

Minutes of the meeting of WATTON TOWN COUNCIL held on
Tuesday January 9th 2024 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber at
Wayland Hall, Middle Street, Watton IP25 6AG

Councillors Present: Peter Bishop (Chairman), Tobi Amadasun, Anthony Bridges, Tina Cruz, Keith Gilbert, Stan Hebborn, Sue Hebborn, Tomos Hutchings, Tina Kiddell, Graham Martin, Don Saunders, Gillian Tarrant.

Officer present: Jane Scarrott Clerk

Liz Whitcher and David Dent present to speak on item 4.4

Prior to the start of the Town Council Meeting three Trustees of Watton Sports Association were present to give an update on the Sports Association.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE RECEIVED and accepted from**
Catherine Turley-Long, Steve Turley-Long

2. **NO DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS MADE**

3. **MINUTES**

3.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on December 12th 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 12.12.23:

- Request submitted to Breckland Council re. Community Governance Review for possible Watton boundary change.
- Town Council Lanyards ordered.
- High Street bus shelter site visit 11.01.24 @ 11am.
- High Street clock mechanism is being removed for repair.
- No further action taken re. Community Orchard Grant as the application closing date is Friday 5th January. The Town Council would struggle at the present time to meet the criteria for the grant and no suitable location can be put forward.
- A site visit is planned for Jan. 17th in preparation for the report on Walsingham Gates to be made.
- Deep clean of the fire damage at the Public Toilets booked for 10.01.24. Refurb. can then be arranged.

4. **REPORTS**

4.1 Chairman's Report

The Chairman attended the Finance Committee Meeting on 14.12.23.

It was noted that the Chairman is willing to visit residents who are celebrating their 100th birthday and if possible a list of names will be compiled.

4.2 Vice-Chairman's Report

The Vice-Chairman has attended the Finance Committee Meeting on 14.12.23.

4.3 Clerk's Report

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

Report included:

- Update on Breckland's Local Plan
- Notification that due to issues with keys not working, new locks will be ordered for the outer doors at Wayland Hall at an approx. cost of £220.

4.4 Watton Neighbourhood Plan

David Dent, as Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and Liz Whitcher as a member of the group spoke of the imminent final stages of the NP leading up to the referendum on January 18th. A final public meeting is planned for January 13th to help inform and remind residents of the Plan.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public present.

6. FINANCE

6.1 The Draft Minutes from the Finance Committee meeting held on 14.12.23 were received.

6.2 Recommendations from the Finance Committee were considered:

- I. **It was resolved** to accept the draft budget and precept request for 2024/25 as presented. The precept request will be for £427625.
- II. The Investment Strategy will be ratified at the Town Council meeting on Jan. 23rd.

7. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

7.1 Hares Green hedging

It was resolved to accept quote 1 as presented in the agenda pack to plant hedging at Hares Green which will eventually replace the knee high railings at the front of the area of green space which backs onto Town Green Road..

8. TRUSTEE FOR STEVENS ALMHOUSES

No volunteer came forward to be a Trustee for the Stevens Almshouses.

9. BIODIVERSITY POLICY

It was resolved to accept the model Biodiversity Policy as presented.

10. COUNCILLOR TRAINING

It was resolved to accept the quote presented for whole Council training. Dates and times to suit the majority will be investigated before any booking is made.

11. CHASTON PLACE

It was noted that the planned metal railings are due to be installed around the raised plinth at Chaston Place. It has been agreed a tiered planter will be located on the plinth for the summer season.

A suggestion was made that entertainers could position themselves on the plinth when it is clear. This is something the Events & Marketing Officer could investigate when in post.

12. **PLANNING**

12.1 3PL/2023/1183/F - Conversion of existing two storey dwelling into 4no. self contained flats, including first floor side extension and new vehicular access and parking - 8 Swaffham Road IP25 6LA

No objections

12.2 3PL/2023/1226/F - Proposed Conversion of Existing Outbuilding to Dwelling - WATTON: Barclay End Farm Town Green Road

No objections

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

13.1 Staffing

It was resolved that the litter picking presently being undertaken by contractors to cover staff absence will cease at the end of January 2024.

The additional hours currently being worked by the Admin. Support Clerk will be reviewed again at the end of the month.

13.2 Lovell Gardens

Works to refurbish the Lovell Gardens Play Area are progressing and it is envisaged the current contractor will be finished on site within a couple of weeks. There is additional work planned to be undertaken by other contractors. The Chairman agreed to discuss the cost of storage of equipment with the Councils preferred contractor.

13.3 Thetford Road Allotments

It was resolved to accept the costs as estimated (£1750 plus VAT) for the solicitor acting on behalf of the current owner of the Thetford Road Allotment site and for the Council to engage Birketts to act on behalf of the Town Council in the planned transfer of ownership of the land to Watton Town Council.

13.4 Market stall request

It was resolved to accept any new market trader on the Wednesday Market for an initial trial period.