



Watton Town Council

Wayland Hall, Middle Street, Watton, Thetford, Norfolk IP25 6AG

Telephone: 01953 881007

Website: www.wattontowncouncil.gov.uk

Town Clerk: Mrs Jane Scarrott clerk@wattontowncouncil.gov.uk

Councillors: You are hereby summoned to attend the Town Council meeting to be held in the Council Chamber, Wayland Hall on Tuesday 13th August 2024 at 7.00pm for the purpose of transacting the following business.

Please note a presentation on the Digital Creative Media Centre is being held at 6.30pm. Doors to the Chamber for the Full Council meeting will not be opened until 7pm.

A meeting of the Trustees of the Charlotte Harvey Trust will take place immediately following the Town Council Meeting.

Jane Scarrott – Town Clerk

7th August 2024

1. To receive and accept apologies for absence
2. To note Declaration of Members personal, prejudicial and disclosable pecuniary interests in respect of items on the agenda
3. MINUTES
 - 3.1 To confirm that the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd July 2024 are a true and accurate record
 - 3.2 To receive an update on items from the previous meeting if not agenda items for this meeting
4. TO RECEIVE REPORTS
 - 4.1 Chairman's Report
 - 4.2 Vice Chairman's Report
 - 4.3 Clerk's Report
 - 4.4 Reports from Lead Councillors
5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – Representatives from Love Watton to attend
6. To agree Town Council action regarding the Breckland Council proposal to introduce car parking charges
7. To consider £5000 donation request from Wayland Partnership
8. To elect a Councillor to be a member of the HR Committee.
9. To consider whether the Town Council wishes to apply for funding from the Love Your Market Town Initiative

10. To accept the proposals from Breckland Council for footfall counters for the High Street
11. Thetford Road Allotments
 - 11.1 To agree to accept Thetford Road Allotment Land and solicitors Client care letter including costs of the transfer
 - 11.2 To agree to join the National Allotment Society (<https://www.thenas.org.uk/>) at a cost of £67 (£55 + VAT per annum thereafter)
 - 11.3 To agree to place a skip at the allotments – estimated cost £248
12. To receive annual play area inspection reports and agree recommended actions
13. To agree credit limit for Screw Fix account (£500 per month suggested)
14. To consider replacing failed knee high fencing at Shire Horse Way
15. To receive the Wayland Hall Structural Report and Guidance
16. To accept 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 To consult on planning applications received since the last meeting
 - 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
<https://planning.breckland.gov.uk/OcellaWeb/planningDetails?reference=3PL/2024/0319/VAR>
 - 17.2 3DC/2024/0144/DOC Discharge of Conditions 10,11 & 12 on 3PL/2023/1206/F (Discharge
<https://planning.breckland.gov.uk/OcellaWeb/planningDetails?reference=3DC/2024/0144/DOC>
18. To pass a resolution to exclude the public and press to consider confidential staffing matters
 - 18.1 To agree to appoint an Independent Officer to investigate a grievance.

Item 3.1

Minutes of the meeting of Watton Town Council held on

Tuesday 23rd July 2024 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber at Wayland Hall

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

Officer present: Jane Scarrott Clerk

9 members of the public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE RECEIVED AND APPROVED from
Steve Turley-Long

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST MADE:
Tobi Amadasun declared an interest in item 9.

3. MINUTES

3.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on July 9th 2024 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

3.2 Updates from items raised at the meeting on July 9th 2024:

- Electrical works undertaken 19.07.24 in response to works identified in the 5yr fixed electrical wiring inspection at Wayland Hall.
- Written report re. Breckland Local Plan included in agenda pack 19.07.24. The Clerk of Carbrooke Council has said he, and possibly some Carbrooke Parish Councillors would be willing to attend a meeting re. the Local Plan with George Freeman MP, if the TC arranges this. George Freeman has been approached but no response received to date.
- Structural Engineer has visited Wayland Hall 11.07.24. Report awaited.
- Wayland Partnership has been invited to attend a future Town Council meeting to support their donation application.
- Norfolk County Council has been asked for an update on schemes for trods along Norwich Road.
- An initial enquiry has been made to request s106 funding for improvements to the Bridle Road Play Area.
- The Council is awaiting new client care documents from the solicitors working on the transfer of the Thetford Road Allotment site to Watton Town Council.

4. REPORTS

4.1 Chairman's Report

The Chairman attended the Finance Committee Meeting on July 12th, Watton Carnival on July 14th and a site meeting at the Thetford Road Allotment Site on July 18th. He also presented the Watton in Bloom trophy on July 18th.

4.2 Vice-Chairman's Report

The Vice-Chairman has attended the HR Committee meeting on July 18th and, with other Councillors, the Summer Fun Day at the Charlotte Harvey Trust on the 23rd.

4.3 District Councillor's Report

District Councillor Tina Kiddell has shared recent e-mail trails regarding Breckland Councils decision to introduce car parking charges in the market towns and she is meeting with local High Street businesses to establish a "battle plan" to oppose the decision.

District Councillor Keith Gilbert is supporting Cllr Kiddell as best he can as Chairman of Breckland Council.

Cllr Kiddell has reported to Norfolk County Council (NCC) that the footway along the Dereham Road opposite the entrance gate to Loch Neaton is in need of clearing. The Clerk was asked to also report this to NCC.

4.4 County Councillors Report

County Councillor Claire Bowes was not present at the meeting with no written report received.

