

Minutes of the virtual meeting of WATTON TOWN COUNCIL held on

Tuesday February 9th 2021 at 7.00pm

Councillors Present: Pat Warwick - Chairman, Peter Bishop, Beryl Bunning, Tina Cruz, Jane Fountain, Stan Hebborn, Stan Hebborn, Don Saunders, Kathryn Stallard, Les Waller.

Officers present: Jane Scarrott Town Clerk

1 member of the public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE RECEIVED FROM

Richard Hindley, Tina Kiddell and Keith Gilbert

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST MADE

Beryl Bunning declared a personal interest in item 12.1.

3. MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting held on 26th January 2021 were accepted as a true record. The minutes will be physically signed by the Chairman as soon as possible.

4. REPORTS

4.1 Chairman's Report

The Chairman has attended the Safer Neighbourhood Action Panel (SNAP) meeting on Jan. 28th and a Town Council Finance Committee meeting on Jan. 29th.

4.2 Vice-Chairman's Report

The Vice-Chairman has attended the second part of a Chairmanship training course.

4.3 Clerk's Report

A copy of the Clerk's Report was included in the agenda pack for the meeting with a verbal update also given:

- Clerk attended the Wayland Chamber of Trade meeting on Feb. 3rd. The Chamber is preparing to give a presentation to Breckland District Council and Norfolk County Council re. the plans for the Wayland Hall Digital and Creative Media Centre.
- The Chamber has been passed emergency contact information for inclusion in their 2021 Directory.
- 12.02.21 Virtual meeting to be held with BDC Officers re. the Officers Mess s106
- Co-option procedure to be an agenda item for the next Full Council meeting
- NP consultant to be contacted re. review of plan expected to reach the Town Council by the end of February 2021.

4.4 PEPSO quarterly report received. The PEPSO was thanked for her comprehensive reports.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Liz Witcher Chairman of the Watton & Saham Flood Action Group (WASFAG) was present having asked to speak at item 10.

6. FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

6.1 The minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 29.01.21 were received. It was noted that the Finance Committee has considered the Internal Auditors Interim Report and recommendations made in the report are being addressed.

6.2 **It was resolved** that up to £2000 would be allocated from the Wayland Hall refurbishment budget to support purchase of tables and chairs for the Council Chamber.

7. MARKET GAZEBOS.

It was agreed to wait until a third quote for erecting the gazebos for the market has been received before making a decision regarding the future contractor from March. This matter will be an agenda item again at the next Full Council meeting when a decision must be made.

8. WASTE DISPOSAL

The provision of disposal services for waste produced by the Town Council was considered with a view to obtaining a better value deal than that currently in place.

It was resolved that the Town Council will look to engage with Breckland District Council to provide a waste disposal contractor based on the quote received.

9. BRIDLE ROAD PLAY AREA

A s106 application has been submitted to Breckland District Council for funding towards a pump track at Bridle Road Play Area. A response is awaited.

Once funding is confirmed the contractors can be instructed to start work on the project.

It is hoped when lockdown is eased a litter pick can be arranged at the site and plans can be put together for further enhancement of the area including possible tree planting in the autumn.

10. FLOODING

Consideration was given as to how the Town Council might assist in times of local flooding.

It was resolved to ask WASFAG to provide information which could be included within the Wayland Chamber of Commerce Directory and to produce a leaflet to give advice how to deal with local flooding.

A copy of the verbal report given by the Chairman of WASFAG is attached as App.1.

11. JUBLIEE GARDEN

It was resolved that the fruit trees planted at Jubilee Garden which have not survived will not be replaced.

It was resolved that the current gardener will be asked to continue with 2hrs work at the site every other week and that he will be instructed to replace the weed control matting at the four corners of the site as estimated.

12. PLANNING

12.1 3PL/2021/0065/F - Conversion of existing C3 dwelling house and associated two storey outbuilding to 5 individual C3 residential flats and associated works - WATTON: 2 Harvey Street

Watton Town Council considers that the number of units proposed on this site is excessive. The site is located where there is no immediate on street parking and nearby on street parking is extremely limited. The exterior space available is insufficient to provide for the level of parking that would flow from five units of occupation. In addition, the outside space constraints do not allow for the provision of wheeled bin storage for the large number of units, consequently this is

very likely to result in on road storage. This situation already exists along Harvey Street which causes conflict with road traffic, in the locale of this site it would be exacerbated because of the road layout.

