

NORTH WALSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
29 September 2015

Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 29 September 2015

Town Mayor: Mrs B West

Town Councillors Present:

Mr G Bull	Miss A Canham
Mr A Fryer	Mrs J Melville
Mrs M Seward	Mrs S Stuckey
Mr A Thirtle	Mrs E Wheeler

District Councillors Present:

Miss V Gay	Mr E Seward
Mrs V Uprichard	

County Councillors Present:

Mr E Seward

The meeting opened at 19:30, following a presentation on the NNDC Local Plan Consultation by Mark Ashwell, NNDC Planning Policy Manager (a note of this is at Annex A).

Part I: Open to the Press and Members of the Public

1 ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

(a) Declarations of Interest

Cllr Fryer declared an interest in discussions on Dream Lodge.

(b) Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Choudhury, Evans, Hester, Turner and Witte.

(c) Minutes of the previous meeting

It was **RESOLVED**

That the minutes be accepted as a true record of the meeting held on 28 July 2015, and be signed by the Town Mayor.

2 ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING TO ALLOW PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was **RESOLVED**

NORTH WALSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
29 September 2015

That the meeting be adjourned in accordance with Standing Order 36.1 to allow contributions from North Walsham Police, District Councillors and members of the public.

A summary of discussion in this section can be found at Annexes B - D.

Cllr Witte entered the meeting at 19:40

Following these contributions, it was **RESOLVED that the meeting be reconvened.**

3 REPORTS FROM THE TOWN MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR

A written report from the Town Mayor can be found at Annex E.

4 ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION

(a) NNDC Local Plan Consultation

It was **RESOLVED**

That the Town Council would discuss this at a separate special meeting.

(b) Street Lighting: Quotes for essential works

Quotes had been received from the contractor for essential repairs to Town Council-owned lighting columns in Anchor Road (replacement lantern required at Column 3) and St Nicholas Churchyard (replacements needed for Columns 1 and 5 due to corrosion near the bases of each rendering them unsafe). It was **RESOLVED**

That the quotes be accepted, and the works carried out as soon as possible.

(c) Parish Partnership Scheme 2016/17

The Town Clerk was asked to circulate information received from Highways regarding the addition of pothole repairs on minor roads and the process for requesting new bus shelters.

(d) Midland Road Car Park

There had been correspondence, copied to the Town Clerk, between Norfolk County Council Property Services and NNDC Assets Team regarding the cost of the additional area that NNDC had previously leased from NPS, regarding constructing a lease for the Town Council to agree. NNDC had now also provided advice regarding surface repair works. NPS had committed to repairing the access footpath prior to leasing that segment of the car park to the Town Council. The Town Clerk was asked to circulate information relating to the car park in advance of the next Council meeting.

(e) Office relocation

The Council was reminded that Steve Blatch (NNDC) had responded with cost details for the area of the building to the right of the main entrance. This set out outline costs on the same basis for the equivalent floor space to that currently occupied at New Road

NORTH WALSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
29 September 2015

(ie at zero commercial rent, with the Town Council responsible for paying the service charge), and an additional 50% of current floor space for which NNDC proposed to charge a commercial rent in addition to the service charge. This included access to a large shared meeting room. The Town Clerk was awaiting confirmation from NNDC of an opportunity for further access when the keys became available.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED**

That a further visit was necessary for staff and Councillors to review the site and clarify the Council's requirements and preference.

(f) Persimmon Homes, Norwich Road

It was **RESOLVED**

That the Town Clerk be asked to ascertain the s.106 contribution being sought by the NHS in respect of this development.

To note: The s.106 contribution sought is included in the NHS response to the hybrid planning application. NHS is seeking the amount of £30,170 – details circulated to Council on Thursday 1 October 2015.

(g) Budget for Media & Information Committee

A blueprint for building a common strategy for the town was put before the Council. It was noted that this went beyond the Town Council, and that the logo was clearly associated with Regenerate North Walsham. Discussion was subsequently deferred to Part II.

