

Minutes of the meeting of WATTON TOWN COUNCIL held on
Tuesday April 12th 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, Keith Gilbert, Tina Kiddell, Keith Prince, Don Saunders, Kathryn Stallard, Pat Warwick, James Wooler.

Officer present: Jane Scarrott Clerk

Also present Town Operative, David Dent (item 4.5), Paul Legrice (item 8) and one member of the public.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE RECEIVED

Tina Cruz, Charlotte Greenough, Sue Hebborn and Stan Hebborn

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST MADE:

Beryl Bunning declared an interest in item 13.4.

3. MINUTES

3.1 Minutes of the meeting held on March 22nd 2022 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

3.2 Report updating on items from the meeting on 22.03.22 was included within the agenda pack with updated verbal report given at the meeting:

- Quinquennial Survey of the Clock Tower booked for May 10th 2022.
- If possible, before his year of Office ends, the Chairman of Breckland District Council will attend a future Town Council meeting and may pledge a tree to be planted in the town to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

4. REPORTS

4.1 Chairman's Report

The Chairman has:

- 31.03.22 Judged the Easter Plate Competition at Westfields Junior School.
- 31.03.22 Attended a talk at Broom Hall in support of the Wayland Chamber of Commerce.
- 06.04.22 With Cllrs Bishop and Stalled and the Clerk visited Birketts solicitor to obtain advice on land registration.
- 10.04.22 Attended free community open day at Full Fitness Gym.

The Chairman announced (agreed by Councillors) that she would prefer not to arrange a Civic Reception this year due to the current economic situation and, with the demographics of those most likely to attend, bringing a large number of people together in a confined space when Covid cases are high in the locality might not be seen as sensible.

4.2 Vice-Chairman's Report

No report. The Vice-Chairman had given apologies for the meeting.

4.3 Clerk's Report

Written report issued with the agenda pack:

- Downpipe at Wayland Hall has been replaced by the contractor but correct pipes to fix into the hopper are still awaited so the job has not yet been completed.
- A leak is still evident below one pan in the public toilets although two attempts by different workmen have been made to fix this. We are now researching if a new matching replacement pan can be obtained. Also to note that the cleaning contractors have not opened/cleaned the toilets on two occasions recently due to staff issues. This situation is being monitored.
Of note: One company approached has suggested one new unisex changing place cubicle could replace all the toilets currently at the site (one toilet can cope with use up to 40x per day).
- The requested registration of the Cemetery allotment site is being delayed as Land Registry may not treat the Section 52 Agreement supplied as the document that transferred legal ownership of the allotment garden from SDC Anglia Limited to the Town Council. The Agreement suggests that there should be a separate conveyance after the S52 Agreement was completed, or there should have been one. However this cannot be found!
- The legal side of the permanent Weds. Middle Street Road Closure is to be advertised in April with a 21 day period so the order should be sealed and in force before the temporary one runs out in June. Appropriate signage for the road closure will follow.
- As agreed under the MTI programme, Breckland Council has commissioned Norfolk County Council to undertake a full technical appraisal and detailed design of new alternative solutions for Middle Street.
- Watton Neighbourhood Plan - Pre-submission Version for Regulation 14 Consultation (D17 22) <https://democracy.breckland.gov.uk/mglssueHistoryHome.aspx?Issued=42171&OptionNum=0>
- Breckland Town & Parish Forum has been arranged for **Monday 23rd May 2022** at 5.30pm and will be held in the Breckland Council Offices, Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke, Dereham.
- Radio Norfolk have made an approach to residents to contact them about Watton. It was resolved that the Clerk should contact Radio Norfolk to ask what information they are looking for and the mayor and Clerk will respond.

4.4 Events Summary

An Events Summary had been passed to Councillors prior to the meeting.
It was felt that an Events meeting is needed to answer the questions raised.

4.5 Digital and Media Centre Update

Verbal update given by David Dent, Chairman of the Wayland Chamber of Commerce.
Wayland Chamber has as one of its strategies: creating the relevant facilities, opportunities and employment for young people and dynamic new start-ups. To help achieve this the Chamber is continuing to work with other partners to create a new modern and iconic digital and creative media centre to be located at the site of Wayland House. Integrating library, art gallery, tourism and public offices with workshop and music, video and gaming studios, linked to a test-bed and local digital Competitive Gaming Theatre, it will provide a dynamic environment for serviced business offices and a communal retail forecourt hub. The Centre will be for the benefit of the Wayland Partnership and the town, as well as for users and other partners. Interested partners include Norfolk Constabulary, Breckland District Council (BDC), Norfolk County Council (NCC) and Hethal Engineering as a business incubator for NCC.

