

NORTH WALSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
24 February 2015

Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 24 February 2015

PRESENT

Town Mayor: Mr R Sims (Chair)

Town Councillors:

Mrs J R Belson	Mr D Spencer
Mrs A Canham	Mr A Thirtle
Mr T Morland	Mr D Turner
Mrs R A Rose	Mrs B West
Mr E Seward	Mr B Wexler

District Councillors:

Mrs V Gay	Mr E Seward
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County Councillors:

Mr E Seward	Mr J Timewell
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The meeting opened at 19:00

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

12222. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Seward an interest as local Member in all matters pertaining to the District and Councils, and in particular the proposed sale of the Council Offices to JD Wetherspoon, the latter on advice from the NNDC Monitoring Officer.

12223. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies from Cllrs Bull, Hester, Peck and Uprichard were received and accepted.

12224. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

As proposed by Cllr Spencer and seconded by Cllr West, it was **RESOLVED**

That the minutes be approved as a true record of the meeting held on 16 December 2014, and be signed by the Town Mayor.

12225. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

As proposed by Cllr Spencer and seconded by Cllr Seward, it was **RESOLVED**

That the meeting be adjourned to allow contributions from District Councillors and North Walsham Police.

12226. POLICE REPORT

A report and a record of the discussion can be found at Annex A.

NORTH WALSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
24 February 2015

12227. REPORTS BY LOCAL MEMBERS OF NNDC

Reports from County and District Councillors can be found at Annex B.

Cllr Seward read a brief statement making clear that his reference at the previous meeting to the NNDC General Capital Reserve had been based on publicly available figures, but that he now acknowledged the correct figure (provided to him by the Leader of NNDC) was £15.5 million.

12228. RETURN TO FORMAL SESSION

As proposed by Cllr West and seconded by Cllr Turner, it was **RESOLVED**

That the meeting be reconvened.

Cllr Belson left the room at 19:24

12229. TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT

The Town Mayor had attended the Thanksgiving Service for the St Nicholas Church tower, held on 25 February 2015. He had discussed the next project, to repair/replace the windows, with Rev Cubitt. This project would cost in the region of £250k. This would be the next priority, and would mean making the tower fully accessible would need to wait until resources were available.

Cllr Belson returned to the meeting at 19:29

12230. PROPOSED SALE OF COUNCIL OFFICES

The Town Clerk reported that a solicitor had been engaged to advise the Town Council on the issue of user rights. The next step was to provide copies of relevant documents. It was also reported that NNDC had approached Enterprise Inns regarding the availability of the Black Swan site. However, until the Town Council had received the advice it required there was nothing further to discuss with NNDC. In response to a query about potential sites, the Town Clerk reported that there were no new options to consider at this stage, although space at North Walsham Fire Station may be available for short-term lease. Given the general consensus that the Town Council did not want to move twice, such accommodation may not be suitable.

12231. TOWN CENTRE TOILET PROVISION

Cllr Spencer noted that there were no public toilets in the town centre, and proposed that the Town Council asked NNDC to build a new toilet block on the site of old block backing onto 4 Market Street. During discussion, it was proposed that NNDC should be asked to reconsider Bank Loke as a site for town centre toilets, and that they should consider implementing a disabled persons' comfort scheme in the town. Cllr Spencer was content for this amendment to be added to his proposal. Therefore, as proposed by Cllr Spencer and seconded by Cllr West, it was **RESOLVED**

That the Town Clerk be asked to write to NNDC requesting

- (i) **Consideration of a new town centre toilet block to replace the St Nicholas Court block, now demolished, and that Bank Loke should be reconsidered as a possible site for this, and**

NORTH WALSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
24 February 2015

- (ii) **That consideration be given to implementing a disabled persons' comfort scheme in the town.**

County Cllr Timewell arrived at 19:40

12232. JUNCTION AT VICARAGE STREET & NORTH STREET

Cllr Turner submitted a paper to the Town Council (Annex C) setting out the problems with drivers ignoring the two-way traffic flow on exiting Vicarage Street. Signage was poor, and badly located. Cllr Turner therefore proposed that Highways be asked to relocate the sign, and consider further improvements to the signage to make clear this stretch of road was two-way. As seconded by Cllr Belson, it was **RESOLVED**

That the Town Clerk be asked to write to Highways seeking improvements on safety grounds to the signage on this stretch of road.

