

Minutes of the meeting of Watton Town Council held on

Tuesday 22nd October 2024 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber at Wayland Hall

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

Officer present: Jane Scarrott Clerk

Also present: District/County Council Claire Bowes

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE RECEIVED AND APPROVED from

Tina Cruz, Catherine Turley-Long and Steve Turley-Long.

2. NO DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST MADE

3. MINUTES

3.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on October 8th 2024 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

3.2 Updates from items raised at the meeting on October 8th 2024:

- Chairman and Clerk were booked to meet with Sam Chapman-Allen, Leader of Breckland Council, on 25.11.24 re. possibility of the TC taking over the BDC town carparks but this date has been cancelled.
- Volunteers have made a great start at clearing the boundaries at Bridle Road but there is a lot of green waste to now clear from the site.
- No further update has been received re. completing the works for the new High Street bus shelters. (County Councillor Claire Bowes offered to follow this up if necessary).

4. REPORTS

4.1 Chairman's Report

The Chairman has attended:

- 11.10.24 Opening of the High Street Banking Hub
- 16.10.24 Watton Society AGM
- 17.10.24 CHT/Food Hub Meeting

4.2 Vice-Chairman's Report

The Vice-Chairman has:

- 09.10.24, with Cllr Stallard and the EMO, purchased goods for the Mayors Charity tombola
- 11.10.24 Opening of the High Street Banking Hub
- 17.10.24 attended the CHT/Food Hub Meeting

4.3 District Councillor's Report /**4.4** County Councillors Report

District and County Councillor Claire Bowes had submitted a written report which was shared with Councillors prior to the meeting [Report available on the Town Council website].

Points noted:

- Breckland District Council has released s106 funding to support improvements to the Bridle Road Play Area.
- Keeping Breckland Tidy – The Councils Environmental Team has been working with local communities to tackle littering. New signage has been installed across the district [signage to be placed in and around Watton High Street].
- Car Park Charging – Councillor supports ‘no charging’ for Watton.
- Norwich Road Watton – footway resurfacing and construction is to take place during October and November 2024.
- Parking outside Westfield School – measures to deter inconsiderate and antisocial parking are being sought.
- Watton Library will be closed between 16th and 24th November 2024 for scheduled refurbishment.
- Norfolk Market Towns Conference held 01.10.24.

District Councillors Keith Gilbert and Tina Kiddell had no further reports to make but it was noted all Councillors have received correspondence relating to parking concerns at Wayland Fields.

4.5 Clerks Report

Written report presented in Councillors Agenda packs with verbal update given:

Norfolk County Council Highways Grit Bin Audit 2024

Norfolk County Council (NCC) has undertaken an audit of all grit bins located on the public highway.

Grit bins that have been reported as broken/damaged - if they were supplied by the Parish, it is the Parish's responsibility to replace them. NCC responsibility is to fill them as per schedule. The replenishment of the salt /sand mix in grit bins is usually undertaken twice per winter season (which is in November/December and then again after Christmas, depending upon weather conditions). Parishes cannot request any individual/additional fills.

- NCC is unable to provide additional grit bins at new locations due to funding pressures. NCC owned grit bins that become redundant in their present location, because of network changes, can be re-sited if they can be re-located appropriately. Parish or Town Councils may wish to fund additional grit bins on the public highway;
- Requests for grit bins cannot be received directly from members of the public. They should instead be channelled through the Town Council or Local Member;
- Grit bin requestors must provide details of the proposed grit bin location (ideally with a plan and coordinates). The relevant Highway Engineer will then complete a grit bin assessment and respond to the applicant as to whether or not the new grit bin has been approved.

Casual Vacancy

The Notice of Vacancy for the casual vacancy on the Town Council has been posted and the due date for requests for an election is 29.10.24. If an election is not requested by 29.10.24 the Town Council will be able to fill the vacancy by co-option.

Merton Road, Watton – 20mph Advisory Speed Limit

Norfolk County Council is proposing the implementation of an advisory 20mph speed limit at Merton Road. The Town Council has no objection to this but it was queried whether an advisory limit is enforceable.

High Street Clock

Noted that the clock mechanism has been re-installed in the High Street Clock Tower and the clock should now be working.

