

Minutes of the meeting of WATTON TOWN COUNCIL held on
Tuesday January 24th 2023 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber at
Wayland Hall, Middle Street, Watton IP25 6AG

Councillors Present: Sue Hebborn – Chairman, Peter Bishop – Vice-Chairman, Beryl Bunning, Jane Fountain, Keith Gilbert, Stan Hebborn, Don Saunders, Pat Warwick, James Wooler, Keith Prince, Tobi Amadasun

Officer present: Michelle Thompson Deputy Clerk

No members of the public present

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE RECEIVED AND ACCEPTED**

Tina Cruz and Kathryn Stallard

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST MADE**

Sue Hebborn declared an interest in item 7.1

3. **MINUTES**

3.1 Minutes of the meeting held on January 10th 2023 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

3.2 Written report presented updating on items from the meeting on 10.01.23

Following a meeting in November regarding Church Walk and the lack of correspondence since that time, It was proposed that the Chairman formally write to Ian Sharman - Case Officer Community and Environmental Services – Norfolk County Council to express the disappointment having not received an update since. It is the intention to submit a formal complaint.

4. **REPORTS**

4.1 Chairman's Report

On 12th January Stan and I attended the ceremony for the new vicar at St Marys, Dave Cossey.

18th January was The Watton Priority meeting in the council chambers. I am pleased to report that there are no planned items for focus within Watton.

It was therefore agreed that Shipdham has a greater need for regular police patrols.

19th January was a teams meeting of 5 market towns.

We were advised that the bid for levelling up money for Breckland had not been successful. As you will have read about in subsequent emails.

There is funding available for the coronation for charities £500 and £200 for councils that have to be match funded and used for flags and flagpoles. Michelle has passed the details to Sue Dent to work with the sports centre. There will also be large screens available. Any details regarding the weekend will be coming direct from the palace and not Bruno Peakes as previously thought. Also discussed were the development sites available around the market towns. It is available to view on the Breckland website.

It was suggested to query the £200 match funding grant, as Watton already has flags and flagpole in the high street could the grant criteria be varied, and be used towards the Coronation event with the Sports Centre.

There has also been a change in the time that a neighbourhood plan will be valid from 2 years to 5 years.

4.2 Vice-Chairman's Report

The Vice Chairman has attended:

- The Watton Police Priority meeting on 18th January.
- The Watton food hub on a regular basis, a soft opening took place on January 25th which had an outcome of 13 members signing up to the hub.

4.3 District Councillor's Report

Written report submitted by Claire Bowes:

Breckland Design Guide

Breckland Council are preparing a Design Guide for Breckland in order to inform future design of development within the district.

This work follows on from the Breckland Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment which was completed last year and is part of the process described in the National Model Design Code. The Design Guide will become a Supplementary Planning Document "The Breckland District Design Guide" as well as inform the update of the Local Plan. Input from Breckland communities is essential to the success of this piece of work and to that end a number of engagement opportunities are available. There is a survey monkey survey on the Breckland Website

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/6LJMH7J>

The Council is also running some Design Guide workshops the details of which are also on the website and you can register your interest in attending in your response to the survey. There are online workshops on 9th Feb and an in person workshop at Elizabeth House on 24th February. This is an important piece of work which will give communities more control over the future design of development in the Breckland area and this is your chance to help shape the policies.

Levelling Up Fund

You may have already heard that, disappointingly, the Breckland area was not supported in the Round 2 of the Levelling Up Fund.

We know demand for the fund was extremely high, but this is still very frustrating news. Not least because we were able to submit a very strong technical bid, which was the result of considerable work.

Had we been successful one of the main projects, as you will know was the construction of a Digital & Creative Media Centre in the High Street which would have provided office space for SMEs and entrepreneurs, training space, as well as significant retail and cultural provision.

As has hopefully been demonstrated through making the bid, Watton – and in particular investment on the High Street – are a key priority for Breckland Council and it should be born in mind that the Levelling Up Fund is by no means the only route to funding and the Council will continue to working with all partners to deliver this via other routes. I would like to thank all those who worked hard on this bid and also a particular thanks to Dr David Dent for his vision, determination and positivity.

Tina Kiddell verbally reported:

- She had attended the installation of the new Vicar Revd Dave Cossey on 12th January
- The release of £107,586.97 was authorised from the Recreational Contribution held by Breckland Council for Outdoor Sports Area in accordance with a Section 106 Agreement dated 22nd April 2008, in relation to Planning Permission 3PL/2007/0262/O, towards the creation of the skate park at the Watton Sports Centre, Dereham Road, Watton
- She will be attending upcoming meetings on the Town Delivery Plan and the Market Town Initiative – which she will update the council on.

- It was noted that a change of use from a health facility to a hotel has been submitted to Breckland Council for the Verve, some concerns have been raised about the plans not including a bar area.

4.4 County Councillor' Report

Written report submitted by Claire Bowes:

Children's Services

Inspectors have praised Children's Services at Norfolk County Council, judging the authority as "good" and highlighting "exemplary" and "exceptional" areas of practice.

The inspection looked at the support the council offers children and families from before birth through to adult life. The judgement relates to all services from early help and prevention, to more specialist support for families with the greatest needs.

