

Swaffham Town Council

Minutes of the Annual Town Assembly meeting held on Wednesday, 27th April 2016 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Swaffham.

Present:	Mayor Cllr A Thorp (Chairman)
Councillors:	Mrs R Bartram, Mrs B Bowler, Mrs Buckley-Stevens, Mr P Darby, Mrs T Jennison, Mr C Houghton, Mrs S Lister, Mrs S Matthews, Mrs J Skinner, Mr Scott
Town Clerk:	Mr R Bishop
Deputy Town Clerk:	Mrs C Smith
Norfolk County Councillor:	Mr P Smyth
Community Speakers:	PC Jo Higgins, Mr D Saunders, Mrs S Gattuso, Mrs S Palmer, Mr R Trowell Ms C Hill, Mr M Booth, Ms C Watts, Ms H Manson
Public:	29 including the Community Speakers

1. MAYOR'S WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

1.1. The Mayor welcomed everyone to the Annual Town Assembly.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Allen, Cllr Bensley and Cllr Sherwood (Breckland District Councillor).

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (*for items on the agenda*)

3.1. There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN ASSEMBLY HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 22nd APRIL 2015

4.1. The Minutes of the Annual Town Assembly held on Wednesday, 22nd April 2015 were agreed and signed as a true and accurate record by the Chairman subject to Cllr Bartram's name being corrected.

5. Norfolk County Council – Section 106 contributions for education

5.1 Cllr Paul Smyth introduced Chris Hay, Head of Planning and School Organisation who gave the keynote address outlining the section 106 contribution for education, how it was calculated and allocated in Norfolk.

5.2 Following concerns over the future education provision in Swaffham, Mr Hay described how the planning process informs the plans made by Norfolk County Council for school places in the County. Concentrating on the primary school places, Mr Hay outlined NCC's statutory responsibility to provide a place at school and associated transport requirements. The theoretical model, where the future use of land is identified in the local authority local plan, should allow for any development to be included in education planning. However this alone does not work for Swaffham. As Breckland has not met its five year land supply, a number of speculative planning applications had been made and, should they all be successful and built, this could mean pressure on places. So in reality NCC watch the planning system at all levels.

5.3 Given that there are possibly 800 dwellings in the pipeline this could result in the need to add one form of entry in the infant and junior school. Mr Hay confirmed that NCC felt comfortable that the two schools could cope with that level of increase. At the moment the speculative development was manageable. However in the long term after the investment and expansion planned for Thetford and Attleborough, Mr Hay felt that Swaffham could be one of the towns considered for more provision. Significant investment and increase in places was not likely before 2026.

6 COMMUNITY REPORTS:

6.1 **Police** – PC Jo Higgins reported that the crime figures for Swaffham were unavailable as there had been a change of computer systems. It was thought that the closure of the front office had had little effect as residents were able to use the yellow telephone outside the Police station or call 101 to access the community policing service. The Safer Neighbourhood Policing meetings were not well attended by the public although they had been moved to the evenings to make them accessible to working people. It was confirmed that the road policing, firearms and vulnerable persons teams were based at Swaffham. However to contact police residents need to phone 101 or 999 depending on the urgency of the call.

6.2 Breckland Council - Cllr Matthews reported:

- **Devolution** – if it happens will be an amalgamation of the county councils of Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Councils. They will not take over the running of everything in the counties, only the services for which they apply to Government. In our case it is Transport. So the money will come direct from Government to the group who will decide where it will be spent.
- **Transformation Programme** – at Breckland, we are processing a Transformation Programme which means looking at everything we do to find a more up-to-date and better way of delivering our services. We must take advantage of advancing technology. There are working groups sitting to work out the way forward. Cllr Darby sits on the digitalisation group. You can now order and pay for your brown bin on-line 24/7. Cllr Matthews chairs the group working out the Alignment of Public Services. Already the Department of Works and Pensions has moved into the offices at Dereham and this will allow a wider range of services can be accessed in a single visit. Also within that sector it has been decided that all war pension income will be disregarded when calculating housing benefit. Previously a £10 adjustment had been made.
- **Early Intervention Hub** – This service is for those aged up to 25 and allows families to receive early help when they are in trouble. Support is provided by a range of agencies. Complicated problems are considered and worked through in a multiagency approach. Working together has produced more effective and efficient outcomes for these families and the agencies involved.
- **Business** - a year long pilot has just started in Dereham to reduce business rates, it is hoped that this will invigorate the Town Centre. If successful it will be rolled out to the other 4 market towns next year.
- **Broadband** - £900k has been invested into a Government matched funded scheme run by NCC to improve the delivery of broadband in most of the district.
- **Car Parking** – consultants have been engaged to work on a Car Parking study, this will be carried out during the month of May in the district, and in Swaffham on 16th and 17th May.
- **Dementia community project** – one community project helped by Breckland is the scheme where anyone looking after someone with dementia who likes to stay active, can buy a discounted joint membership pass at the Dereham Leisure Centre for just £25 a month. They can access all activities there with the exception of Pilates.

