

Minutes of the meeting of Watton Town Council held on

Tuesday October 8th 2024 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber at Wayland Hall

Councillors Present: Don Saunders - Chairman, Tina Cruz, Peter Bishop, Keith Gilbert, Stan Hebborn, Sue Hebborn, Tomos Hutchings, Graham Martin, Kathryn Stallard, Gillian Tarrant.

Officer present: Jane Scarrott Clerk

2 members of the public also present.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE RECEIVED AND ACCEPTED from

Tony Bridges, Tina Cruz, Tina Kiddell.

Claire Bowes also sent apologies.

2. NO DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST MADE

3. MINUTES

3.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on September 24th 2024 were accepted as a true record.

3.2 Updates from the meeting held on September 24th 2024 if not agenda items (as listed in the agenda pack):

District Councillor Claire Bowes was instrumental in Breckland Licensing revisiting its decision regarding the necessity for traders to hold street trading licences for the Fireworks Event 2024 and an email has been received confirming that an exemption will be given for the traders not to need street trading licences for the Fireworks Event. Thanks expressed to Claire Bowes for her assistance.

Council confirmed it is willing to proceed with the Fireworks remaining a free event for 2024. The decision to charge 1p per person entry being rescinded as any charge is now unnecessary.

- Breckland Council has been made aware of the safety concerns raised by residents of Wayland Fields. Planners have been asked “to reach out to the developers and ask if they can provide the ‘lifesaving rings’ as the residents have requested and to visit the site and see if they have any safety concerns.”
- George Freeman MP attended a meeting held in the Council Chamber on 27.09.24 updating on the introduction of car parking charges within Breckland. As agreed, Watton Town Council will compile a report to be submitted to Breckland Council requesting to take over the Breckland car parks in the town. It is suggested that as a first step the Mayor and Clerk should organise a meeting with Leader of the Council, Sam Chapman-Allen.
- The Boundary Commission has been contacted re. the proposed Breckland ward boundary changes.
- Volunteers are scheduled to undertake clearance work to the boundaries of Bridle Road Play Area 10.10.24 and w/c 21st October.

4. REPORTS

4.1 Chairman's Report

The Chairman has attended:

Finance Committee Meeting 26th September

Meeting to consider Car Parking Charges 27th September

Lunch at Thorpe House Care Home 6th October

4.2 Vice-Chairman's Report

Vice-Chairman has attended:

Meeting to consider Car Parking Charges 27th September. The Vice-Chair stated that she was disappointed to learn at the meeting that Breckland Council had already made the decision to introduce car parking charges to its car parks and that the imminent consultation is about the format of how charging will be implemented. The Town Council has said it would be receptive to taking over the management of the car parks in the town and this is being investigated and discussed.

HR Committee meeting 03.10.24

4.3 Clerks Report

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

Thetford Road Allotments

Further advice and information has been received from the solicitor acting for the Town Council in the possible transfer of ownership of the Thetford Road Allotment Site.

It was agreed that the solicitors will be asked to clarify a point made regarding the termination of a lease for allotment land and the Finance Committee was tasked with looking at what other specific questions should be asked as the Council wishes to ensure what is being spent on legal advice is producing helpful information,

Audit

The Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) for Watton Town Council for the year ending 31.03.24 has been completed. It was noted that assertion 4 of section 1 of the AGAR form was incorrectly completed in that it should have been confirmed that the notice of public rights in 2022/23 was published slightly after the public rights period had commenced.

No other matters were raised.

Banking Hub

A temporary Banking Hub has been available at Wayland House since December 2023 but a permanent home for the hub has now opened in Watton High Street. Official opening of the Hub is to be undertaken by the Mayor on 11.10.24.

Emergency Planning – Flooding

E-mail sent to Cllrs 02.10.24 giving information regarding flooding and emergency contact numbers.

Norfolk County Council Highways: 0344 800 8020

Report a power cut: dial 105

Report a gas leak: 0800 111 999

Report a water leak: 0800 771 881

Breckland Website: Flooding

Norfolk PCC's Police and Crime Plan Consultation

Email forwarded to Councillors on 02.10.24 re. launch of Norfolk's PCC Sarah Taylor Police and Crime Plan consultation.

You can take part in the consultation by visiting the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner's website: <https://www.norfolk-pcc.gov.uk/police-and-crime-plan/police-and-crime-plan-202529-consultation/> from 9am on Monday 2 September.

Planning

As requested Breckland Planners have supplied guidance regarding planning application 3PL/2024/0733/A for signage within the High Street.

The application site is situated within the Watton Conservation Area.

There are no explicit policies for adverts within a Conservation Area, but, there are applicable policies which will be used in the assessment of this application.

The Planning Officer has sent relevant information which was shared within the agenda pack for the meeting.

4.4 Reports from Lead Councillors

- Noted that Cllr Martin has planted 1150 daffodil bulbs along Church Walk.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Residents of 30 Swaffham Road were present to inform the Council of their planning application.

6. FOOTFALL CAMERAS

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.).

An Officer from Breckland Council gave a brief presentation outlining the proposals and the benefits which could arise from being able to access data from footfall counters.

It had previously been resolved on 10.09.24 not to financially support this initiative due to the cost involved but with the new information now presented the Council was in agreement to revisit the decision at the next meeting of the Full Council.

7. GRANT APPLICATION

A grant of £300 was agreed as requested by the 2nd Watton Brownies.

8. WEDNESDAY MARKET CHARGES

It was resolved that the current charges for the Wednesday Market would remain until 31.03.24.

9. FINANCE

- 9.1 The draft minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 26.09.24 were received.
- 9.2 **It was resolved** that the maintenance agreement currently in place with Watton Sports Association should remain the same.

10. MUSEUM 4 WATTON WORKING GROUP

The notes for the Museum 4 Watton Working Group Meeting held on 04.10.24 were received.

Recommendations from the Museum 4 Watton Working Group were accepted:

- Breckland Council Historic Buildings Officer will be approached for advice on replacing the windows at Wayland Hall.
- The Town Council will contact identified companies who could carry out an audit of the heating system at Wayland Hall.

11. MIDDLE STREET

The draft layout for the 'Heritage Quarter' was received and it was noted that a closed informal consultation on the proposals for Middle Street is planned for 25.11.24.

12. PLANNING

12.1 3PL/2024/0719/F - Erection of 1no. self-build residential dwelling and the use of an existing cabin as ancillary annexe accommodation - Land to rear of 30 Swaffham Road IP25 6LA WATTON

No objections

12.2 TRE/2024/0197/TPO - TPO 2005/52 T1 White Beam Take down and grind out. Tree has not come into leaf apart from a few lower branches. The tree is dying so it becomes unsafe it should come down. T2 Sycamore prune back side branches from footpath and road by 2 meters. The branches are being to encroach the footpath and road. - Street Record Eastern Road IP25 6PA WATTON

No objections

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

13.1 Report received from the HR Committee Meeting held on 03.10.24.