

SWAFFHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Town Assembly held on Wednesday 1st May 2002 at 7.30p.m. in the Assembly Rooms, Swaffham.

Present: Mayor Cllr D. Cannon (in the chair)

Councillors:- Mr D. Butters, Mrs P. Buxton, Mr P. Darby, Mr B. Emmerson,
Mr P. Francis, Mr P. Ison, Mrs S. Matthews, Mr I. Sherwood
Mr J. Stockdale, Mr L. Wise.

Clerk:-	Mr R. Bishop.
Deputy Clerk:-	Mrs M. Meyrick
Community Policeman:-	PC. A. Partridge
Chief Executive Breckland	
District Council:-	Mr R. Garnett
Taurus Sports	Mr Simon Dawson Mr Andy De-Gol

Public:- 43

1. MAYOR'S WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

1.1. The Mayor Mr D. Cannon welcomed everyone to the 2002 Annual Town Assembly. It has not been an easy year for Swaffham but Swaffham now has an improved financial position due to the sale of allotment land. There has been major staff changes at the Town Hall in the past year. The Mayor also spoke of Cllr Laurie Buxton who died of cancer earlier in the year who is greatly missed.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

2.1. Cllr J. Boddy and Cllr P. Green.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – for items included on the Agenda.

3.1. There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF THE TOWN ASSEMBLY OF 25th APRIL 2001

4.1. The minutes were agreed by the Council and signed as a true record by the Mayor.

5. REPORTS OF COUNCILLORS – on the work of the Town Council during 2001/2002

5.1. The Clerk informed the Assembly that an extra item has been added to the agenda- m: report on Town Council Property by Cllr D. Butters.

a) Civic Exchange. A report by Cllr B. Emmerson.

Cllr Emmerson reported that it is the turn of Hemoor in Germany to host the Civic Exchange this year. In the early days lots of people visited each town but there has been a decline somewhat over the last few years but the Twinning Association has grown. Cllr Emmerson recalled how a family of 5 were thrilled by the way they were treated by the families of Hemoor. Cllr Emmerson has asked for representatives from any groups of Swaffham including the football club, rugby club and the lions who would like to go on the Twinning weekend in September, but he would like to point out that the cost of the trip would have to be borne by the people who go. In two

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years time Swaffham will be host to around 60 members of from Couhe in France and Hemoor in Germany. The twinning association are hoping to organise a whole weeks function to involve a craft fair with the Chamber of Trade.

b) Business in Bloom. Report by Cllr B. Emmerson.

The business in Bloom competition was set up jointly by the Manager of the local McDonalds and Cllr Emmerson. On its first year of the competition there were 3 entrants but last year there were over 20. Most of the displays were to a very high standard. This year the sponsorship from McDonalds has been secured. The Town Council, Chamber of Trade and McDonalds will judge the event to be held in July.

c) Market. Report by Cllr B. Emmerson.

To see how successful the Swaffham market you only have to visit the markets of King's Lynn and Dereham who both have quite a lot of empty spaces. Swaffham has a new market superintendant who is very much on the ball and Cllr Emmerson wishes him well. There has been concern over the width of the alleys on the market which is being looked at by the Council. Cllr Emmerson asked the public to please use the market and if there are any complaints to see the market superintendant.

d) Swaffham Museum Ltd. Report by Cllr P. Francis.

The Museum is in the final stages of becoming Swaffham Museum Ltd., the Town Council remains committed to the museum which has received a £5000 grant this year. A photocopier has been donated to the Friends of Swaffham Museum by the Town Council. The Town Council has the built ship now the friends are to keep it afloat.

e) Town Hall & Museum Enhancement. Report by Cllr P. Francis.

The Jubilee Heritage Plan includes a new Civic Centre. Andrew Gayton from Breckland Council – New conference chamber, an office for the registrar and Breckland Council representatives. There would be an internal access for the public to visit the museum and there would also be disabled access. Looking for architects over the next 2 weeks to draw up proposals and we are hoping for work to finish before next winter. This will put the Town in a superior financial position for many years to come.

f) Finance. Report by Cllr P. Francis.

120,000 2002/2003 + 500 for reserves. Breckland Council tax rose by 3.5% .
120,000 plus lighting – savings from contractors. Jubilee Heritage with Icen partnership. Enhancements plus 86,000 peppercorn rent to S.P.A.
640,000 against JHP
50,000 – Community Centre.

Taken over by new body – cash reserve – to be brought back to Swaffham
Last time a Councillor will be an Internal Auditor due to the new Audit regulations.

g) Planning Matters. Report by Cllr P. Darby.

Up to 1st April 2002 there were 78 Planning Applications, 58 which were granted, 1 refused and 19 outstanding. There were 6 applications that were granted that were not in line with the Town Council decision. These included Tower Meadows, 15 Market Place, Print UK, Swaffham Poultry, British Gas Site and 1 other. Business Link –

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Ecotech, Mansells Construction – Retirement housing, Demax factory unit who are big employers. The Redland Roofing site has been deferred as it is not in line with the structural plan of Norfolk. The planning applications which could prove to be very good for the Town include PC Games above Myhills, the rugby club which has its new clubhouse, improvements made to Swaffham Courthouse and the development at Denis Farm. The Brandon road development is coming towards the end. The application for a second wind turbine on the other side of road has been deferred because the policy for wind turbines is still ongoing.

h) Community Centre Association. Report by Cllr J. Stockdale.