6.3 Norfolk County Council – Cllr Paul Smyth reported:

- NCC had spent 8 months focussed on budget cuts, coupled with an increasing demand of 46% for social care it had made for a challenging year. The only cut that had affected Swaffham was the move of the Registrars to the Community Centre.
- Cllr Smyth had attended monthly highway meetings with the Town Clerk and Highway Engineer. One issue currently being addressed is facilitating an access at the back of the junior school, this would help with
- Initiatives supporting local charities and organisations have been put in place to share expertise.
- A Public Health strategy has been produced to promote health living. A number of initiatives have been developed within this including, a conference with Arts and Culture to help people with dementia, support for children in care and the seven steps campaign to protect children from secondary smoke.
- Resources have also been allocated to support local Escape group, the service was considered good value providing training and support to vulnerable people.

6.4 Icení – Mr D Saunders – reported that there had been investment in the updating and maintenance of the Assembly rooms and community centre. The recently designed café area had proved a great success.

ICENI have worked closely with the Town Council, Breckland District Council and Norfolk County Council to provide facilities and he was sad to report that the Registrar's service had been withdrawn from Swaffham completely. This coupled with the loss of the job centre meant that Swaffham residents did not have the same access to services and it was an unfair situation. Too many excellent projects were under threat and Mr Saunders called on the community to work together to stop the leaching of services that penalised residents for living in Swaffham.

6.5 Swaffham in Bloom – Cllr Bowler reported that Swaffham in Bloom is mainly achieved by many volunteer who give their time and energy by being part of a team this includes Swaffham Town Council and the Escape project and collated by the Icení partnership, all of which takes many hours to hopefully try to get it right, thanks to Katie for all her support and her team of dedicated helpers.

Graham and the team hope to start planting week commencing 15th May and expect judging to take place mid July, with the addition for a new member of outside staff this summer it will allow the team a

few more hours for watering and general maintenance of the flowers. Can I remind residents you are invited to pick from the herb tubs they will be situated outside the Green Parrott and Barclays Bank, this will hopefully encourage lots of new healthy recipes.

I feel very honoured to be part of our Swaffham in Bloom team, we all have a pride in our lovely market town and to dress it in flowers each year is very exciting, but in Anglia in Bloom is not just about flowers it also embraces our community spirit and the environment of Swaffham, so each one of us, who belong to this very iconic town, can play a part and to have a pride in such a lovely gift we call Swaffham.

- 6.6 Swaffham Museum** – Sue Gattuso, Museum Manager, reported on the very busy year for the Museum. Although paying visitor numbers were down there had been 4 days of opening free to the public, over 300 people had attended in that time. This was part of the 800 year celebration events where lots of activities had taken place. The Museum Volunteers had clocked up over 1000 hours and a financial contribution had also been made.
- 6.7** The 800 year project had also included an education programme and loan boxes had been developed, these were available to schools and individuals and looked at the history and development of markets. SID was now available in the Museum foyer; this is a digital display showing archives and present day images and video of Swaffham life and events. All were encouraged to come along to the Museum and play with the user friendly display.
- 6.8** A gallery had been cleared to make way for a new military display and other improvements were planned, including finding some new case for the Yeomanry silver. More information was needed regarding the ancient sites around Swaffham and it was hoped that the research already done could be built on. All in all it had been a productive year and the Museum expressed thanks to the Town Council for their support.
- 6.9 Civic Twinning** – Cecelia Cogliatti, chairman of the Twinning Association reported that the French and German Towns of Couhe and Henmar would be visiting Swaffham this year. The twinning charter was signed almost 50 years ago and it was a great achievement that this event promoting co-operation, sharing cultures and friendship still goes on. The Twinning Association were organising the weekend for 24-26 September. On Saturday there would be a dance with music from the Folska band, followed by a long lunch on Sunday with speeches and entertainment. Other activities would be confirmed nearer the time. On Saturday morning the main business meeting would take place in the Council chamber.
- 6.10 Youth Development** – Sally Palmer, helped by Amy, Kayleigh and Leanne gave a presentation detailing the youthie project and plans for the future. Good attendances were reported at all the clubs and there had been good take up in the new 11-14 year old group. The Icen youth hub catering for 13-19 year olds supported young people in development of CV's and job searches. Leanne reported on the Youth Voice project and described how she had gone on to stand for the youth parliament and was currently standing for the Breckland Youth advisory board.
- 6.11** In the future the members committee hoped that a youth council could be formed. The first steps towards this had been undertaken jointly with work done at the Nicholas Hamond Academy.
- 6.12** The youth team also reported that they had worked with the Town Council and helped to make a funding bid to Wren for the Sk8park. The outcome of this would be known shortly.
- 6.13 SCALGA** – Roger Trowell, previous Scalga chairman reported that the two plots held by Scalga at Shouldham Lane and Tumbler hill were more or less full. Heightened interest in growing your own vegetables had meant that there was greater interest in allotmenting. Starter plots for those wishing to try having an allotment were facilitated by Scalga and other activities included helping the Town Council with inspections and projects such as the work to improve the paths. Many Scalga members had also attended the open meeting with the Town Council. The Scalga AGM would be held in June and another event in September with Tea and cake and prizes for the best kept allotments.
- 6.14 Escape and Friends of Swaffham Orchard-** Clare Peak outlined the projects supporting children, families and adults at the allotments. There were around 60-70 service users and the project now offered an opportunity to gain a qualification. 18 people had so far completed a level one horticultural award.
- 6.15** Evaluation work for the heritage lottery funding had identified that 145 individuals had developed over 120 different skills at the project. Funding remained an on-going challenge, at the moment the projects had merged together and it was hoped they would attract some further funding to continue. The project