12233. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

As proposed by Cllr Spencer and seconded by Cllr Thirtle, it was **RESOLVED**

That the meeting be adjourned to allow a contribution from County Cllr Timewell.

12234. HIGHWAYS ISSUES

A brief note of County Cllr Timewell's report can be found at Annex B. At Cllr Timewell's request, it was **RESOLVED**

That the Town Clerk be asked to forward relevant correspondence with the Highway Engineer to Cllr Timewell..

12235. PARISH PARTNERSHIP SCHEME 2015/16

Highways had contacted the Town Clerk to advise that the bid for a traffic island on Happisburgh Road (near North Walsham High School) could not be taken forward due to insufficient space. An offer to submit an alternative bid for a pair of flashing 20mph had been taken forward, on the basis that "something was better than nothing", and the Highway Engineer had already indicated that the area near the High School had been placed on the long list for consideration for a pedestrian crossing. The other two bids were unaffected, and the three bids remained under consideration.

12236. WOODVILLE PARK

A completed application pack had been submitted to the NNDC Big Society Fund seeking grant match-funding towards play equipment. The package had included a supporting letter from District Councillors and several independent referee documents. The results of a survey of local children, being conducted through North Walsham Junior and Infant School and Millfield Primary School, would follow shortly.

12237. FINANCE TRAINING FOR COUNCILLORS

The Town Clerk had made arrangements for three places to be reserved on a course to be held on 10 September 2015 aimed at teaching Councillors the fundamentals of local council finances. This was the first available date after the election. The

NORTH WALSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
24 February 2015

intention was to provide greater flexibility for internal finance checks and to help councillors understand what they were agreeing to when making resolutions that impacted on council finances.

12238. ROAD GRITTING

Cllr Seward had provided literature on a partnership between County Hall and three local councils to fund additional road gritting in those areas. The Town Clerk had circulated this document as an example of the kind of interventions available to a Town or Parish Council.

12239. RUBBISH AND DOG WASTE BINS

The Town Clerk was asked to approach NNDC with regard to providing stickers making clear that dog waste could be deposited in normal rubbish bins if properly secured.

12240. WAR MEMORIAL PARK

The Town Clerk reported that the deeds transferring the park to the Council referred to a charitable trust being in place prior to its designation as the War Memorial Park. It was therefore safe to assume that, without exploring historical records not held by the Town Council, the existing trust had been created prior to 1947 and could not therefore be disbanded as per the internal auditor's query, raised at the meeting on 27 January.

12241. PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS

As proposed by Cllr Seward and seconded by Cllr Belson, it was **RESOLVED**

That the Payments & Receipts report be approved.

12242. RECYCLING

In response to a query on bottle banks raised as part of the Comparisons report, it was noted that two quotes had been obtained for siting bins elsewhere in the town, at £10/ton and £15/ton for collection and no charge for the bins. However, the Town Council needed more information regarding the impact of the new NNDC collection policy on the bottle banks at Sainsburys before committing funding towards additional banks.

12243. PLANNING

The minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 27 January and 13 February 2015 were received.

12244. CORRESPONDENCE

Cromer Town Council had arranged a meeting with Norfolk Police to discuss the match-funding proposal for additional PCSOs. This would be held on 23 March. The Town Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Town Clerk would attend and report back to the Council.

12245. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Arts North Norfolk proposal for 4 Market Street, post-landscaping

NORTH WALSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
24 February 2015

12246. DEMENTIA FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

Cllr West had been asked to attend further meetings on behalf of the Town Council, as this group was seeking to get more organisations to back the scheme. As proposed by Cllr Belson and seconded by Cllr Spencer, it was **RESOLVED**

That Cllr West continue as the Council's representative.

12247. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

As proposed by Cllr Spencer and seconded by Cllr Wexler, 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.

Part II: Press and Memebtrs of the Public Excluded

12248. MARKETS

The Town Clerk reported that the first of these new markets, held in December and January, had proved successful. The Council was asked to consider extending approval for the markets beyond the end of March 2015. However, the Town Clerk also raised serious concerns about the involvement of RNW. Members of the groups had persistently ignored advice, requests and proper procedure including legal requirements. The Town Clerk had also received a number of complaints about the behaviour of individual members of RNW.

Town Council ownership of the markets was acknowledged and, while it did not wish to stop them, its position would need to be reconsidered if the problems persisted.

