

Thorpe St Andrew Town Council Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 7th December 2009

1. Present: Mr R. S. James (Town mayor)
Mr J. M. Ward (Deputy Town Mayor) Mrs E. C. Laming
Mr A. J. Barber Miss S. P. Lawn
Mr J. Emsell Mr E. A. Newberry
Mr D. E. Eley Mr R. Robson
Mr J. F. Fisher Mr G. Rowe
Mr S. Freeman-Pannett Mr N. Shaw

Apologies: Mr G. Allison, Mr I. J. Mackie, Mr D. R. C. Spooner

In attendance: Mr S. J. Ford

2. Declarations of interest: Mrs E. C. Laming declared a personal interest in agenda item 10 Thorpe Marshes. Mr J. M. Ward and Mr N. Shaw declared a personal interest in any matters relating to Norfolk County Council and Broadland District Council as members of those councils. Mr D. E. Eley, Miss S. P. Lawn, Mr A. J. Barber and Mr J. M. Ward declared a prejudicial interest in agenda items 13 and 18 as trustees of Dussindale Park Community Trust and would leave the room when those matters were discussed. Mr R. Robson declared a personal interest in Voucher 1043 on the payment list as hirer of the equipment. Mr J. F. Fisher and the Clerk, Mr S. J. Ford declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 27 as trustees of Thorpe Burial Trust and would leave the room whenever Burial Trust matters were discussed during the meeting.

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd November 2009

(i) The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd of November 2009, previously circulated to members were approved and signed following the addition of the following to paragraph 28. "Town Councillors are entitled to attend and be sent agendas for any Committee or Sub Committee taking place and to participate in the discussion. All proposals and recommendations to the main Town Council meeting should be scrutinised for content, cost and budget by the relevant committee. The draft minutes contained in section 8 of the Publications and Media Committee were amended to recommend to the Town Council that the extra costs of producing an advertisement free Town Council News publication be accepted for the current edition and to look to including advertisements in the forthcoming financial year.

(ii) Matters arising from the minutes: None.

4. Announcements:

(i) Town Mayor: The Town Mayor, Mr R. S. James congratulated the committee, members and staff and who had organised the recent Christmas light switch on event. He had been very impressed by the event and was particularly delighted by the presence of two live reindeer to lead the parade to switch the lights on.

(ii) The Town Clerk, Mr S. J. Ford announced that the Town Council notepaper would soon require ordering and showed members a sample of the notepaper, in future it would incorporate the scroll and town inscription beneath the two shields at the top of the page.

5. Public Participation:

The Town Mayor then put forward a motion, seconded by Mr J. M. Ward to suspend the meeting to enable members of the public to speak. Following a vote the meeting was suspended to enable members of the public, Town and District Councillors to speak. At that point Mr J. F. Fisher and Mr S. J. Ford, Town Clerk, left the room and returned when recalled to the meeting following a discussion that had been held on a proposed development on land owned by Thorpe Burial Trust. Notes on the public session are attached as an addendum to the minutes of the Town Council meeting.

6. Payment of accounts

(i) Cheque numbers 003723 – 003793 totalling £53,890.32p, on the 2008/09 payments list were approved and signed.

(ii) Budget 2010/11: The Finance and General Purposes Committee had met on 23rd November 2009 and **RECOMMENDED** to the Town Council the budget that had been prepared by the Responsible Finance Officer Mrs J. B. Fenn based on a zero percentage increase on the 2008/09 budget except where costs were known to be higher in the new financial year. This had resulted in a precept of £304,156, an increase of 3% over the current year's budget. Mr J. M. Ward, seconded by Mr G. Rowe that the proposed budget be accepted. Mr A. J. Barber, seconded by Miss S. P. Lawn proposed an amendment that setting the budget be deferred until the Responsible Finance Officer was able to provide actual figures for the period to the end of December. It was possible that the increase might need to be higher than 3% in order to carry out works intended to be carried out. Mr D. E. Eley proposed a further amendment that the precept should be accepted provided it did not represent an increase of more than 3%. Six votes were then cast in favour of Mr Eley's amendment, with five against, and the amendment was carried. A vote was then held on the substantive motion which was carried with seven votes in favour and five against. The budget would be referred to the Finance and General Purposes Committee to further consider and recommend a budget that would not have an increase higher than 3% when information on the predicted number of band D properties had been made available by the District Council.