The project is continuing to grow and a questionnaire is to be issued shortly asking residents what they would like to see at the Centre.

The next stage will be to secure funding for the venture and BDC is helping to put supporting documents together for bid applications in July 2022.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No matters raised.

6. PARKING AT BRIDLE ROAD PLAY AREA

It has been of concern for some time that some residents of adjacent houses at times park their vehicles on the grass at the Bridle Road Play Area.

It was resolved that the situation will continue to be monitored and that the grounds maintenance contractor will be asked to quote to install posts to deter parking.

This matter will be an agenda item again in three months time.

7. MARKET TOWN INITIATIVE (MTI) FUNDING

An e-mail sent to Cllr Kiddell in response to questions raised regarding MTI funding will be shared with other Councillors. It is noted that BDC is putting MTI money towards the realisation of the proposed pedestrianisation of Middle Street and that at the present time the overall cost of the project is not known.

The Town Council is looking to replace the litter bins and flower tubs in the High Street and Cllr Kiddell, in her role as District Councillor, was asked if any MTI money could be allocated to this project.

District Councillors were also asked for an update on the promised Electric Vehicle Charging Point for Watton and an update on what BDC is doing to assist with improvement to the appearance of buildings in the High Street. Landlords have been approached and made aware of grant funding available but not all wish to engage. A question was raised as to whether listed buildings in the conservation area could be added to any "at risk" register.

Cllr Kiddell stressed that she is happy to try to find answers to any questions put to her relating to BDC.

It was noted that at times the Town Council feels that it is not kept well informed and it needs to chase for answers from other authorities.

8. ADOPTION OF OPEN SPACE AT ROKELES GREEN

It was resolved, with one abstention, not to adopt the open space at the Rokeles Green development.

9. CASE FOR MAYORS CHAIN OF OFFICE

It was resolved to investigate the cost of a new lighter weight case for the Mayor's Chain of Office.

10. WATTON AND SAHAM FLOOD ACTION GROUP (WASFAG) DONATION

Declaration of interest made by Keith Gilbert as a member of WASFAG.

The Town Council had previously agreed to pay £1320.00 for a drainage report commissioned by WASFAG but only £1180.68 was spent leaving £139.32.

The original £1000 donation made to WASFAG to support the groups website has only £122.80 remaining but the most recent invoice for £252 (includes VAT) can be paid if the Town Council was to re-allocate the £139.32 remaining unspent from the report. The VAT can be reclaimed.

It was resolved to re-allocate the £139.32 to pay the website invoice.

11. HIGH STREET FLAG POLES

District Councillors Kiddell and Bowes have been working on a project to install flag poles on buildings along Watton High Street.

This project aims to install as many 2 meters long 45 degree angled flagpoles as possible outside the High Street shops. It is hoped that 22 flagpoles with Union Jacks will be erected in time for the Queens Jubilee celebration weekend.

The long term aim is for these flagpoles to be handed over post-installation to the Town Council for it to use as it wishes (i.e. replacing the flags for ceremonial events - Norfolk day, Pride etc.).

BDC has commissioned a structural surveyor to survey each position to deem its suitability and advise on mounting fixings.

The Town Council has now been approached to accept the flagpoles once they have been erected. It was noted that Town Councillors had not previously been made aware of plans to use MTI funding for this purpose.

Concern was raised that the Town Council does not have the in house resources to manage the flagpoles and it is anticipated that there would be a considerable cost to purchase additional flags and to engage a contractor, both to change flags, and to undertake annual condition surveys of the flagpoles. An increase within the annual Town Council budget would be needed.

It was suggested all Councillors should carefully read the draft flagpole licence provided in the meeting agenda pack and then forward any concerns to the Clerk to pass to Cllr Kiddell who will then answer questions raised.

This matter will be an agenda item again for the next Town Council meeting on April 26th.

12. PLANNING

Noted that as a member of Breckland District Planning Committee Keith Gilbert took no part in the discussion.

