A request from Ms Susan Ingleby has been received and circulated to Councillors for anti littering signs in Ash Close and at least 2 – 3 litter bins.

It was agreed for the Clerk to carry out a site visit to establish suitable positions for signs and bins. The Clerk is then to take a recommendation to the next Full Council.

1112.18. A request from Mrs. Jean Stone has been received and circulated to Councillors for a litter bin to be placed at the green areas around the crossroads (Sporle Road/New Sporle Road).

It was agreed to order an appropriate litter bin for the Sporle Road/New Sporle Road junction within the current year budget.

1112.19. Amended annual return for the year ended 31st March 2006 - In recent exchanges between the Town Clerk and the Audit Commission a compensating error was discovered by the Town Clerk and drawn to the attention of the external auditor. The error relates to

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pension contributions that increased staffing costs in Box 4 by £4,964 and decreases Box 6 by the same amount. On receipt of a revised annual return, agreed by the Council, resigned and dated by the Town Clerk and Chairman (Mayor), the audit would be complete for 2005/06.

It was agreed to approve the amended return and allow the Mayor and Town Clerk to sign the form to complete the audit.

1112.20. External Auditor – Late correspondence has been received and circulated to Councillors detailing the appointment of Alun Williams as the external auditor for the Audit Commission. Mr Williams will be the external auditor for Swaffham Town Council.

1112.21. A late request has been received from Mr. Green on the auction site at the Saturday Market. Mr. Green has requested that the Council consider a reduced rate for the stall allocated to him which is in addition to his auction site. The total frontage after relocating Mr. Palmer the Ice Cream van would be 24 feet that would give a total rent of £84 per month. The Market Superintendent is concerned that a reduced fee would in fact result in other traders seeking a reduction in rent for various circumstances. N.B. any decision would have to be ratified at the March meeting as this is finance and not included on the published agenda. Cllr Lister proposed and Cllr Greaves seconded to charge the full rent subject to the incentive scheme.

It was agreed to charge Mr Green the full rent for his market pitch subject to the incentive scheme.

1113. JUBILEE HERITAGE PLAN.

1113.1. A request has been received and circulated to Councillors from Icen Partnership seeking help and advice from the Town Council regarding parking limitations at the Community Centre. Ideas that have been floated in the past have been developing car parking on the Antinghams or taking up more of Campingland. There followed a discussion, the Council were not happy for any part of the green areas being used for car parking.

It was unanimously agreed for the Clerk to reply to Icen Partnership stating the Council were not happy for any green areas in that part of town to be used for car parking and to recommend to advise users of the Community Centre to use the Theatre Street car park.

1113.2. The majority of snagging work is complete at the Town Hall. The replacement door and mechanism is awaited. When this has been completed the final account can be paid to Veltshaws. The hard standing area is complete, we have to have the sign of a wheelchair painted on to the space and we have a sign to erect stating that this is for Disabled Parking only.

It was agreed for the Clerk to push contractors for a completion date on the door and other minor works at the earliest opportunity.

1113.3. The Museum is on course to be open at the end of next month. The new display cases have arrived and are now in position in the old Council offices as well as the new flooring. The new shop counter has been converted from the library and is in position. The Stannah stair lift will be installed shortly. The volunteers are working hard with the staff to achieve the target opening date of 31st March.

1114. GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE:

1114.1. Correspondence to and from Mr. R. Clarke regarding the Town Clock has been received and circulated to Councillors. Mr. Clarke supplied some helpful information relating to the chiming of the clock. This was passed on to the clock restorer. It has been noticed that the clock is still a few minutes slow. This will be rectified shortly.

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1114.2. A circular letter regarding Norfolk Clerk of the Year 2007 has been received and circulated to Councillors. The information relates to the competition won by the Town Clerk in 2006. It is understood that the winner cannot enter in the following year.

1114.3. An acknowledgement letter from CPRE regarding membership confirmation of the Town Council has been received and circulated to Councillors.

1114.4. A copy of the Norfolk Link newsletter of NCAPTC has been received. This newsletter has articles relevant to town/parish sector of local government. It is suggested that the Council consider paying a small contribution towards ordering sufficient copies to distribute to all councillors. This would come to councillors separate to the meeting pack. The subscription fee is due in April 2007.

1114.5. Late correspondence has been received and circulated to Councillors from Mrs. Carole Simmons regarding the danger of trees on the Recreation Ground adjacent to 1 Southlands. A report is awaited from the Tree Surgeon Mr David Machin.

1114.6. Late correspondence has been received and circulated to Councillors from the Breckland Christian Fellowship notifying the Council of 6 fundraising stalls outside the Oasis Centre. The first on 31st March 2007, other dates will be notified when they are arranged.