(h) Payment for two-way radio sets

Two sets had been purchased by Cllr Melville for the VE70 Picnic in the Park event earlier in the year, which were now being used on the Sunday markets. It was **RESOLVED**

That the Council would recompense Cllr Melville for the radio sets.

5 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

(a) Freedom of Information request

The Town Clerk reported the receipt of a FOI request in relation to vehicular access to the park. This had been received on 7 September 2015, with a full response sent on 11 September, well within the 21-day deadline for responding to such requests.

(b) Meeting with Highway Engineer on 11 September 2015

A number of issues had been discussed during the Highway Engineer's visit, and he was due to report back on proposed action shortly. Particular focus had been on

- The Bacton Road trod footpath being delivered under the 2015/16 Parish Partnership Scheme, with work scheduled to commence on 21 September 2015 (*as confirmed earlier in the meeting by County Cllr Seward*),

NORTH WALSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
29 September 2015

- Drains on the bypass: an action plan had been agreed with the contractor to clear the drains, but this would involve heavy machinery and partial road closure,
- Speeding on Acorn Road: the Highway Engineer would examine the area and suggest possible courses of action which may include bidding under the Parish Partnership Scheme 2016/17,
- Parking in Farman Avenue: the Town Mayor, Town Clerk and Highway Engineer had met Farman Avenue residents on site and noted the problems caused by non-resident parking. In particular this raised issues for access by emergency services and waste collection vehicles, and serious access/egress problems for residents. The Highway Engineer committed to researching the background and looking into further measures that might be taken, including bidding under the Parish Partnership Scheme 2016/17. It was **RESOLVED**

That the Council should consider the Acorn Road speeding and Farman Avenue parking problems for a bid under the Parish Partnership Scheme 2016/17, taking into account the Highway Engineer's response.

(c) Acorn Road Park

The previously reported proposal to NNDC for Town Council grounds staff to take on the maintenance of the Acorn Road park under agreement with NNDC would be discussed as part of an NNDC review of its own grounds maintenance arrangements.

(d) "Communities Can"

Details had been circulated, and Councillors were reminded that further information on this event was available via the NALC website.

(e) Glass recycling banks

Although a further quote for supplying recycling bins to locate on car parks had been obtained, the Council was reminded that NNDC would not permit this on its car parks as it was contrary to the current policy of household collection.

6 FINANCE

(a) Payments and receipts to end July 2015

It was **RESOLVED**

To approve the report for the period to end July 2015.

(b) Payments and receipts to end August 2015

It was **RESOLVED**

To approve the report for the period to end August 2015.

(c) Payments and receipts to 22 September 2015

It was **RESOLVED**

To approve the report for the period to 22 September 2015.

(d) Bank charges on Town Council accounts

The bank charges previously incurred had now been refunded, and assurances given that this would not arise in future. With regard to account signatories, documentation for Cllr Thirtle had been lost in the system, requiring him to resubmit. The Council was asked to note that a resignation meant there was now a need to replace another signatory. It was **RESOLVED**

That Cllr Melville be appointed as an account signatory, and that the Town Clerk be asked to make the necessary arrangements.

(e) Precept 2016/17

The Town Clerk circulated outline calculations to help Councillors prepare for the Precept meeting scheduled for 13 October 2015. These were based on no change (apart from possible increased accommodation costs and new Parish Partnership Scheme bids), + 2%, + 5% and + 10%. Councillors were asked to consider for the Precept meeting what plans the Council might wish to take forward in 2016/17.

7 PLANNING COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meetings held on 26 August (under delegated powers) and 8 September 2015 were received.

8 REPORTS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES and GROUPS

(a) Funday Committee

The minutes of the Funday Committee meeting held on 1 September 2015 were received.

(b) Christmas Lights Group

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 September 2015 were received.