4.6 Reports from Lead Councillors

- Tony Bridges as Lead Councillor for Youth Provision informed the Council that he plans to put a report to the next Full Council Meeting regarding possible upgrades for the planned works at Bridle Road Play Area.
- Kathryn Stalled as Lead Councillor for Heritage informed the Council that Historic England has updated the List Entries for Walsingham Gates with an extra sentence that the gates were replaced. The gates are being painted by the Town Operatives and a copy of the e-mail received from Historic England will be forwarded to Norfolk County Council and Breckland Historic Buildings Officer. The Town Council will now close its investigation of Walsingham Gates. Cllr Stallard was thanked for all her work on this matter.
- Cllr Hutchings has attended the AGMs for Watton Sports Association and Loch Neaton and the Market Towns Conference. Reports will be forwarded to Cllrs.
- Cllr Hutchings is making enquiries with Breckland Director of Planning re. Wayland Woods.
- Noted that the Museum 4 Watton will be taking part in the town's Halloween Witches Trail 26.10.24.

5. WORKS IN PROGRESS

The Works in Progress list was received.

- References to the Walsingham Gates will now be removed as the project is considered to be completed.
- An update will be sought re. the order for the new Mayors Chain.
- Clarification will be sought re. the requested new litter bin for Norwich Road.
- Cllr Bridges is still to present a Play Area Policy.

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public present.

7. FINANCE

7.1 Payments for October 2024 were approved for payment as on the list presented prior to the meeting, with the addition of Town Crier Expenses £15.00, Fireworks Facepainting £240, Toilet rolls (public toilets) £22.85, Pyromusical Fireworks Display £8442 and stationery £86.29.

7.2 The draft minutes from the Finance Committee held on 10.10.24 were noted.

7.3 Recommendations from the Finance Committee

- I. **It was resolved that** once clarification has been received regarding possible termination of the current lease of the Thetford Road allotment land the Town Council will advise the solicitor that if the owner is unable to transfer the land to the Town Council it will withdraw from the process.
- II. **It was resolved** to support the installation of the footfall cameras as proposed by Breckland Council. Review to be undertaken after an initial 3 year period.
- III. **It was resolved** to establish a working group to prepare a long term staffing strategy. The Working Group would comprise of members of the Finance and HR Committees.

8. HERITAGE PARK

The draft notes from the Heritage Park Working Group meeting held on 08.10.24 were noted.

It was suggested signs should be erected at Heritage Park stating ownership of the area and that metal detecting is not permitted.

9. SPEED ACTIVATED MONITORING (SAM) SIGNS

It was resolved to apply to the Norfolk County Council Parish Partnership Scheme for an additional SAM sign.

10. TREE PLANTING

It was resolved to support the tree planting proposals made by the County Councillor but with further consultation to take place with all parties to ensure the correct planting is undertaken.

11. MUSEUM FOR WATTON

It was resolved to proceed with the renewal of the Museum for Watton lease of part of Wayland Hall. The lease will be negotiated in accordance with the existing lease with reasonable modernisations, and the additions of shared use of the Council Chamber by mutual agreement and joint use of the kitchen facilities in the Chamber.

The solicitors estimated fees of approximately £2500 plus VAT were accepted.

12. CHURCH WALK

Breckland District Council has been attempting to secure a location for the proposed 2nd camera at the east end of Church Walk. St Mary's Church and a neighbouring resident have both been approached and further letters to them have recently been put into respective letter boxes. BDC is hoping for a response!

District Councillor Tina Kiddell offered to further investigate progress of the installation of the second camera.

13. 50TH YEAR OF TOWN COUNCIL

It was resolved that in celebration of the 50th year of this Town Council, Watton Town Council wishes to record its thanks for the work of all the many Town Councillors who have

served over the past 50 years. It is with greatest appreciation that this Council recognises the dedication of Councillors and Council staff in serving the people of Watton since 1974. The Council also recognises the service given by those involved in the Parish Council prior to this date.

It was resolved that before the end of the year a small celebratory event for past and present Cllrs and staff will be held to celebrate the 50th anniversary year.

14. PLANNING

No planning applications received for consultation.

15. No resolution to exclude the public and press was made as this was not needed.