12.1 3PL/2022/0296/F - 4no. New Dwellings - WATTON: Field Maple Road

Town Council objects:

- Loss of open space – area is amenity land which is suggested for allocation as green space in the Local Plan and Watton Neighbourhood Plan
- Over development of site
- Overbearing
- There is a concern regarding contaminated land (land originally allocated as open space for this reason)
- Proposal does not relate to the soft edge of the current development and transition to the adjacent agricultural field.

12.2 3PL/2022/0353/O - Residential development - WATTON: 8 Swaffham Road

Town Council supports observations by WASFAG and objects:

- Over development of site
- Overbearing
- Insufficient clarity relating to the access

12.3 3DC/2022/0071/DOC - WATTON Development Site Rear 121 Brandon Road - Discharge of condition 7 on pp 3PL/2021/0493/VAR (Discharge Conditions)

No comment

12.4 3DC/2022/0072/DOC - WATTON Land north of Norwich Road - Discharge of Conditions 3,16,18 on 3PL/2021/0032/F (Discharge Conditions)

No comment

12.5 APPLICATION TO MODIFY OR DISCHARGE A PLANNING OBLIGATION 3OB/2022/0018/OB - 3PL/2021/0032/F Schedule 1 Clause 1.1 Provision of affordable Housing Scheme - WATTON: Land North of Norwich Road - Abel Homes Limited

No comment

12.6 TRE/2022/0088/TPO - Tree references relate to Hayden's Drawings. TPO numbers are additionally referenced within Tree Preservation Order 2008 No.98. Trees Within A002 - Tree Avenue No.16 - T138 - Horse Chestnut - Fell No.11 - Unknown- Horse Chestnut - Fell No.21 - T135 - Horse Chestnut - Fell No.23 - T132 - Horse Chestnut - Fell No.36 - T140 - Horse Chestnut - Remove Severely Affected Limbs No.38 - T137 - Horse Chestnut - Fell No.42 - T136 - Horse Chestnut - Fell No.45 - T131 - Horse Chestnut - Fell Trees Within A004 - Group of Silver Birch, Horse Chestnut & Scots Pine - Remove Major Deadwood Trees Within G001 - 15 x Horse Chestnuts Need Deadwood Removal T002 - Horse Chestnut - Requires Pruning To Clear Telegraph Pole & Removal of Deadwood Trees Within G002 - T003 - Poplar - Remove Major Deadwood T004 - Scots Pine - Remove Major Deadwood T005 - Norway Spruce - Remove Major Deadwood T006 - Horse Chestnuts Remove Major Deadwood T008 - Horse Chestnuts Remove Major Deadwood Trees Within G003 16 x Horse Chestnuts Need Deadwood Removal T120 - English Oak - Removal of Hanging Limbs & Deadwood Trees Within G004 Group of Various Trees that require the removal of Major Deadwood T011 - Plum - Fell T094 - Purple Plum – Fell - Former Officers Mess (Heritage Park) Portal Avenue IP25 6HR – WATTON

No comment

12.7 Concerns raised by WASFAG re. 62 Dereham Road.

WASFAG has raised concern regarding possible drainage issues. The Town Council will request that the points raised be considered when the conditions of the application are discharged.

13. Resolution passed to exclude the public and press to update and consider confidential legal matters

13.1 Church Walk

Verbal update given regarding legal matters relating to Church Walk. Solicitors advice to be followed.

A new sign stating “Vehicle access to Linden Court only” has been erected at the town end of Church Walk.

13.2 Hares Green

Noted that Paul Legrice, Managing Director of Abels Homes Ltd had attended prior to the start of the Town Council meeting to try to allay concerns members of the Town Council have regarding the handover of the open space land at Hares Green. This matter will be an agenda item again at the next Town Council meeting on April 26th.

13.3 Former Officers Mess Site

Paperwork from the solicitor acting for the Town Council relating to the transfer of the open space land at the Former Officers Mess site has been copied to Councillors.

13.4 Market

Copies of e-mails received relating to the position of stalls at the Wednesday Market were passed to Councillors. The Chairman and Clerk will look at suggestions made and report back to Full Council.

13.5 Charlotte Harvey Trust (CHT)

Investigation is taking place as to whether a community shop can be established at the CHT building. This matter will be a future agenda item for a Charlotte Harvey Trust Meeting.