7. Tree Warden's report

The content of the monthly report was noted. Mr P. Rope was in attendance to provide additional information on current tree matters in the town. He had sent a letter in support of Tree Preservation Order 57, Laundry Lane Recreation Ground; there were particular concerns regarding works carried out on the oak tree in the service yard. Mr Rope had recently attended a site meeting with Mr P. Leggett, Street Scene officer of Broadland District Council to discuss the possibility of planting a 100m long native species hedge between the footbridge and steps to Sainsbury's in Vane Close. This could be

carried out with the plants being provided under the Tree Warden Scheme. Mr Rope would not be able to carry out the actual planting but would discuss the planting with his fellow Tree Warden, Mrs M. Amos to agree how the planting could be carried out.

Mr Rope had inspected and tried the slide that had been built into the dell at Dussindale Park recreation ground and considered it worked well and was a very good asset to the recreational facilities at the park.

Mr Rope concluded his report by saying that he enjoyed his work as Tree Warden; however it was his wish to step down within the next two years.

8. Draft minutes of committee meetings

Joint Events & Publications Committee

The Events Committee Chairman presented the draft minutes commenting that the Christmas Light event had been a great success and that the Christmas Concert would take place later in the week. The budget requested for Events would remain the same as the current year. The requested budget for the Media and Publications Committee had been set at £2,600 rather than the £2000 shown on the budget discussed earlier in the meeting.

Finance & General Purposes Committee

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 26th October 2009 were noted. It had been agreed to **RECOMMEND** to the Town Council that any surplus s106 after the cost of the River Green improvements had been ascertained would be used to construct a circular path around Laundry Lane Recreation Ground. An application for solar water heating and other energy saving measures had been applied for at the Fitzmaurice Pavilion. The allotment rules had been reviewed and a number of changes implemented to maximise the number of plots available to residents of Thorpe St Andrew.

Plans Committee

The draft minutes of the Plans Committee meeting held on 9 November 2009 were noted. An exhibition had been held at the Dussindale Centre as part of a pre planning application public consultation on a proposed development in Yarmouth Road on land owned by Thorpe Burial Trust. Representatives of the developers and housing association putting forward the proposals had attended the exhibition earlier in the day to answer questions from the public and had stayed for the public session of the meeting to answer any further questions about the proposed development.

The Town Mayor then announced that a result of the information arising from the draft minutes of the Plans Committee he would bring forward item 27 on the agenda; Mr A. J. Barber's request that the Burial Trust Transfer ownership of the site. Mr J. F. Fisher said that if the last item on the agenda was to be brought forward he would leave the meeting. Mr S. J. Ford, Town Clerk, then left the room. Mrs E. C. Laming agreed to take minutes whilst the Clerk was out of the room.

9. Request for transfer of ownership of Burial Trust Land

Mr A. J. Barber suggested that the Thorpe Burial Trust be requested to transfer ownership of the land they held in Yarmouth Road to the Town Council of Dussindale Park Community Trust. It was his view that to sell the site for affordable housing was not in the interests of residents. If the land was sold he considered the trust would no longer need to exist. The Town Council had not previously been made aware that the land could become available for sale although it had expressed an interest in any amenity land that could become available. Mr A. J. Barber proposed, seconded by Mrs S. P. Lawn that the Town Council write to the Burial Trust and request them not to sell the land but to transfer ownership to the Town Council for the benefit of residents of Thorpe St Andrew. On a show of hands it was **AGREED** unanimously to take that course of action. The Town Mayor, Mr R. S. James would write the letter.

The Town Clerk, Mr S. J. Ford, was then asked to rejoin the meeting.

10. Update on the St Andrews Park roundabout

The sponsor had erected new signs that were aimed at recruiting carers for his business. The wording on the signs would be checked for an acknowledgement of the Town Council on the signs.

11. Update on the marshes

Information that a possession order had been granted by Norwich County Court had been granted to ensure that the two boats that had been moored on Crown Point land were no longer permitted to moor at Thorpe Marshes was noted.

12. Olive's garden

A large number of bulbs had been planted on the site; planting of shrubs for beds would follow. The Rotary Club and Horticultural Society had drawn up plans and would be carrying out the work that would be publicised in the spring edition of Thorpe St Andrew News.

13. Update on River Green improvements

The Clerk had been advised earlier in the day that planning permission had been granted with conditions attached. Formal notification would follow.

14. Town Council rent

Mr A. J. Barber, Mr D. E. Eley, Miss S. P. Lawn and Mr J. M. Ward left the room before any discussions took place. The Town mayor, Mr R. S. James said that he would take item 18 on the agenda; the accident at Dussindale Community Centre in tandem with the rent discussions.

Mrs E. C. Laming noted the rental valuation that the Community Trust had obtained and proposed that the Town Council obtain an independent rental valuation and should have a landlord and tenant agreement when terms had been agreed. There should be a service charge for heat, light etc used by the Town Council. It was **RESOLVED** to seek independent advice prior to entering into further negotiations with the Community Trust.

