

SWAFFHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Town Council meeting held on Wednesday 9th February 2005 at 6.45p.m. in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Swaffham.

Present: Mayor Cllr P. Buxton

Councillors: - Mr D. Butters, Mr D. Cannon, Mr P. Darby,
Mr B. Emmerson, Mrs A. Greaves, Mrs S. Lister, Mrs F. Mann,
Mrs S. Matthews, Mr I. Sherwood, Mr J. Stockdale, Mr L. Wise.

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

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763. APOLOGIES & REASONS FOR ABSENCE.

763.1. Cllr Baker (away on business) and Cllr Sherwood working in London, he will be late.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 6.46p.m.
THE MEETING RESUMED AT 7.02p.m. (see Appendix 1)

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

764.1. Cllr Stockdale declared an interest on item 768.2. as he is a neighbour of the applicant.

765. MAYOR'S REPORT.

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

Attended the launch of the Shopmobility Project and cut the ribbon.

Attended the launch of the ICENIMA – The local Cinema at EcoTech officially opened by the actor Bernard Hill.

The Mayor was interviewed on behalf of the Town by Neil Haverson for the article on Swaffham in the EDP publication 'Let's Talk'. This is issue 30 published March 2005 and has six pages about Swaffham including some words on the history from Cllr David Butters.

766. POLICE MATTERS

766.1. An e-mail has been received from Mr Walter I Rogers with reference fireworks and a copy would be passed on to the Community Policeman Andy Partridge.

766. MINUTES:

766.1. The minutes of the Full Council meeting of Wednesday 19th January 2005 were agreed and signed as a true record by the Mayor.

766.2. The minutes of the Finance and General Purposes meeting of Wednesday 8th December 2004 were agreed and signed as a true record by the Mayor.

767. TOWN CLERK REPORT:-

767.1. The issue of the Swimming Pool is beginning to come to a conclusion around the Section 106 agreement which is necessary to move the negotiations forward with the land owner. Steeles Conveyancing are dealing with the legal agreement between all parties. This is made a little more difficult as Breckland Council are the owners of a strip of land at the proposed entrance to the land in question, The Town Clerk is currently dealing with the Planning Officer and the Commercial & Property Management section of Breckland Council on this issue. This will mean that Breckland Council will have to agree to sign up to the Section 106 agreement and enforcement will then be carried out by Norfolk County Council. In addition to the Town Council themselves, the land owners would also have to agree in principle to the Section 106 agreement and providing negotiations are successful with the land owners for the purchase of this land it could be that they may also have to sign up to the Section 106 agreement.

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The Clerk has spoken with Mr. Raikes of RH & RW Clutton who has requested some further information in the absence of the planning permission documents originally requested. These will be with him by Friday of this week, the land owner will then consider the position within the week, if they are agreeable to selling the land, a site visit will be arranged for the following week commencing 21st February, firmed up by a meeting back at the Town Hall. The Clerk suggested that at this meeting that the Mayor, plus the Council's SPA representative Dave Cannon and the Chairman of SPA Marion Clements be present, then for the detail of any proposed agreement to come before the Council in March. Mr. Raikes believes that one month is a realistic timescale to conclude matters. The Clerk reassured members of SPA that this matter is taking priority.

767.2. A meeting took place with Anthony Wright and Trevor Hawkins from Breckland Council in relation to monitoring of car parks, also in relation to public toilets, the Tourist Information Centre, the Recreation Ground, various signage issues around the town. The Clerk has also had a meeting with David Green from Breckland Council in relation to street lighting improvements and the possibility of a PFI bid, Mr. Green was due to come and make a presentation to the Council at this meeting but the timescales he was working to make it almost impossible to mount a serious bid. He might like to come to a Council meeting at some stage to discuss the options available to the Town Council in improving their street lighting and in particular the long term management of street light. Similarly the issues of public toilets and the Tourist Information Centre may feature in a presentation to the Council at some stage. Discussions have been along the route of best value and working towards finding a long term management solution to improve the current service.

767.3. An update had been requested regarding Northwell Pool in relation to ducks as the season is due to start which will be reported at a later meeting. A verbal request from Mr Martin Beale has been received to restock the pond with fish but it was established this would need to put in writing to move things forward.

