

Minutes of the meeting of Watton Town Council held on

Tuesday August 13th 2024 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber at Wayland Hall

Councillors Present: Don Saunders - Chairman, Tobi Amadasun, Peter Bishop, Tony Bridges, Keith Gilbert, Stan Hebborn, Sue Hebborn, Tomos Hutchings, Tina Kiddell, Graham Martin, Kathryn Stallard, Catherine Turley-Long and Steve Turley-Long,.

Officer present: Jane Scarrott Clerk

5 members of the public also present.

Noted that a Charlotte Harvey Trust meeting was held following the Town Council meeting.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE RECEIVED AND ACCEPTED from
Tina Cruz and Gillian Tarrant.

2. NO DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST MADE

3. MINUTES

3.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on July 23rd 2024 were accepted as a true record.

3.2 Updates from the meeting held on July 23rd 2024 if not agenda items(as listed in the agenda pack):

- George Freeman MP has said he would be willing to attend a meeting in respect of the Breckland Local Plan – land north and east of Shrublands in Carbrooke, but it is likely any meeting to consider planned car parking charges will come first.
- Still awaiting response to initial enquiry re. possible s106 funding for works at Bridle Road Play Area.
- Awaiting Anglian Water to visit to look at whether their volunteers can clean and re-paint the weigh-bridge at Memorial Garden.
- Smiths of Derby visited the High Street clock again on 08.08.24 as it had stopped working. Smiths are to provide a report re. suggested replacement of the clock weights which are not the original.
- 7 new market gazebos have been purchased and are being used.
- The TC preferred contractor has been commissioned to cut the grass at Heritage Park. This should be undertaken by 16.08.24

4. REPORTS

4.1 Chairman's Report

The Chairman attended the opening of a defibrillator at Richmond Park Golf Course on 27.07.24.

4.2 Vice-Chairman's Report - Vice-Chairman not present.

4.3 Clerks Report

Written report presented in Councillors Agenda Pack with verbal update given.

Planning -e-mail forwarded to Councillors 05.08.24

SENT ON BEHALF OF COUNCILLOR SAM CHAPMAN-ALLEN, LEADER OF BRECKLAND COUNCIL:

Dear Parish Councillors and Clerks,

I am just writing to make sure you are aware of some important issues relating to National Planning Policy.

Last week the Government announced a rapid consultation on some significant new changes to the planning system, the details of which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system>

These are potentially very significant for Breckland, and include proposals to:

- Introduce a new mandatory housing figure based on new methodology, which would mean a 39% uplift in Breckland's housing requirement, to 917 per annum (256 more houses per annum)
- Make the new target mandatory imminently. Potentially by the end of the year. This could have a significant impact on our five-year housing land supply.
- Increase requirements on neighbouring authorities to provide even more additional housing (Kings Lynn & West Norfolk 88% more, and North Norfolk 69% more houses)
- Increase the need for strategic, cross boundary co-operation, including potentially meeting any unmet housing need for neighbouring districts.
- Remove or weaken issues like the availability of agricultural land used for food production from our consideration when determining applications.

We are still reviewing and digesting the implications, understanding what they mean for our current and under-development Local Plan, and agreeing how we can respond as a District and Local Planning Authority.

Whilst we support the need for some new housing in Breckland and were positive about the shape our emerging Local Plan was taking, clearly these requirements - if enacted - are of a profoundly different order of magnitude.

I will keep you appraised as we are able to better analyse and understand the situation, but I wanted you to have this information now – and encourage you to engage with the consultation in your own rights.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Sam Chapman-Allen

Leader of Breckland Council

Request made that the above be an agenda item for the Town Council meeting on 27.08.24.

Public Toilets

Concerns have been raised with the cleaning contractors re. the cleanliness of the floors of the public toilets and how long the cleaners are on site.

Limescale has been removed from the taps and the Office has been re-assured that a thorough clean of the floors will be undertaken at no additional charge.

The cleaning company monitors how long cleaners are on site and at some point the Town Council will be offered a new contract with precise terms and conditions.