4.5 Clerks Report

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

Anglian Water

An e-mail has been received from Anglian Water stating that Anglian Water is currently working on a project in Watton and they would like to work closely with the community. They have people who would like to take part in any volunteering schemes locally.

A suggestion will be put to Anglian Water that volunteers could clean and re-paint the weighbridge at Memorial Garden.

Clock

After many months the clock in the High Street Clock Tower is working! Cost for repairs £7583 plus VAT.

Staff Training

Councillors were provided with information relating to recent training undertaken by staff.

Banking Hub

Notification has been received that the anticipated permanent Banking Hub will be located in the former Barclays Bank in Watton High Street as from Autumn 2024.

Love Your Market Town

A £20000 investment fund has been created by Breckland Council and Norfolk County Council to give local community groups and businesses the opportunity to sell their ideas to a panel, with successful applicants receiving funding up to £2000 to

put their plans into action to support initiatives to help generate footfall in the market towns.

4.6 Staff Well-being Report

Council received the Well-being Report submitted by the Events & Marketing Officer.

It was resolved to produce a staff Well-being Policy but in the mean-time a Team Building Day will be supported to be held between September and November 2024 at a cost of up to £500. Staff will be asked to put a suggested package for the day together, to include the venue and costs, and bring this back to Council by the end of August. The Council endorsed the process of staff discussion and well-being to be undertaken by members of the HR Committee.

It was agreed that the HR Committee is to work on a suite of HR Policies to be in place perhaps by September 1st 2024.

4.7 Reports from Lead Councillors

- The Lead Councillor for Youth reported that he has been invited to the 864 Watton Air Cadets Summer Barbecue and Families Evening. The Mayor has also been invited and both will attend if able.
- The Lead Councillor for Emergency Planning reported that he has met with the Chairman of the Watton & Saham Flood Action Group and the Watton Emergency Plan is to be resurrected with volunteers to be recruited for key areas.
- The Chairman of the HR Committee reported that following the appointment of CBR as HR consultants work has begun on review of the Staff Handbook and Policies.

4.8 Report from Working Groups

4.8i Notes from the Church Walk Working Group Meeting held 16.07.24 were received.

4.8ii The Terms of Reference for the Church Walk Working Group were accepted as presented.

4.8iii Notes from the Heritage Park Working Group Meeting held 17.07.24 were received.

4.8iv The Terms of Reference for the Heritage Park Working Group were accepted as presented.

4.8v Allotments

Allotment holders were present at the meeting.

It is hoped that grounds work now undertaken at the Thetford Road Allotment site will help alleviate concerns raised about the management of the site.

There are currently 4 vacant plots which hopefully will be filled from those on the allotment waiting list.

The Thetford Road Allotment site meeting was seen as positive and further conversations will be held with allotment holders regarding removal of waste from site, access through the site and whether or not a gate is wanted at the north end of the site.

4.9 The Chairman of the Watton & Saham Flood Action Group had provided a written report which had been circulated within the agenda pack for the meeting and was present to give a verbal update at the meeting.

5. WORKS IN PROGRESS

The Works in Progress list was received.

Noted that the bench at Memorial Garden is still to be returned and that research is ongoing regarding possible purchase of two additional SAM2 (speed awareness monitor) signs through the Norfolk County Council Parish Partnership Scheme.

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Members of the public spoke vehemently against the proposed introduction of car parking charges in Watton.

It was agreed to consider item 8, the introduction of car parking charges to the Breckland Market Towns at this point.

Much discussion took place around the detrimental effects charging for parking would have on the town, its residents and those who work in the town.

Points raised included:

- Annoyance and upset caused in that there has been no proper consultation, although Breckland Council claims to be working in partnership with the towns
- grave concern for businesses and the long term impact on the town centre
- concern regarding issues that the displacement of parking to residential streets will cause
- belief that free parking is a USP to attract visitors

Those that have already put in work to object to the charging proposals were thanked and **it was resolved that** Watton Town Council will oppose the proposals to bring in car parking charges and would be prepared to work with other Town Councils towards obtaining a democratic consultation which could then be considered.

7. FINANCE

7.1 Payments for July 2024 were approved for payment as presented.

7.2 The draft minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on the 12th July 2024 were received.

7.3 Recommendations from the Finance Committee meeting held on 12th July, as resolved:

7.3i **It was resolved that** in response to the Internal Auditors suggestion that the Council should approve a Reserves Policy: that, in consideration for a worst-case scenario, the Council will ensure an amount equal to 50% of the annual budget figure is held in reserve to cover all legal responsibilities.

7.3ii **It was resolved that** the Council purchases the two centre pages of the new Watton & Wayland Times each month at a cost of £400 per month.

7.3iii **It was resolved to** spend £1746.43 plus VAT on 7 new canopies and side walls for the Market Gazebos. The gazebos to be stored in the Town Council unit and erected by staff.

7.3iv The contractor engaged by the Town Council has failed to cut the grass at Heritage Park so **it was resolved** to accept the quote from the Town Council preferred contractor to undertake a single cut at a cost of £750.

7.4 Mayor's Chain

It was resolved to accept the quote as presented of £4692.01 plus VAT to commission a new Mayor's Chain of Office.

As it is the 50th anniversary of the Town Council [established in 1974] recognition will be made of this on the new chain. **It was resolved** that the Finance Committee could agree additional expenditure relating to the commission as necessary.

