

Minutes of the Watton Annual Town Meeting

held at the Youth & Community Centre, Harvey Street on April 17th 2018

Present: Mayor Stan Hebborn (Chairman of Watton Town Council), District Councillors Mr K Gilbert (also a Town Councillor), Mr M Wassell and Miss C Bowes (also County Councillor), 9 other members of Watton Town Council and 28 members of the public signed the attendance sheet.

Also present 5 members of Watton Town Council staff.

1. The minutes of the 2017 Annual Town Meeting were presented and signed as correct.

2. Chairman's Report

The Chairman gave a report of Town Council activities over the past year.

3. District Councillors' Report

District Councillors Claire Bowes, Keith Gilbert and Michael Wassell all submitted written reports. Hard copies were available at the meeting and are available on the Town Council website www.wattontowncouncil.gov.uk Councillors were present and willing to answer queries directed to them.

4. County Councillor's Report

County Councillor Claire Bowes had submitted a written report. Hard copies were available at the meeting and are available on the Town Council website www.wattontowncouncil.gov.uk

The County Councillor was asked to support the inclusion of Watton in any transport studies the County Council may commission in the near future so information obtained could be included in the Watton Neighbourhood Plan.

Concern was raised by the Chairman that a report to Norfolk County Council's (NCC) Policy & Resources Committee in June 2107 stated that NCC will need to save a further £100m from 2018-2022, on top of savings of £24.9m already agreed for 2108/19 and 2019/20.

It was also noted that County Councillors have voted to increase their basic allowance by 11.7%.

Members of the public raised concerns with the timings of the traffic lights at the crossings by the Dereham Road/Thetford Road crossroads and that despite many requests the filter arrow on the Norwich Road by this junction has still not been re-painted by NCC Highways.



5. Police Report

No Police present but a reminder given of the date of the next Safer Neighbourhood Team Meeting. Hard copies of the April Safer Neighbourhood Team Newsletter for the area were available at the meeting and are available on the Town Council website www.wattontowncouncil.gov.uk

6. Wayland Chamber of Commerce

Debbie Muller presented a report on behalf of the Chamber of Trade. Copy available on the Town Council website.

7. Wayland Partnership Report

Apologies received that the Wayland Partnership was not represented at the meeting. Written report made available at the meeting and on the Town Council website.

8. Reports from other groups and organisations within the Town, including those which have received grants from the Town Council during the last financial year.

Written reports received from:

- Watton Carnival Committee
- Watton Thursday Club
- Wayland Men's Shed
- Stevens Almshouses Charity
- Watton International Food Festival
- Watton Sports & Social Club

Verbal reports/update given by:

- Museum4Watton
- Wild Cherry Close Neighbourhood Watch Team
- Mid Norfolk Citizens Advice Bureau
- Watton U3A
- Reverend Gerry Foster - Watton Focus Group

Copies of all written reports received are filed and available on the Town Council website.

9. Future Plans for Watton

Watton Neighbourhood Plan Update April 2018

- Members of the Watton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group have been extremely busy in the last year moving the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) forward.
- So far an initial questionnaire has been used to evidence an understanding of the issues people are raising and from this the Watton NP



Drainage Working Group (WDG) was formed and specific questionnaires about flooding have also been distributed with a very good response rate. The WDG members have undertaken much work to produce the report which is available tonight.

- NP Steering Group members have been out and about attending meetings with other organisations, businesses and voluntary groups within the town and are continuing to do so to reach as many in the community as possible.
- Grant funding has been obtained through Locality (<https://locality.org.uk/>) to, amongst other things, produce a study of the town centre area, compile a Character Area Appraisal Report, engage with students at Watton Academy and most recently to conduct a site assessment. Copies of the study by AECOM (<https://www.aecom.com/>) of the town centre and of the Character Area Appraisal Report are available. The site assessment is still to be undertaken.
- Swaffham Town Council is also undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan and the two towns have recently begun to meet to discuss areas of possible joint working. The Swaffham & Watton Partnership meetings are also looking at ideas within the Breckland Market Towns Initiative.
- Towards the end of the year it is expected that a questionnaire will be made available to all Watton residents. The responses, once analysed, will be fed into the NP.

A report was given by the Watton Neighbourhood Plan Drainage Working Group – copies were available at the meeting and will be posted on the Town Council website.

10. Points raised by members of the public

- The Town Council produced a Financial Statement relating to the 2017/18 budget and the increase in the precept for 2018/19. Concern was raised regarding the lack of financial support the Town Council has given to Watton Sports Association and the Mid Norfolk Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) in recent years.
Allocations have been made in past Town Council budgets and Watton Sports Centre did receive a donation of £5000 in April 2107. The Chairman suggested the CAB could make representation to the Town Council for future consideration. The Town Council would be interested to know how many residents of Watton use the local CAB services.
- A breakdown of costs relating to the 2017 Fireworks Evening is available on the Town Council website.
- The Town Council has co-opted new members since the 2015 election as no elections have been requested by members of the public. The next scheduled Local Council elections in the Breckland Area will be in May



2019 when seats on the Town Council will be contested should enough candidates stand.

- It was noted that the cost of internment in Watton is £1250 which is higher than surrounding parishes.
- Councillor Keith Gilbert was thanked for his assistance with sorting out problems with street lighting at Lovell Gardens.
- Comment was made that the reports submitted by Claire Bowes and Michael Wassell appeared not to mention Watton.
- A local resident raised concerns of safety issues which could arise around the mini roundabout along the Brandon Road as further planned development in the close proximity will lead to greater levels of traffic movement.
- The Men's Shed announced the group would be willing to consider sub-letting the MOD building they use should they be approached.
- Flooding concerns raised relating to new developments.
- It was noted that all aspects relating to Watton Cemetery are to be reviewed by the Town Council.
- Cars parked along the High Street in the evenings were reported as causing safety issues. A suggestion was made that the area could be designated as a 20mph zone.
- Groups of volunteer litter pickers are working hard within the parish.