768. PLANNING/DEVELOPMENT CONTROL:

768.1. Planning Decisions Breckland Council:-

3PL/2004/1980/F planning permission granted for a single storey extension. Hawthorns, North Pickenham Rd. Mr.& Mrs. K. Green.	
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768.2. Planning Applications:-

3PL/2005/0110/F Erection of one dwelling. Mill House, Tumbler Hill. Mr. & Mrs. M. Lucas. 3 NO OBJECTIONS 3 ABSTENTIONS AND 2 FOR. NO OBJECTION	3PL/2005/0113/F Extension. The Paddocks, Cley Road. Dr. S. Kaushal. NO OBJECTION	
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768.3. A general discussion to place regarding making comments for the EERA East of England Plan.

768.4. Comments on the Community Plan for Breckland 2005 – 2015 must be made by Friday 11th February is any Councillors wish to make any comments. It was reported that the north south bypass has been dropped in the plan.

768.5. A report from for October – December 2004 has been circulated to councillors.

768.6. The auction of a painting formerly in the Assembly Rooms will be taking place on Friday 11th February. The painting has a Reserve value of £5,000 in Keys auction. The Council has noted the comments in the public session made by Mr Paul Ison. According to the Council's standing orders it is within the 6 months of the decision made to sell the painting of the soldier and use the proceeds to restore the painting of the horses. The Council were advised that a suspension of standing

orders would need to be undertaken to discuss this issue. See Appendix 3 for information on the paintings. There followed a discussion.

It was unanimously agreed not to suspend standing orders to discuss the sale of the painting, thus confirming it would be sold at the Auction on the 11th February.

768.7. A request has been received for grant assistance from the West Norfolk & Breckland Rural Transport Partnership. It was reported that a total of £866.50 has been used out of a budget of £1,000 in this financial Year, leaving a balance of £133.50. Cllr Buxton reported as the Council's representative on the Rural Transport Project that the funding which previously came from the Countryside Agency is being taken over by EEDA at the end of March. The need for the Rural Transport Project to continue was strongly felt as the delegated funds in particular had been vital in establishing a number of initiatives throughout Breckland and West Norfolk. It was reported that there could be an annual contribution for the Swaffham transport partnership as part of the 106 agreement. It was proposed by Cllr Cannon and seconded by Cllr Stockdale to leave the remainder of the budget so that the Council could make a donation to the Swaffham Transport Project if required as part of the section 106 agreement.

It was unanimously agreed to leave the remainder of the budget so that the Council could make a donation to the Swaffham Transport Project if required as part of the section 106 agreement.

769. FINANCE:

769.1. Accounts for Payments for February 2005 (see Appendix 2).

The list of Accounts was circulated to Councillors.

It was unanimously agreed to accept the accounts as listed.

771. JUBILEE HERITAGE PLAN.

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

In addition to the minutes and reports, there are now weekly meetings in respect of the progress on the Town Centre regeneration project. The first two took place in the Methodist Church Room, involving the contract site manager and representatives of the Icen Partnership. The meetings from now onwards will take place in the Town Clerk's office at the Town Hall every Tuesday morning.

771.2. A letter has been received from Mrs V. McBride with regards to the Town Centre Enhancement Scheme. It was agreed to send a copy of the information received from Icen Partnership in respect of moving the trees.

771.3. The lease to the Icen partnership for the assembly rooms is now becoming more urgent as it has been finalised prior to the contractors taking control. The request from the solicitors was received on Wednesday 2nd and hand delivered on Friday 4th February to their Dereham office.

771.4. It was asked when the shop frontage by the greyhound downwards will be done and it was reported that this will take place either at the end of the first stage or possibly not until stage two.

772. To receive GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE:

772.1. The move into the new offices had begun last Monday 31st January. The Town Clerk thanked all the staff who have worked extremely hard as a team to get things done as quickly as possible. Both the Museum Office and Icen Partnership have also been re-located in their new premises. As the old offices were dismantled the new offices were fitted out with shelves, notice boards and the equipment they need to function properly. Office furniture has been mended where possible, painted or stained or in some cases replaced where not salvageable. The new office for Breckland/Registrar/Citizens Advice and Age Concern has been furnished to accommodate two staff and two members of the public. We have the Deputy Town Clerk's husband to thank working as a volunteer last Friday. There have been problems to overcome with the lift, the reception counter and shutters.

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Some of the items on the agenda as at the time of publishing the agenda the Clerk was unable to calculate whether or not the following three items would in fact be in budget:-

- 1) Additional ventilation has been requested in the Council Chamber by the Building Inspector, this item was unforeseen and will cost £1900.00 + Vat
- 2) Gates to the Cley Road entrance are in the budget as a provisional sum of £2000 + Vat. The detail of these gates is to be agreed. We are currently obtaining quotations from various sources.
- 3) The workshop adjacent to the Town Hall extension is currently in the amended budget, although we are actively seeking alternative estimates to see if this can be achieved at a more reasonable cost. It could be that this is done after the main contract has finished.

