

SWAFFHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Wednesday 8th June 2005 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 D. Cannon,
Mr P. Darby, Mr B. Emmerson, Mrs A. Greaves, Mrs S. Lister,
Mrs S. Matthews, Mr I. Sherwood, Mr L. Wise.

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

Public: - 9

829. APOLOGIES & REASONS FOR ABSENCE.

829.1. Cllr Mann (Operation on hand) and PC Partridge.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 7.15 p.m.

THE MEETING RESUMED AT 7.29p.m. (see Appendix 1)

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

830.1. Cllr Emmerson and Cllr Wise declared a personal interest on item 838.2. as they are both members of the British Legion.

830 2. Cllr Greaves declared a personal interest on item 840.5. as the applicant is a neighbour and a personal interest on item 842.5. as the correspondent is a friend.

831. Becky Hellard (Chief Executive) & William Nunn (Leader) of Breckland Council

William Nunn – I stood for office ten years ago to make a difference in my patch. I now see my role as bringing all the 5 Town Councils and Breckland together by communicating directly with you understanding your issues.

Becky Hellard – We asked if we could come along to all Town Councils and pick up on all of the issues on the ground. We are not expecting an easy ride, but we would like to know the issues that you would be looking for more support from Breckland Council. We have earmarked 1 person as a senior P.A. as a liaison person for all Town Councils for correspondence, to keep the correspondence live, the more difficult bit would be are the real difficult issues in Swaffham. Even if it is not our responsibility we will help to get the right people around the table.

William Nunn – We would like to see joined up government, all the cogs to come together as one. You get elected for the same reason I get elected, we can come together to work together, must think big to achieve this.

Becky Hellard – We will agree the actions from this meeting and I will write confirmation on those issues to your Town Clerk.

Ian Sherwood – On this Council you have 3 District Councillors, over the years Swaffham Town Council has used the Breckland Councillors as a direct channel. The relationship Swaffham has with Breckland has been very good. I am under the impression that the communication is very good, you coming along is a progression of that. I am pleased how we feel our relationship is.

Shirley Matthews – I have received recently a letter from a member of the public about the toilets in Swaffham. I receive more complaints about the toilets than anything else.

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Becky Hellard – This has been recognised and a new Asset Manager has just been put in post. Some of the loos have structural issues but the majority don't. We need some interim measures in place, full redecoration, steamed cleaned and new fittings. Swaffham is being done this week; every loo in the district is being done over the next couple of months. Breckland are renegotiating the cleaning contract for an additional clean. We want to specify where and when they need cleaning which is different for each toilet. We are looking at different options for the longer term. A deep clean will be done every 3 months.

William Nunn – We hope to bring loos up to a certain standard and hand the toilets over to you the Town Council.

Shelia Lister – The rumour is that there is going to be no consultation regarding a future gypsy transit camp.

Becky Hellard – That is not right, there will be consultation. We are starting with Thetford, but Swaffham will be next. We know that the overall feeling is that Swaffham has done its bit we already have a site. Maybe we could do something with a short stay traveller site within the splashes,

Sheila Lister – No this is not right.

Anne Greaves – The decision has been made that sites are going to be Thetford and Swaffham. The meeting last year at Elizabeth house was at short notice. We had to take on trust what has been discussed with regards to information, which we have not received despite requests. We want to know why the decision was Thetford and Swaffham and not Thetford and Dereham or Attleborough. The consultation will have to be thorough.

Becky Hellard – I will come back to you on the consultation. And I will make sure you receive the information. We have to build a site where their natural sites are or they won't use it.

Anne Greaves – If the decision is made to put one here they will naturally come and stay. The police will have to move them here, this will attract even more.

Mayor, Jerome Stockdale – 9 out of 10 travellers do not want to mix with other travellers.

Town Clerk – Breckland need to justify why Swaffham was being looked at. Swaffham was top of the list to Thetford; the Town Council want to know how do we compare with other towns in Breckland?

Becky Hellard – I will get the information here and also officers here to have a debate.

William Nunn – We will not build a site if there is not need for one.

Jerome Stockdale – There is no need for one.

Paul Darby – The car parking needs a lot more monitoring, maybe there could be joined up thinking with County, Breckland and the Town Council regarding this.

William Nunn – I agree, we need to resolve the issue together with County as well.

Pam Buxton – Breckland is the only one that doesn't contribute to Creative Arts East. Is there any hope that may change in the future?

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Becky Hellard – Breckland has never had a culture strategy, which will be keyed for the future. The Strategic partnership meeting is piloting a project helping young men with mental health issues and arts is being used for that.