The cleaning company has asked if the recent removal of the built up limescale on the taps can be used as a case study on their website. The Council was against this as it has no policy which covers what could be seen as endorsement of a contractor.

Coronation Living Heritage Fund - Community Orchards

Breckland Council is giving parish and town councils a further opportunity for all to apply for grant funding (from £100 to £5,000) to fund a Community Orchard.

It was resolved to make an application for funding to plant fruit trees at Jubilee Garden.

Bike Event

The Bike Event is taking place on the w/end of 24th/25th August with Bikes in the Street on the Sunday. Event Management Plan and Safety Advisory Group forms have been submitted to Breckland Council with a query being raised re. street trading licences for food vendors. It is possible the charity burger stall may need to obtain a 48hr street trading licence. This is being checked.

After some discussion as to if the Town Council could help charity traders who would possibly need a licence **it was resolved** that the Town Council would not pay for any street trading licences this year.

Moving forward a policy may be needed relating to street trading licences and if the Town Council can support traders who may need a temporary licence.

Norfolk Market Towns Conference

Norfolk County Council is holding a Market Towns Conference on 01.10.24.

Places are limited and only one representative from the Town Council is invited.

Tomos Hutchings was nominated to attend.

Lovell Gardens Play Area

Noted that the planned second chalk wall is still to be installed at Lovell Gardens Play Area.

Vehicle Activated Signs

The cost of a portable SAM 2 sign is estimated at £3175. It is suggested a bid is made to the Norfolk County Council Parish Partnership Fund to pay 50% of the cost, but prior to an application being submitted locations for new signs would need to be agreed with the Highway Engineer.

Engagement Events

Events to be held by the Leader and Chief Executive of Breckland Council:

Monday 9 September 2024 – 1800-2000 - Shropham Village Hall, Rocklands Rd, Shropham, Attleborough, NR17 1DU

Tuesday 10 September 2024, 1700-1900 – Venue tbc, Thetford

Monday 16 September 2024 – 1800-2000 - Narborough Community Centre, Chalk Lane, Narborough, King's Lynn, PE32 1SR

Tuesday 17 September 2024 – 1800-2000 - Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke, Dereham, NR19 1EE

The format of the evening will allow an opportunity to visit Breckland Council pop-up stands to ask questions and gather further information such as:

1. **Flytipping**: Efforts and measures in place to tackle this issue.
2. **Breckland Rural Support Officer (Ranger)**: Their role and the support they provide.
3. **Inspiring Communities**: Highlights of our work in community engagement and support.
4. **Housing**: Updates and information on housing projects and policies.
5. **Community Safety**: Initiatives to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our residents.

A presentation will be given by the Leader, Councillor Sam Chapman-Allen, and Chief Executive, Maxine O'Mahony, followed by a Q&A Session.

4.4 Reports from Lead Councillors

Church Walk

A Church Walk Working Group meeting was held on 12.08.24.

- The Police have assured that they will patrol Church Walk.
- It will be checked who empties the bins along Church Walk and when. The Clerk has a meeting scheduled with SERCO on 09.09.24.
- Town Council Christmas lights will be checked to see if they can be used in Church Walk.
- Daffodil bulbs will be planted in the Autumn - position to be mapped.
- Breckland Officers are to be asked for an update re. the security camera for the east end of Church Walk.
- Norfolk County Council will be asked for an update regarding encroachment of the verge at the west end of Church Walk.
- Once the additional street lighting has been installed this will be publicised in the Wayland Times.

Air Cadets

Councillor Tony Bridges has attended a meeting of the Air Cadets and will submit a report for the next Town Council meeting.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

One of the organisers of 'Love Watton' gave the Councillors an overview of the non-profit community project that promotes local businesses through gifts and acts of kindness towards people who live in Watton.

Love Watton was invited to attend the next fun day to be held at the Youth & Community Centre and the Community Day planned for August 31st.

6. CAR PARKING CHARGES

It was resolved to support the concept of a public meeting to be held near the time of the proposed Breckland Council consultation regarding the introduction of car parking charges to the market towns. The Chairman of the Council will chair the meeting and the Town Council will work with the other market towns in the district to consider the viability of a judicial review.

