

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

COUNCIL

**Held on Thursday, 22 May 2008 at 10.30 am in
Anglia Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

PRESENT

Mr S. Askew	Mrs D.K.R. Irving
Mr G.P. Balaam	Mr A.P. Joel
Mrs J. Ball	Mr C.R. Jordan
Mr S.G. Bambridge	Mr R. Kemp
Mr W.P. Borrett	Mr M.A. Kiddle-Morris
Mr A.J. Byrne	Mr R.G. Kybird
Mrs M.P. Chapman-Allen	Mr J.P. Labouchere
Mr S.H. Chapman-Allen	Mr T.J. Lamb
Mr R.P. Childerhouse	Mr K. Martin
Mr P.D. Claussen	Mrs K. Millbank
Mr J.P. Cowen	Mr I.A.C. Monson
Mr P.J. Duigan	Mr D.S. Myers
Mr M. Fanthorpe	Mr J.W. Nunn
Lady Fisher	Mr J.D. Rogers
Mr P.S. Francis	Mr F.J. Sharpe
Mr K.S. Gilbert	Mr W.H.C. Smith
Mr R.F. Goreham	Mr M. Spencer
Councillor E. Gould	Mrs P.A. Spencer
Mr J.R. Gretton	Mr A.C. Stasiak
Mr M.J. Griffin	Mrs A.L. Steward
Mrs T. Hewett	Mrs L.S. Turner
Mrs S.R. Howard-Alpe	Mr N.C. Wilkin

ALSO PRESENT

Mrs J Jenkins Chairman – Standards Committee

In Attendance

Ralph Burton	- Economic Projects Officer
Paul Calkin	- Strategic Director (Transformation) (Breckland)
Phil Daines	- Development Services Manager
Mark Finch	- Chief Accountant
Trevor Holden	- Chief Executive
Ray Johnson	- Asset Manager
Andrea Long	- Environmental Planning Manager
Helen McAleer	- Member Services Officer
Mary Palmer	- Marketing & Communications Manager
Mark Stokes	- Strategic Director (Services)
Ian Vargeson	- Member Services Manager

48/08CHAIRMAN (AGENDA ITEM 1)

The Outgoing Chairman thanked everyone for their support particularly the Member Services Manager, the Marketing and Communications Manager and her team and his Secretary. He said he had enjoyed chairing the meetings and had enjoyed a busy year.

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Finally he congratulated Councillor Shirley Matthews on her third term as Mayor of Swaffham.

(a) After being duly moved and seconded, it was

RESOLVED that Mr J Labouchere be elected Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year.

(b) Mr Labouchere signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Mr Labouchere in the Chair.

49/08 VICE-CHAIRMAN (AGENDA ITEM 2)

(a) After being duly moved and seconded, it was

RESOLVED that Mr J Rogers be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year.

(b) Mr Rogers signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

50/08 VOTE OF THANKS TO THE OUTGOING CHAIRMAN (AGENDA ITEM 3)

The new Chairman thanked Mr Francis for doing a fabulous job representing the Council and people throughout Norfolk. He had been impressed by the job he had done as Chairman.

A representative of the Labour Party commented that Mr Francis had been different to other Chairman and had brought outside people into the Council. He thanked him for a very good year.

An Independent Member said that as Mayor of Watton he had met the Chairman at various events and he had represented Breckland with great dignity and been a wonderful ambassador for the Council.

The Leader of the Council presented Mr Francis with a picture of himself with members of the armed forces taken at the Armed Forces Review. He also mentioned that over £4,000 had been raised for Quidenham Hospice during the previous year.

Finally the new Chairman presented Mr Francis with a 'Past Chairman of Breckland' medal.

51/08 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (AGENDA ITEM 4)

The Chairman told Members that there would be a short presentation on the LDF at the end of the meeting, followed by a photo shoot which he asked all to stay on for.

There was one Urgent Item. The report had been circulated and a copy tabled.

