

Minutes of the meeting of WATTON TOWN COUNCIL held on Tuesday 25 February 2014 at 7.00 pm at Church Hall, St Mary's Church, Church Road, Watton, Norfolk

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

Officers Present: J Seal - Town Clerk
Michelle Craigie – Administration Assistant

Others Present: County Councillor Stan Hebborn and Rosa McMahon – Reporter, Eastern Daily Press

Members of the Public Present: One (1)

13/126 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P Cooper

13/127 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Council Meeting on Tuesday 11 February 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

13/128 COMMUNITY REPORTS

1.1 County Councillor Stan Hebborn

Report Given 'Appendix A'.

1.2 Police

Report Given.

1.3 District Councillor Michael Wassell

Report Given 'Appendix B'.

1.4 District Councillor Keith Gilbert

Councillor Gilbert was pleased that Breckland had changed their decision on the Council Tax Support Grant and would now be paying this to the Town and Parishes.

He had attended the Planning meeting and spoke against the Redhill Park application which was refused because of highways infrastructure.

He had also attended the Scrutiny Committee meeting and had felt that a sanitised report had been given. He did not think that Scrutiny was doing as well as it should.

13/129 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

29 January	-	Attended the Pantomime Group production of Cinderella
23 February	-	Attended the Induction Service of the new Vicar for Watton Geraldine Foster

13/130 VICE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Councillor Rogers had attended the planning meeting and spoke on behalf of Watton Town Council for the Redhill Park application. He stated that as the application had been refused Watton had lost a 106 agreement for £50,000 for children's recreation.

He attended the Bridle Road play area with the Council's grounds maintenance contractor to inspect a partly fallen tree which had reportedly been uprooted by the strong winds and was in danger of falling causing much damage to the new play equipment with a risk of someone being seriously hurt.

The decision was made to remove the tree, which had been carried out on the same day.

He had also attended the meeting with the Clerk and the arborist at the Jubilee Garden. The office was awaiting a report.

13/131 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk reported that the insurance claim for the War Memorial had now been settled and that a claim had been made for the replacement fence at the children's playground at the Sports Centre which had been damaged previously.

13/132 WAYLAND PARTNERSHIP SUPPORT REQUEST

The Wayland Partnership was preparing a bid to the Safer Norfolk Foundation Medium Grant Programme to help in a programme of support for young people in the Watton area and requested the Council's support for the bid.

It was agreed that the Council would give their full support to the bid.

13/133 MILLENNIUM GARDEN LIGHTS AND FOUNTAIN MAINTENANCE

Members discussed the lights and fountain in the Millennium Garden. It was explained that the electricity had been disconnected for safety reasons. Over the years the lights had suffered from constant vandalism and Members felt it best to remove them.

It was proposed by Councillor R Turner, seconded by Councillor B Bunning and agreed that the lights be removed and the fountain disconnected but retained as a feature along with its plaque.

13/134 CHURCH WALK – HEDGE MAINTENANCE

The hedge at the Dereham Road end of Church Walk was overgrown and needed maintenance work carried out.

It was proposed by Councillor R Crabtree, seconded by Councillor B Bunning and agreed that the Council's contractor be asked to cut the hedge as soon as possible before the bird nesting started on 1 March.

13/135 PAYMENTS

It was agreed that payments for February 2014 be approved.

13/136 COMPLAINT REPORT

The Clerk reported that a complaint had been made against the Council by a Member.

Breckland Council's Assistant Director – Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer had investigated the complaint and concluded that “there is no evidence of a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct because the complaint related to the Town Councillors sitting as the Town Council and was not a complaint against the action of the Councillors acting alone” and that the matter should be referred to the Town Council.

As suggested, the Complainant has now formally referred the matter to the Town Council.

The Complainant had since been in contact and had been advised that the complaint was not a breach of the Code of Conduct or the Localism Act 2011 and that it is was against the Town Council.

The Chairman stated that the Monitoring Officer had already concluded that there was no evidence of a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct and the Town Council had adopted Breckland Council's Code of Conduct. This was the same complaint which had already been investigated.

It was proposed by Councillor L McCarthy, seconded by Councillor J Rogers and

RESOLVED

(Voting: 11 for with 2 against)

That the Council agrees with the Monitoring Officer's decision and that no further action be taken and this matter is now closed.

It was then proposed by Councillor J Rogers and seconded by Councillor R Turner that the Council pass a vote of no confidence in Councillor Gilbert as it was considered that by his actions he was bringing the Council into disrepute.

It was

RESOLVED

(Voting: 8 for with 2 against and 2 abstentions)

NOTE: A Member required in accordance with Standing Order 10 that the vote on this item be recorded.

For – K Birch, B Bunning, R Crabtree, J P McCarthy, L McCarthy, J Rogers, R Turner and M Wassell.

Against - P Blackmore and A Osborn.

Abstention – R Ivory and M Holmes.

That the Council has no confidence in Councillor Gilbert.

The Meeting ended 7.37pm

JS