

Questions with Notice under Standing Order No. 6 – Full Council, 2 September 2021.

QUESTION 1:

Cllr Birt to the Leader of Breckland Council:

I recently learned from your personal Twitter feed that Breckland Council has purchased at auction the floating restaurant at Riverside Walk, Thetford. It appears the Council paid well above the auction guide price for the acquisition back in June.

1. Why are members not kept officially informed of such matters especially when they carry considerable 'public interest'?
2. What is to happen to the floating restaurant?

RESPONSE:

Thank you, Cllr Birt, for your questions.

Firstly, I'd like to correct an error in your opening statement. It is not my "personal" twitter feed; in the account description it clearly identifies me as a Councillor and as the Leader of Breckland District Council and it is predominantly in these roles that I use this account. The news was immediately retweeted by the @BreckCouncil account, and I also note that the Leader of the Opposition tweeted positively on the subject some 20 minutes later.

The Council did pay over the auction guide price, but it should be noted that many of the "lots" at the said auction similarly went for more than thought by the auctioneers. It would appear that the market in Norfolk and East Anglia is buoyant.

In answer to question 1: the relevant Thetford Wards Members have all been kept informed and have been in unanimous support of the acquisition and subsequent activities. Your question is, therefore, misplaced.

In answer to question 2: the floating restaurant hasn't been operational for several years and there was no intention for it to be reopened, hence the property coming up at auction. We will be lifting the boat from the river and it will be disposed of. The boat was not purchased for operational or investment reasons. And I make no apology for that. It was bought following feedback from the people and businesses of Thetford who wanted the "eyesore" removed, so that the potential of the river and its proximity to the Town Centre could be fully capitalised on. The Riverside Development is now fully let. Significant improvements have been made to Butten Island and the immediate public realm. Work is about to commence on the Riverside Walk area of town. These are exciting times in the is part of Thetford Town Centre and I am delighted that we are playing a large part in this.