8. CAR PARKING CHARGES

(considered after public participation)

9. YOUTH CONFERENCE

It was resolved that the Town Council would support the Watton Sports and Social Club plans to hold a Youth Conference later in 2024 and that the organisation is invited to request an appropriate grant to assist with the event.

10. EVENTS COMMITTEE

It was resolved to defer item 10 until it is known what is being requested relating to the establishment of an Events Committee.

11. PLANNING

11.1 3PL/2024/0563/VAR - Variation of Condition No2 on 3PL/2016/1094/F - design and layout changes - WATTON: Tiffany House 24A Merton Road

No comments

11.2 3PN/2024/0027/PNE - Prior approval for proposal to erect a single storey rear extension projecting from the original rear wall by 4.05m deep, with a maximum height of 3.1m and eaves height of 2.35m The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) - Schedule 2, Part 1, Class A - 252 Lovell Gardens IP25 6TU WATTON

No comments

11.3 3PL/2024/0542/HOU - Proposed Single Storey Front Extension - WATTON: 1 Windsor Court

No comments

11.4 3OB/2024/0026/VOB - Application to modify the planning obligation under Schedule 2 - Affordable Housing relating to the S106 Agreement on 3PL/2014/1378/F (as amended on ref 3PL/2023/0408/VAR) - to modify/remove the proportion of affordable housing on the site. - WATTON: AND CARBROOKE Land at Former Officers Mess Site, Norwich Road

Strong objection

11.5 3PL/2024/0423/F Proposal A) Change of Use for Unit B1 to include Sui Generis (to permit display and sale of motor vehicles). B) Amended west elevations of Units B1 & C1 - Neaton Business Park South, B1 & C1 Norwich Road IP25 6JB Parish WATTON

No comments

11.6 3PL/2024/0424/A Proposal 3 new illuminated signs and new glazed personnel door and sectional door to Unit B1. - Neaton Business Park South, B1 & C1 Norwich Road IP25 6JB Parish WATTON

No comments

12. It was resolved to exclude the public and press to consider confidential staffing matters

12.1 Staffing Matters

The Chairman of the HR Committee gave a precis of the minutes of the HR Committee Meeting held on 18.07.24.

It was noted staff are often undertaking more than their weekly contracted hours.

Item 3.2 Update from the meeting held 23rd July 2024

Agenda Item 23.07.24	Update
3.2	George Freeman MP has said he would be willing to attend a meeting re. development. Awaiting contact from his office.
3.2	Wayland Hall Structural Report received - Agenda item 15 13.08.24
3.2	Still awaiting response to initial enquiry re. possible s106 funding for works at Bridle Road Play Area. S106 Officer has not been in work.
3.2	Client care letter received to be accepted and returned to the solicitor who will be acting for the Town Council re. the transfer of the Thetford Road allotment site. Agenda item 11.13.08.24
4.3	Car Parking charges - agenda item 16 13.08.24
4.5	Awaiting Anglian Water to visit to look at whether their volunteers can clean and re-paint the weigh-bridge at Memorial Garden.
4.5	High Street Clock is not running properly. Smiths of Derby are to visit again 08.08.24.
4.5	Love Your Market Town – Agenda item 10. 13.08.24
7.3iii	7 new market gazebos have been purchased and are ready for use!
7.3iv	The TC preferred contractor has been commissioned to cut the grass at Heritage Park.

Item 4.3 Clerk's Report

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

Public Toilets

Cleaning company Stulee the held the contract for cleaning of the public toilets was sold to Symclean a while back.

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.

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

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

Coronation Living Heritage Fund - Community Orchards

From Councillor Helen Crane

Executive Member for Waste, Environmental Health, Licensing and Sustainability

"As a Council, we are keen to encourage local communities to plant and expand canopy cover across the Breckland District.

Late last year, we applied for and were successful in securing £26,400 grant funding from the Kings Coronation Living Heritage Fund delivered through DEFRA

(Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) to plant community orchards to help increase our tree canopy cover, supporting our Working Smarter Breckland 2035 corporate priority theme. It is great to see the orchards, which were planted by local community groups earlier this year, already thriving.

A limited amount of funding remains so we are offering a further opportunity for all Breckland Town and Parish Council's as well as Community Groups to apply for grant funding (from £100 to £5,000). Groups can apply for funding to purchase trees, along with stakes and tubes to protect them while they grow. It should be noted that just a minimum of 5 trees are classed as an 'orchard' for this purpose and that maintenance costs, for example to water and care for the plants, are not part of the funding.

A part of your application we will require you to identify the suitable land (Town, Parish or Community group/s own land) for the planting and to tell us about the positive impact that the planting will have on the environment and the community along with how it will be maintained for years to come.

You will find the application to apply for funding on our website Breckland Community Orchards Grant Application - Breckland Council

If you would like any help or advice, please contact our Communities Team via the following email - CommunitySupport@breckland.gov.uk.

Application for funds can be made between 5 August 2024 and 13 September 2024.

For the best chance of the trees surviving, planting must take place between October 2024 and February 2025."

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 but if it is so would the Town Council be willing to pay for the licence?

Item 7. Wayland Partnership Donation Request

Accounts: App 4

WATTON TOWN COUNCIL DONATION
APPLICATION FORM

A. Your Application

Name of organisation in full: Wayland Partnership Development Trust

chair@waylandchamber.co.uk (David Dent)

Name of person/organisation cheques should be made payable to: The Wayland Partnership Development Trust

B. Your Organisation

Registered charity number: 1081310

Year organisation established: 2nd November 1999

What does your organisation do?