1114.7. Late correspondence has been received and circulated to Councillors from Mr Stan Sole Chairman of the Twinning Association informing the Council of the 40th anniversary of the twinning with Couhe. He suggests that there is a possibility of an event to mark this occasion in Swaffham on August Bank holiday weekend 25th, 26th & 27th August.

It was agreed to arrange a liaison meeting with members of the Twinning Association and to bring a recommendation for consideration to the Full Council meeting in March or April.

1114.8. Correspondence from and to Mrs. J. A. Edwards regarding safety of trees in Churchyard to rear of 83 Market Place has been received and circulated to Councillors. The recent correspondence followed a telephone conversation between Mrs. Edwards and the Town Clerk. Mrs. Edwards outlines her concerns regarding the safety of Fir/Cyprus trees situated in the Churchyard to the rear of 83 Market Place. She requested that the trees be inspected for safety purposes and to have the branches lopped and ideally the height reduced. A copy of a tree report from David Machin who advises the Council on tree safety has been received today and circulated to Councillors. The three trees concerned are all Corsican Pine. All three trees show no evidence of recent branch failure, two of the trees show minimal risk should any fall on to fabric of building, one tree (no. 2) shows high risk if branches fall on to the fabric of the building. All three trees show no sign of disturbance to the soil or root system around the base of each tree as a result of being partially windblown in recent gales. The summary declares all trees are in a good state of health. The growth rate is slowing down, but has many years of growth rate left. They are of considerable presence and amenity value on the landscape of this area. The report concludes that the trees within the churchyard do pose a risk to the buildings below should they fall, but it suggests that almost all the trees in the churchyard pose a similar risk should this happen. The trees that pose the most risk would benefit from an annual inspection to possibly prevent the nature of this occurrence happening and increase the life span of the trees.

It was agreed to accept the report from the tree surgeon & to programme an annual inspection of the trees concerned. To send a copy of the report to Mrs Edwards. To remove the worst of the three trees at a cost of £380.

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1114.9. Correspondence from and to Mr. D. Ward regarding safety of trees on the Recreation Ground behind 56 Greenhoe Place has been received and circulated to Councillors. The letter from Mr. Ward identifies trees of concern that are located on the Recreation Ground at the rear of his property. Photographs have been circulated to Councillors highlighting the areas of concern. A report from the tree surgeon has been circulated to Councillors. Both trees are in a good condition but one tree in particular poses a nuisance and hazard factor to the residents of Mr Ward's property. There is loss of light, health hazard from persistent bird droppings and finally the risk of damage should the tree fall in severe weather this would be catastrophic. A suggested solution would be to fell this tree to clear up the problems highlighted and remove the risk. The second tree would be retained and pose little threat to the property.

It was agreed to accept the tree surgeons report and to remove the tree that is of concern at a cost of £450 subject to permissions being obtained if required from Breckland Council. It was also agreed to accept the cost of tree stump removal at a cost of £252.62 for 1 at the Churchyard, 2 at the Cemetery and 1 at the Recreation Ground.

1114.10. A request has been received from the Mid-Norfolk Support Group of the Gurkha Welfare Trust to have a Charity Stall at the Market on Saturday 14th July 2007. The charity is similar to many other deserving causes who request space free of charge at the Market. The Council need to be mindful of their current policy to support charities that give direct benefit to the residents of Swaffham. This matter is therefore referred for clarity of this policy and to consider this request on its merit.

It was agreed to allow the Mid-Norfolk Support Group of the Gurkha Welfare Trust to have a charity stall on the Market on the 14th July 2007 free of charge.

It was agreed for the Town Clerk to use his discretion on future applications of charity stall allocations.

1114.11. A request has been received and circulated to Councillors from the Home Hospice Support for Swaffham & Litcham. The request is for permission to hold a Charity Stall on the Market on the 27th October and 17th November to sell tickets for a Trolley Dash at Waitrose in November.

It was agreed to grant permission for the Home Hospice Support for Swaffham & Litcham to hold a charity stall free of charge on the 27th OCTOBER & 17th NOVEMBER

1114.12. A request has been received and circulated to Councillors from the Norfolk Pre-School Learning Alliance for the use of Campingland on May 18th 2007 from 10.30am to 1.30pm for a Toddler Roadshow.

It was agreed to grant permission for the Norfolk Pre-School Alliance to use the Campingland free of charge subject to the normal conditions on May 18th 2007.

