

Minutes of the meeting of WATTON TOWN COUNCIL held on
Tuesday November 14th 2023 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, Stan Hebborn, Sue Hebborn, Tomos Hutchings, Tina Kiddell, Graham Martin, Don Saunders, Katherine Stallard, Catherine Turley-Long, Steve Turley-Long, Gillian Tarrant.

Officer present: Jane Scarrott Clerk

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE RECEIVED and accepted from**
Tina Cruz and Keith Gilbert

2. **NO DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS MADE**

3. **MINUTES**

3.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on October 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 24.10.23

- Cllr Bridges has provided an updated report re. Lovell Gardens Play Area (agenda item 4.4).
- Negotiations are still underway regarding the insurance settlement following the fire at the public toilets - see Clerk's Report.
- Stakeholders are aware of the anti-social behaviour at Church Walk and possible mitigation is being considered.

4. **REPORTS**

4.1 Chairman's Report

The Chairman has attended:

- 25.10.23 Police Priority Setting Meeting
- 16.10.23 Town Council Finance Committee Meeting
- 28.10.23 Fireworks Evening
- 08.11.23 East Wretham Remembrance Service
- 11.11.23 Watton two minutes silence at Chaston Place and War Graves Remembrance Service
- 12.11.23 Watton Remembrance Parade

4.2 Vice-Chairman's Report

The Vice-Chairman has attended:

- 17.10.23 High Sheriff's Justice Service
- 28.10.23 Fireworks Evening

4.3 Clerk's Report

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

Report included:

1st January 2024 Biodiversity Deadline for Councils

Public authorities who operate in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England. This is the strengthened 'biodiversity duty' that the Environment Act 2021 introduces.

The Council must complete a first consideration of what action to take for biodiversity by **1 January 2024**. Objectives and policies must be agreed as soon as possible after this date.

Draft Checklist and Policy will be with available very soon from the Norfolk Association of Local Councils.

Christmas Tree and Lights

Work to the plinth at Chaston Place has taken place so the new artificial Christmas tree can be sited. Permanent fencing is to be installed around the plinth. If this is not ready in time for the Christmas tree a temporary barrier will be put in place.

The Christmas lights are to be erected w/b 20th November.

Public Toilets

The insurers have offered a very low settlement of £2754.68 for repairs to be undertaken to the public toilets following the fire last month.

The alternative is that the insurers will arrange for the work to be done but there is concern regarding the quality of the work planned bearing in mind the pay out offered.

Two quotes have now been obtained to send to the insurers. One is from the company that undertook the refurbishment in March.

The ladies and disabled toilets are open but unfortunately it looks like it may be a while before the insurance is settled and works can begin to get the gents re-opened.

Cranswick Liaison Meeting 24th November 4pm

A community liaison meeting is scheduled to be held at the Cranswick site on November 24th. The Town Council has been invited to send 2 representatives. Tina Kiddell and Keith Gilbert are invited as Breckland District Councillors and can represent the Town Council.

Feedback Reports from the Fireworks Evening and Remembrance Parade will be sent to Councillors.

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.

Plans for the refurbishment of Lovell Gardens Play Area were outlined in the Report:

- The total spend for refurbishment of Lovell Gardens Play Area, to include a footpath across the site and repair of the safety surface around the current roundabout, will cost an estimated £96,276. £86,923.07 has been requested

from s106 money held by Breckland District Council (BDC), (£60,290 s106 money held by BDC is allocated to be spent on the Lovell Gardens Play Area and thus is guaranteed for release).

It was resolved that if the full amount of s106 funding requested is released the Town Council will support this project with use of an estimated £10647 of the £20,000 already pledged by Watton Town Council for playground works.

