

Minutes of the meeting of WATTON TOWN COUNCIL held on

Tuesday 14th March 2017 at 7.00 pm

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

Councillors Present: Beryl Bunning – Chairman, Janet Carr, Jane Fountain, Daniel Fishlock, Jennie Fishlock, Keith Gilbert, Sue Hebborn, Stan Hebborn, Margaret Holmes, Tina Kiddell, Maureen Roy, Patricia Warwick.

Officer Present: Jane Scarrott Town Clerk

Also present:

Norfolk County Councillor/Breckland District Councillor Claire Bowes

1 member of the public

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies received from Gavin Bulmer and Peter Bishop.

2. NO DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS MADE

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES 28.02.17

The minutes of the meeting held on February 28th 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 Mayor has attended the following:

March 1st – HR Committee meeting

March 5th – Justice Service at Kings Lynn Minster

March 11th – Thetford Town Council Charity Ball

March 13th – Watton Sports Centre meeting

March 14th – meeting with planners at Breckland.

- It was suggested a letter should be sent to the owner of the recently re-opened Kings Arms, which is adjacent to Wayland Hall, to congratulate them on the renovation of the building and to wish the venture success.
- A request has been received for private use of the Town marquee. The marquee has been passed to the Town Council to manage and is currently in professional storage. A policy is needed regarding use of the marquee as users must use and pay the firm which stores the marquee to erect it.
It was agreed that in this instance the marquee would be made available and further requests will be considered by the Council on their merit. An agreement for hire will be needed and insurance cover is also to be researched.
- All were in favour of The Museum for Watton Group request to store bound copies of the Thetford and Watton Times in the Garnett Mitchell Room at Wayland Hall. All were also in favour of the Group holding a key for the weekend

of March 25th/26th to show a visitor items held at Wayland Hall. Dan Fishlock indicated that he would like to meet the museums visitor.

- A request has been received for the SAM 2 mobile speed sign to be positioned at Watton Green. Enquiries will be made as to where the sign could be located and this will be an agenda item for a future meeting as agreement would be needed to purchase additional brackets to hang the sign.
- It is anticipated the Annual Town Meeting will be held at Watton Sports Centre as a greater number of attendees can be accommodated than if the meeting were to be held at Wayland Hall.

4.2 Vice-Chairman's Report

- It was agreed that the Town Council would donate a gift up to the value of £150 to the Watton twinning town of Weeze as it is the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Twinning Association.
- High Street traders are concerned with the decrease in footfall in the town which with the recent closure of Budgens could become more evident. The Council has contacted six of the popular high street superstores and six banks to ask if there is any interest from them to locate in Watton. Only one response has so far been received. A press release has also been issued highlighting the unwelcome demise of the High Street.
- Stan and Sue Hebborn will undertake a review of the Watton Community Car Scheme.

4.3 Clerk's Report

Report previously circulated to Councillors. A copy is filed.

Verbal update given:

- Response received from Wayland Academy in reply to letter sent concerning litter around the town.
- Breckland Local Plan Working Group meeting to be held on 17th March 2017 at Breckland Council Offices.
- Councillors are aware of a petition organised within the town to campaign for enhanced medical services in Watton.
- A suggestion was made that once the new equipment installed at both Lovell Gardens and Bridle Road Play Areas has been handed over to the Town Council an official opening celebration should be arranged.
- The date for receipt of requests to hold an election to fill the casual vacancy on the Town Council was 13.03.17. Once notification has been heard from Breckland Council that no request has been received the Town Council can begin the co-option process.
- The Council has been notified of the re-evaluated rates for the employers contribution for the Norfolk Pension Fund. The employer contribution rates for the next three years are:

01.04.17 to 31.03.18	21.5%
01.04.18 to 31.03.19	22%
01.04.19 to 31.03.20	22.5%

- The local Police Newsletter received will be forwarded to Councillors.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- Councillor Claire Bowes informed the meeting that Breckland Council has market towns very much in its thoughts and all organisations need to work together to be able to achieve more for the benefit of the community.
- The member of the public present voiced strong concern regarding pot holes, sinking drain covers in the road and the general nuisance of litter along the roadsides. Councillor Bowes was asked to investigate.

6. EVENTS WORKING PARTY MEETINGS

The notes of the Events Working Party meeting held on 28.02.17 were accepted as presented.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE HR COMMITTEE

7.1 Eye tests for staff

As good employers it was agreed, with two abstentions, that the two members of staff who are regular VDU users would be offered £32.50 to cover the cost of an eye test with an additional £10 for a retinal photograph to be taken. Spectacles with the advised anti-reflection coating are available locally from £119 and thus this amount will be released for the staff concerned if it is discovered spectacles need to be purchased.

7.2 Provision of Health & Safety related training

There is a need to consider training for staff in matters relating to Health & Safety.

Options for training include on-line courses, which may be the cheaper option, against a bespoke face-to-face training package. Further investigation of options will take place and the staff will be asked for their preference as a satisfactory outcome is wanted from any training to be undertaken.

8. ALLOTMENT LEASE AND FEES

- With one abstention it was agreed there would be no increase in allotment fees for the financial year beginning April 1st 2018. The fee for an allotment will remain at £20.00.
- It was suggested Cranswick should be asked to display a notice to advertise that there are vacant allotments at the present time.
- It was agreed by all that a further £600 will be paid on account to the solicitor who is engaged by the Town Council to re-new the lease for the allotment site at Thetford Road.

9. RE-INSTATEMENT OF THE TOWN CLOCK

A quote of £1350 plus VAT to re-instate the clock mechanism in the clock tower now the building maintenance work has been completed has been received.

The clock parts are to be cleaned, the seized clock hammer must be freed and the linkage rod replaced.

All were in favour of accepting the quote to get the clock back and working as soon as possible.

10. FUTURE PROJECTS INCLUDING CEMETERY PROVISION

It was agreed to suspend Standing Orders at this point to allow the meeting to extend until 9.10pm.

Much discussion took place regarding possible future plans for enhanced recreational facilities within the town and the need for future Cemetery and open green space provision. Engagement should take place with other relevant partners and much community consultation is needed. **With this in mind it was agreed by all that a Neighbourhood Plan for Watton should be initiated. It was agreed by all that money allocated in the 2016/17 and 2017/18 budget for possible grant funding for maintenance of the Youth & Community building will be vired to help fund the Neighbourhood Plan and a consultant will be engaged.**

Item 10.1 Cemetery Fees to be added to future agenda.

11. NO PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED FOR CONSIDERATION

Item 12. - Unnecessary as discussed under item. 10.