

Minutes of the meeting of WATTON TOWN COUNCIL held on
Tuesday February 8th 2022 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber at
Wayland Hall, Middle Street, Watton IP25 6AG

Councillors Present: Jane Fountain - Chairman, Peter Bishop, Beryl Bunning, Tine Cruz, Keith Gilbert, Sue Hebborn, Stan Hebborn, Tina Kiddell, Keith Prince, Don Saunders, Kathryn Stallard, Pat Warwick, James Wooler, Charlotte Greenough

Officer present: Jane Scarrott Clerk

1 member of the public

1. **NO APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE RECEIVED**

Noted that Kris Moore has resigned as a Town Councillor.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST MADE:**

No Declarations of Interest made.

3. **MINUTES**

3.1 Minutes of the meeting held on January 25th 2022 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

3.2 Report updating on items from the meeting on 25.01.22 was included within the agenda pack with updated verbal report given at the meeting:

- Field Maple Road open space land has been included within the draft Watton Neighbourhood Plan.
- District Councillors Claire Bowes and Tina Kiddell have responded with information as requested regarding Electric Vehicle Charging (EVC) points:
Breckland District Council (BDC) officers are following up on EVC charging points and the matter has been passed to the portfolio holder for climate change and green issues.
- Maintenance work has been completed on trees at Loch Neaton embankment

4. **REPORTS**

4.1 Chairman's Report

The Chairman has attended:

02.02.22 panto at the Queens Hall

03.02.22 Breckland District Council 5 Market Towns Meeting followed by a walkaround Watton with BDC Officer.

08.02.22 site meeting at Hares Green

Feedback from the 5 Market Towns Meeting:

- Governments levelling up agenda has Norfolk as one of the trail blazing counties. More info at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom>
- Car parking changes and enforcement matters have been completed in towns where this has been requested. The Watton Neighbourhood Plan (NP) identified an issue in Watton in that the "vets" car park is used by commuters and thus availability of car parking space for visitors/shoppers is reduced. Should the TC wish to discuss possible solutions, BDC would be willing to consider this and Ralph Burton the officer responsible could make a presentation to members. Possible future TC agenda item?

Noted that BDC would consider use of their car parks for events.

- BDC is looking to enhance the support team for Neighbourhood Planning.
- Digital signage – BT has approved Breckland for the roll out of their BT Streethubs which will replace old telephone boxes.

Street Hubs will bring councils, communities and the public wide-scale digital connectivity at no cost – entirely run and installed by BT. BDC is thus pausing its work regarding digital signage in the market towns to await the outcome of the BT hubs roll out.

- BDC Local Plan is currently under review and the 5 year land supply is under regular monitoring.

4.2 Vice-Chairman's Report – no report given

4.3 Clerk's Report

Written report issued with the agenda pack:

- The new Town Operative began work on Feb. 1st.
- The Market Supervisor is still to be engaged for 5 hrs per week until the end of February to wind the town clock until the Town Operative has been shown how to do this.
- Work has been undertaken to the roof at Wayland Hall to repair a leak and a quote is being produced to replace the gutter hopper and down pipe which is causing the dampness to the west wall of the building.
- Re-decoration of the foyer and outer office at Wayland Hall is underway. The Town Operative will be asked to undertake the painting of the remaining office once all the other work has been completed.
- Norfolk County Council has reported that AMEY will be including the High Street lamp posts in this year's painting programme. They have apologised for the delay and said this was due to some issues with the RAL number, which have now been resolved and the paint is at their depot ready to go. A date should be provided for when the work is to start.

Verbal report given:

- Swaffham Town Council has approached Watton Council to support its request to apply Tree Preservation Orders or similar to protect a linear landscape feature situated between Swaffham and Watton. This will be an agenda item for the Town Council meeting on Feb. 22nd.

4.4 Civilian Committee - Report from Cllr Keith Prince

- The number of air cadets within the Watton squadron is increasing and a request has been received for them to be included to assist with future Watton Town Council events. They will be added to the list of those who are approached.
- The Air Cadets Civilian Committee raises money for the local squadron and is at present an unregistered charity. Should the charity become registered the structure could change and the fund raising for the group could be incorporated within the wing of the squadron and would no longer be at such a local level.
- It has been suggested the Civilian Committee could submit a donation application to the Town Council to possibly fund provision of IT equipment.

- The cadets are looking for an allotment area. It is possible the Town Council could help with this if spare land at the Thetford Road allotment site was considered to be suitable.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No matters raised.

6. INTERNAL AUDITORS INTERIM REPORT

The Internal Auditors Interim Report was received as presented. Points raised will be considered by the Finance Committee.

7. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE AND GARDENING CONTRACTS

Agreed to move to item 11 to after a resolution to exclude the public as commercially sensitive information is to be discussed.

8. CHRISTMAS LIGHTING 2022

Contractors are being approached regarding the provision of Christmas lights for 2022. To date one firm has visited the town and will be putting some suggestions forward. More options will continue to be investigated and Christmas Lights 2022 will be an agenda item again for the next Town Council meeting.

9. FUTURE BRECKLAND TOWN DELIVERY PLAN

Councillors were asked to pass comments on the Watton Town Delivery Plan to the Clerk for collation in time for the next Town Council meeting on Feb. 22nd. Comments received will be considered and, following agreement, submitted to BDC.

It was noted that the next edition of the Transforming Breckland magazine will feature information about projects in Watton. The Town Council is encouraged to submit articles for publication about what is happening in the town. It was suggested however that the magazine is a BDC publication which would be expected to promote what BDC is doing for Watton.

10. PLANNING

10.1 3PL/2021/1329/HOU - Rear garden summer house (retrospective) - 12 Sharman Avenue

The Town Council supports comments made by Watton and Saham Toney Flood Action Group

10.2 3PL/2019/0991/D - Reserved matters application for residential development of 177 dwellings following outline permission 3PL/2015/0254/O - Development Site Mallard Road Watton AMENDMENT: Amended plans & documents

The Town Council supports comments made by Watton and Saham Toney Flood Action Group

11. Resolution passed to exclude the public and press to consider confidential matters

- 11.1 The decision made to appoint a new Town Operative on NJC scale pt. 6 for 35 hours per week was ratified.
- 11.2 It was resolved that the Deputy Clerk will receive an incremental pay scale point rise (from NJC pt. 27 to 28) as from April 1st 2022.
- 11.3 It was resolved to accept the quotes from TTSR for a three year contract to undertake grounds maintenance, Cemetery and gardening work for Watton Town Council.

The grounds maintenance contractor will be asked to quote to possibly include grounds maintenance work at Hares Green within the contract. This will be a future Town Council meeting agenda item.