The Partnership exists to promote the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of the Wayland area.

The Wayland Partnership is Watton based and serving the whole of Wayland

Where are your organisation's headquarters?

Headquartered in Watton at Wayland House, High Street, Watton

What is the total Membership of your organisation?

The Members of the Partnership are: Watton Town Council, 14 Parish Councils and associated parties such as the Wayland Chamber of Commerce, The Men's Shed, U3A.

Please give the names and addresses of the Officers of your Organisation?

Charity Trustees

[Redacted names and addresses of Charity Trustees]

The Wayland Partnership is a local organisation serving Watton and surrounding Parishes.

C. Request for a Donation

SEE ATTACHED DOCUMENT

D. Additional Details

The award will benefit all ages.

Please provide a set of your organisation's latest AUDITED ACCOUNTS, together with details of income and expenditure for the current year.

THE PARTNERSHIP HAS SIGNIFICANT PROJECT FUNDS THAT ARE RESTRICTED FOR USE ON PARTICULAR PROJECTS. DAY-TO-DAY OPERATING FUNDS ARE AMOUNT TO ONLY: £5,943

Please use the space below to include a STATEMENT in support of your request. (This must include details of how your organisation meets the 'eligibility criteria' set out in the information pack

included with this form. In addition you should include details of the ways in which you would publicise how the Town Council has assisted you, if your application is successful).

We are a properly constituted charity, based in Watton. Although we serve the wider Wayland area, the majority of our beneficiaries reside in Watton.

We were created to provide activities and services which are not usually possible within the remit of statutory bodies and private organisations, often because funding criteria is restricted to charities such as ours. We aim to add to the existing provision locally to enhance life within Watton and area.

We do not make grants or donations to organisations or charities operating abroad. Nor do we use grants and donations to sponsor individuals unless that fund specifically allows for that.

We are constantly seeking ways to raise additional funds for capital works and projects. Examples are income into the building through rental of our rooms and other facilities, in house fundraising, donations, paid-for workshops, gallery income, match funding grants.

We are happy to provide invoices for any works undertaken and to allow the Council to verify that the work has been completed as stated.

We will use our facebook pages and our newly developing website to publicise the Town Council's support. We report regularly to Partners at our meetings and they in turn will report back to their parishes. Where they exist, we will use parish magazines and publications to place an article, some of these are also online.

E. Statement in Support of Request for a Donation

SEE ATTACHED DOCUMENT

F. Certification

I certify that the above information and the contents of the attached documents are correct at the time of applying. I understand that if any of the information is subsequently found to be incorrect this may lead to the organisation being disqualified from consideration and/or the

withdrawal of any grant awarded. I agree to my organisation being bound by the eligibility criteria and any conditions set by the Town Council.

SIGNED:

G. Request for donation

14. How much money are you seeking? £5,000

15. What is the total cost of the project? £12 million to deliver the Digital and Creative Media Centre (DCMC) project.

16. What will you use the donation for?

Norfolk County Council have committed £125,000 to developing the DCMC business case, Breckland District Council have committed £13k project funds, plus the cost of a part time staff member. The DCMC is part of the Council district Strategic Plan and a key initiative in the Watton Neighbourhood Plan.

The political will and drive to deliver the DCMC from NCC and BDC for Watton is clear and evident, with the DCMC well placed to benefit from a share of the £20 million per annum County Deal. This new asset will transform footfall on Watton High Street, stimulate business growth, the local economy and provide leisure facilities for the whole of Wayland.

In the interim, prior to securing funds and the subsequent DCMC build (potentially end of 2025) there is a need to maintain the Wayland House building in a fit state for use by the community, client businesses and community groups. Given the age and nature of the building, a number of maintenance and repair issues are accumulating that need to be addressed. Without redress the Partnership is in danger of losing our ability to maintain current rental business and client base that generates income.

The donation is required to hire professional services to attend to key maintenance matters over the next 12 months and ensure the continued viability of the Partnership activities until the funding for the DCMC kicks in.

17. How many people in Watton do you estimate will be receiving help from the donation?

11,500 households and local businesses in and around Watton. The Services available to every Watton resident includes the Banking Hub, Community Gallery, Computer Courses, Sensory Garden and Dementia Cafe, Business support with serviced offices.

18. Are funds available from other sources? (if yes give details) Currently the maintenance of Wayland House is barely covered from decreasing financial reserves and largely achieved by handyman volunteers, which has limitations. Project funding rarely provides support for core maintenance needs.

19. What fund raising efforts will your organisation be making?

The DCMC will involve an investment to Watton of £12 million and in the meantime continued efforts are made by volunteers and Trustees to secure public sector funding to maintain services and activities for the community e.g. a Lottery Fund grant.

E. Statement in Support of Request for a Donation

The Partnership has limited reserves with which to cover its normal operating costs and although a reasonable cash position this consists largely of ring-fenced project funds, that cannot be used for other purposes.

The £5,000 donation will ensure that the building continues to be safe for users, addressing maintenance to ensure user health & safety including fire hazard prevention, proper functioning of toilet facilities. The donation will help ensure the maintenance of the existing building to maximise use and income, the viability of the Wayland Partnership as a 'going-concern' for the duration of the transition period between now and DCMC funding.

Eligibility

The contribution made by the TC will be acknowledged through website, social media posts, newsletters, parish magazines and reports to Partners.