The Community Centre has been doing fairly well and has made a small profit with the help of a grant of £2000 received from the Town Council. It now has a small office vacant which is available to be hired out. The Community Centre has 7 groups that are regular users. It has recently lost 5 groups with 3 of them going to bigger premises, 1 has given up all together and 1 has moved out due to the uncertainty of the future of the Community Centre.

i) Assembly Rooms Management Group. Report by Cllr D. Butters.

Cllr Butters reported that there are 6 members of the management group which consists of Cllr Emmerson, Cllr Darby, Cllr Butters, Mr John Clarke, Mr Tony Dickens and Mrs Barbara White.

The management group are a group of councillors and members of the Iceni Partnership who have been allocated the task of managing the Assembly Rooms for a year, while the Iceni Partnership prepares a programme to submit to the Town Council which will include ideas for improving and renovating the building in order to make it more attractive to potential customers. The Town Council will remain the owners of the Assembly Rooms but will lease the building to the partnership on a 99 year lease at a peppercorn rent. The Iceni Partnership are able to attract more funding by way of grants from other sources not accessible to the Town Council.

At the end of the Management group year, on the 31st March 2003, a Management Review Report will have to be produced for the Town Council and the Iceni Partnership which will carry recommendations for the future management of the Assembly Rooms.

j) Road Safety. Report by the Mayor, Cllr D. Cannon.

The painting competition for local schools changed slightly this year by using Crime Prevention as the topic. The A1065 is classed as one of the most dangerous roads in Norfolk with 4 deaths in the last year but Swaffham is becoming almost as dangerous with a death of a motorcyclist on the A1065 and a death outside Woolworths. Swaffham is on the list for a bypass but we do not have any definite dates so we must rely on Cllr Shirley Matthews to push this on on behalf of the Town Council.

k) Swimming Pool Association. Report by the Mayor, Cllr D. Cannon.

Membership has increased from 400 to 1000 which includes just 1 paying member per family which shows the town is 100% behind the purchase of the site beside the Eco-Tech. Following a phone call on Monday a meeting was set up with a group

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which was held at the Eco-tech. The Mayor introduced Simon Dawson and Andy De Gol from Taurus Sports to explain.

Simon Dawson informed the Assembly that they are in talks with Breckland Council over the venture they are proposing. They want to bring to Swaffham a Sports and Fitness Academy which will include a 33 metre pool, Jacuzzi, sauna and steam room. There will also be a hotel attached to the site which will be rented from the Academy by Best Western. It will be the first of its kind in Britain possibly Europe as the pool will be chemical free. There is to be a hydrotherapy pool, the plans of which, are being discussed but it is hoped that the floor will be able to be raised and lowered depending on which age group would be using it. The gym area will incorporate lots of trees which will oxygenate the air. There are lots of things to offer the Community. There is to be a 30ft Climbing wall which is digital and would look like a waterfall. Aquarius are in talks with Sport England but they already have 6.75 million available from private investors. The academy require 5 acres of land, 3 acres for the academy and 2 acres for parking. Aquarius have asked Paul Lucas the architect for the Ecotech to put together the plans.

m) Town Council Property. Report by Cllr D. Butters

Following the sale of the allotment land it took a while to unravel the muddle that was initially caused by the loss of some deeds. It took some time to convince the Charity Commissioners that they did not have the right to allocate all the sale proceeds to a charity. I asked the Charity Commissioners some questions which they could not answer but I realised that some of the answers might lie in the NRO. With the invaluable help of Peter and David found the answers in various documents and on a 16' long map of Swaffham dating from 1869. After that we handed the problem over to the Clerk who finished the job off.

One point arising from the research was that the remaining allotments were from different sources and should be noted as such. The Tumbler Hill and Shouldham Lane allotments came about as a result of an 1845 enclosure act. Four Acres was purchased by the old UDC as was Day's Field. More deeds are due to arrive from our solicitors so I can determine the status of other allotments.

The Recreation Ground is Town Council property and charity land, as, I believe is the Campingland. The Cemetery, Town Hall and the Assembly Rooms were purchased. The Church Clock which was stopped for some time due to the rewiring of the church is the Town Council's responsibility.

The old UDC acquired the above properties over time and according to a list of deeds held in 1972 and various UDC minutes so was all the Shambles. Unfortunately, it seems as if some of those deeds might have been mislaid because the legal department of Breckland District Council cannot confirm the validity of those old UDC minutes.

Despite all my research to which I have devoted many hours including searching our own records manorial and parish records in the NRO I have not yet come across any indication that anyone else other than the local councils own or are responsible for, the Shambles. The same result came from an enquiry to the Land Registry.

6. OTHER REPORTS:-

a) Police Matters. A report by P.C. A. Partidge.