As proposed by Cllr Spencer and amended by Cllr Seward prior to being seconded by Cllr Rose, it was **RESOLVED**

That Cllr West be asked to substitute for Cllr Hester at the forthcoming meeting of RNW, and that authority be delegated to the Town Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Cllr Hester (as official RNW representative) to meet with RNW to resolve the problems.

12249. GRANTS

Cllr Rose, as Chairman, reported on the meeting of the Personnel & Grants Committee held on 10 February 2015 to discuss grant applications. As proposed by Cllr Seward and seconded by Cllr Turner, it was **RESOLVED**

That the recommendations of the Committee be accepted, and that an annual grant of £450 to the Bluebell Pond Society be approved.

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2015 to discuss grant applications were received.

12250. STAFFING

The Personnel & Grants Committee had also met on 10 February to discuss staff pay and grading matters.

At the request of the Town Mayor, *the Town Clerk and Deputy Clerk-Finance left the room at 21:05, returning at 21:14.*

As proposed by Cllr Seward and seconded by Cllr Spencer, it was **RESOLVED**

That the recommendations of the Committee be accepted.

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2015 to discuss staff pay and grading matters were received.

NORTH WALSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
24 February 2015

12251. PROPERTY VALUATION

It was reported that Arnolds Keys had agreed to carry out the valuations required at a rate of £1,100 plus VAT. As proposed by Cllr Spencer and seconded by Cllr Morland, it was **RESOLVED**

That the Arnolds Keys quote be accepted.

12252. COUNCIL AWARDS

The Town Mayor would to fund an initial set of annual awards through his business, and had identified a perspex design. Appropriate wording to be engraved would be approved by the Town Council. He asked Councillors to consider nominations for individuals or organisations who had done something for the town, and to bring these to the meeting on 24 March 2015.

12253. TENDER EXERCISES

The Deputy Clerk-Finance reported on tendering exercises for street lighting and insurance.

For street lighting, as proposed by Cllr Wexler and seconded by Cllr Rose, it was **RESOLVED**

That the quote from TT Jones be accepted.

For insurance, some potential savings were identified, for example in relation to terrorism and business travel. As proposed by Cllr Spencer and seconded by Cllr Turner, it was **RESOLVED**

That these items be removed from the cover and revised quotes sought on this basis.

The meeting closed at 21:35

Police Crime Report for Town Council Meeting 24 February 2015

PCSO Reynolds presented the monthly crime report, noting that there had been a total of 43 crimes in the period 27 January to 23 February 2015 compared to 60 for the same period in 2014. The full report is as follows:

Crime Breakdown

43 crimes in total have been reported to police between the dates above. This can be further broken down into the following categories:

- Criminal Damage – 5
- Theft – 9
- Assaults – 7
- Domestic non crime – 14
- Public Order – 5
- Drugs – 2
- Theft of MV- 1

60 crimes for the same period last year:

- Criminal Damage – 9
- Theft – 9
- Assaults – 11
- Domestic non crime – 19
- Drugs – 4
- Sexual offences – 4
- Public Order – 2
- Burglary-2

Up and Coming events and initiatives involving the SNT

Our next priority setting meeting will be Wednesday 11th March 2015 at 1900 hours held at the Atrium. Next Pub Watch meeting 9th March 2015 at The Kinga Arms Public House.

Current North Walsham Priorities

Speeding on Brick Kiln Road North Walsham

Current Issues around North Walsham

Speeding in Swanton Abbott

Issues raised by Councillors

1. *Traffic & speeding*

Town residents had responded to a query on the Town Council Facebook Group with a lengthy list of roads in the town which suffered with speeding problems. This list would be forwarded to PCSO Reynolds.

A regular congregation of vehicles along Cromer Road, near Laundry Loke, was reported. This made access difficult for residents, and the mainly young male drivers often became aggressive and confrontational if approached. PCSO Reynolds confirmed that there was

NORTH WALSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
24 February 2015

no way for residents to check the road tax status of vehicles, but would report the issue to colleagues. Residents should report any concerns to the police, and they would respond.

2. Dogs
PCSO Reynolds agreed to speak to colleagues about the dog waste issue and dog wardens.

Report from County/District Cllr Seward to Town Council, 24 February 2015

The Green Acorn RD: Following a resident's survey by District Cllrs and discussions with the District Council's Parks and Countryside Manager and Town Cllr Gary Bull a number of improvements have been agreed. The football goal post is to have a new net, some of the vandalised trees are to be replaced with guards, a swing for children older than toddlers has been ordered for installation in the early summer and some pruning of the shrubbery that overhangs the existing play equipment is to be carried out. There was a lot of concern about the length that the grass was allowed to grow during the summer before it was cut. This was due to the contractor Kier having problems with their lawn mower. A new lawn mower has been acquired and a better service is expected in the summer.