The Town Clerk reported that the contractors have provided us with a breakdown of precisely what works apply to the Museum and it was reported that all three items can be achieved within the amended budget of £365,000 which includes £56,631.58 worth of work completed for the Museum enhancement. The sound system for the Council Chamber is also an outstanding item to resolve and again there is a budget to work with on that one. The Town Clerk personally thanked Nigel Chambers, Ted Carter, Colin Stacey and all from Veltshaws Builders who have worked very hard with the Architect and ourselves to give us this facility.

In a general discussion it was thought that the brickweave paving is a dangerous form of paving when it is freezing. The Clerk was requested to check with the building inspector. The provision of a clock in the Council Chamber is to be looked at. It was generally agreed that the staff now has a more satisfactorily working environment and a very suitable council chamber.

Cllr Sherwood arrived and apologised for his lateness and stated how pleased he is on how the new Town Council Chamber looks.

772.2. A circular has been received and distributed to Councillors from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister regarding the Freedom of Information Act and guidance for Clerks & Councils Direct.

772.3. A copy of Norfolk Link from NCAPTC has been circulated to Councillors for information.

772.4. Details of a training event from NCAPTC at George Hotel, Swaffham has been circulated to Councillors. This training event will look at the Freedom of Information Act, Parishes working in Partnership, Delivering Access for all: Disability Discrimination Act, the new NALC/SLCC Model Contract for Clerks and community safety/anti social behaviour and the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act. Any Councillor wishing to attend to inform the Town Clerk.

772.5. Details of a training events from the Norfolk Training Partnership has been received and circulated to Councillors. There is one on community consultation and one on play ground safety issues are on 24th February and 17th March respectively. They are being held at the RCC office at Dereham. Any Councillor wishing to attend to inform the Town Clerk.

773. REPORTS BY REPRESENTATIVES OF OUTSIDE BODIES.

773.1. The Well Family Association are looking for anyone willing to help at a school with any gardening skills.

773.2. The main speaker at the Health Forum was Bev Pitcher from the Swaffham Transport Project.

773.3. The Swaffham Learning Partnership became the Icení Lifelong Learning Group from February 1st. The members include representatives from Breckland and Norfolk, learning providers and users and business. There will be activities during Adult Learners Week (May 21st to 27th) and involvement in Green Breckland. The Green Breckland Project aims to promote learning and increase knowledge about global and local environmental issues. If funding is gained it is hoped

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that there will be events such as a writing competition leading up to a final event on July 23rd at the Ecotech centre.

773.4. The NCAPTC will be holding its spring seminar soon.

773.5. The Olive Tree Project held a management meeting recently. It was reported that they have acquired a building in King's Lynn which will be a Open Drop In Centre.

773.5. The First school are looking for volunteers to help youngsters to read.

773.6. A letter from the Town Estate requested clarification of one member, as Mr Paul Ison's term of office ceased in December 2004. The Clerk was requested to clarify whether the appointment had to be a Town Councillor. Cllr Matthews stated if necessary she would stand down to allow Paul Ison to continue. Cllr Butters stated that he thought his name had already been put forward.

774. BRECKLAND COUNCIL.

774.1. Guidance from Breckland Council Monitoring Officer regarding dispensations acting as sole trustees and custodian trustees has been received and circulated to Councillors for information.

774.2. Information from Breckland Environmental Services/Serco Ltd has been received and circulated to Councillors for information only.

774.3. Notification has been received stating that the Public Entertainments Licence for the Assembly Rooms has been received which is valid for 1 year.

774.4. The recycling rate for 2003/4 is up from 10% to 28%. It is the biggest increase in the eastern region. Breckland is working with partners to set up business seminars and workshops in Thetford and Swaffham. The Anglia Revenues Partnership was the 1st in the country so the benefit fraud inspectorate has taken a great interest in it. The average time to process claims has fallen from 122 days (2002/3) to 22 last year.

774.5. It was asked if any information regarding the travellers meeting that took place at Breckland has been received? There was recently a strategy meeting regarding this topic. Cllr Stockdale requested the minutes from this strategy meeting.

775. NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL.

775.1. A proposal for the B1077 Swaffham – Watton Road Footway widening scheme has been received. There followed a lengthy discussion. The Council are in favour of any improvements for Watton Road but are concerned with a number of issues: -

- a) Will there be any parking provision for people that live on that road if it gets widened?
- b) The telegraph poles need to be taken into account.
- c) To bear in mind safe access for pedestrians, push chairs and wheel chair users.
- d) If they reduce the roadway and extend the pathway this area would need to have restrictions on lorries.
- e) Can't find any of it at 1.2 metres it is about 400 mm wide. If they take it to 1.5 it may be necessary to take it up the cliff.
- f) The piece of land in the triangle on the map was offered in the past to Norfolk County Council and it was not accepted do they realise this area is private.

Cllr Matthews will be following this up on behalf of the Council, the Clerk would also write to Norfolk County Council

775.2. There was concern shown with the lack of crossings and paths for the new development on Brandon road. It was reported that a lease was signed in October with Taylor Woodrow but they haven't sent their figures to Breckland which they have to do.

775.3. February 1st was the start date of the new services – i.e. combination of Social Services and

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Education. There was a working party last week that is monitoring what schools are doing about disruptive behaviour and as consequence exclusion. Some schools are already working together with Social Services to great benefit to the children.

775.4. It was reported that on the pathways on Queen and King street which have been resurfaced is particularly slippery on frosty days.

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

776.1. Wed 9th March 2005 at 6.45pm Full Council at the Town Hall

776.2. Wed 16th February 2005 at 7pm Recreation Ground Committee at the Town Hall (*in the new Council Chamber*)

776.3. Open day on the 18th and open to the public on the Saturday 19th February .

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

777.1. The Receptionist/Clerical Assistant post has been advertised through the job centre as at the last Town Council meeting. In accordance with the Council's wishes consideration has been given to un-employed candidates for this post under the government's new deal scheme. Nine candidates were interviewed on the 20th January out of 21 applicants. These interviews had been arranged prior to the last Council meeting where the Council re-affirmed an earlier decision in respect of the criteria for this post. There was one further applicant who was invited for interview but pulled out due to obtaining suitable work elsewhere. Two applicants were invited back for a second interview last Friday 4th February. The Receptionist will be the first person most people see when they arrive at the Town Hall and it is important to create the right impression, to be professional and to have the right character within such a small team. The Town Clerk recommended JANE DEVLIN as the new Receptionist/Clerical Assistant. Cllr Darby proposed and Cllr Mann seconded to employ Mrs Devlin as the Clerk has recommended.

It was unanimously agreed to employ Mrs Jane Devlin as Receptionist/Clerical Assistant.
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777.2. The Town Clerk reported that correspondence has been received from the Structural engineer and this matter is on-going. A report would come to the Council at the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.40p.m.

Chairman_____

Appendix 1

Paul Ison – I urge the Council to re-consider the selling of the painting of the soldier that was displayed in the Assembly Rooms which is due for sale on Friday. It is like the government selling the crown jewels. We are all sad to sell it. I am asking you to reconsider selling it. It was something the Lord of the Manor gave to the Assembly Rooms.

Suzanne Chalcraft. – I have 6 pages of signatures of people objecting to the redevelopment plans of the town centre. Mr Impsen told me he has people coming into the shop to object to the plans. It is only available to the Icen partnership as it is a unelected quango – the chairman was not happy with me describing the Icen as this. It is not an exaggeration for me to call it this. To whose tune does the Icen jump? Members of the public are appalled that Swaffham is a historic Georgian town, why do we need it we just need maintenance.

Penny English – I too am concerned by the culling of the trees – I have collected 178 signatures just in an hour and a half just in the town centre. I was also accused of misinforming people of what is happening, I am just passing on information that I have had.

John Norton – I want to know whether the Town Council can inform us if an environmental impact was done when the planning application was put in?

Tony dickens – I do object to the partnership being called a quango we do not have any powers or funding. We are a charity and a Company Ltd by guarantee. We are a partnership of 30 local organisations. Funding comes to promote projects that have arisen. The partners involve a large numbers of elected bodies, 9 local parish councils are partners, the Town Council and Breckland District Council as well as various local groups. All the meetings are public and open. The directors are elected and are volunteers. The environmental impact is something that may be looked at. We are taking trees out that will be replaced. In 1902 there were no trees on the market place sometime in the late 1960's this area was replanted by the Urban District Council. They were removed this time for very good reasons. If you have any queries please come into the office and discuss the issues you may have.

Suzanne Chalcraft – The chief problem with the trees are that they have not maintained properly. The trees for the last 10 years have not been maintained this is the reason they have to be taken out. Can we have any assurances that these new trees will be maintained? We did go to the Icen offices before and have given our concerns.