He then gave a short speech explaining how delighted he was to become Chairman and outlining the projects he hoped to support in

the ensuing year, including raising money for Riding for the Disabled, fighting the closure of post offices and supporting a plan for genuine Thetford to Wymondham A11 improvements.

He congratulated Councillor Lynda Turner on her election as Mayor of Dereham.

Finally he said he hoped he would not prove to be the penultimate Chairman of Breckland.

A list of engagements attended by the outgoing Chairman and former Vice Chairman was tabled, for the period 10 April to 21 May 2008, which included:

Date	Event	Host
10 th April, 2008	Presentation to the Light Dragoons and RAF Marham for duties in Afghanistan and Iraq	
14 th April, 2008	Launch of Swaffham Sports Forum	Swaffham Town Council & Breckland Council
18 th April, 2008	Mayor's Reception	Mayor of Swaffham, Councillor Shirley Matthews
25 th April, 2008	Watton Town Council Civic Reception	Mayor and Mayoress of Watton, Councillor Keith Gilbert and Ms. R. Lake
27 th April, 2008	Service of Thanksgiving for public services in the County	Chairman of Norfolk County Council, Michael Cartiss
7 th May, 2008	2008 RAF Marham Annual formal Reception	Commanding Officer and Officers of Royal Air Force Marham
10 th May, 2008	Opening reception of 2008 Dereham Festival	Dereham Festival
14 th May, 2008	End of Year Civic Reception	Lord Mayor Councillor Roy Blower and Lady Mayoress Beryl Blower, Sheriff Nick Williams and Sheriff's Lady Gill Wilson
16 th May, 2008	Celebration of completion of the B1077 Attleborough Norwich Road Puffin Crossing	Norfolk County Council, Planning and Transportation

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The minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 2008 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

53/08 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 6)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr C Bowes, Mr R Duffield, Mr P Hewett, Mrs S Matthews, Mrs L Monument, Mr D Mortimer, Mrs P Quadling, Mr B Rose, Mr I Sherwood and Mr D Williams.

54/08 DECLARATION OF INTEREST (AGENDA ITEM 7)

The following declarations of interest were noted:

- Lady K Fisher – Personal interest in any items concerning Thetford Growth Point and LDF by virtue of her family being landowners in the district.
- Mr S Askew – Personal interest in Minute No 57/08 of the Council Agenda by virtue of having land under consideration in the LDF.
- Mr R Childerhouse – Personal interest in any items concerning the LDF, by virtue of being a landowner in the district.
- Mr J Labouchere – Personal interest in any items concerning the LDF, by virtue of being a landowner in the district.
- Mr P Duigan – Personal interest in Cabinet Minute No 64/08 by virtue of being a member of Dereham Town Council.
- Mr R Kybird – Personal interest in O&SC Minute No 24/08 by virtue of work interests in relation to LDF matters.
- Mr F Sharpe – Personal and Prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 16 by virtue of him running a Post Office.

55/08 ANNUAL APPOINTMENT OF THE LEADER, DEPUTY LEADER, COMMITTEES, PANELS AND OTHER REPRESENTATIVES AND CHAIRMEN AND VICE-CHAIRMEN 2008-2009 (AGENDA ITEM 8)

The Member Services Manager explained that the attendance list attached for information would be withdrawn and replaced at a later date to avoid confusion as it ran from April 2007 and did not accurately reflect attendance details from the last Annual meeting to this one.

(a) Leader of the Council

Having been duly moved and seconded, Members

RESOLVED that Mr J W Nunn be re-appointed as Leader of the Council for the ensuing year.

Mr Nunn outlined the work that had been completed during the past, very successful year, and said that there were significant challenges in the coming year. He also thanked Mr Stasiak for his nine years service on Cabinet; he had stepped down from that role but would continue to serve on the Council.

The Leader of the Labour Party also congratulated Mr Stasiak for what he had done during his time on Cabinet.

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(b) Deputy Leader of the Council

Having been duly moved and seconded, Members

RESOLVED that Mr W H C Smith be re-appointed as Deputy Leader of the Council for the ensuing year.