1114.13. Correspondence has been received and circulated to Councillors from Mrs. Kate Gordon regarding anti-social behaviour. Mrs Gordon is asking the Council to give consideration to supporting the extension of the CCTV system along London Street and Whitecross Road, also requesting Town Council action regarding licensees in the town. The Town Clerk has raised this issue at the recent Safer Neighbourhood Group meeting.

It was agreed for the Town Council to give support to the extension of the Breckland CCTV system by sending a letter to Breckland Council.

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Mrs Gordon also requested that the Town Council remind licensees of town centre pubs of their obligations to run their business in a manner that does not cause disturbance or harassment to local residents.

It was agreed for the Town Clerk to raise this issue at the Safer Neighbourhood Group meetings.

Cllr Sharpe gave his apologies and left the meeting at 8.16 due to illness.

1114.14. A circular letter has been received and circulated to Councillors from Government Office East regarding the proposed changes to the East of England Plan. Consultation period ends on 9th March 2007. The important information contained in this letter relates to the full East of England plan and related consultation documents which are contained on the GO-East website at; www.goeast.gov.uk/goeast/planning/regional_planning

It was agreed for the Planning Committee to have delegated authority to act as a working party to meet to discuss and raise issues as part of the consultation process on behalf of the Council.

1114.15. Correspondence has been received and circulated to Councillors from Mrs. S. Polaine-Leonard regarding remedial work at the Green Parrot, Swaffham. It draws to the Council's attention some remedial work being carried out to a high standard on the frontage of the Green Parrot. Mrs. Polaine-Leonard asks whether there is a town or citizen's award for such dedicated craftsmanship?

It was agreed for the Council to give consideration to the issues raised and for the Town Clerk to respond in full.

1114.16. A letter has been received and circulated to Councillors regarding the review of the Quality Town and Parish Council Scheme, the re-accreditation and electoral mandate. This circular letter relates to the recently published Local government and public involvement in Health Bill. It takes forward many of the issues in the Local Government white Paper including the extension of the power to promote well-being. This in turn has affected plans for reviewing the Quality Town and Parish Council scheme, as the bill is expected to confirm the white paper commitment to extend this power to all quality councils. In view of these potential changes this affects the proposed review of the Quality Council scheme. The existing accreditations are therefore extended until statutory provisions come into force. There are no re-accreditation requirements. The electoral mandate remains at 80% rather than being increased to 100% of councillors being elected rather than co-opted.

It was agreed to note this information and await the legislation later this year.

1114.17. A request has been received and circulated to Councillors from the Swaffham Guides for them to distribute leaflets detailing a Blue Peter Shoebiz Appeal on the 17th and 24th February 2007. The Town Clerk has used his discretion to give permission for the 10th February.

It was agreed to grant permission to the Swaffham Guides to hand out leaflets on for the Blue Peter Shoebiz Appeal on the 17th and 24th February 2007.

1115. REPORTS BY REPRESENTATIVES OF OUTSIDE BODIES.

1115.1. The Norfolk Association of Parish and Town Councils (NCAPTC) has received funding from government which has to be spent by the 31st March 2007 to encourage Quality Council Status.

1115.2. The new Children's Centre has been passed for the Nursery and the First school.

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1115.3. The money raised from the ice rink has been handed over to the Cinda Project. It is unlikely that the olive tree project will continue – waiting for the Annual General Meeting to find out more information.

1116. BRECKLAND COUNCIL.

1116.1. An e-mailed request under Freedom of Information Act and response regarding car parking data has been received. This letter requested some data from the Town Council who act as an agent for Breckland Council with regard to off street car parking in the town centre.

1116.2. An e-mail has been received and circulated to Councillors regarding a complaint of the public toilets. At present the responsibility of the public toilets rests with Breckland Council. The complainant was informed that the Town Council are currently in negotiation to take on the responsibility of public toilets. The e-mail and reply were copied to Breckland Council in order to log the complaint.

1116.3. A copy of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) constitution and other information has been circulated to Councillors. This outlines how the LSP is to operate within the Breckland area. At national conferences and training events, all councils are being encouraged to lobby their LSP to request representation of more democratically elected organisations. The five Town Council's for an example could each request a seat on the LDP board.

It was unanimously agreed to send a letter to the Chairman of the LSP Board requesting one representative from Swaffham Town Council on the Board and to lend support to the other 4 Breckland Town Council's for similar representation.

1116.4. The Clerk gave a progress report on the offer of Play Areas, Public Toilets and TIC building. The maps relating to the Play Areas have been received and only minor points need clarification regarding the issues of concern. These relate to tree maintenance and overall responsibility. Once replies are received then this matter should be ready to be concluded. The offer has been accepted by the Town Council, subject to agreeing the finer detail with Breckland Council, regarding the transfer.