4.5 Deputy Clerk's Report

Written report issued with the agenda pack:

- Portal Avenue - The solicitor last had correspondence on 14 December and that they were awaiting comments from the MOD on the variation to the s106 agreement. This is being chased up regularly. Once our solicitors have this, they can proceed with the land transfer.
- Hares Green - Engrossment transfer and plan has been received and signed.
- Meeting with Dereham Town Clerk re. Country Park - As Dereham Town Council's meetings are the same evenings as ours we would be looking at another evening or a date time meeting. Can we organise some meeting dates please?
- Closure of Verve Health Watton - The verve will be closed as of Wednesday 18th January 2023
- Co-option - We have received one Co-option application form. Will be an agenda item on Feb 14th meeting.
- Public Toilet refurbishment - The refurbishment is booked in for 27th March – 5th May which is a 6-week program.
- Town Crier - Mike shall be representing Watton at a competition in Alcester near Birmingham on Easter Saturday.
Independent Venue Week - It is a nationwide 7-day celebration of independent music and arts venues. On 1 Feb it, along with BBC Radio 6 Music will be in Norwich at the Norwich Arts Centre and Steve Lamacq will be broadcast live from this venue. Mike has been asked by Radio 6 Music to go along and record a proclamation and be filmed. The film will apparently appear on their Instagram and Twitter social media channels.

Verbal update given:

- I attended the Police SNAP meeting on Wednesday 18th January with Councillors Sue Hebborn, Peter Bishop and the Town Operative.
- I attended the 5 Market Towns Teams Meeting on Thursday 19th January with Sue Hebborn. The agenda consisted of a Future Breckland update, Kings Coronation Update and Local Plan.

Beryl Bunning updated on the Twinning Association:

- Watton has been twinned with Weeze for 36 years this year.
- The Association is holding their AGM and Afternoon Tea on March 26th at the Carbrooke Hub – All Councillors are welcome.

- The Association has planned a trip to visit Weeze on May 18th, 12 seats are available.
- Twinning Association is looking for new people to join, they hope more councillors will be involved and attend events and meetings.

5. WORKS IN PROGRESS LIST

The Works in Progress List was accepted as presented.

- Query on item 50 – Second Teen Shelter for Lovell Gardens. It was thought that quotes were being sought for a complete refurbishment of equipment at the play area as S106 monies are available – to investigate.
- Query on Item 72 – Warm Spaces. Grant received, what are the plans moving forward?

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public present.

Breckland Council Officers Caroline Bidwell and Emma Crampton both gave a presentation on the Watton Town Delivery Plan. Hard copy report submitted to Councillors in their Agenda Packs.

7. FINANCE

7.1 Payments for Approval for January 2023 accepted as presented with the following additions: Jo Howe – £33.30 and Van And A Man – £195.00

8. TOWN DELIVERY PLAN

Following a presentation from Breckland Council officers **It was resolved** to agree and adopt the Watton Town Delivery Plan.

9. WAYLAND PARTNERSHIP DONATION

It was resolved to not award the donation to the Wayland Partnership Development Trust, following the outcome of received up to date accounts and a recent asbestos survey on the building.

10. RURAL MARKET TOWN GROUP

It was resolved to sign up to the Rural Market Town Group and take advantage of the free membership up until June. In the meantime look to investigate the future costs and what benefits can be received between now and June.

11. PLANNING

Noted that Keith Gilbert, as a member of the Breckland Council Planning Committee, took no part in agreeing comments made.

11 .1 3PL/2023/0023/LU - Construction of outbuilding (garage) - Certificate of lawfulness - Proposed use - 4 St Marys Close IP25 6DS

Watton Town Council is aware that this application is for a certificate of lawfulness which is judged on matters of fact and not against planning policy. It is also noted that there is an outstanding enforcement issue on the site in relation to an alleged material change of use from that of a dwelling house to a mixed use dwelling house for the storage of motor vehicles. As there are no supporting documents available for public view in this case it is understood to be normal practice, the Town Council relies on the case officer to ensure that

legal advice is sought to establish that should a certificate be issued, it would not inadvertently provide immunity to any required enforcement action.

A few points give rise to concerns, the lack of knowledge as to whether the enforcement issues raised have been resolved, the description on the application refers to the construction of an outbuilding while the listing refers to a change of use.

It is also marked on the application form that no change of use is involved and states that the use of the site is that of a dwelling house (C3) There is no mention of a material change of use raised in the enforcement case.

It is unclear whether the application relates to section 191 of the TCPA 1990, the existing use is lawful or to section 192 of the TCPA 1990, that the proposed use or operation is lawful.

11.2 3PL/2023/0031/F - Change of Use from existing HMO to two storey house and self-contained flat above including installation of new external staircase. - WATTON: Clayland House 1 Norwich Road

No objection to physical changes, it is noted however that this site often raises concerns in respect of the storage of rubbish in the opening to the front of the site in full public view. The Town Council would ask that consideration be given to the imposition of a condition relating to the location and method of storage of waste for collection on the site.

14. Resolution passed to exclude the press and public to consider staffing matters

14.1 **It was resolved** to request the HR Committee to collate all existing policies relating to staffing into a Staff Policy and Procedure Handbook, to include any benefit packages that are appropriate. The Town Council further requests the HR Committee to discuss with The Finance Committee any financial implications.