

Minutes of the meeting of WATTON TOWN COUNCIL held on
Tuesday October 10th 2023 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber at
Wayland Hall, Middle Street, Watton IP25 6AG

Councillors Present: Peter Bishop (Chairman), Anthony Bridges, Tina Cruz, Stan Hebborn, Sue Hebborn, Tomos Hutchings, Tina Kiddell, Graham Martin, Don Saunders, Catherine Turley-Long, Steve Turley-Long, Gillian Turrant.

Officer present: Jane Scarrott Clerk

Also present: 1 member of the public

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE RECEIVED and accepted from**
Tobi Amadasun and Keith Gilbert

2. **NO DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS MADE**

3. **MINUTES**

3.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on September 26th 2023 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman of the meeting.

3.2 A written report was presented within the agenda pack updating on items from the meeting on 26.09.23

- The Town Council was invited to give a presentation as part of the application process to receive a grant from the Love Your Market Town Fund. The invitation was turned down as not enough time was given for a confirmed bid to be put together. It was requested that Norfolk County Council be made aware that the short time frame for submission of a proposal for this fund was not helpful.
- Noted that the Internal Auditor is scheduled to visit the Town Council on November 16th to undertake the Interim Audit.
- Due to problems caused by anti-social behaviour the benches at Memorial Garden have been removed as agreed.

A request has been made by the Local Police that the benches along Church Walk also need to be removed to deter anti-social behaviour in the area. Much debate took place about what action could be taken at Church Walk and the Clerk was tasked with arranging further discussion with relevant partners (Police, Norfolk County Council) to consider possible options for lighting, CCTV or employment of a security firm to undertake patrols in the area.

4. **REPORTS**

4.1 **Chairman's Report**

The Chairman attended the Thorp House Nursing Home Silver Sunday/Grandparents Day on October 1st and a Charlotte Harvey Trust Management Committee /Food Hub meeting on October 4th.

4.2 **Vice-Chairman's Report**

The Vice-Chairman had no report to give.

4.3 Clerk's Report

Written report issued with the agenda pack, with verbal update provided.

Report included:

- Information on the Slow Ways national walking network.
- Details of the Interim Internal Audit Review scheduled for November 2023.
- Notice that Orbit Homes is to attend the Town Council meeting on 14.11.23 to update on the proposed Mallard development.
- Notice that a site meeting is to take place 16.10.23 re. new play equipment for Lovell Gardens Play Area. Clerk and Cllr Bridges to attend.
- Notice that a surveyor will visit the public toilets to assess damage following fire on 03.10.23.
- Reminder of the current consultation of update of the Breckland Local Plan.

Memorandum of Understanding with Watton Sports Association

A slight amendment was suggested and accepted for the Memorandum of Understanding re. the Sports Centre Play equipment. The second sentence of the second paragraph will now include the highlighted wording "The Town Council will facilitate necessary repair or replacement of play equipment **currently at the play area**....."

4.4 Reports from Lead Councillors:

A written report from the Lead Councillor for Youth had been issued in the agenda pack for the meeting. Cllr Bridges was thanked for the report and he will continue to research the proposed project to improve facilities at Bridle Road Play Area.

It was resolved to approve the quote of £500 to remove and store the multi goals currently sited at Lovell Garden Play Area (proposal is to re-locate them at Bridle Road), prior to the refurbishment of the equipment at Lovell Gardens Play Area.

It was resolved to replace the broken swing seats at the Sports Centre Play Area and undertake the recommended maintenance work as outlined on the annual RoSPA inspection report.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A member of the public raised concern about the mowing down of oak saplings at the Heritage Park Community Land and asked whether those remaining could be re-located or adopted by members of the public.

The Town Council now owns the majority of the open space land at Heritage Park and the intention is to retain the area as an open space informal park land.

It was suggested an open day should be arranged when there would be an opportunity for members of the public to collect saplings. Cllr Kiddell offered to act as Lead Councillor to help implement a launch day for the Heritage Park land.

(Noted that item 7. on the agenda was covered within discussion).

6. FINANCE

6.1 The Draft Minutes from the Finance Committee meeting held on 28.09.23 were received.

6.2 **It was resolved** to accept the recommendation from the Finance Committee: To liaise with the Watton Air Cadets in the first instance to ascertain the level of assistance they can offer for events, but to agree a budget increase of up to £10,000 to supply adequate manpower and security to cover need for the 2023 Fireworks Evening and Festive Market.

Noted that the Finance Committee is to hold a meeting to focus on the management of events in 2024 and that the Wednesday Market is seen within the Four Year Forecast as a priority for support.

The Chairman of HR Committee requested that, in reference to item 5 of the Finance Committee minutes, staffing matters be discussed after a resolution to exclude the public at the end of the meeting.

7. **HERITAGE PARK**

See Public Participation.

8. **MEMBERSHIP OF RURAL MARKET TOWN GROUP**

It was resolved not to subscribe to either the Rural Market Town Group or the National Association of British Market Authorities at this time.

9. **EMERGENCY PLANNING**

No Councillors volunteered to act as Emergency Planning Co-ordinators.

10. **PLANNING**

10.1 3DC/2023/0258/DOC - Discharge of Condition No 10 on 3PL/2017/1487/O - Land to the west of Brandon Road

No comments made as this application is in Swaffham not Watton.

10.2 3PL/2023/0939/HOU - Proposed single storey extension to the rear of the property, with replacement porch and new roof to the front and replacement pitched roof garage to the side - 7 Three Post Road IP25 6LE WATTON

No Comments

11. **A resolution was passed to exclude the public and press to consider staffing matters:**

It was reported that a member of staff is off work and return is not envisaged for some time. It was therefore agreed in principle to support spending from within the budget to facilitate a temporary solution to the current staffing need. The HR Committee is to meet 11.10.23 to consider options.