

Minutes of the Watton Annual Town Meeting

held at the Queen's Hall, Watton on April 16th 2019

Present: Tina Kiddell (Chairman of Watton Town Council), District Councillors Mr K Gilbert (also a Town Councillor), Mr M Wassell (District Councillor), 6 other members of Watton Town Council and 30 members of the public.

1. The minutes of the 2018 Annual Town Meeting were presented and signed as correct.

2. Chairman's Report

The Chairman gave a report of Town Council activities over the past year. Copies of the report will be posted on the Town Council website www.wattontowncouncil.gov.uk

3. District Councillors' Report

District Councillors Claire Bowes, Keith Gilbert and Michael Wassell all submitted written reports. Hard copies were available at the meeting and will be posted on the Town Council website www.wattontowncouncil.gov.uk Keith Gilbert and Michael Wassell were present and willing to answer queries directed to them.

4. County Councillor's Report

County Councillor Claire Bowes sent apologies for being unable to attend the meeting and had submitted a written report. Hard copies were available at the meeting and will be posted on the Town Council website www.wattontowncouncil.gov.uk

5. Police Safer Neighbourhood Team Report

PC Paula Gilluley was present and gave an update on crime statistics for Watton and an update on local policing. It was of note that Copies of the April Safer Neighbourhood Team Newsletter for the area were available at the meeting and will be posted on the Town Council website www.wattontowncouncil.gov.uk

6. Watton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Jane Fountain as chairman of the Watton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group gave an update as to how the Plan is progressing. A questionnaire, which was also available on-line, has been delivered to all households and responses have been analysed. The information gained will help write the policies for the Neighbourhood Plan.

7. Wayland Partnership

Apologies received from Wayland Partnership and copies of 2018-19 Report was available at the meeting and will be posted on the Town Council website

www.wattontowncouncil.gov.uk

8. Reports from other groups and organisations within the Town, including those which have received grants or donations from the Town Council during the last financial year.

Written reports received from:

- Watton Carnival Committee
- Watton Thursday Club
- Breckland Harmony
- Stevens Almhouses Charity
- Watton Twinning Association
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Loch Neaton Charity

Verbal reports/update given by:

- Watton Sports Association – The Sports Association had received a donation of £7000 from the Town Council during 2018 to assist with refurbishment of the kitchen at the Sports Centre.
The Sports Centre would like to be recognised as a Community Hub and it was noted that the recently introduced Park Run has been well received.
- Watton Rotary Club – The Town Council gave a donation of £250 to the Rotary Club to help purchase umbrellas to be given to groups within the town to enable them to take part in the competition organised by the Rotary Club to decorate an umbrella. £1000 was raised for local charities through the 2018 umbrella competition and it is planned to organise it again in 2019.
- Museum4Watton – verbal update given. Chris Hutchins was thanked for his efforts and the success of bringing a museum to Watton.
It was reported that although the museum has hosted many visitors from far and wide, very few Watton residents have been to the museum. The museum is appealing for more volunteer helpers.
- A written report was read out on behalf of the Reverend Gerry Foster who had given her apologies for not attending the meeting. A copy of the report will be posted on the Town Council website
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Copies of all written reports received are filed and available on the Town Council website.

9. Points and Questions raised by members of the public

- A query was raised as to whether there are plans for a skate park to be provided in Watton. This is something that is once again being investigated with both the Breckland Youth Advisory Board and the Benjamin Foundation looking to assist with provision of youth facilities in the town. Talks are underway between parties, including the Town Council. A future meeting date is to be arranged led by the Youth Advisory Board.
- It was noted that the Motorhome rally which takes place at Watton Sports Centre brings visitors to the area. This formerly annual event is now to be held twice a year.
- It was queried why Watton Carnival is held in September. This timing is now established and therefore easy to continue with annual bookings and those that help manage the event are available during the run-up to the September date, whereas they might not otherwise be.
- It was noted that drainage issues in the town have been addressed through the hard work and determination of the Watton Drainage Group but that this work needs to be ongoing and continued talks between associated agencies are extremely important.
- There is currently a drive to list the Hare and Barrel Pub as an Asset of Community Value.
- Comment made that the town needs greater access to local medical facilities. It is felt that although surgery provision is adequate in the town there is a lack of doctors available. Watton surgery is not a prescribing surgery and this has a bearing on the surgery income.