

Minutes of the meeting of WATTON TOWN COUNCIL held on Tuesday 27th January 2015 at 7.00 pm

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

Councillors Present: J Rogers Chairman, K Birch Vice Chairman, B Bunning, P Cooper, R Crabtree, K Gilbert, S Hebborn, J P McCarthy, L McCarthy, R Turner and M Wassell

Officers Present: J Scarrott - Locum Clerk for the meeting

Others Present: Doug Faulkner – Reporter, Eastern Daily Press

Member of the Safer Neighbourhood Team

Members of the Public Present: (20) Twenty

#### 14/242 APOLOGIES

Apologies for Absence were received from P Blackmore, P Cooper, M Holmes.

#### 14/243 INTERESTS

Items relating to Watton Sports Centre - Councillor JP McCarthy declared a prejudicial interest in this item as a Member of the Sports Centre.

Items relating to Watton Sports Centre – Councillors L McCarthy, P Cooper and R Crabtree declared personal interests as a Member, Employee and Trustee of the Sports Centre.

Chairman and Cllr B Bunning declared personal interests in item 14/253.

Cllrs L McCarthy and JP McCarthy declared interest in planning matters relating to Portal Avenue and Griston Road.

Cllr S Hebborn declared interest in planning matters relating to Portal Avenue.

#### 14/244 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Council Meeting on Monday 15 December 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

14/245 PAYMENTS for the month of January were approved as presented.

#### 14/246 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Residents raised concerns regarding the planning applications for consideration and in particular the number of new dwellings in an application submitted for Portal Avenue. The main issue raised was that local infrastructure, such as the doctors surgery, schools and the sewerage system, cannot support such growth. It was acknowledged that these are valid concerns but lack of infrastructure is not a reason for planning applications to be refused. Developments are often granted planning permission with obligations attached for some form of contribution to infrastructure and Breckland Council ensure obligations are met.

Concern was also raised regarding the lack of provision of open space for the proposed development at Griston Road. The suggestion is that the open space on the adjacent development could be accessed and used by residents of the proposed new dwellings.

Some discussion also took place regarding the provision of a continuous footpath from the Griston Road development to Norwich Road. There was concern raised by residents concerning ongoing drainage issues in the area and the possibility of contamination of the ground.

It was noted that comments regarding provision of infrastructure could be passed to the MP and residents should write individual letters of objection to planning applications they are not supportive of. Each letter of objection received is counted as one objection and thus this approach can carry more weight than submission of a petition.

A query was raised regarding the location of the Town Mural which was commissioned by the Rotary Club and then passed to the Council. It is presently in storage in the old Council Chamber awaiting a decision regarding where to display it.

#### 14/247 COMMUNITY REPORTS

##### Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT)

It was reported that at the SNAP meeting held on Jan. 21<sup>st</sup> the previous agreed priorities will continue. This includes targeting of cyclists riding on pavements in the Town.

The SNT has no plans at present to deal with the contractors at the Thetford Road building site leaving mud on the road and creating parking problems but it was noted that if people complain to the Police this stance could change.

District Councillor Michael Wassell gave a verbal report. Copy attached as appendix 1.

District Councillor Claire Bowes reiterated that Breckland Council considers all planning applications individually and carefully. She stated she is happy to advise anyone regarding how to object to applications.

District Councillor Keith Gilbert stated that he is a member of Breckland Council Scrutiny Committee and that Breckland will be organising training for new councillors after the elections in May.

County Councillor Stan Hebborn reported that dates for visits from the Highways Rangers will be published soon and that the County Council budget has been cut and cuts will be evident.

Cllr. Hebborn will report the perceived slip hazard to pedestrians due to smooth tarmac at the Saham Road/High Street junction.

#### 14/248 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman has attended:

November 30<sup>th</sup> Festive Market and light switch on

December 4<sup>th</sup> Wayland Academy Awards Night

December 5<sup>th</sup> USAF Lakenheath Yuletide Reception

December 6<sup>th</sup> Charlotte Harvey Trust Thursday Club Christmas Party

December 14<sup>th</sup> Watton Churches Together

December 17<sup>th</sup> Watton Market Traders Christmas Refreshments

#### 14/249 VICE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Attended Prince's Trust meeting.

#### 14/250 ABEL HOMES OPEN SPACE

Mr Abel was in attendance at the meeting and had given a verbal outline of the proposal to offer the Open Space at Hus46 for adoption by Watton Town Council during public participation. All were in favour of the proposal as presented which incorporated a contribution of £31,781 towards grounds maintenance of the area.