was currently funded until September. It was hoped to generate more income by selling plants and produce from the allotments. It may also be possible to charge for some of the training.

- 6.16 Nicholas Hamond Academy-** Cheryl Hill, Principal and Martin Booth Deputy Principal reported that last year the school had applied for World Class Curriculum Status. This has now been awarded the school, the only one in England to achieve this. The foundation works with Governments all over the world and so to be judged over 10 standards is a great achievement. Recognition of the students work in the community is one of the criteria judged and one of the areas the school is most proud of. The Department of Education had also visited since the last Town Assembly and had confirmed that the school had the capacity to reach an outstanding report, again a great achievement.
- 6.17** Children continue to benefit from a wide ranging education and this includes trips away, including a summer trip to Italy, skiing and a year 9 group would soon be off to Kingswood for an action packed trip.
- 6.18** The new intake continues to grow and in September 2016 it is expected that 130+ children will be coming into year 7. Results continue to improve with 45% scoring A*-C grades in English and Maths. It is hoped this will improve further to 50% in the near future.
- 6.19** Help from the Swaffham community such as Lions and Rotary with books and equipment are much appreciated. One of the competitions run by Rotary for short stories had led to one student being named as a local and regional winner. The work was now being judged at national level. Ms Hill reported that it was a stunning piece of work which would be shared when the judging had finished.
- 6.20 Town Team –** Cllr Les Scott reported that this voluntary group had the broad aim to promote the Town. Many key issues were currently being considered including business rates, car parking and Wifi. Since the last meeting the Town Team had led on the 800 year events and visitor information boards were now in place. The Town Team were supporting the dementia friendly initiatives and looking at taking over a website previously run by the Tourism Association, as this was no longer in being. The Town Team are also well placed to help with the neighbourhood plan and any project to improve the public toilet facilities.
- 6.21 Swaffham Trade Association –** Colin Mason, Chairman reported that the new organisation had formed in recent weeks and had already started to get involved in promoting the town. It was hoped that a new lighting scheme decorating town centre trees and landmarks would be in place. An event for the Christmas lights switch on was also in the planning stages. There had already been a good response from a number of businesses and the Swaffham Trade Association was keen to work with local organisations for the good of all in the town.
- 6.22 Swimming Pool Association –** Carolyn Watts and Helen Manson introduced the swimming pool project and outlined their plans to build an outdoor facility to benefit all residents. The plan was to have an environmentally friendly pool that would work as a charity/ not for profit business. An application to become a charity had been made and a feasibility study had been undertaken in order to progress the ideas. For more information residents could look at the facebook page.
- 7 Mayors Annual Report –** The Mayor Cllr Anne Thorp read her annual report a copy is attached at appendix A
- 8 Accounts 2015-16, Budget and Neighbourhood Plan Consultation –** The Town Clerk tabled the accounts and reported that we had ended the year within budget. Any questions regarding the accounts could be directed to the office for a detailed response.
- 8.1** It was reported that the precept had risen by 5.3%, the decision had not been taken lightly but prudent finances had meant that the Council was in a stable position with some reserves.
- 8.2** From 1st June there would be a change in office hours with the Town Council office open to the public 9.30-1 and 1.30-4 on a Monday and 9.30 to 1 every other day.
- 9 OPEN SESSION –** including correspondence received and any questions from the floor
No correspondence had been received and there were no questions from the floor.

9. MAYOR to close the meeting at the end of the Open Session

9.1 The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and expressed her gratitude to those who had given a report.