

**Minutes of the Full Council Business Meeting held on Tuesday 17 January 2012 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Wayland Hall, Middle Street, Watton, Norfolk IP25 6AG.**

Councillors Present: K Birch  
P Blackmore  
B Bunning  
P Cooper – Vice Chairman  
R Crabtree  
K Gilbert  
M Holmes  
R Ivory  
J P McCarthy  
L McCarthy  
A Osborn  
J Rogers  
R Rudling  
R Turner  
M Wassell - Chairman

Officers Present: J Seal - Town Clerk

Members of the Public Present: Two (2) Chris Edwards – Edwards News Agents and Tim Mullenger – Mullenger Estate Agents

The Chairman informed Members that Councillor Ken Birch had signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office, witnessed by the Clerk. Members welcomed Councillor Birch as a Member of Watton Town Council.

**154 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from District Councillor Claire Bowes

**155 INTERESTS**

Councillor Wassell, Rogers and Gilbert declared personal interests in Item numbers 158, 164 and 165 as Member of Breckland Council.

Councillor Rogers declared an interest in Item 161 as a Member of Norfolk County Council.

**156 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

It was agreed by Members that the Minutes be signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

**157 URGENT BUSINESS**

A request had been received for a dog bin to be placed on Griston Road in the vicinity of Knotts Yard Veterinary Practise, to prevent, what is now becoming a serious dog fouling area.

**It was proposed by Councillor Holmes and seconded by Councillor L McCarthy and agreed that a dog bin be placed on Griston Road in the vicinity of Knotts Yard Veterinary Practice**

**158 CAR PARKING CHARGES**

Councillor Turner asked Members what they were going to do about the proposed car parking charges by Breckland District Council.

Most Members agreed that they did not want to see car parking charges introduced.

The Chairman explained that Breckland had agreed to spend £25,000 on conducting a feasibility study into car park charges. There were a total of twenty eight car parks in Breckland with 180 spaces in Watton, and cost Breckland Council, £300,000.00 per year.

It was suggested that if Breckland put £10 on a band D property it would cover the costs needed to maintain free parking.

Many Members were concerned that if parking charges were introduced it would deter people from coming into the town and that the shops would suffer.

The Chairman invited Chris Edwards and Tim Mullenger to speak. They expressed concern at the lack of response from both the Council and the Chamber of Commerce, but understood that the Council had been in recess and that this was the first opportunity to respond.

Petitions were being signed in many shops in the town and that so far over 60% of the population had signed the petition with 3841 signatures in seven days.

Concern was expressed that employees would ask to be compensated for their parking fees, putting even more pressure on shops and businesses, and would increase parking on residential estates.

They said many shops were hanging on by their teeth and that in the past fifteen years the High Street had changed and attracted far fewer visitors/shoppers to the town.

The Chairman informed Members that Councillor William Nunn, Leader of Breckland District Council and Chief Executive Terry Huggins were prepared to come to a meeting if the Council wished.

**It was proposed by Councillor Holmes and seconded by Councillor Crabtree and**

**RESOLVED**

**Voting: 13 for with 2 Abstentions**

**That Watton Town Council wholeheartedly, totally oppose the proposal for parking charges in Watton and will support the Chamber of Commerce and the residents of Watton in their fight against any charges being implemented.**

## **159 MARKET TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

Members discussed the new Market Rule which will be effective from 1 April 2012 and unanimously agreed that the Market Rules be adopted.

## **160 PUBLIC TOILETS CLEANING SPECIFICATION**

It was unanimously agreed that the Public Toilets Cleaning Specification be adopted.

## **161 NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL PROJECTS**

Norfolk County Council are looking at working in partnership with Town and Parish Councils to share the cost for small highway improvements, such as pavements, paths and road crossings.

It was unanimously agreed that the Council would not take over any highway projects.

## 162            **GROUND MAINTENANCE/GARDEN CONTRACT SPECIFICATION**

**It was proposed by Councillor Rudling and seconded by Councillor Ivory and agreed that the Gardening Contract Specification be adopted with the list of plants as a suggested guide.**

## 163            **HEALTH CENTRE CLOSURE FOR HEARING AIDS**

Councillor Turner brought to the attention of the Council that the Health Clinic had stopped, without notice, supplying hearing aid batteries, causing residents from Watton and the surrounding parishes to have to travel to Wymondham, the listening bus or the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital.

The Chairman had looked into the problem and had contacted the Audiology Department at the to ask if the local chemist could supply them. He was informed that the policy was not to supply Commercial companies with free hearing aid batteries.

It was agreed that a letter be sent to the Audiology Department at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital, to ask why, there was no prior notification that the Health Centre would no longer supply hearing aid batteries, and request that the two Chemists in the town Boots and Total Health be able to supply them.

The Chairman informed Members that the Doctors surgery would be taking over the supplying of hearing aid batteries.

## 164            **PLAYGROUNDS TRANSFER**

Councillor Cooper informed Members that he and the Clerk had inspected the fence at Lovell Garden and felt it was satisfactory.

**It was proposed by Councillor Cooper and seconded by Councillor J P McCarthy and agreed, that the Council accept the transfer of the two play areas, Lovell Gardens and Bridle Road from Breckland Council.**

**It was propose by Councillor Turner and seconded by Councillor Crabtree and agreed, that the Clerk sign any legal paperwork on behalf of the Council, for the transfer of Lovell Garden Play area and Bridle Way play area.**

## 165            **COMMUNITY CAR SCHEME**

The Chairman informed Members that the Watton Community Car Scheme was now operating without any funding from Breckland Council, and that the passengers were happy to pay the extra fare.

Members felt that as all responsibility and liability was being passed to Watton Town Council from Breckland, and that the co-ordinator and passengers were happy with the current arrangement, that the Council would continue with its funding and not sign the Breckland Agreement.

**It was proposed by Councillor Turner and seconded by Councillor Holmes and**

**RESOLVED**

**Voting: 11for with            1 Against**

**That Watton Town Council continue to fund the Community Car Scheme and put in place a governance document, after seeking advice both from both the Councils Insurance Company and Solicitors.**

The Meeting ended 8.55pm

JS