(c) Executive Support Members

The Member Services Manager highlighted some minor corrections to terminology: Performance Portfolio should read People First and Economic and Commercial should read Housing and Economic.

(d) Committees

RESOLVED that the Committees and Panels, their Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen where appropriate and Joint Consultative Committee Member representation be re-appointed en bloc as detailed in the report, subject to the following changes:

Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Mrs T Hewett replaced by Mr A Stasiak.
Mr C Jordan replaced by Mr M Kiddle-Morris.

General Purposes Committee

Mr W Smith replaced by Mr A Stasiak.

Licensing Committee

Membership corrected to read Mrs M Chapman-Allen, not Mr S Chapman-Allen.

Audit Committee

Mr R Kybird noted as Vice-Chairman.

Policy Development and Review Panel 2

Mrs L Monument noted as Vice-Chairman.

Staff Appointments Panel

Mr A Stasiak replaced by Mrs T Hewett
Mr P Cowen replaced by Mr R Duffield.

Local Joint Consultative Committee

Mrs T Hewett replaced by Mr R Kybird.

56/08CABINET (AGENDA ITEM 9)

(a) Comprehensive Equality Policy 2008 - 2010

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RESOLVED that the revised Comprehensive Equality Policy and Action Plan 2008 - 2010 be adopted.

(b) Race Equality Scheme 2008 - 2010

RESOLVED that the revised Race Equality Scheme and Action Plan 2008 – 2010 be adopted and published.

(c) Environment Strategy for Breckland

A Member asked when the Council would insist on higher standards for house building. It was explained that Building Regulations standards were set nationally; however developers were encouraged to build to higher standards and documents were being prepared to enable the Council to support the Nottingham Declaration.

RESOLVED that the Environment Strategy 2008 – 2013 for Breckland Council and the delivery of the Year One Action Plan be approved, subject to quarterly reviews and the continued monitoring of feedback through the Environment Strategy Working Group established by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.

(d) Transfer of Play Areas

A Member questioned the Council's policy of passing the responsibility for play areas down to Town and Parish Councils who lacked the resources to maintain them.

The Leader of the Council pointed out that the parishes had looked after their own play areas for years and that funding was being made available for the Council to inspect and maintain the play areas for the next 20 years.

(e) Review of Political Management Arrangements

The Leader of the Labour Party explained why Labour Members had voted against item 2 of the recommendation. He was concerned that only one Member and one officer could make decisions and that one officer could decide what items were contentious. He also asked why the Scrutiny Champion was to be an officer.

The Chief Executive explained that the aim was to allow simple reports to get to the decision stage more speedily and did not affect the delegation process.

It was also pointed out that the Scrutiny Champion officer would check on officers' standards, not Members.

RESOLVED that the following changes to the political management arrangements at Breckland Council be approved:

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1. Overview and Scrutiny Function

- a) The proposals as set out in paragraphs 3.2.11 to 3.2.19 inclusive of the report be adopted and the Member Development Team Leader develops an action plan by 29 May 2008 together with a timed programme of its delivery.
- b) The sum of £10,000 per annum to provide funding to support major Scrutiny reviews and assist research by the University of East Anglia be allocated.

2. Speed up the Decision Making Process

- a) The proposed new report clearance process, as shown in Appendix 1 of the report, be introduced with immediate effect subject to the provision for consultation with Ward Members on ward-specific matters and the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission (on a suggested weekly-list basis or such other method as may be practicable).

3. Development of Councillors as Community Leaders

- a) Ward profiles and plans be developed to describe the character of each Ward (or cluster of wards), in consultation with relevant Members as detailed in paragraph 3.2.21(b) of the report.

The Labour Members voted against the recommendation and Mr Lamb and Mr Gilbert abstained.

(f) Appointments to Outside Bodies 2008/09

The Member Services Manager told Members that the Supporting People Members' Panel (page 41) had not been disbanded and suggested they might wish to appoint a representative.

Mrs Howard-Alpe asked for her address to be corrected at page 29.

