

Minutes of The Greater Thetford Development Partnership Community Sub-Group Meeting

Held at Guildhall Council Chamber, Market Place, Thetford
on Wednesday 16th January 2019 , 7pm to 9pm

Chair: Mr Robert Whittaker

Minutes: Clare Higson

Sub-Group Members present: Mr Robert Whittaker (Independent Community Member),
Cllr Brenda Canham (Thetford Town Council), Cllr Doug Stephen (Croxton Parish Council).

Apologies: Cllr Rae Herries (Brettenham & Kilverstone Parish Council).

There were 7 members of the public present.

1. Introductions

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 21st November 2018 were approved, with no changes to the draft.

3. Announcements and Matters Arising

Railway Station Parking

Officers from Breckland District Council and Thetford Town Council were still looking at the possibility of finding alternative allotment space elsewhere in Thetford, so that some of the current allotment land near the station could be used for additional parking.

Cost of tickets bought on the train rather than at the station

The Board had now had a response from East Midlands Trains. They said that because their franchise was ending shortly, they were not prepared to look at the matter further at present. This was disappointing, but it was not clear what else we could do. It was agreed that the Sub-Group would ask the Board to write to the Secretary of State for Transport regarding the rules when ticketing facilities are available at a station but not fully accessible, and also to write to Greater Anglia (the Station franchise holder) to ask if a second ticket machine could be added on the northern platform.

Health Care Provision

The meeting heard anecdotal evidence that the GP practices in Thetford were struggling to see patients in a timely manner. It was not clear who had overall responsibility for GP provision. The Sub-Group agreed to ask the GTDP Board to write to the individual Practices asking about how they are coping and what, if anything, they need to improve their services.

Bus provision for Kingsfleet and the bus route through the Joe Blunt's Lane underpass

Breckland's planning department have yet to respond to the Chair's enquires, but Cllr Chapman-Allen said the matters were still being investigated. Since there could be legal ramifications, he said it was important that any response was accurate. The meeting noted the media coverage in Thetford and Brandon Times: "Use of muddy railway underpass as bus route for 5,000 homes slammed by residents" (<https://bit.ly/2sByvBy>).

Cycling and Walking Report

A meeting between the Chair (who wrote the report) and Norfolk County Council officers to discuss the proposals in the report had yet to be arranged. Cllr Chapman-Allen reported that it was with Norfolk County Council to arrange. The Sub-Group provisionally agreed that Robert Whittaker could take on the consultation responsibility on this issue on behalf of the Sub-Group, even if he ceased to be a member of the Sub-Group.

Grazing of Ford Meadow

The eight Water Buffalo heifers have been moved to the larger pen on Ford Meadow following their escape from the smaller one. The public are now prevented from walking through the penned in areas.

4. Election of Chair and Vice Chair, and filling Vacancies

The interview process for the new independent members had been concluded, and the two candidates had been offered positions on the Sub-Group. As they had had little notice, and only two of the four places had been filled, it was decided to postpone the election of the Chair to the next meeting. Mr

Whittaker agreed to continue as Chair for this meeting and to make the arrangement for the next meeting.

After much discussion, the Sub-Group decided to try to recruit people to fill the two vacant independent member positions before the next Sub-Group meeting in two month's time. The GTDP Board Chair (who was present at the meeting) agreed to the plan, and would look at placing an advert in About Thetford magazine.

There was also some discussion of the Sub-Group's role, including how better to engage with the public and how to increase attendance at the Sub-Group's meetings. It was agreed to approach the Residents' Associations to encourage them to send representatives along. It was suggested that changing the Sub-Group's name to something more accessible and meaningful might also help. The meeting thought it would be useful to discuss these issues with the GTD Partnership Board.

5. SUE, TEP and Waterspace Updates

The meeting noted the various updates in the paper for this item, but there was no further discussion.

6. Public Questions

A member of the public asked about the traffic management study and whether this was part of Breckland's Market Towns Initiative. It was clarified that the traffic study, formally known as the "Network Improvement Strategy" was a different project by Norfolk County Council. This is looking and traffic flows (including motor vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists) within a number of Market Towns in the county, including Thetford. The study in Thetford had been ongoing for around a year, and the report is expected in the first quarter of 2019. More details can be found in the update paper from the November Board Meeting: <https://bit.ly/2DnRKF2>.

7. Items to Note

The meeting noted the two items included on the agenda, and two other items:

- The Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner is consulting on whether or not to raise the Police part of the Council Tax precept in order to prevent cuts to services, or adopt an even greater increase to allow additional investment. Details at <https://bit.ly/2FixxBG> ; deadline for responses 30th January 2019.
- The Shadwell Estate Company is re-submitting a previously refused planning application for around 100 new houses on land east of Arlington Way (reference 3PL/2017/0578/O). View and comment online at <https://bit.ly/2Rhemj8>.
- The local referendum on the Joint Neighbourhood Plan for the parishes of Croxton, Brettenham and Kilverstone had recently taken place. Residents had voted in favour of the Plan being adopted. The formal decision will be taken by Breckland Council at an upcoming meeting. For more details see <https://bit.ly/2DnR1nh>.
- Breckland Council will be hosting a “Prospective Councillors' Evening” on Tuesday 12th February for those interested in becoming a local councillor. Further details can be found at <https://bit.ly/2W8aZKe>.

8. Any Other Business

The question of expenses incurred by Sub-Group members when printing copies of the meeting papers for the public was raised. The GTDP Board Chair thought that it should be possible for one of the councils to arrange something here.

The next meeting is scheduled for the Wednesday 20th March 2019 (being the third Wednesday of the month).