Dave Cannon – There is a big problem with the call centre if I don't know who the person I need to speak to as it can take up to 11 minutes for a call to be answered.

William Nunn – We now have 11 people at the call centre, this will improve.

Becky Hellard – We can supply you with direct dial numbers.

Town Clerk – I have spoken to Mutairu Jibril, the ICT Client Manager and he will supply this information with regular updates.

William Nunn and Becky Hellard were thanked by the Mayor for taking part in this meeting.

832. MINUTES

832.1. The minutes of the 11th May 2005 Full Council meeting were agreed and signed as a true record by the Mayor.

833. MAYOR'S REPORT.

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

Chamber of trade at Downham Market

833.1. To receive a report and discuss the possibility of a byelaw on New Sporle Road. Cllr Cannon has been approached by a Mr Moore regarding an issue with his garden wall. Mr Moore says that although the children are very polite they are using his wall to kick balls on 10 or 15 times a night and now his wall has been knocked down. He is requesting whether a sign can be put up stating that there is playing field just up the road. There followed a short discussion and the outcome of the discussion was the gentleman himself would need to contact the police, vandalism is a serious issue. The town Council to pass information onto the police but the gentleman himself needs to do that as well.

Town Clerk – The owners of the land can put up a sign which is owned by the Highways Department. A letter could go to Highways with a photograph of the wall.

834. POLICE MATTERS

834.3. A report has been received from Mr D. Horton regarding an allotment site at Shouldham Lane. following the meeting last month a letter went back reporting what PC Andy Partridge stated to the meeting i.e. that the shed had been raised to the ground thus removing the problem of a gentleman living on the Shouldham Lane allotments. Mr. Horton has been into the Town Hall again to report that the same person is still living on the allotment site. PC Partridge came to see us yesterday and this matter was again reported to him, in returning to us at lunchtime today he states that he has again dealt with the matter and he will report to us again on Friday to see if it has had the desired affect.

835. TOWN CLERK REPORT:-

835.1. Swimming Pool Land Purchase Negotiations.

Following last months meeting the small group negotiating on behalf of the Council met to consider the latest information and there has been a further exchange of correspondence and telephone calls. A great deal of progress has been made in respect of agreeing the finer detail of the conditions of sale and within the amount that the Council have budgeted for this land purchase. But further clarification is required from Breckland Council in respect

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of the proposed access and a full report will be made available for the Town Council to consider in due course.

835.2. Progress on applications for Town Crier.

There have been no applications received to date. The Town Hall will continue to advertise this vacancy without incurring additional expense on the Council. The profile of the Town Crier was raised not only by the local press but also during BBC Look East and Anglia Television News recently; both reports implied there was nothing to cry about in Swaffham. There are a lot of opportunities for a Town Crier to raise the profile of the town of Swaffham, particularly the work of our voluntary sector with our numerous Clubs, Societies and local Charities, we will seek to promote this ideal together with the Civic role of the Town Council itself.

835.3. Progress report on Access to graves in the Cemetery.

Measurements have been taken to see what can be achieved in respect of improving access to the gravestones. The Town Clerk the information gathered into a document for the Town Council to consider at either the next Council meeting or the Finance meeting.

835.4. Progress report on Northwell Pool Ducks and Road Closure.

A specialist contractor has been engaged within the budget agreed who is currently advising and monitoring the situation at Northwell Pool, and relocation is being arranged as necessary. He is also seeking permission from DEFRA for next season in respect of pricking and oiling of eggs, even if the Council decide not to go down that route. The contractor is preparing the necessary information to bring the area under better control and allow us to estimate more accurately for next year what the on-going cost is likely to be.

The Road Closure application has recently been passed back from Government Office East to Norfolk County Council. A letter from Norfolk County Council has stated that *"this request has been considered and it has been decided that we cannot pursue the matter as this would not be in the interest of the vehicular use of the public highway."* The Town Clerk has gone back to Norfolk County Council and copied in the County Surveyor Sam Ralph to query this, giving the history of the area being closed off. This letter was sent on 26th May and a response is still awaited.

835.5. Report of invitation to address Breckland Council's Scrutiny Panel on the subject of car parking provision on 9th June.

Unfortunately the Town Clerk has been uninvited from the Scrutiny Panel meeting scheduled for tomorrow, as the planned review on car parks within the Breckland District has been postponed for the time being.

835.6. Guidance Policy required for attendance of five Market Towns meetings for Town Clerk & Town Mayor. There was a lengthy debate.