The issue of the Public Toilets and the TIC is ongoing may require an extraordinary meeting. The offer has been agreed by the Town Council to a minimum value, as previously discussed. The Town Clerk is currently negotiating on their behalf.

It was agreed to provisionally book Tuesday 6th March 2007 for an extraordinary meeting to discuss the Play Areas, Public Toilets and the TIC.

1116.5. Breckland Council are currently negotiating for a New Chief Executive.

1117. NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL.

1117.1. Notification has been received and circulated to Councillors regarding the installation of a Zebra Pedestrian Crossing on Watton Road.

1117.2. A final notification of views has been received and circulated to Councillors relating to the Local Government Review regarding Norwich City Council. It requests that any views are in before the 14th February 2007.

1117.3. Notification has been received and circulated to Councillors for the A1065 Station Street/Castleacre Road surfacing scheme which is planned for May 2007.

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1117.4. Notification has been received and circulated to Councillors for the works on the A1065 London Street mini roundabout and Zebra Crossing.

1117.5. The Town Clerk met with Mr Green of Theatre Street relating to proposed changes and footway improvements. This will be placed on a future agenda.

1117.6. The Audit Commission has given Norfolk County Council 3 stars and have been told they are using their money well.

1118. DATES of forthcoming meetings

1118.1. Wednesday 28th February 2007 Town Group at 7.00pm.

A case has been made for the Assembly Rooms on the inaugural meeting, as this would be a less formal venue for a larger audience. It has already been established that regular meetings would be at the Town Hall. It is understood that the Assembly Rooms is being offered free of charge.

It was agreed to hold the inaugural Town Group meeting in the Assembly Rooms

1118.2. Wednesday 7th March 2007 at 6.00pm Youth Council Steering Group.
7.30pm Recreation Ground Committee

Both will be held in the Council Chamber.

1118.3. Wednesday 14th March 2007 at 6.45pm Full Council (*in the Council Chamber*).

1118.4. 3rd "Do you want to be a Councillor" Roadshow on 21st March 2007 – 7pm – 9pm (*in the Assembly Rooms*).

1119. ADMISSION TO MEETINGS ACT (PUBLIC BODIES) 1960 – following the exclusion of the public and press:

1119.1. Councillors discussed a confidential report and subsequent correspondence with Disability Rights Commission conciliator and Mrs. D. Dickens.

It was agreed for the Town Clerk to pursue the relevant evidence to support the claim by Mrs Dickens in relation to one of the options being perceived to be unsuitable.

The meeting closed at 9.20p.m.

Chairman.....

APPENDIX 1

Mr Robinson – Guidance from the government's Environment, Transport & Regional Affairs Committee requires Councils to consult with allotment holders before applying to the Secretary of State for permission to appropriate statutory allotment land for another use. Why has the Council not followed this guidance? That is the basis of my question.

Town Clerk – I am not quite complete my research. I am trying to ascertain whether what you say is there in statute. I believe successive governments have failed to push forward changes of allotment law but this has to be looked into. Allotment law is outdated, I am trying to find out at what point it is and I will get back to you.

Mr Robinson – I am confident I am correct.

Mr Lucas – I refer to the issue of allotments and the same White Paper. The Town Council sold the allotments down the Brandon Road for about £¾ million. From the White Paper it recommends that a significant amount of the proceeds is used to improve other allotments in the area.

Clerk – I spoke with Mr Lucas this morning. I can only look back over the 5 year period I have been Clerk but as an approx figure I would say it is around £25,000 but I would have to look into it in more detail to get an accurate figure. It was charity land – 2/3 went to the Town Council and 1/3 is in an account for the Relief In Need Charity.

Mr Caser – I wonder why the Town Council wish to deprive many allotments holders of Days Field? Why should they wish to deprive us that I have personally have had for the past 30 years?

Cllr Lister – Days Field is not all let out and not all used properly you must agree.

Mr Caser – It was a shock to me to have this letter for a notice to quit like a common criminal. There has been no consultation with the allotment holders.

Mrs Polaine Leonard – I have just come up in the lift with my son Charlie, I thought you would have to provide a lift that a carer could come up in the lift.

Town Mayor – Under the DDA Act we have to do what is reasonably practical.

Mr Robinson – You mention the fact that you have been to Days Field, up until last year there were not spaces.

Mr Ian Robinson stated that Days Field allotment site was mentioned as a good example of an allotment site in the review of 2003.

Town Mayor – The letter sent with the notice quit was written in the legal term. Unfortunately this is what is required.

Mr Dickens – The lift is designed for an unaccompanied wheelchair, which is not designed for that.