PC Partridge stated that the crime figures on average were 51 per month, 13 a week and 2 a day which is not hard done by due to the size of Swaffham. The police man power for Swaffham includes 9 constables and 1 sargeant which will increase to 13 constables, PC Partridge and 1 sargeant. Breckland is the lowest district for crime in the county.

b) SK8 Mob – Skateboarding Group

The Town Council have bought second hand ramps which are in storage for the group. Last weekend Peter Harris did a sponsored 24 mile walk and raised £100 for the SK8 Mob. The group are receiving professional services for free. They are getting advice from a surveyor and an accountant will be drawing up a business plan for the group. They are applying for funding from other bodies and are raising money themselves. This will help buy the Asphalt they need for the skatepark which they need 600 metre square at a cost of around £8000. The Town Council and the Icen Partnership are fully in support of the Skate Park Mob. The group have been informed that Breckland Council will match fund what money they have raised. The group are seeking local sponsors and funding from Sport England.

c) Icen Partnership. Report by the Chairman Tony Dickens.

The Icen Partnership is a Community Regeneration Partnership and its purpose is to bring together local people, organisations and councils to improve the community. The partnership are a non political body and are open to anyone living in the area. To enable the partnership to comply with the charitable aims it has 6 directors. The partnership hold regular meetings which are open to all the public. To enable the partnership to get started it received a grant of £1000 from the Town Council. It received a further £20,000 which was largely from Breckland Council which includes the cost of architect training, public consultation and business plans. The partnership have found it difficult to get registered as a charity (which will enable them to get funding) as a track record is required to show what the Icen partnership can do. On Saturday 6th July in the Assembly Rooms there will be the first public consultation which will show a set of ideas an architect has produced which people can respond to. There will also be meetings in the villages which the public are able to attend.

d) Norfolk County Council. Report by Cllr Shirley Matthews.

There has been a 9.75% increase in Council Tax which is fairly consistant. It is expected that £10.5 will be put into the Social Services budget. There is an ever increasing demand on the budget. The Housing Association are in negotiations to take over the building of Westfields residential home and Breckland will be in charge of the care of the residents. There is slow but steady progress to look for in the future. Teachers pay do not come out of the school's budget. 90% of the schools in the County have agreed that the High School entrance age to be 11 instead of 12. of The Lynn road has improved over the year. A speed limit reduction outside Hammonds High School has been requested but has received a negative response. Cllr Matthews will be asking Breckland Council to look back at it. There will be a footpath on Whitsands Road coming at the end of the year.

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e) Breckland Council. Report by Cllr Ian Sherwood.

Cllr Sherwood said that Cllr Matthews covered some of what he was going to report. He would like it known that he has enjoyed serving Swaffham as Deputy Mayor over the year. He reported that CCTV cameras have been installed to improve security at the Eco-Tech site. The occupation of specialist units at the Eco-Tech is at 60% and workshop occupation is at 100% which is proving very positive.

7. QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR.

The Mayor stated that the written question would be taken first:-

7.1. Mrs B. White stated that 6 months ago on an experimental basis, the public open session was at the beginning of a meeting which proved to be useful. At the end of the meeting is too late to have any input into the meeting.

7.2. Mr Ivan Bubbear also asked why the public questions were at the end of the meeting.

7.3. Mr Bonus that on a road safety issue the signs for the loading bay outside Boots need to be renamed. Cllr Matthews will be contacting Highways on this issue.

7.4. Mrs D. Bishop showed concern over the aerials on the water tower and has started a petition against them. She stated that the Town Council had refused the planning application but Breckland Council had given permission. The government have advised Breckland Council to accept them.

7.5. Cllr Francis stated that there must be stronger efforts to refuse aerials for the future.

7.6. Kevin Felto stated that on the road going to Cockley Cley some repairs were done last year down one side of the road from about a 3rd of the way down to some distance a motorcyclist has to ride on the repairs which is inadequate.

7.7. Mr J. Dean stated that he could not understand the Councils logic of reducing the precept when it may have to go up in years to come.

7.8. Monica Riegan-Rudd stated that the road outside Woolworths is in a terrible state due to heavy lorries. The road needs to be resurfaced. Cllr Sherwood will look into this matter and will get back to her.

7.9. Helen Schofield asked where the street cleaning team covered and stated that she is fed up with cleaning the side wall of her house from graffiti.

7.10. Mrs Miles asked whether the Council has a press officer because she feels the town needs some advertising.

7.11. Monica Riegan-Rudd stated that if you live in Swaffham the you will receive an In Touch With Your Town newsletter which is delivered to every household.

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7.12. Christine Wright stated that she has been in attendance of Council meetings for many years. Initially the issues were very small but now the Town Council's workload has increased and we should applaud the Town Council for doing a tremendous job.

8. MAYOR'S CLOSING REMARKS.

8.1. The Mayor thanked all members of the Town Council, he thanked the representatives from Taurus Sports and PC Partridge for their presence. The Mayor reminded everybody that the H.V.S. will be on the 12th May, the Jubilee celebrations on the 2nd June and the next Town Council meeting will be on the 8th May. The Mayor concluded with a final thank you to all in attendance this evening.

The meeting closed at 9.35p.m.

Chairman _____