15. Accident at Dussindale Community Centre

Town Council staff had hired an access tower on behalf of the Dussindale Park Community Trust who needed the equipment to carry out lighting maintenance in the main hall of the Community Centre. Town Council staff had unbolted the cradle on the tower to get it into the hall. Whilst an electrical contractor was operating the equipment it appeared that there was a fault with the tower; it failed to stop using the normal controls when needed and crashed through the ceiling causing considerable damage.

Subsequent investigations by the Health and Safety Executive investigators failed to replicate the accident but drew attention to the dismantling of the equipment although no clear link to the accident could be attributed to the dismantling.

Concerns were raised over the manner in which the emergency stop device had been wired into the machine and the Environmental Health Officer at the District Council was awaiting the opinion of a specialist electrical inspector on the best way to proceed with the matter.

The Community Trust considered that as the Town Council had hired the equipment and their staff had dismantled the cradle and that the Town Council was responsible for the charges that had been raised by Toucan Tool Hire for the period that the equipment was impounded by the Environmental Health Officer to enable investigations to be carried out. It was **RESOLVED** that no action should be taken until the report from the specialist engineer was received. It was noted that the equipment had been supplied by Toucan Tool Hire with a missing emergency lowering cable and that as a vital piece of safety equipment the equipment was not fit for purpose when supplied by the hire company.

16. Appointment of Trustee to Dussindale Park Community Trust

An email to Mr D. Eley, Chairman of the Community Trust, from Mr R. S. James resigning as a trustee with immediate effect was noted. Mr J. Emsell offered his services as Mr James replacement. There being no other candidates Mr Emsell was elected as a Town Council representative to Dussindale Park Community Trust.

17. Greater Norwich Economic Strategy Summary 2009-14

The contents of the summary were noted.

18. Stop Norwich Urbanisation

Information on the group that sought to challenge the large scale developments to the north east of Norwich was noted. It was considered that the council was not in a position to make a judgement at the present time.

19. Retirement of Village Hall caretaker

The resignation of Mrs Palotai as village hall caretaker after over twenty years of dedicated service was received with regret. It was **RESOLVED** to make a presentation of an suitably engraved crystal rose bowl from the Town Council at a cost of £50 that would be funded from the Town Mayor's allowance. Mrs Palotai was retiring from caretaking at the Dussindale Centre and Mr D. E. Eley would be coordinating separate arrangements to mark her retirement.

The Town Mayor, Mr R. S. James, announced that as the time was 10.20pm he proposed to hold items 19 – 29 on the agenda for the next meeting on 7th January 2010 unless any members considered there were matters there that needed to be dealt with immediately. Mrs E. C. Laming said that she wished to action printing of the Town Plan; all members had been circulated with details of the plan and a deadline for comment but only three members had responded within the timescale set out although some members had subsequently made comments on the document.

Following a discussion on points raised at the meeting the following corrections were **AGREED**. Dussindale Park had been referred to as Fitzmaurice Park on a proof; it was **RESOLVED** by five votes to four that the reference should be changed to: Dussindale Park recreation ground. Minor alterations to the map of the south part of the town would be made to ensure all residential roads were included. The town Mayor, Mr R. S. James then moved that the plan be published in its existing form and with nine votes in favour it was **RESOLVED** to publish it as soon as possible.

20. Future agenda items:

Mr S. Freeman-Pannett asked if provision of a notice board in Plumstead Road could be considered at the next meeting. Mr R. Robson requested that Homewatch in Broadland be placed on the next agenda.

The meeting closed at 10.30pm.

Date of next meeting: 4th January 2010

Addendum to Town Council minutes of meeting held on 7 December 2009

5 (i) Public Session

Mr M. Cranwell of Victory Housing Trust attended the meeting to provide additional information on a proposed affordable housing development on land owned by Thorpe Burial Trust. In general there had been positive feedback following a public consultation on the development proposals.

It was explained that affordable housing was any price that that was below open market private or rented housing. The most common affordable accommodation was social housing then intermediate rent and shared ownership (a share purchased from a housing association).

Social renting was the highest housing need identified by Broadland District Council. A local need had established and a lettings policy had been drawn up. If the proposed development at Yarmouth Road went ahead priority for tenancies would be given to residents of Thorpe St Andrew. A cascade mechanism setting out the criteria that needed to be fulfilled would be put in place.

The section 106 agreement that would arise from the development would be between the District Council and the housing trust. If the housing development went ahead the properties would be owned and managed by Victory Housing Trust.