The Worsted (Scarborough Hill) Recycling Centre: Currently this centre is open seven days a week and no charge is made for household waste. It is a well-used recycling centre by local residents. In 2013 the County Council as part of the financial savings in future years proposed that from April 2015 the centre should be open for only part of a week (Thursday to Sunday) and that from April 2016 persons using the centre should be charged £2 per visit. The Council has 20 recycling centres across Norfolk and these proposals apply to 8 of the Council's smaller (known as discretionary) recycling centres. The Town Council wrote to the County Council in November of last year expressing concern about these proposals and a negative response was received.

In January this year the Government published a consultation document entitled 'Preventing backdoor charging at household waste recycling Centres'. It proposed a statutory order to come into effect from April this year to prevent charging at recycling centres like Worsted. The District Council has welcomed the Government's proposals and it is likely that this statutory order will receive parliament approval. The charging proposal is therefore unlikely to take place. However, the reduction in opening hours is still scheduled to come into place at the beginning of April. Concerns about this proposal for Worsted and four other recycling centres (it saves £167k per year) were raised by the author in the Council's budget setting meeting on February 16th. In the budget that was eventually approved an early review of the proposal to reduce opening hours at Worsted and other recycling centres was agreed.

The Government consultation paper also strongly suggested that before a recycling centre was closed or partially closed by a Council it should be offered to other groups in the community to run including Town/Parish Councils!!

County Council Budget 2015/16: As has been widely reported the Council after a five and half meeting on February 16th agreed a balanced budget for the coming financial year 2015/16. It embraces both efficiency savings and cuts in services. The budget was supported by the Labour, Lib Dem and UKIP groups with the Conservatives abstaining. The Greens opposed. They wanted an increase in Council tax but this is firmly resisted by the majority of County Cllrs (UKIP and Conservative). The County Council's financial situation in future years is very challenging and this is added to by the rising costs of providing for Adult Social Care.

NORTH WALSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
24 February 2015

In addition to his written report, **Cllr Seward** reported that:

- He had asked Norfolk County Council to put the planned reduction in opening hours at Worsted recycling centre on hold as there was now a review into recycling centre opening hours. This was under consideration. A discussion was also due shortly on budget issues relating to retaining 7 days/week opening at Worsted.
- Network Rail had now replied to the Highway Engineer regarding installation of the bridge height sign and other improvements on the approaches to the bridge, and an Asset Protection Agreement had been sent to them.
- The County Council road sign contractor had been asked to make contact with the Town Clerk regarding the SAM2 speed awareness signs ordered via the 2014/15 Parish Partnership Scheme. The Highway Engineer's office was surprised this had not happened and would chase. The Town Clerk confirmed that the contractor, Westcotec, had contacted him earlier that day and that the signs would be put into production.

Cllr Spencer asked if District Councillors were able to explain the stalemate that the press had reported existed between NNDC and the Town Council, and that had been picked up by the Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP's office. District Councillors present had nothing further to add, as they were not part of the negotiation. It was noted that the Town Mayor had recommended that Town Councillors did not participate in the survey organised by the MPs office.

District Cllr Gay reported that a Norfolk CAB Stakeholders' Forum meeting had been held on 3 February 2015. Norfolk CAB was now in discussions with NNDC about what was expected from the organisation for the period of the six month extension to the funding agreement. The Chief Executive had stated unequivocally that Norfolk CAB remained committed to North Walsham, but had also said the organisation was considering its commitments in light of its budget.

County Cllr Timewell reported that Highways was questioning the practicality and viability of any intervention at Aylsham Road. With budgets still unclear, he asked that the matter be left with him to seek a resolution at County Hall.

Vicarage Street/North Street Junction

I have been asked to bring to the councils notice a disaster waiting to happen. Some cars coming up Vicarage Street (which is one way) seem to think that it is still one way once over the junction marked red. What I would like the council to do is write to Highways asking for better signage at this junction before someone has a fatal accident. I appreciate its down to the drivers but we have to treat them as idiots and tell them its two way once over the junction.

David Turner

NORTH WALSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
24 February 2015