Item 9 Love Your Market Town Initiative

Love Your Market Town Fund

Do you have an idea for something that will support and grow your local economy, increase pride in your area, and increases footfall into the town centre?

The Love Your Market Town Fund is a scheme with an investment fund of £20,000. Your community group or business can apply for a grant of up to £2,000 to bring your ideas and initiatives to life and help generate footfall and activity into local town centres in the Breckland area.

The £20,000 investment fund has been created through matched district and county council funding and will give local community groups and businesses the opportunity to pitch their ideas to a panel and receive funding to put them into action.

How it works: There will be an Idea Pitch session in Breckland, where your local community group or businesses can present your idea to a panel to ask for a share of funding, either in person or virtually.

To be considered for an invitation to this session, you must submit an [Expression of Interest Form \(opens new window\) \(opens in a new window\)](#), through the Norfolk County Council website, no later than 5pm Friday 23rd August 2024.

Are you eligible?

- Applicants can be from any local groups/consortia, business, including Town or Parish Councils and representative bodies like the local Chamber.
- Any activity must be a brand-new idea, (funds cannot be used to fund existing programmes) and should support multiple areas and/or services of your local town.
- There is no limit to the kind of activities that can be funded but your idea must have a tangible link to creating interest and/or footfall in town centres.

- Applicants must demonstrate deliverability and achievability of plans at the Idea Pitch Session, provide a written report of how they used the grant and show the impact the idea has had on the town centre.
- Applicants will supply data to Norfolk County Council for longer-term impact evaluation.

Delivery

- Projects should be ready to start within 2 months of grant award, however, consideration will be given to events planned to be delivered in early 2025.
- The last date for projects to be delivered and impact evaluated is 5 April 2025.
- Match funding is not essential but will be taken into account.
- You can ask for a grant up to £2,000, to be paid in arrears.
- Anticipated grant cap of £2,000.
- The investment fund is administered in partnership between Norfolk County Council (NCC) and Breckland Council.

Find out more

For further information email our partner, Norfolk County Council's Economic Development team: econdev@norfolk.gov.uk.

Item 10 Footfall Counters

Breckland Council Officers visited the Town Council Office recently to inform us of the plan to install footfall counters in Watton Town (particularly High Street and Middle Street). This initiative, proposed by the Breckland District Council, aims to support the long-term success and regeneration of Watton by providing accurate data on the number of people in the main shopping areas of the town.

This initiative will provide valuable data on pedestrians, supporting town planning, event evaluation, long-term trend analysis, and grant applications.

There are two options (see report below): proceed with the installation and shared costs, or opt not to proceed, which would limit our ability to assess town activity.

BRECKLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

To: Watton Town Council, 06 August 2024

Author: Barbara Gieczewska – Economic Project and Partnership Officer at Breckland District Council (BDC)

Subject: Footfall Counters

Purpose: To inform Watton Town Council (WTC) of the opportunity to install footfall counters in Watton High Street.

Recommendation(s):

- 1) Breckland District Council pays for installation of footfall counters in Watton and the cameras become Watton Town Council assets. The information gathered will be shared by both parties.

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 In March 2021 a major new initiative to support the long-term success of Breckland began. Future Breckland: Thriving People & Places provides a robust evidence base through extensive research and engagement and presents a compelling shared vision for the future of the district. Within the “Town Delivery Plan” proposed for Watton, several ambitions were declared to improve and future proof the town. Objectives such as reconfiguring the Middle Street, strengthening the local economy and diversifying the town would all benefit from the data provided by the installation of footfall counters in the town.

2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 BDC would like to explore the opportunity of installing two footfall cameras in Watton. If a feasible option can be agreed, BDC will find the capital funding which can cover the equipment/installation costs. Indicative costs suggest the installation costs will be an estimated £4,200 ex VAT.

2.2 As the counters would be Watton Town Council Assets, the Town Council will take responsibility for the installation, with support from BDC, and cover the ongoing costs. The estimated cost for the information and reporting is £630 per annum. Breckland District Council has funds to cover capital works but not for the ongoing costs of the project.

2.3 The information from the cameras is all GDPR compliant. This means that individual people and cars are NOT identified. However, the cameras will provide accurate numbers of people, cars and bicycles passing through the designated area. This information is to be shared between Watton Town Council and Breckland Council.

3.0 EXPECTED BENEFITS

3.1 Breckland Council and Watton Town Council will receive accurate information on the number of people in the main shopping areas of the town. This will provide vital information in terms of regeneration as it will show when the town is thriving but also when more activity is needed.

3.2 The information provided will inform the evaluation of key events in Watton town. It will provide an accurate figure for attendance, and therefore, comparisons can be drawn between different events and the relative success of each.

3.3 The information can provide trends across the years so both Breckland Council and Watton Town Council can judge the long-term impact of any changes made within Watton. The longterm trends in Watton can also be compared to national trends to judge the success of the town in a national context.

3.4 The cameras can also provide information on traffic passing through the town. This can show the relationship between traffic and footfall in Watton town. It can also provide information for any future changes to the public realm in relation to traffic/parking. It can also inform the amount of pollution in the central area. Information which will be key in developing proposals for the reconfiguration of the town centre.

3.5 Footfall counting is generally a condition of large grant funded programmes run by national funders such as the National Lottery Fund and Historic England. In order to be successful in the future with large bids accurate footfall and evaluation is a key component.