(c) Personnel & Grants Committee

The minutes of the Personnel & Grants Committee meetings held on 13 August and 21 September 2015 were received. The Town Mayor noted that further minor amendments were needed to the draft Standing Orders, and that these would be brought to the Council meeting on 27 October 2015

(d) Development & Amenities Committee

Receipt of the minutes of the Development & Amenities Committee meeting held on 8 September 2015 was deferred until the next meeting.

(e) Markets Group

The minutes of the Markets Group meeting held on 16 September were received.

(f) Bittern Line Partnership

The Town Mayor's report of the meeting held on 9 September 2015 was received.

NORTH WALSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
29 September 2015

(g) Media & Information Committee

Further discussion had been deferred to Part II.

(h) Christmas Lights Group

The minutes of the meeting of the Christmas Lights Group held on 29 July 2015 were received.

(i) Catch 21

Cllr Stuckey's report on the Catch 21 Management meeting held on 1 September 2015 was received.

9 FORTHCOMING MEETINGS and EVENTS

The following meetings had been arranged for October 2015:

- Monday 5 October: Media & Information Committee at 18:30
- Tuesday 6 October: Christmas Lights Group at 19:30
Development & Amenities Committee
- Tuesday 13 October: Council Precept meeting at 19:00

10 CORRESPONDENCE

(a) A letter had been received from Cllr Tom FitzPatrick, Leader of NNDC, announcing that the Council had been awarded £5,403.73 towards the Woodville Park improvement project, specifically for the following pieces of equipment:

- Basket swing
- Turtle Springer
- Merry Roundabout (a wheelchair-accessible roundabout).

With the Town Council's agreed contribution of £5,000 this meant that work on the project could commence while further funding was sought to meet the wider proposals.

11 ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

In addition to the items detailed above, a discussion on the Councillors' Facebook Group was requested.

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was **RESOLVED**

That due to the confidential nature of the matters to be discussed, members of the public be excluded from the meeting as per Standing Order 36.5.

NORTH WALSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
29 September 2015

The meeting closed at 21:40

Note of presentation by Mark Ashwell (NNDC) on the Local Plan Consultation

Local Plan

The new Local Plan would cover the period 2016 to 2036, ie including the first five years of the current Local Development Framework. The first stage was to notify people of the intention to prepare a new plan, which had been done concurrently with the announcement of the consultation. Overall this was probably a three-year project, with public consultation throughout the process.

It was expected that the content would be broadly similar to the existing LDF, identifying sites for potential development and a similar rate of development (averaging approximately 400 houses per year across the district, ie no dramatic step-change in development). It would consider the capacity of individual settlements to accommodate growth; North Walsham, which was identified as a growth town, could expect to see proposals for site allocations in the town.

Neighbourhood Plans

In North Walsham, the Town Council was able to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. In order to do so, it would need to seek designation as a neighbourhood area for this purpose - Regulation 5 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). A Neighbourhood Plan can contain local policies and proposals. There were, however, significant limitations to what could be achieved through a Neighbourhood Plan:

- It was not a mechanism for preventing growth, and there was a presumption in favour of growth
- It had to conform to the strategic part of the Local Plan, and to national planning policy
- It had to pass a local referendum with at least 50% of the turnout in support
- It must be compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements
- It was subject to close inspection/examination, at which stage it could be rejected if it was non-compliant
- It could contain place-specific policies, but clear evidence to support these was required and they could not be anti-competition.

• Policies could be suggested to the Planning Authority (NNDC) during the consultation process. It was noted that preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan would take around two years, during which time NNDC would publish the new Local Plan. Councils may wish to wait until this was further developed, as some of the changes proposed for consultation may be agreeable and may be what Councils would consider incorporating into a Neighbourhood Plan. Should a Council wish to produce a Neighbourhood Plan and allocate/propose land for development, NNDC would require alignment of timetables and understand the Council's intentions very early in the process, in order to avoid delays to the Local Plan. Councils would, however, be able to submit proposals during the call for sites consultation, with input sifted to draw up a list of preferred development site allocations.