7. DONATION REQUEST FROM WAYLAND PARTNERSHIP

Prior to the start of the Town Council meeting David Dent (Vice- Chairman of Wayland Chamber) and Bronwen Tyler (Lead Trustee Wayland Partnership) had given a presentation on progress of the re-development of Wayland House as a new Business, Community and Leisure Centre based around digital creative media.

It was resolved to grant a donation of £5000 to the Wayland Partnership as requested to assist with ongoing maintenance costs of Wayland House. For audit purposes the Partnership will be asked to produce regular updates and the donation will be paid against receipts received.

8. HR COMMITTEE

It was agreed the update from the HR Committee would be given after a resolution to exclude the public.

9. LOVE YOUR MARKET TOWN INITIATIVE

It was resolved to ask the Events Officer and Community Projects Officer to explore submitting a bid to the Love Your Market Initiative to provide for children at Easter 2025.

10. HIGH STREET FOOTFALL COUNTERS

The Town Council has been asked to support Breckland Council in an initiative to install two footfall cameras in Watton High Street. The proposal is that Breckland Council would cover the installation costs of the footfall counters and Watton Town Council would fund ongoing costs (3 year contract estimated at £630 p.a.).

It was resolved to request more detail from Breckland Council. Questions were raised around GDPR compliance and Cllr Stan Hebborn offered his assistance with this. Once any response is received from Breckland to questions raised it will be shared with Councillors together with a briefing document from Cllr Hebborn.

The proposal will be an agenda item again for the Full Council Meeting on 27.08.24.

11. THETFORD ROAD ALLOTMENTS

11.1 **It was resolved** to accept the transfer of the Thetford Road Allotment Land and the solicitors Client Care Letter indicating additional costs of an estimated £1210 to complete the transfer.

11.2 **It was resolved** to join the National Allotment Society at a cost of £67.

11.3 In order to help clear rubbish, **it was resolved** to place a temporary skip at the Thetford Road Allotment Site at an estimated cost of £248

12. ANNUAL PLAY AREA INSPECTIONS

The Annual Play Area Inspection Reports for Watton Sports Centre Play Area, Bridle Road Play Area and Lovell Gardens Play Area were received.

It was resolved to undertake the recommended works to the Cantilver Swing at Lovell Gardens as quoted before the 2025 inspection.

13. SCREW FIX ACCOUNT

It was resolved to establish a Screw Fix account with a monthly limit of £500.

14. SHIRE HORSE WAY FENCING

It was resolved not to replace the knee high fencing at Shire Horse Way. Fencing will be removed as it fails.

15. WAYLAND HALL STRUCTURAL REPORT

The Wayland Hall Structural Report was received. Further suggested inspection of the chimney will be considered by the Finance Committee with a recommendation to be brought back to the Full Council meeting on 27.08.24.

16. MAYORS CHAIN

It was resolved to accept the suggested wording to be machine engraved onto the back of the pendant of the new Mayors Chain: 'Commissioned in 2024 to acknowledge the 50th Anniversary of Watton Town Council' (additional quoted cost of £72.08).

17. PLANNING

17.1 3PL/2024/0319/VAR - Variation of Condition 10 & discharge of condition 13 on 3PL/2022/1375/F - Amendments to include additional Air handling unit following detailed design of HVAC system and installation of front canopy to provide protection to disabled visitors . Minor amendments to garage doors and discharge of condition 13 for surface water disposal - Land Off The Thetford Road AMENDMENT:
Amended surface and foul drainage plan and additional design information
No comment

17.2 3DC/2024/0144/DOC Discharge of Conditions 10,11 & 12 on 3PL/2023/1206/F
No comment

18. RESOLUTION PASSED TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC AND PRESS to consider confidential staffing matters

18.1 Appointment of an Independent Officer to investigate grievances: deferred

Item 8. Appointment of a 'reserve' member for the HR Committee:
Sue Hebborn volunteered to be the 'reserve' member of the HR Committee.