

Minutes of the meeting of Watton Town Council held on

Tuesday December 10th 2024 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber at Wayland Hall

Councillors Present: Don Saunders - Chairman, Tony Bridges, Tomos Hutchings, Graham Martin, Kathryn Stallard, Gillian Tarrant.

Officer present: Jane Scarrott Clerk

No members of the public present.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE RECEIVED AND ACCEPTED from**  
Peter Bishop, Tina Cruz, Keith Gilbert, Stan Hebborn, Sue Hebborn, Tina Kiddell.

**2. NO DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST MADE**

**3. MINUTES**

**3.1** The Minutes of the meeting held on November 26th 2024 were accepted as a true record.

**3.2** Updates from the meeting held on November 26th if not agenda items (as listed in the agenda pack):

- Car Parks – Response received from Breckland District Council following initial meeting held re. Watton Town Council possibly taking over management of the Breckland Council owned car parks in the town.
- 50th Celebration – Invites have been given to past staff and councillors for a celebration on the 11.12.24. It was agreed that the Museum would provide teas and coffee.
- Heating company carried out the annual boiler service at Wayland Hall on 4.12.24. Other agreed works still to be completed.
- Arrangement made to clear the gutters at Wayland Hall.

**4. REPORTS**

**4.1** Chairman's Report

The Chairman attended

- Air Cadets Awards & Presentation Evening on 27.11.24,
- Meeting with the owner of the Thetford Road Allotment site on 29.11.24
- Meeting at Breckland Council re. car park charges 4.12.24
- CHT and Food Hub meetings 5.12.24
- Christmas Celebration at RAF Mildenhall 5.12.24

**4.2** Vice-Chairman's Report

No report given.

**4.3** Clerks Report

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

Wayland Hall

Builders attended Wayland Hall on 3rd December to look at quoting to replace the chamber windows like for like. Awaiting quote for works.

#### Church Walk

The Office has finally received a response from Norfolk Trails Team (NTT) regarding possible encroachment along Church Walk. A new staff member at NTT is looking at this issue and has stated she will be back in touch as soon as possible

Apologies were given that there has been a slow response, but the NTT team has recently grown from 1 to 6 and it's taking the team a while to get through the significant backlog of work and enquiries.

#### Mayor's Chain

The new Mayors Chain has arrived ready for its unveiling at the 50th celebration on 11th December.

#### Boundary Review

Consultation e-mail and information from District Cllr Tina Kiddell forwarded to Town Cllrs 04.12.24.

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is currently carrying out an electoral review of Breckland. This is because some councillors currently represent many more or fewer electors than others. This is known as 'electoral inequality'. The aim is to create 'electoral equality', where the number of electors per councillor is as even as possible.

Following consultation in spring/summer, the LGBCE has now put forward some draft recommendations. These are:

- Breckland should be represented by 51 councillors, two more than there are now.
- Breckland should have 34 wards, seven more than there are now.
- The boundaries of 21 wards should change; six will stay the same.
- There should be two three-councillor wards, 13 two-councillor wards, and 19 one-councillor wards

As part of the previous consultation process, Breckland submitted some suggestions, which the LGBCE has taken into consideration, along with its own views and those of other consultation respondees. One suggested change is that Carbrooke Ward and Watton Ward become just Watton Ward plus the Blenheim Grange area within the parish of Griston.

A public consultation on the proposals is running from 3 December 2024 to 24 February 2025.

Once the Boundary Commission has considered all responses to the consultation, final recommendations are expected to be published in June 2025. A draft order will then be laid in both houses of Parliament. Subject to parliamentary scrutiny, the new electoral arrangements are scheduled to come into effect at the authority's elections in 2027.

*The Boundary Commission recommendations will be an agenda item for the next meeting of the Full Council.*

#### 4.4 Reports from Lead Councillors

4.4i Festive Market – report included with the agenda pack for 10.12.24

#### 5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public present.

#### 6. FINANCE

6.1 The payments for approval for December were agreed as presented.

#### 7. INTERNAL AUDIT INTERIM REPORT

The Internal Audit Interim Report was noted. The Finance Committee will consider recommendations made and report back to Full Council.

#### 8. GRANTS

8.1 **It was resolved** to grant £500 to Norfolk Clubhouse as requested.

8.2 **It was resolved** not to make a grant to Norfolk Community Law Service but to send a letter explaining why and making a suggestion for how the service might be brought to Watton.

#### 9. POLICIES

It was resolved to accept the draft staffing policies as presented but acknowledged that they will be amended and customised as necessary by the Office with agreement of the HR Committee.

#### 10. THETFORD ROAD ALLOTMENTS

Notes from the meeting held with the owner of the Thetford Road Allotment land were presented in the agenda pack for the meeting.

The meeting was felt to be positive and it is hoped the transfer of the allotment land to the Town Council can progress.

#### 11. TOWN CALENDAR

**It was resolved to** explore the feasibility of producing a Watton Town Council calendar to be sold at the 2025 Festive Market. The Events & Marketing Officer will be asked to produce some costs and guidance for the next Full Council meeting.

#### 12. PLANNING

No planning applications received for consultation but it was noted that the plans to create a skate park at Watton Sports Centre are to be considered at the Breckland Planning Committee meeting on 17.12.24. The Town Council is in support of the application.

#### 13. RESOLUTION PASSED TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

13.1 It was noted that a long standing market trader is to retire from the Wednesday Market. **A resolution was passed** to recognise the long-term commitment to the community by the market trader and the Mayor will make a presentation to them on their last day of trading in Watton.

13.2 The Chairman reported on the meeting he had attended at Breckland Council regarding the proposed introduction of charges for the car parks in the town. It was agreed that talks between the Town Council and Breckland Council regarding Watton

Town Council taking over management of the car parks should continue but noted that any final decisions must be made by Full Council.