

Minutes of the meeting of WATTON TOWN COUNCIL held on

Tuesday 14th February 2017 at 7.00 pm

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

Councillors Present: Beryl Bunning –Chairman, Patrick Alzetto, Jane Fountain, Stan Hebborn, Sue Hebborn, Margaret Holmes, Tina Kiddell, Keith Gilbert, Maureen Roy, Patricia Warwick.

Officers Present: Jane Scarrott Town Clerk

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies received from Janet Carr and Jennie Fishlock.

Apologies also received from Norfolk County Councillor Claire Bowes.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Beryl Bunning declared an interest in item 11. as the Mayor's allowance may be under discussion.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES 24.01.17

The minutes of the meeting held on January 24th 2017 were unanimously agreed as a true record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

4. REPORTS

4.1 Chairman's Report

The Chairman has attended the following:

29th Jan – New Year Twinning Association get together. Also attended by Pat Warwick.

30th Jan – ATC Presentation evening

31st Jan – Well Wayland meeting

Feb. 1st – Watton Pantomime

Feb. 9th - Site visit with residents and Officers to look at possible measures to be taken to reduce speeding along the Thetford Road.

Norfolk County Council (NCC) Highways have said that carriageway roundels as suggested for the Thetford Road will be considered for the next financial year but an island/crossing patrol as also suggested would not be funded by NCC.

4.2 Vice-Chairman's Report

- The Vice-Chairman has made an appearance on Radio Brecks and has suggested to the radio station operator that an application for a grant should be made to the Town Council to support continued broadcasting.
- The Vice-Chairman, along with the Phoenix Pipe Band, will be visiting Weeze in June as part of the town twinning trip.

4.3 Clerk's Report

The Clerk's report submitted to Councillors prior to the meeting is filed.

Verbal update given:

Concern has been raised that the metal 'N' on the weather vane at the top of the Clock Tower in Watton High Street, although now back in place, is bent. The contractors working on the clock tower will be asked to quote to straighten the metal.

- The Royal British Legion has requested closer liaison with the Town Council in preparation for the 2017 Remembrance Day parade and a date has been set to discuss this.
- It was agreed that the Clerk and Jane Fountain will attend the Suffolk Association of Local Councils Planning for All Conference on March 2nd 2017 at a cost of £75 plus VAT per delegate.
- Report received from County Councillor Claire Bowes has been forwarded to Councillors.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – no members of the public present

6. Anti-Social Behaviour

Much concern has been raised regarding problems relating to drinking in the High Street and surrounds and the general untidiness of Watton. Serco is engaged by Breckland Council to clear the High Street each morning and is responsible for litter picking in public areas.

It was agreed a letter should be sent to the Watton Academy and Westfield Infants School regarding problems with litter and whether the message not to drop litter can be re-iterated to pupils. Gavin Bulmer offered to pass this message to governors of Westfield School and the Safer Neighbourhood Team will be contacted also. Anti-social behaviour and litter are both issues often discussed at Safer Neighbourhood Action Panel meetings and the PSCO's do already work with the local schools.

It was noted signs around the town stating areas are Designated Public Place (DPP) No Drinking Areas have not been replaced as was hoped as the legislation relating to the Orders is to change in 2017 and it is not yet clear what the future legislation will be.

7. Review of Standing Orders.

Standing Orders were accepted as presented.

8. Internal Auditor's Interim Report

The Internal Auditor's Interim Report was presented and accepted. Points raised to be actioned.

9. Appointment of Portfolio holders

Much discussion took place regarding the suggested introduction of Council portfolio holders. Further information will be sought as to what such a role would entail and what arrangements should be put into place to establish terms for such a position. A suggestion was made that a skills database of Councillors should be compiled so that experience and competency amongst members can be called on.

10. Communications Policy

It was agreed by 9 for, 2 against and 2 abstentions to accept the Communication Policy as presented.

It was noted Councillors have been provided with a town council e-mail address should they wish to make use of it. Council correspondence however should normally be through the Office. Councillors personal addresses do not need to be published but it was felt some means of contacting councillors should be made available to the public and thus the town council supplied e-mail could be the contact if so chosen.

11. Budget Revision

Virement between budget code headings will be considered at the Town Council meeting on 28.02.17 to accommodate possible revision to the civic allowance and expenses. Agreement will also need to be made regarding where the predicted expenditure to cover costs for the planned Food Festival will be taken from. There is likely to be savings in some budget headings for the current financial year but the most appropriate pot to vire money for the Food Festival needs to be agreed.

12. Community Car Scheme

It was agreed to undertake a review of the Community Car Scheme to ascertain whether it remains fit for purpose.

13. Planning Applications for comment:

13.1 3PL/2017/0109/VAR - conversion and extension of 78 and 78a annexe into two separate residential units 3PL/2016/0866/F (revised scheme) 78 Norwich Road, Watton
No objections raised

14. Resolution to exclude the public and press to consider commercially sensitive information relating to possible commissioning of a consultant to undertake Neighbourhood Planning.

It was agreed a meeting will be held with Breckland Planners as recommended in the preliminary feasibility study recently commissioned with a view to following other recommendations, including meeting with other possible partners, in due course. Further investigation will be undertaken as to whether Watton Town Council could access money from the Breckland Community Housing Fund to provide local affordable housing.

More debate will be needed as to whether a Neighbourhood Plan will be commissioned.

The meeting was closed at this point as Standing Orders state no meeting should exceed 2 hours.