Another Member pointed out that the Attleborough Area Partnership (page 28) no longer existed and that The Attleborough Town Hall Management Committee contact needed changing to Mrs H Elias.

RESOLVED that representatives be re-appointed en-bloc to Outside Bodies for 2008/09 in accordance with the Schedule, with the addition of Mrs D Irving as the Council's representative on the Supporting People Members' Panel.

(g) Adoption

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 28 April 2008 be adopted.

Julie Britton

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57/08 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION (AGENDA ITEM 10)

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission meeting held on 17 April 2008 be adopted.

58/08 DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE (AGENDA ITEM 11)

RESOLVED that the confirmed minutes of the Development Control Committee meeting held on 28 April 2008 be adopted.

59/08 GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE (AGENDA ITEM 12)

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 23 April 2008 be adopted.

60/08 APPEALS COMMITTEE (AGENDA ITEM 13)

- (a) **RESOLVED** that the confirmed minutes of the Appeals Committee meeting held on 23 January 2008 be adopted.
- (b) **RESOLVED** that the unconfirmed minutes of the Appeals Committee meeting held on 16 April 2008 be adopted.

61/08 STANDARDS COMMITTEE (AGENDA ITEM 14)

Mrs J Jenkins Independent Chairman of the Standards Committee was in attendance to present the minutes.

- (a) **RESOLVED** that the confirmed minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 15 April 2008 be adopted.
- (b) **RESOLVED** that the revised version of the unconfirmed minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 6 May 2008, which had been tabled, be adopted.

62/08 STRATEGIC ALLIANCE (AGENDA ITEM 15)

Nothing to report.

63/08 POST OFFICE LTD NETWORK CHANGE PROGRAMME - BRECKLAND COUNCIL FORMAL RESPONSE (AGENDA ITEM 16)

A supplementary paper with additional comments suggested for inclusion in the Council's response had been circulated.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission presented this report which was a culmination of work by the Commission and officers to prepare a paper to submit to Post Offices Limited.

A special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission had been held on 13 May 2008 and representatives of the Post Office had been present, along with a large number of members of the public.

The Post Office representatives had advised that the change programme was required by the Government. 2,500 post offices

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would be closed. Rural and urban areas were treated the same. If a nominated post office was found to be inappropriate, another would close in its place. In any event, 2,500 post offices would close.

It had become clear that the consultation process did not concern the process or principle, but only the facts. A number of these facts were incorrect. For example in Beeston Post Office Ltd said that people could walk to the post office – but did not take account of the dangerous road; in Old Buckenham it referred to a bus service, but failed to note it was for school children only.

The report responded objectively to the comments of Post Office Limited. The aim was to stop six post offices from being closed. These were considered vital otherwise communities would suffer. In the consultation document there was no reference to the elderly or to care homes in the vicinity.

The Chairman of the Commission concluded by saying that the Council had a duty to represent people's needs.

A Member asked if external letter boxes in post office buildings would also close if the post office did and was told that this was the case.

The Leader of the Labour Party described the Post Office Ltd report as a clumsy attempt to justify the unjustifiable. He said that a letter from the Labour Members had been sent to the Post Office urging restraint and pointing out that 50% of Breckland area was rural and reliant on social hub facilities. He hoped every effort would be made to spare as many as possible.

Finally he asked that the response from the Council raise the Council's concerns objectively, rather than being couched in an aggressive way.

RESOLVED to endorse the draft response to Post Office Ltd, with the suggested additional information as circulated, for submission as the Council's formal response to consultation on the proposed closure programme.

64/08 NOMINATIONS FOR COMMITTEE AND OTHER SEATS (AGENDA ITEM 17)

None.

65/08 URGENT ITEM - APPOINTMENT OF REGISTRATION OFFICER AND RETURNING OFFICER (AGENDA ITEM 18)

The Member Services Manager explained that this item was a legal requirement to formalise the role of the Chief Executive as Registration Officer and Returning Officer for the Council.

RESOLVED to appoint Trevor Holden, Chief Executive as Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer.

The meeting closed at 12.00 pm

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CHAIRMAN