4.0 OPTIONS

4.1 **Option 1** – Breckland Council explore the possibility of delivering this proposal. If agreed, Breckland Council would cover the installation costs of two footfall counters and Watton Council would fund the ongoing costs (for a 3-year contract).

3.1 **Option 2** - Do Nothing, however, in doing this, it will be difficult to judge the economic success of the town moving forward.

Item 11 Thetford Road Allotments 11.1

Letter of Engagement

Client: Watton Town Council (also referred to as 'you')

Matter: Receipt of allotment land at Watton

Thank you for your instructions to act on behalf of Watton Town Council in connection with the above matter.

This is a Letter of Engagement. It sets out important information about the basis upon which Birketts LLP will act for Watton Town Council. It includes important information that I am required to provide by the Solicitors Regulation Authority.

I also attach our Terms and Conditions of Business. Please read this letter and the attached documents carefully.

Set out below is my understanding of your instructions. It is important that you let me know immediately if I have misunderstood any of your instructions, as these determine what you can expect from me and the likely costs.

1. SUMMARY OF YOUR INSTRUCTIONS (THE 'SUMMARY')

You have instructed me to provide advice on the receipt of land from Ms Toulson. We understand the land comprises allotments, which are already leased to WTC, and open land used by the public.

Fulfilling your instructions will involve completing the transfer and registering it at Land Registry.

2. NEXT STEPS AND TIMESCALES

The next step is to finalise and complete the transfer to WTC, following which we will register the title at Land Registry. We anticipate this matter may take a further month or so to reach completion, depending on how quickly documents can be signed. If you have a particular timescale in mind please communicate this to us and we will work hard to help you achieve it.

3. COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES

Unless instructed otherwise, I will communicate with you by telephone, email and letter using the contact details you have provided. Please let me know as soon as possible if you wish to change your communication preferences.

4. EXCLUSIONS FROM ADVICE

We are not advising on governance questions or powers of Watton Town Council to enter into the transfer. If you need this advice we can put you in touch with our public sector team.

Nor will I will not provide advice on valuation issues or any tax implications. If you require any advice on valuation issues and/or tax implications, please let me know and we can discuss the possibility of obtaining specialist advice.

Please be aware that, where your transaction includes the disposal of any type of UK property, or shares in a company holding UK property, it is possible that you will be liable to pay UK capital gains tax, even if Watton Town Council is not registered in England or Wales for tax purposes. The reporting timescales can be very short (30 days from disposal), with penalties payable for non-compliance. Reporting may be required even where the property is not sold at a gain.

Where appropriate, you should seek specialist advice on tax matters at an early stage. Our Private Client Advisory Team can advise on UK tax consequences of the disposal of a UK property. If you would like me to put you in touch with a colleague from that Team, please let me know.

5. **RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MATTER AND CONTACT DETAILS**

Watton Town Council's Client Relationship Manager is Ruth Neave. They have overall responsibility for the relationship Birketts has with Watton Town Council and will always be available to discuss any points, which arise in respect of the relationship you have with Birketts.

I will have principal responsibility for dealing with this matter.

Members of the Team who may be involved in this instruction are:

Name	Role / Position	Hourly rate (excluding VAT)	Contact details
Louisa Saunders	Legal Director, Charity Property	£230	T: 01473406331 E: louisa-saunders@birketts.co.uk
Lily Proudfoot	Paralegal, Charity Property	£110	T: 01473299158 E: lily-proudfoot@birketts.co.uk
Ilayda Ayran	Paralegal Charity Property	£110	T: 01473406348 E: Ilayda-ayran@birketts.co.uk

It may be necessary for other members of the firm to work on this matter.

If so, I will notify you of their name and their hourly rate.

6. **TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF BUSINESS**

The enclosed Terms and Conditions of Business (the **Terms**) together with the Summary form the basis of the contract between us and Watton Town Council for the provision of legal services.

In the event of any conflict between the Terms and the Summary, the Terms will prevail unless specifically amended by this letter. It is therefore important that you read and understand the Terms carefully. Whilst the entire contents of the Terms are relevant, please pay particular attention to the following sections:

Communicating with you (Section 4);

Confidentiality (Section 5);

Financial Matters (Section 6); and

For joint clients, Sections 3.3 and 6.11.

Please can you email me to confirm that you agree to the Terms and the Summary.

If we do not hear from you please note that, by instructing me to proceed with your instructions, Watton Town Council will be deemed to have accepted the Terms, the Summary and the basis of the contract between us.

7. **ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING**

The firm has a statutory responsibility to carry out money laundering checks for all new clients and to keep our personal records up to date for all existing clients.

We will, or have already, written to you separately to set out details of the checks and records we require. These checks must be completed and records received, before we are able to start any material work on your matter, or accept any funds on your behalf in respect of the matter. It is therefore important that you attend to these requirements as soon as possible, if you have not already done so.

8. **FEES, COSTS AND DISBURSEMENTS**

I estimate that our further fees for acting for Watton Town Council in this matter will be in the region of **£1,150** plus VAT and disbursements.

My estimate is based upon the information presently available to me. If the matter requires more work than anticipated and it becomes necessary to revise our fee estimate, I will let you know as soon as possible.

The fees Watton Town Council will be charged will be calculated by reference to the time spent on the matter at the applicable hourly rates. These rates are set out above.

In addition, Watton Town Council may be charged costs and disbursements in accordance with our policy (which is available on request) plus VAT.