NORTH WALSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
29 September 2015

Modest grants were available to District and Town/Parish Councils to support preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan. The Planning Authority was required to cover the cost of inspectors and a referendum.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

It was acceptable to ask developers to contribute to local pressures on infrastructure. In the NNDC area, this was currently done through Section 106 agreements. This was a negotiated process resulting in a legal agreement between the Planning Authority and the developer, with the funding tied to the place (ie s.106 money for North Walsham must be spent in North Walsham).

CIL was a direct levy related to the amount of floorspace built, and was subject to a viability assessment. It was not negotiable. The funding was collected by the Planning Authority and ring-fenced for infrastructure, but was not tied to the specific development or place (ie CIL money arising from developments in North Walsham could conceivably be spent on infrastructure elsewhere in the district). Town/Parish Councils would receive either 15% or 25% of the CIL contribution (the higher figure if there was a Neighbourhood Plan), which could be spent on local infrastructure.

The Town Mayor thanked Mr Ashwell for his presentation.

Summary of discussion permitted under Item “: Public Participation

(a) Crime Report

PC Gwynn was in attendance but was called away prior to this item. One question arose regarding recent, regular incidents of vandalism and anti-social behaviour at the Acorn Road park. NNDC had agreed to conduct a clean-up exercise on 30 September. The matter would be reported to the police for discussion at the next SNAP meeting.

(b) Reports from County and District Councillors

A written report from County Cllr Seward can be found at Annex C, and written report in his role as District Cllr can be found at Annex D. In addition to these, Cllr Seward noted that Highways had agreed to clear vegetation from a permissive footpath at White Horse Common, with residents agreeing to maintain it. However, access would require the installation of some steps, and Cllr Seward intended to speak to the Town Clerk about the possibility of a Parish Partnership Scheme bid.

Cllr Seward was asked what NNDC intended to do about the ongoing issue of works being carried out at Dream Lodge without planning permission, or any contribution from the developer towards town infrastructure and services that residents were using. Cllr Seward noted that Dream Lodge was licensed as a holiday park, which did not give tenants the same rights as enjoyed by mobile home tenants. NNDC's view was that there had been no apparent breach of planning rules in regard to the siting, spacing, etc. However, it was not clear why planning procedures had not been followed for the gym, gas tanks and entrance. A planning agent had committed to submitting application by 25 September 2015, but had not done so. This was frustrating, particularly as there were no penalties for continued and deliberate delay to the planning procedure. It was agreed that the Town Clerk should write to the District Council including the material presented by Cllr Bull.

Cllr Seward also reported that

- With regard to Town Council relocation, a window of opportunity remained with regard to the Registry Office on Kings Arms Street.
- Local NNDC Big Society Fund successes included £1,000 to the North Walsham Good Neighbour Scheme and £5,400 for Woodville Park play equipment.

(c) Public Participation

Mr Ian Turner, a resident at Dream Lodge caravan park, asked the Council if it could take any action regarding overgrown and now dangerous oak trees on the park, which were subject to TPOs. It was agreed that this would be included in the letter to NNDC Planning Enforcement suggested above.

REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCIL

Worsted Recycling Centre

At the beginning of the year the Council was faced with an officer proposal to open the centre for only four days a week and to charge householders who used the centre. The proposal for charging was subsequently dropped after the then Government brought in regulations to stop Councils from charging householders. The proposal to change opening hours was deferred in February in the discussions over the Council's budget so that a further review of the viability of all the Council's recycling centres could take place.

A report on the outcome of the review was considered by the Council's Environment Transportation and Development Committee on September 18th. The review found that the Worsted centre was one of the Council's busiest and most efficient recycling centres. It was agreed that no changes to opening hours was required apart from closing an hour earlier in the summer. This is very good news for local residents. The change in approach has involved a lot of effort by North Walsham County Cllrs and we are pleased with the outcome.