#### 14/251and 252 GATES AT SPORTS CENTRE PLAYGROUND

The Chairman offered to undertake a site visit to assess both a new unpermitted gate which has been positioned in the Sports Centre Playground giving access to a garden and to look at an existing gate which had been hidden by trees. He will report back to the next meeting when a decision can be made regarding any action that may be necessary.

#### 14/253 TOWN MAYOR'S CADET

It was agreed by all that a Town Mayor's Cadet should be appointed as outlined in communication received from Watton Troop. The ACF and ATC will supply a list of senior cadets for consideration for the post each year. It was agreed applicants should be from the Wayland area and that the first cadet will be appointed to the new Mayor in May.

#### 14/254 DOG WALKING AREAS

Discussion took place regarding where dogs can be walked and it was suggested Cllr. Hebborn should compile a paper to be put to the Charlotte Harvey Trust which would request that land behind the Community Centre which belongs to the Trust be used as an area where dogs could be exercised.

#### 14/255 PURCHASE OF CONES

Members agreed that the purchase of 200 cones as suggested for use at public events should be considered at a future date as this had not been something incorporated in the current budget.

#### 14/256 USE OF TOWN AMBULANCE

It was agreed that the Prince's Trust be allowed to use the Town Ambulance for transporting students home on certain evenings. The Vice-Chairman has volunteered to act as driver and the Prince's Trust will be asked to make a donation to cover costs.

#### 14/257 DONATION OF BENCH FOR CEMETERY

It was agreed to accept the proposed donation of a bench for the cemetery but the Council will stipulate where the bench will be placed and what sort of bench is wanted to match those already in position.

#### 14/258 TOWN MURAL

As stated in Public Participation the mural has been restored and is to put on display once a decision has been made as to where to locate it.

#### 14/259 PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

It was reported that the present provision of NHS physiotherapy services in Watton is to be curtailed and users will need to travel to Dereham. The Town Council would be keen to see the service remain in the town and enquiries will be undertaken to see if the Town Council can help facilitate replacement premises if this is the reason for the possible loss of the service.

#### 14/260 IT CONTRACT

It was agreed no action would be taken relating to the council IT contract until a new Town Clerk has been appointed.

#### 14/261 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

1.1 3PL/ 2014/1248/F – First floor extension over garage to create bedroom with ensuite at 3 Jubilee Road, Watton, Norfolk IP25 6BH

The Council had no objections

1.2 3PL/2014/1187/F – Erection of two storey rear extension at 44 Brandon Road, Watton IP25 6AL

The Council had no objection

1.3 3PL/2014/1183 – Change of Use to first floor flat at 47 High Street, Watton IP25 6AB

The Council had no objection

1.4 3PL/2014/1304/LU – Single storey rear extension, conversion of half garage to accommodation. Infill covered area to form porch. 190 Lovell Gardens, Watton IP25 6UH

The Council had no objection

1.5 3PL/2014/1314 - Outline planning application for erection of 31 residential units comprising of 18 flats and 13 houses, estate road, parking areas and open space at 20 Griston Road, Watton

Council against application

1.6 3PL/2014/1378 - Residential development for 80 dwellings with associated servicing and infrastructure at Portal Avenue

Council against application

1.7 3PL/2014/1374 – Change of Use of units 2-4 from B1 (Business) to D2 (Assembly & Leisure).

The Council had no objection

1.8 3PL/2015/0021 – New dwelling and garage at 115 Brandon Road, Watton IP25 6LL. The Council was not supportive of the presented design but not against development of the site.

14/262 In view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, concerning staffing matters and tenders received, a resolution was passed to exclude the Press and Public from the following items.

1. Staffing matters

A report received giving an update on the recruitment process being undertaken for a Town Clerk is attached as appendix 2.

No temporary clerk has been appointed. In view of this and the extra responsibility being undertaken it was agreed to increase the salary and hours of work of the current member of office staff as outlined in appendix 3.

2. Repair to Clock

One quote having been received for work to the Town Council Clock it was decided to investigate whether missing parts of the clock could be found and if so a revised quote will be requested to be considered at the next meeting.

3. Clearing of moss on roof of Wayland Hall

It was agreed further quotes for this work should be sought.

4. Office security

It was agreed further quotes should be sought for the proposed security measures for the office but that the Chairman should have discretion to engage the most appropriate contractor as soon as possible as it is imperative that safety measures be implemented.

It was suggested as much communication as possible within the council should be undertaken electronically and that Councillors should have town council e-mail addresses. It was considered this is something that should be looked at for the new council after the May elections.

The Local Plan & issues and options consultation ended on the 9th January. We had a good response with over 300 people attending the various events that were put on across the district. We also had a good response to the online and written requests and Breckland are currently analysing these.