This item was placed on the agenda as requested at the previous meeting. The Town Clerk stated that with this type of forum, a little time is needed to assess whether it is going to be of true value to the Town Council and to the town of Swaffham as a whole. The Town Clerk has discretion within his contract of employment and job description that allows him to justify attendance on the grounds that it is for the benefit of the electorate. The next meeting is at Dereham on Monday 26th June, this is being attended by William Nunn Leader of Breckland Council and Swaffham is due to host the meeting after that. It could be argued that a working meeting of this type is of equal or perhaps more benefit than the Mayor attending neighbouring towns' receptions. The Town Council should be able to trust the judgement of the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk recommended for the Town Council not to have a policy in respect of this particular forum. There followed a lengthy inconclusive debate.

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835.7. Insurance seminar

The Town Clerk and the Deputy Town Clerk will be attending a Local Council Advisory Service Seminar at Long Stratton tomorrow all day, this is being conducted by the insurance company Zurich Municipal. The subjects covered are an Accident and Claims Review, Stress Awareness, Risk Assessment and Safety Inspections, Cemeteries and Memorials.

835.8. Standards training

The Town Clerk attended a training day at Breckland Council offices on standards issues with Cllrs David Butters and Anne Greaves. The Town Clerk was invited to give a Town Clerk’s view of standards as the first speaker, with Stephen Teverson former Mayor of Downham Market giving the Councillors view and Stuart Chaplin Executive Officer of the County Association of Parish & Town Councils giving an independent overview. The event was attended by over 40 councillors and/or Clerks within the Breckland District.

835.9. Churchyard progress – next council meeting on the maintenance contract and for it to be placed on the finance agenda.

Further legal advice on the closed element of the churchyard has been taken and this is ongoing at the present time. The areas of concern to clear in the corner of the churchyard are programmed to happen next week, with the additional cost still keeping us within the grounds maintenance budget. The long term issues will feature in a detailed report, which were discussed at a site meeting earlier today by the Clerk and Deputy. A report will be compiled and will be aimed to be completed for the Town Council’s consideration prior to the budget meeting in December.

835.10. Personnel meeting

A Personnel meeting is scheduled for this coming Friday when the new National Agreement for Town & Parish Clerks will be discussed. This will impact on three of the administration staff including the Town Clerk, as it will result in amendments to contracts of employment and possibly job descriptions, but certainly the rates of pay. This is also the time of year when the staff appraisals commence that will take place during July and August, followed closely by the Town Clerks in September. The results of the appraisals will be dealt with by the Personnel Committee in September and October, in readiness for any appropriate changes to be made at the budget meeting in December.

836. JUSTICES LICENCE - applications

Application for the transfer of Licence for the Co-op Store, Swaffham. To Graeme Clegg, Janet Marice Prager and Valerie Ann Rowland.	Application for transfer of Licence for Forbuoys, 46 Market Place. To Alan Kenneth Hubert Kingsley.
Application for the transfer of Licence for Legends (formerly known as Little Chef). To Stewart Ernest Charles Bell.	

837. PLANNING/DEVELOPMENT CONTROL:

837.1. Notification of Planning Decisions.

3PL/2005/0543/F Planning permission granted for the Erection of bungalow and garage. Part of garden of 63 Mill Farm Nurseries. Oakwood Properties.	3PL/2005/0487/F Planning permission granted for the Erection of conservatory extension. 7a Princes Street. Mr. & Mrs. R. Rix.
3PL/2005/0600/F Planning permission granted for a Proposed rear conservatory. 8 Northfield Road. Mr. & Mrs. Peters.	3PL/2005/0499/F Planning permission granted for the Addition of en-suite shower room. 46 Southlands. Mr. & Mrs. Titmarsh.
3PL/2005/0482/F Planning permission granted for Extension of dining area. 7 Warstade Way. Eric John Nye.	3PL/2005/0498/F Planning permission granted for the addition of new WC. 7 Ash Close. Mrs. C. Webb.
3PL/2005/0520/F Planning permission granted for the Erection of ground and first floor extensions. 48 Partridge Grove. Mr. & Mrs. N. Taylor.	3PL/2005/0438/F Planning permission granted for Alterations & extension. 14 Tumbler Hill. Mr. A. & Mrs. L.C. Bouilouta.
3PL/2005/0652/F – Planning permission granted for Erection of attached garage – Mr & Mrs Spratt – 15 Guthlac Close.	