Scottow Enterprise Park

This site on the former airfield was bought by the County Council some years ago. A solar farm is being developed on the site and it is already producing electricity for 10,000 homes. There are also 14 companies employing 64 people on the site. Further proposals to make the site more attractive to companies are being developed and the aim is to attract companies that will provide significant numbers of jobs. The site is now operating at a profit. It's future development is important for the local economy. The County group overseeing the development of the site is chaired by North Walsham West Cllr John Timewell.

Highways

- 1) Bypass Drains: it has now been learnt that when the contractor attempted to clean the gullies last month they were not found to be in a good condition and additional work is going to be required. The current intention is that further work is carried out in late October. The Town Clerk is aware of the situation and Highways are aware of local County Cllrs concerns.
- 2) Bacton Rd Trod: this scheme is funded jointly by the County and the Town Council under local highways partnership improvement programme. A site meeting took place in August to resolve the precise details for the footpath and it included the nearby Shires Care Home whose residents in particular will use the footpath. Work on the footpath commenced on Monday September 21st.
- 3) A range of other highways issues are being looked at by Highways and if the Council requires information on them I will seek to do this at the meeting.

Eric Seward
23/9/15

Report from North Walsham's District Councillors for July 2015

Persimmon Homes Planning Application

District Cllrs are aware of the Council's concerns about this application and ward members are seeking a meeting with planning officers to discuss the application in more detail. In the meantime clarification is being sought from the County Council Education Dept as to whether a Sec 106 contribution is required for schools given the reported difference in view between the applicants and the County Council over this.

CAB Services Tender Exercise

The deadline for submission of tenders closed on September 4. There has been a small number of bids. Shortlisting now has to take place with interviews scheduled for October. The interview panel consists of representatives from the District and County Councils.

Northfield Rd former Surgery site

The NNDC Cabinet at their meeting on September 7 agreed to make an offer to purchase the site from NHS Estates. It is not currently known when a response will be received. What has emerged in the District Council's evaluation of the site is that considerable works have to take place to make the property fit for purpose for new tenants. Apart from the Town Council there have been a number of expressions of interest in renting space at the site from community organisations in the town.

4 Market St

The NNDC Cabinet at their meeting on Sept 7 agreed to spend an extra £20k on landscape works. This is primarily for the laying of a Yorkshire stone surface. A tender is currently out for the work and it is still the intention for the work to be completed in time to install a Xmas Tree.

Retrospective Planning Applications in the Bluebell pub area of Bacton Rd

NNDC wrote to the owners (Dream Lodge) of the holiday park seeking planning applications on a number of developments on July 13th. On August 5 the Council received notification that the owners had appointed a planning agent and would deal with the matter by the end of the month. The Agent informed the Council on Sept 2 that they would be submitting applications by Sept 25. Planning legislation allows such delays to take place. The council will be updated at their meeting on any further notifications of developments. The Town Clerk is in receipt of the information given to District Cllrs.

In the discussions on the Trod footpath between the Bluebell pub and Melbourne cottages it has emerged that the owner of the site apart from the footpath is likely to be required to need planning permission for the fencing/gate access that has been erected. The Council are making inquiries with the owner and ward Cllrs will be keeping a check on the situation.

Eric Seward
23/9/15

NORTH WALSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
29 September 2015

Annex E

Town mayor's report: August and September 2015

16 August: Attended Westover Vets Dog Show on Memorial Park. Judged Best in Show

30 August: Attended launch of Good Neighbours Scheme at Sunday Market

1 September: Attended Local Plan Presentation/NNDC (Cllrs Melville and Hester also attended)

6 September: Attended Rose Meadow Fete. Judged Dog Show with the welcome help of Deputy Mayor

10 September: Attended Paston College Awards Evening in Paston College and St Nicholas Church

14 September: Attended 75th Anniversary of Battle of Britain event at Norwich Castle

15 September: Attended Visit North Norfolk presentation at Deepdale Market with Cllr Abbs

Attended various committee meetings throughout these months – plus volunteered with other Town Councillors to help with Heritage Days held on 10-12 September, which I am glad to say was very successful.