Breckland held a Town and Parish forum in Swaffham on the 15th January, where the Breckland Corporate Plan for 2015 to 2019 was discussed, along with the Budget for 2015-16. It was very well attended with lots of questions. We will continue to hold these events across the district rather than them being held exclusively in Dereham.

I am pleased to say that Breckland intend to present a balanced budget for 2015-16 and for the following years, up to 2019. We are doing this with no reliance on reserves, in other words WE will not be using our reserves to prop up our finances and despite continued cuts in Government Grants as central government strive to continue to improve the financial situation nationally. Breckland are also going to freeze council tax for 2015-16 and pay the Town and Parish Council Tax Support grant at the same level as previous years.

Unusually for a district council, Breckland Council has no debt.

I can provide an update on the Icelandic investment, which I have not done for a while:

- Originally invested £12 million in 2006/2007
  - 6 lots of £2m investments
  - We have all but £670,000 back
  - That £670,000 is in an escrow account in Icelandic Kroner that the Icelandic government will not release.
  - We are still earning interest on that amount
  - I did look into using the £670,000 to purchase something, to then import into the UK and sell – perhaps fish
  - I was advised that this was illegal and I could go to prison, so I abandoned that idea!

Breckland are currently finalising the Corporate Plan for 2015 – 2019 which will be published at the end of March. The draft Corporate Plan sets out how we will work with partners and the community to ensure that Breckland continues to be a place where people choose to live, work and visit. The Council is recognised as a forward-thinking and commercial organisation. I aim to ensure that Breckland is an organisation with a Commercial Head and a Community Heart. We will continue to strive for excellence and ensure that we make the most of opportunities for regeneration, jobs and housing, and wider benefits for both residents and businesses. The draft corporate plan is available on Breckland's web site and is open for consultation until the 31<sup>st</sup> January.

And finally the dead line for submissions to the pride in Breckland Awards has been extended to the 30<sup>th</sup> January. This will allow more of the shining stars that live and work in the district to be recognised. There are nine diverse categories available, which offer opportunities to recognise those who have given up some of their free time to make the lives of others better, people who have shown incredible determination, and people who have achieved great things in their chosen field. Full details on the Breckland Web Site.

Through you Mr. Chairman I will take any questions that members may have.





## Full Council Briefing Note Town Clerk Recruitment

Dear Councillors,

During the December Full Council meeting a decision was made to appoint a sub committee to act as a recruitment panel for the Town Clerk vacancy. The panel includes the Chairman and Vice Chairman as well as Cllr M Holmes and Cllr J P McCarthy.

During the December Full Council meeting we reviewed a CV from a candidate who was interested in the interim post, but subsequent to an interview which took place on 18 December 2014, the candidate declined the offer of the interim post, and is keen to apply instead for the permanent post.

The permanent vacancy has been advertised with a closing date of **13 February 2015**, in the following publications/websites, as per the original proposal:

- Eastern Daily Press
- Watton & Swaffham Times
- Thetford & Brandon Times
- Indeed.co.uk
- Norfolk Association of Local Councils website
- Suffolk Association of Local Councils website
- Breckland Council website
- Watton Town Council website

Social media is also being used to draw attention to the vacancy.

Proposed key dates for the next stages of the recruitment process are as follows:

<b>Date/Time</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Fri 13 Feb	Advert closing date	Natalie King
Fri 13 Feb – Tue 17 Feb	Initial sifting and scoring exercise against criteria within person specification.	Natalie King
Wed 18 Feb, 10am – 12pm	Longlisting meeting to review applications and determine which candidates to interview.	Recruitment Panel, facilitated by Natalie King
Wed 4 Mar, 10am – 5pm	Interviews (approx. 6 candidates)	Recruitment Panel, facilitated by Natalie King
Tue 10 Mar, following full council meeting	Presentations from shortlisted candidates to Full Council (approx. 3 candidates). Appointment decision to be made.	All Councillors

We anticipate receiving between 15 and 30 applications. NK will score and sift the candidates against the criteria within the person specification, to bring it down to 8-10 candidates. During the shortlisting meeting we can then decide upon a maximum of 6 candidates to take through to interview (or more if we schedule interviews over 2 days). Following the interviews we will then decide upon a final shortlist of 2 or 3 candidates to invite to deliver presentations at Full Council to all Councillors. We will aim to make an appointment decision at Full Council and advise the candidates on the next working day.

I have enclosed the job description, person specification and advert wording again for your information.

Please don't hesitate to contact me should you have any queries.

Yours sincerely

*NKing*

Natalie King  
For and on behalf of Breckland Council

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