In relation to this matter we estimate the following disbursement costs:

Land Registry searches – c.£20

Land Registration fee – c.£40

9. PAYMENTS ON ACCOUNT

10. I may require you to make a payment on account of fees and/or disbursements. Any such payment will be set off against the final invoice but please be aware that the total fees and disbursements may well exceed any sum paid on account.

11. INVOICING

If you would like a PO number to be included on invoices, please let me know as soon as possible.

I will invoice you monthly as required at appropriate stages or at the end of the transaction.

Unless otherwise stated, all interim bills will be final bills for the period covered.

For further information please see Financial Matters (Section 6) in the Terms.

12. CONFIDENTIALITY

The firm recognises the importance of the correct and lawful treatment of personal information, and we are committed to protecting and respecting Watton Town Council's privacy. How we use personal information is set out in our privacy notice, which can be found at www.birketts.co.uk/site-information/privacy-policy.

13. COMPLAINTS

As a firm we are committed to providing high quality legal advice and client care. If at any time during the conduct of this matter our standards fall short of your expectations, please let me know. If I am unable to resolve your concerns to your satisfaction, the matter will be referred to my supervising partner, Liz Brownsell or to James Austin, our Client Care Partner. Further information regarding our procedure for handling complaints is contained in the enclosed Terms or on our website, www.birketts.co.uk/policy/complaints-policy.

14. CLIENT FEEDBACK

Birketts is committed to excellence in client service and to continuous improvement. You may be asked to provide your feedback at the end of your matter, either by telephone or survey.

Should you wish to opt in to receive relevant and timely legal and industry insights, and event invitations, please go to www.birketts.co.uk/register to register your interest.

11.3

It is suggested that the Town Council pays for a skip to be sited at Thetford Road Allotments to give the Town Operatives some way of disposing of items which need to be cleared from vacated plots. Estimated cost of a 6 yd skip is £248 incl VAT.

Allotment holders could be given a chance to use the skip to help clear the site but this would need to be managed. Moving forward it may be worth considering locating a skip or bin to remain on site or possibly have an annual “spring clean” when a larger skip could be brought in for a few days.

It is planned to liaise more with allotment holders who have asked about community composting and raised concerns re. security of the site.

Item 12 Annual Play Area Inspections – Reports App 1,2 and 3

Quote to undertake repair at Lovell Gardens:

Cantilever Swing: Wicksteed 59434412 Manufacturer recommends replacing the bearing housing assembly every five assembly (last replaced 2017) -

Cost for Wicksteed to undertake:

Universal Joint Assembly (4 Chains Version) c/w fixings	£1446.00
Labour cost carry out all work	£200.00
Total cost, excluding carriage & VAT	£1,646.00

Item 14

Residents at Shire Horse Way have complained that the knee high fencing around the greens at Shire Horse Way is being removed as it fails but not replaced.

There are currently some large gaps in the fencing.



Thoughts were that in time the fencing might be replaced by hedging and this has been trialled at Hares Green. The hedging at Hares Green cost £1107.98 + vat for mixed native hedging to be planted and initially watered once a week for 6 months.



Hedging has done well at Hares Green

There are larger borders to fill at Shire Horse Way than at Hares Green and costs would need to be investigated should it be agreed to consider hedging to replace the fencing.

It is possible hedging packs could be obtained from:

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/schools-and-communities/>

Item 17.

Ref: Wayland Hall, Middle Street, Watton, Thetford, Norfolk IP25 6AG – North Gable Cracking

Thank you for asking us to provide you with structural engineering advice on the observed cracks within the North gable wall at the above property. It was a pleasure to meet you during our visit on 11 July 2024. As instructed, we visually appraised the building structure from ground level. We write now as promised to outline the findings from our visit.

5 Limitations

1. No trial pits, opening up works or other forms of invasive investigation were carried out as part of this appraisal by Wright Consulting. Observations made in this report are based on a visual appraisal of the exposed building structure visible from floor level externally and internally. Comments may also be included on non-structural elements, but these should be treated as information only as they are beyond the realm of our professional expertise.

2. Our Appraisal is based on observations made on the date shown above. As some of the defects noted within this appraisal may be progressive, no responsibility can be accepted for defects that were not evident at the date of our visit, or conditions that may have deteriorated since our visit.
3. This report is not intended to be a full list of defects or conditions, but instead focuses on the most salient structural items considered appropriate to the structural form of the building, the use of the building and its overall structural condition given the purpose of the report. This appraisal is prepared without prejudice and items listed are the most salient points, bearing in mind the purpose of the appraisal. It should therefore not be considered as a 'Full Structural Survey'.
4. This report is prepared for the sole purpose as mentioned above and is for the sole use of the named Client and their professional advisors only. The use of this report by third parties is not allowed without the written authority of Wright Consulting. No responsibility can be accepted for any consequences of this information being passed to a third party who may act upon its contents/recommendations. Nothing contained in this Report shall be construed to give any rights or benefits to anyone other than the named Client and Wright Consulting, and all duties and responsibilities undertaken are for the sole and exclusive benefit of the named Client and not for the benefit of any other party. In particular, Wright Consulting does not intend, without its written consent, for this Report to be disseminated to anyone other than the Client or to be used or relied upon by anyone other than the named Client. Use of the Report by any other person is unauthorised and such use is at the sole risk of the user. Anyone using or relying upon this Report, other than the named Client, agrees by virtue of its use to indemnify and hold Wright Consulting harmless from and against all claims, losses and damages, arising out of or resulting from the performance of the work by Wright Consulting.
5. The recommendations contained in this Report represent Wright Consulting's professional opinions, exercising the reasonable duty of care required of an experienced Structural Engineering Consultant. Wright Consulting does not warrant or guarantee that the property is free of hazardous or potentially hazardous materials or conditions.

