

Chairmans Report for the Town Meeting 9th May 2023

The purpose of this report is to enlighten the residents of Watton as to what the Town Council has been doing for the past year.

From a historical point of view, it has been a very busy year.

Mike Wabe our Town Crier organised the Towns first Town Crier competition. This coincided with the members of the Twinning Association arriving from Germany, who were delighted to see so many varied and resplendent Town Criers.

We hosted the family picnic and fun day to celebrate the Late Queen Elizabeth 11's Platinum Jubilee at the Watton Youth and Community Centre.

The announcement of the Queen's passing.

Last weekend in conjunction with the Sports centre the King of Parties was held, to celebrate the Coronation of our new King Charles 111.

The Council submitted the Watton Neighbourhood plan (regulation 16) Consultation, to Breckland. We have recently agreed to adopt the Breckland District Council Town Delivery Plan.

The Emergency Plan for Watton has also been created.

We have made several purchases to enhance the Town. These include new litter bins and planters for the High Street. The old planters have been re-sited at the Bridle Way play area, and they should be replanted this month.

As many will have seen the Town had new Christmas lights for 2022. These have been brought and will be put up each year by an external company. This decision was taken for health and safety reasons with the old lights no longer fit for purpose.

I attended the opening of the Carbrooke Hub in May last year. This is a wonderful facility which all the local area can make use of.

June 22 saw the re-opening of the Dragonfly Centre after the covid restrictions. I do hope that you visit to see the exhibitions that they put on and all the remodelling that has gone on.

We have adopted the new play area at Hares Green, adding to Lovell Gardens, Bridle Road, and the sports centre play areas.

The Council is producing a Newsletter each May, September and January advising of local events and general information. Copies can be obtained from the Town Hall or the Internet.

The refurbishment of the town's toilets has begun.

The Town Hall has some renovation works in progress including roof works and a legionella report.

Watton now has a Food Hub based at the Watton Youth and Community Centre. This has involved a great deal of work from councillors Peter Bishop, Kathryn Stallard, Don Saunders, and Pat Warwick. A special mention for the extra hours that she has put into the newly appointed Supervisor, Jo Howe.

We have seen Charlotte leave the council and Graham join over the last year.

The two charities that I picked for my Mayoral year are the Young Carers of Watton and the Pact Animal Sanctuary. I am pleased to say that the fundraising for the year has raised £1200 which will be split between them.

In addition to my report on behalf of the town council, I would like to express my personal gratitude to three people who have come to my attention over the past few years by presenting them with The Mayor's Certificate of Appreciation.

My First goes to Liz Witcher who has voluntarily taken the helm for the council forming the Watton and Swaffham Flood Group. Her wealth of knowledge and reports have been

invaluable to us and the whole community. Liz is also involved in the new project of "Save the Rain."

Thank you, Liz.

My next award goes to Carol Cox. Carol has worked tirelessly with the 864 Squadron, on the committee for at least 10 years to my knowledge. She has been instrumental over many years in helping the youth of our community to reach their potential both in the Air Cadets and beyond.

Thank you, Carol.

Both Liz and Carol I am sure will be happy for me to ask on their behalf for volunteers to help with their causes.

My last award goes to a person who has served the community of Watton for the last 35 years. Dr Mahatme should have retired last year but continued to work within the Watton Medical Practice until April this year. Dr Mahatme has shown commitment and dedication to the well-being of our Town and for that I thank him. I wish you a long and happy retirement.

Thank you, Dr Mahatme.