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837.2. Planning Applications:-

3PL/2005/0806/F Erection of extension. 2 The Oaklands. Mr. D. Wright. NO OBJECTION	3PL/2005/0872/A Illuminated window advertisement – Halifax Plc, 83 Market Place - NO OBJECTION
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838. FINANCE:

838.1. Accounts for Payments for June 2005 (see Appendix 2).

The list of Accounts was circulated to Councillors.

It was unanimously agreed to accept the accounts as listed.

838.2. A request was received to fund Remembrance Day Band for Royal British Legion. Cllr Stockdale proposed and Cllr Darby seconded to agree a payment of £150.

It was unanimously agreed to give a grant of £150 for the Remembrance Day Band for the Royal British Legion.

838.3. A request was received for waiving the cost of a replacement key Mr. W. W. Hewson (also to consider policy on replacement key for allotment holders). There are two issues to consider, councillors should note that replacement keys are in fact £3.50 not £2.50 as mentioned so the first issue is whether to grant a replacement key for Mr. Hewson. Secondly is to consider whether to continue with the current policy of charging for replacement keys in this way. The current policy seeks to recover the cost of a replacement key. Cllr Sherwood proposed to keep the policy as it is.

It was agreed for the current policy of charging for replacement keys to stay as it is and for Mr Hewson to pay for his replacement key.

838.4. The ratification of a decision made at the last meeting of the Town Council to grant Hammond's High School £357.96 from the Twinning Bursary.

It was unanimously agreed to grant £357.96 from the Twinning Bursary to Hamond's High School for a recent Twinning visit of schoolchildren.

839. JUBILEE HERITAGE PLAN.

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

839.2. A working group is being set up to look at options of Street Furniture for the Town Centre, it has been requested that at least two councillors should be involved in these discussions. This would help to feed back the information to the Town Council. The Town Clerk is involved as the Town Council's representative on the Town Centre Group, but the group is looking for any interested Councillors interested. Cllr's Ben Emmerson, Dave Cannon, Paul Darby and Pam Buxton all expressed an interest in being involved with this working party.

839.3. The meeting with the Architect/Town Councillors and the Access Group has been re-scheduled for the 16th July in the Methodist Rooms

840. GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE:

840.1. A letter of thanks re- Swaffham Funday from Mrs. Barbara White has been received and circulated to Councillors for information only.

840.2. A letter has been received and circulated to Councillors from the Bulgarian State Circus & to request the use of the Recreation Ground 26th – 30th Oct.

It was unanimously agreed to allow the Bulgarian State Circus to use the Recreation Ground between the dates of 26th – 30th October.

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840.3. A circular letter has been received in respect of Trafalgar Weekend 21st – 23rd October 2005. This letter will be passed to the Museum.

840.4. A request has been received for the placement of a desk tablet in the Swaffham Cemetery, H. Brett & Son. There has been no desk tablets been allowed in this section previously, only in the ashes section.

It was agreed not to allow the placement of a desk tablet in this section as it would be against policy.

840.5. A letter has been received and circulated to Councillors from Mrs P. Coe re-Swaffham Cemetery.

840.6. A letter has been received and circulated to Councillors from BT with regards to a consultation on proposals to re-align payphone provision. There followed a discussion.

It was agreed to write back to BT stating that the Council would not like to see any booths removed especially the one on Haspalls Road and the red phone booth by the War Memorial.

841. REPORTS BY REPRESENTATIVES OF OUTSIDE BODIES.

841.1. The main speaker was Hilary Sinclair from the West Norfolk Mental Health Advocacy which covers our area. They train volunteers to work with people with mental health problems who need support whether it be something like attending tribunals and appeals or helping with medication and treatment. Men's Health Week is June 13th-19th. A young carers group is being set up in Swaffham and courses in first aid, fire safety and food hygiene are being organised.

841.2. There has been a very positive response to the new Swaffham & District Tourism Association leaflet from both the advertisers and the outlets. Over 25,000 have been distributed so far with more to follow once Spring arrives. The website is becoming increasingly important as more and more use the internet to decide holidays and venues. The A.G.M. will be May 12th at 2pm.

Cllr Cannon gave his apologies and left the meeting at 8.38p.m.

841.3. The St Raphael club are always looking for new members. They meet once a month on a Tuesday at the Convent.

841.4. There is a meeting of the Association of Parish and Town Councils next Monday at Dereham.

842. BRECKLAND COUNCIL.

842.1. Notification of Breckland Area Meeting on Monday 13th June 7 for 7.30pm, Elizabeth House, Dereham has been received and circulated to Councillors.