12.2 3PL/2021/0093/HOU - Two storey rear extension and single storey front extension. -
WATTON: 77 Merton Road

No objections/comments

12.3 3DC/2021/0010/DOC – Discharge of Condition No's 7, 9 & 10 on 3PL/2020/0899/F – Drome
Garage Norwich Road Watton IP25 6HW

No comments

12.4 3PL/2021/0105/HOU - Single Storey Front/side Extension WATTON: 18A Queensway

No objections/comments

12.5 3PL/2021/0069/F - External alterations to include replacement of vertical cladding and resheeting of roof. Relocation of cantilever racking, 2x new containers, 2x new pallet racking & new lintel rack - Jewson Builders Merchant Norwich Road Industrial Estate, Watton IP256DF

Watton Town Council has no comments to make with regard to alterations to the building and stationing of new containers. Concerns were raised regarding the part of the application that relates to racking on the site. Last year racking was erected on the site in breach of planning controls. An application was submitted in order to resolve the issue and following discussions with officers a compromise was agreed on and a conditional planning permission was granted under reference 3PL/2020/1048/F. This permission required that the racking be repositioned and reduced in height within one month of the granting of the permission on 18/11/2020. It is understood that this racking remains in place. While the council is supportive of the business on the site it considers that no alterations to the agreed racking on site should be allowed. Consequently, if the company wishes to proceed with this application without deleting the racking element the council cannot support it in its entirety.

Report from Watton & Saham Flood Action Group to the Watton Town Council Meeting on 9 February 2021

Re: Item 10 To consider allocation of funds to purchase pumps to assist in times of flooding

The Flood Action Group met on Friday and I would like to begin by updating you about the Group.

We met with interested Parish Councillors from Saham and the Group now has three new members. They are, Kathy Avery, Daniel Freeman and Trevor Bunce.

The meeting considered all the initiatives in the county arising from the floods of Christmas 2020 which were county-wide. Cllr Bowes told you at your last meeting about the Task Force set up by the Cabinet Member for Environment & Waste, Cllr Andy Grant and which will be chaired by General Lord Dannatt. It is due to hold its first meeting on Thursday. When I saw the news in the EDP on 14th January, I emailed Cllr Grant, in my capacity as Chair of WASFAG, with a plea that local flood groups and local residents even where there were no formal groups be involved as they have first-hand knowledge of the problems. I did receive a reply the same day, thanking me for my email and its contents and that he hoped to be in contact in the future.

I think the floods of August and of December last were a wake-up call for our Group as well and I will come back to that later.

In parallel with that initiative, George Freeman had set up what is called the Mid Norfolk Flood Partnership which held its first meeting on Friday 29 January. Nick Creek and I represented WASFAG and Dave Carlin was there for the new Carbrooke Drainage Group. In addition, there were 8 district and county councillors (all Conservative) and 3 parish Councillors, 2 from Necton and 1 from Rocklands. My heart went out to the two from Necton and I have already been in touch with them to offer support in the form of our knowledge, experience and agency contacts. We have had a first exchange by phone, and I sent them documents I thought would help. There were 2 officers from the LLFA, 3 from Anglian Water, 1 from NCC Highways and 1 from the Environment Agency. The Councillors all started the ball rolling and Cllr Bowes introduced me and our group with much appreciation for our work. All areas have the same problems in common- problems with foul sewers, ditches, watercourses and Highways drains not maintained and buck passing between the agencies. The minutes of the meeting summarised 12 points George will feed back to Lord Dannatt's Task Force. When George asked the LLFA to speak Mark Ogden spoke of the difficulty of obtaining funding for rural communities like ours and Mark Henderson spoke about work they are doing in Dereham. I think he mentioned it because members had mentioned that residents did not know who to call in various kinds of emergency and he had a list for those in Dereham.

George then asked Cllr Wilkin to say some things about Planning. I was given the opportunity to speak again and said a lot about possible ways for agencies and residents to work together based on NFF information. I said residents wanted action and that meant funding and asked how FAGs like ours could help our flood officers to get funding. Then, George said it was time to start wrapping things up and he started summarising the points he would make to Lord Dannatt's Task Force. While he was doing that, Mark Ogden wrote on the chatline that the LLFA has made a bid for funding from the central government Innovation and Resilience Fund for £3m over 6 years to work with rural settlements in Norfolk to capture and re-use flood water. I of course have googled

this and discovered that it is a competitive process. Based on expressions of interest, projects will be short-listed, and that list should be known by the end of April. Then those 25 have to work up their project and cost it and then these will be assessed by the EA and Defra and the final 25 will be known by late summer probably.

I don't know who else knew about that but it was certainly news to us.

I am in email and phone contact with the senior manager at Anglian Water who deals with new developments and is part of the team led by Jonathan Glerum, their Flood Risk Manager. He has told me about major investment they are going to make in their infrastructure in Watton over a number of years, one outcome of which should be stopping residents' toilets and showers backing up. We are putting an article in the Wayland News and maybe elsewhere about our work and that will include text from AW about what they are happy to make public at this point in time.

The Group also talked about the need to become more active when floods threaten, and this relates to item 10 on your agenda. I think we need to have volunteers to act as flood wardens who will visit vulnerable properties with residents who do not access social media or the internet. There are alternatives to sandbags (which the Environment Agency no longer consider OK) which are called floodsacs and I think we need a store of these. We may indeed need pumps but for all of this we need our volunteers trained and appropriate insurance which the NFF have advised me about. I know of one resident who has installed pumps in his property, and I have consulted him about those.

So, Stan's idea [to provide pumps] coincided with mine, but I think we should ask Breckland as a Flood Risk Management Authority to provide financial and practical help.

Liz Whitcher
Chairman