

Minutes of the meeting of WATTON TOWN COUNCIL held on

Tuesday 31 March 2015 at 7.00 pm

at Wayland Hall, Middle Street, Watton, Norfolk IP25 6AG in the Council Chamber

Councillors Present: J Rogers Chairman, K Birch Vice Chairman, P Cooper, R Crabtree, J Fishlock, K Gilbert, S Hebborn, M Holmes, R Turner and M Wassell

Officers Present: J Scarrott acting as Locum Clerk

District Councillor C Bowers and 5 members of the public were in attendance.

**14/293 APOLOGIES**

Apologies received from B Bunning, P Blackmore, J P McCarthy and L McCarthy.

**14/294 INTERESTS**

No interests declared.

**14/295 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES 17.03.15**

The minutes of the Council Meeting held on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**14/296 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES 24.03.15**

The minutes of the Council Meeting held on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**14/297 COMMUNITY REPORTS**

**1.1 Police**

A member of the Safer Neighbourhood Team gave a verbal report of the crime statistics for the town and gave an update on the current SNAP priorities.

The priorities have been:

1. To address concerns regarding cycling on the pavement around the town – individuals have been stopped and spoken to:
2. To reduce anti-social behaviour around Church Walk, Lime Tree Walk and Harvey Street – youths have been spoken to and a fixed penalty notice has been issued.

**1.2 District Councillors**

Copy of the verbal report given by Cllr. M Wassell is attached.

Cllr. K Gilbert voiced thanks to Breckland Council Housing Team who has given assistance to a young person in the town.

### **1.3 County Councillor**

Cllr. S Hebborn stated that there has not been a meeting of Norfolk County Council since the last meeting of the town council so he had no County Council report to make. He also confirmed he is still looking at some local highway concerns.

#### **14/298 No matters raised in Public Participation**

#### **14/299 Chairman's Report**

The Chairman gave a verbal report of events he has attended during March:

6<sup>th</sup> March – Total Pharmacy as part of No Smoking Day

11<sup>th</sup> March – Watton Twinning AGM

12<sup>th</sup> March – Wymondham VC Commemoration

13<sup>th</sup> March – Reception for Mayor of Swaffham

20<sup>th</sup> March – Pride in Breckland Awards

28<sup>th</sup> March - PACT shop in Watton 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

#### **14/300 Vice-Chairman's Report**

No report given as the Vice-Chairman did not arrive at the meeting until 8.40.

#### **14/301 Payments for the month of March 2015 had been previously circulated and were agreed for payment.**

A request for an update against the budget was made for the next meeting.

#### **14/302 Presentation from Chris Edwards, Chairman of the Car Club**

Mr Edwards gave an update of the plans for the Town Team Classic Car Rally to be held on June 21<sup>st</sup> 2015.

It was suggested Breckland Council should be asked to undertake extra street cleaning prior to the event and every effort will be made for the town to be presented in the best light to visitors.

#### **14/303 All agreed that the outstanding items/resolutions list which was previously circulated to councillors will be regularly re-issued as has been past procedure.**

#### **14/304 Town Mural and Luncheon Club**

The Town Mural has been repaired and the Luncheon Club tapestry is framed and ready to be hung. A picture presented to the town from the twinning town also needs to be displayed.

It will be an agenda item at a future meeting to decide where the mural, tapestry and picture should be positioned.

#### **14/305 Wireless system and hearing loop for the Council Chamber**

It was agreed that quotes should be sought for the installation of Wi-Fi and a hearing loop for the Council Chamber.

**14/306          Chairman's portraits**

It was reported that it has been previously agreed that past mayors should be recorded in portraits to be on display in Wayland Hall.

**14/307          Dog waste bin for Merton Road**

It was reported that the resident of 4 Merton Road would be willing for a dog waste bin to be positioned outside his property. This will be confirmed in writing and the location will be checked and permissions sought as necessary from Breckland Council, who will empty the bin, and from Norfolk County Council Highways Department.

**14/308          Planning Applications:**

1. 3PL/2015/0275/F Erection of brick walls, railings and gates to existing entrance at 85a Brandon Road, Watton IP25 6LB

No objections

2. 3PL/2015/0291 White UPVC conservatory on brick base at 32 Churchill Road, Watton IP25 6BB

No objections

**14/309          In view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, concerning staffing matters and tenders, a resolution was passed to exclude the press and public to consider the following matters:**

Funding for Neighbourhood Plans

At the last Cabinet meetings Breckland's Cabinet has agreed to provide matched funding for those communities who wish to create their own Neighbourhood Plan. Currently communities can get up to £8,000 from central government to help pay for Neighbourhood plans. Breckland will match fund this at a rate of 50%, so a maximum of £4,000. In terms of criteria all that Breckland asks for, is notification that a community is bidding for central government funding and sight of the offer letter. At last weeks cabinet meeting we approved the creation of a new officer role within the council to act as a single point of contact for those communities who are undertaking Neighbourhood Plans. This role will not write the neighbourhood plans but rather will assist and advise. It may be of interest and in support of the decisions made by Breckland's planning committee, that where a planning application has gone to appeal, in the past 7 years, in over 78% of these appeals the inspector has upheld the decision made by the council.

Car Parking

At last weeks council meeting I was asked whether in the next 4 years any future Conservative run Breckland council intends to introduce car parking charges. I was able to give reassurance that there is NO intention to introduce a charge. Uniquely in Norfolk, Breckland Car parks will remain free to the end user; in reality of course they cost the Council Tax payer of Breckland around £300,000 per year.

Participatory Budgeting

The participatory budgeting initiative has recently seen the awarding of a total of £10,000 to groups across the Watton and Wayland area, based on public input and decisions made by members of the community. **Perhaps a true demonstration of Localism at it's best.**

Pride in Breckland

The 2015 Pride in Breckland award were held in the Queens Hall on the 20<sup>th</sup> March. From 90 nominations the pride board panel selected 27 finalists, and as a member of that board this was both a challenging but rewarding task. At the ceremony, 9 winners from the 27 finalists were announced, amongst them locally were the Wayland Academy Eco Bugs who won the **Greener Schools** award, Adcocks of Watton who won the Breckland Business of the Year Award and Jan Godfrey who won the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Local Asset Backed Vehicle Initiative

At last week's Breckland Full Council meeting the Local Asset Backed Vehicle initiative received it's final and full approval. This innovative partnership will bring jobs, housing and regeneration to Breckland and will provide over 50 new jobs, some great facilities and

provide 23 new homes. Initially it will focus on 3 projects, Riverside in Thetford and 2 housing schemes and the hope is that the partnership will lead to further projects in the future.

Finally Mr Chairman as this is the end of the financial year, Breckland are busy closing down the accounts and reviewing our progress. From this comes all sorts of statistics and facts and figures. One of these that has stuck in my mind is that Breckland collects 99.5% of the council tax due, compared to a national council tax figure of just over 96%. In terms of the Breckland Council Tax collected this 0.5% equates to around £12,500.

Mr Chairman, thank you and I will gladly take questions through you.