842.2. A letter has been received and circulated to Councillors regarding a Travellers working group meeting from Becky Hellard Chief Executive. Cllr Darby, Cllr Lister, Cllr Sherwood, Cllr Greaves, Cllr Baker and the Mayor would like to attend.

842.3. A circular letter regarding Licensing Act 2003 has been received and distributed to Councillors. The office is to look into the possibility of the Town Hall and the Recreation Ground having to have a licence.

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842.4. A notification of Serco taking over the Thetford Depot has been received and circulated to Councillors.

842.5. A diversion order for Public Footpath No. 25. has been received and circulated to Councillors. A copy of the recent press report in the EDP regarding this footpath diversion has been circulated to Councillors. Councillors were made aware of the planning application that they submitted on behalf of the Icen Partnership for the new Community Centre and the numerous consultation events relating to the size, shape, design and site layout for the new Community Centre. It has from a very early stage (for at least two years) been known that this diversion order would be required to accommodate the enlarged car parking area. To object at this stage would be inconsistent with previous decisions taken by the Council including the finer detail of the lease which includes moving the footpath. The Council made a decision on this back in 2003 when it was discussed in detail of the proposed lease. There were also a number of other anomalies such as granting a vehicular right of way to gain access into the Community Centre car park, as it was in fact land locked. The layout of the car park has always included the need for the footpath diversion order. The Council have noted the comments made and but do not wish to take any further action.

842.6. Notification of Sue Simpson retiring from Electoral Services has been received and circulated to Councillors.

842.7. There have been problems with the recycled waste, with residents putting it in black bags and then in the bin. Once it is in black bags they are not allowed to be opened which results in them then going to landfill. There is a recycling Road Show on the 5th July at Waitrose. Breckland are cleaning the street name signs so if anyone knows of any in particular that is needed to be cleaned to make Cllr Matthews aware of it. On the 23rd of July there is a Green Fun Day at Ecotech.

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

844.1. Tues 21st June 2005 at 7.00pm Recreation Ground Committee

(in the Council Chamber)

844.2. Wed 20th July 2005 at 6.45pm Full Council at the Town Hall

(in the Council Chamber).

845. ADMISSION TO MEETINGS ACT.

845.1. At the extraordinary meeting recently it was reported to members of the Council in respect of a claim by former employee to take their pension early. Legal advice on this has been taken and it is felt the Council have a very good case to defend this. The Town Clerk keep the Council informed of the outcome.

845.2. There has been no correspondence recently from the Structural Engineer.

The meeting closed at 9.08p.m.

Chairman_____

APPENDIX 2

Dennis Tallon, speaking as a member of the public – Pleased to see Breckland here tonight. Has concerns with the direction of local government over the past few year. There are 13 councillors, whose powers have been stripped, with many local services being taken out of their control. Local councillors have pride in their town and need to control such amenities as street cleaning, toilets, TIC, and car parking. Swaffham is in the process of being successfully regenerated and future control needs to be in the hands of the local people. The LSP has now published a community plan. But this is unlikely to go anywhere if Breckland do not support it financially or give more powers to local councils.

Becky Hellard – There is no funding for LSP's – with their own budgets. Breckland have already approved two new projects from the local plan. There are 3 community officers in Breckland that is community money, we then have the regional partnerships going round.

William Nunn – LSP – the government is saying that will be the main way of getting funding, the main funding.

Dennis Tallon – Having set up local groups to develop communities, why is there no continuation funding after 2006? And how are the local groups going to run after this date?

William Nunn – It is not us that cuts the funding it is European funding, not Breckland funding. It has been devolved power down – we are happy to take back to Breckland to discuss with other councillors for devolved power. Take on open spaces, loos etc.

Dennis Tallon – If you devolve powers to the local council will you also transfer sufficient funds to successfully carry out the tasks? I have concern about the high level of sickness within Breckland Council.

Becky Hellard – Breckland is the best in country per staff member there is only 9 days sickness. There has been 36 million pounds that has come into the district from European funding over the last few years = 18 years of council tax – there has also been staff resources going into but we are getting an awful lot of funding.

Mr ???? – I am here on behalf of my son who is in hospital and lives in bungalow by owned by Peddars Way housing association. 7-8 years ago he was told he would get a new bath, toilet etc. then told 3 years ago they would look at it. Last year another rep did the same. The kitchen is condemned, he has cracks in the wall. His is the only one that hasn't had any thing done. Where can I get the help to get Peddars Way to deal with this issue.

Becky Hellard – We will happily take your details and contact Peddars Way on your behalf.

Reg Dowden – Where is the Breckland call centre located, India or somewhere?

William Nunn – In Dereham