The money will be used to:

- a) remove the current goals and re-install at Bridle Road Play Area
 - b) re-locate the pump track at Bridle Road Play Area
 - c) include resin designs in the footpath to be installed at Lovell Gardens Play Area
 - d) install a graffiti wall at Lovell Gardens Play Area
 - e) provide a key box for safe storage of a harness for the disabled swing which is to be installed at Lovell Gardens Play Area.
- **It was resolved** that should the anticipated additional s106 funding of £26,633 not be forthcoming the Town Council would underwrite the additional works to install the path at Lovell Gardens Play Area.

Festive Market 2023

Lead Councillors for the Festive Market reported that arrangements for the Town Council tombola stall are progressing well but more prizes are needed! Councillors were asked to volunteer to man the stall.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public present.

6. FINANCE

6.1 The Draft Minutes from the Finance Committee meeting held on 26.10.23 were received.

6.2 Recommendations from the Finance Committee were considered:

- I. **It was resolved** to purchase a cascading plant container at a cost of £787.50 + vat and delivery, to be sited on the plinth at Chaston Place during the summer months
- II. **It was resolved** to accept the quote received for £600 plus expenses and VAT in order to: review the existing Wayland Hall quinquennial report (includes a site visit), produce a programme of repairs, review with the town council over email/telephone and then finalise the report.
- III. **It was resolved** to accept removal of the Financial Regulations as presented by the Clerk.
- IV. **It was resolved** to increase the expenditure limit from £500 to £1000 on the Town Council Lloyds Commercial Credit Card.
- V. **It was resolved** that the High Street Bike Event should become a regular feature each August Bank Holiday weekend.
- VI. **It was resolved** that the Council would request the use of s106 monies to fund the current re-furbishment of Lovell Gardens Play Area. (Request submitted for £86924.03).

- VII. **It was resolved** that a policy should be agreed for the Town Council to consider purchase of land in the parish should it become available.
- VIII. **It was resolved** to increase annual allotment fee for 2024 to £25
- IX. **It was resolved** to raise cemetery fees by 10% from April 1st 2024
- X. **It was resolved** to reduce fees for the weekly market by half for an initial 6 months starting from December 1st 2023:
- Small pitch to be free of charge
 - Medium pitch to be £10
 - Large pitch to be £15

6.3 **It was resolved** To approve payment of an outstanding missed invoice for cleaning of 2 bus shelters and external clean of windows at Wayland Hall at the cost of £192.00

6.4 **It was resolved** to donate £100 to support prizes for Wayland Academy Graduation Evening.

It was noted that a quote has been received from the grounds maintenance contractor that installation of permanent metal railings around the plinth at Chaston Place will cost £2000. This cost will include erecting temporary safety fencing around the Christmas tree for 2023. Accepted that works will be necessary.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

It was resolved to accept the Risk Management Plan as presented.

8. MUSEUM4WATTON

A letter has been received from the Museum4Watton regarding an extension of the current lease for use of part of Wayland Hall by the Museum.

Legal advice will be sought regarding the length of any future lease.

9. TREE RISK ASSESSMENT

Clarification will be sought regarding wording within one of the tree risk assessment quotes received before a decision is made regarding appointing a contractor. This will be an agenda item again for the next meeting of the Full Council.

10. NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL (NCC) PARISH PARTNERSHIP SCHEME

It was resolved to

- submit a bid to the Parish Partnership Scheme to fund a trod along the Norwich Road from east of the Lidl site from the entrance to Breckland Business Park to the bus stop. Cost estimated at £7416.35 of which the Town Council would contribute 50% (3708.18).
- submit a bid to the Parish Partnership Scheme to fund wig-wag signage outside Wayland Senior Academy at an estimated cost of £3500 of which the Town Council would contribute 50%.

11. DIGITAL SIGNAGE

Quotes will be obtained of costs to install digital signage at the four entrance points into Watton.

12. **PLANNING**

Noted that planning application 3PL/2023/0982/LU removal of existing conservatory and replacement with extension at 31 Griston Road, Watton has been approved

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

13.1 A resolution was passed to implement the agreed Local Government Services pay agreement from April 2023.