

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

County Councillors:
Mr E Seward Mr J Timewell

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.

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**



- (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 Happsburgh 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 Scholl 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

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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

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.

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Part II: Press and Memembrs 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.

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

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