Introduction

Wright Consulting was appointed by Alan Wright of Kings & Dunne Architects on behalf of Watton Town Council to undertake a Structural Appraisal of the North gable cracking at Wayland Hall. This structural appraisal is required to provide structural advice on the condition of the existing structure and to outline any further investigations and/or structural repairs required. To this end, Josh Halton-Farrow BEng (Hons) MEng CEng MStructE visited the property on 11 July 2024 to appraise the building from ground level internally and externally. The weather conditions were clear and dry at the time of our visit. For the purposes of this letter, the building shall be taken to be on a North-South axis, with Harvey Street located to the North of the property and therefore the adjacent alleyway (Davey Place) being located to the West of the property.

Building and Site Description

From our inspection, the detached two-storey (roughly rectangular on plan) building appears to be constructed with loadbearing masonry walls supporting a traditionally cut timber First Floor and roof structure. The Ground Floor has been converted into office space, with the addition of

'modern' blockwork walls to form smaller rooms and the North end of the First Floor is used as the Council Chamber. The Council Chamber is a large vaulted space with an exposed timber hammerbeam truss roof construction. The stability of the property is assumed to rely on the cross walled nature of the internal and external walls.

A detailed historic study of the building and site has not been completed, but a historic map of the area (Norfolk Sheet LXXII.14 – 1883) shows a building of the same footprint in this location, thus confirming that the property was constructed before this date (1853 is noted on datestone on South West corner). This map also displays Watton as a much smaller town with buildings largely being centred on the High Street and highlights the expansion of the town (and thus the level of construction undertaken around the Hall) in the last 120 years.

Wayland Hall is Listed Grade II on the National Heritage List for England under List Entry Number 1076779. The property is therefore protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act of 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest. The official Listing is as follows:

WATTON MIDDLE STREET TF 9100 - 10/116 Wayland Hall. - II

Civic Hall. 1853 by E. B. Lamb. Red brick with gault brick dressings and corrugated tile roof. 2 storeys. Narrow facade. 3-light cross casement window to ground floor under flat head flanked by single-light windows. Relieving arch over central window. First floor windows similar with 2-light central casements. Circular roof light. Interior unimaginative but includes hammerbeam roof in main hall of light scantling. Occupies important visual position.

Listing NGR: TF9158100844

Given the building's Listed status, any works that alter or change its external appearance or historic building fabric must receive Listed Building Consent from the Local Conservation Officer prior to works commencing. Accordingly, we would recommend an early consultation with the Local Conservation Officer to ascertain if some of the proposed works can be completed as a repair to the historic building fabric, without the need for an LBC application. If a Listed Building Consent application is required, we would be happy to provide any further details regarding this process or the information required should an application for consent be needed.

Having reviewed the British Geological Society's desktop viewer for the site, it is assumed that the building has been constructed on a superficial deposits of Lowestoft Formation (Diamicton) overlaying a Lewes Nodular Chalk, Seaford Chalk, Newhaven Chalk and Culver Chalk Formation (Chalk) bedrock. The results of a previously undertaken local borehole (BGS ID: 511769 : BGS Reference: TF90SW73) notes that there is likely to be a 0.6m depth of Topsoil over a Stiff yellowish brown calcareous very silty Clay formation. A detailed ground investigation on the specific site would need to be undertaken to confirm these soil conditions. However, if clay was found, it could lead to movement due

to any change in the moisture content of the soil. Possible causes of this could be the growth/felling of nearby trees or the proximity of other water sources (such as ponds, ditches, leaking drains, etc.) nearby which cause a seasonal change in the moisture content of the soil. This highlights the need for a formal surface water drainage system for the buildings and the need to dispose of all surface water at least 5m from the building's envelope.

According to the Environment Agencies flood zone mapping, the site is within Flood Zone 1. Land and property in Flood Zone 1 have a low probability of flooding.

Observations

The following observations should be read in conjunction with our photographs taken during our visit and included at the end of this letter.

Cracking to North gable

The cracking in question is located on the North West corner of the building where Harvey Street meets the alleyway (Davey Place) that extends along the building's West elevation. The North West corner of the building at Ground Floor level has been set back from the First Floor corner using corbelled brickwork. Two cracks were observed. One crack (2mm in width) is diagonal in nature and runs along the line of the top six brick courses of this corner corbel. The other crack (2mm in width) is vertical in nature and extends up nine course from the springing point of the previously infilled western arch. No corresponding cracks were observed within the building.

The North gable is located adjacent to Harvey Street, with the road extending right up to the building. There are signs of relatively recent works being undertaken to the road and it is our assumption that heavy machinery was likely used to carry out these works. It is our opinion that the cracking observed is likely to have been caused by extensive vibration local to the building. However, vibration readings from before and during the trenching works would be required to confirm these assumptions. The previous cementitious and hard masonry repair works carried out adjacent to the cracks will have created 'hard spots' which will have worsened the effects of any vibrations. It is therefore our opinion that the cracks be repointed with a suitable lime mortar and monitored. Should they open up again, steel bed joint reinforcement should be used to stitch the cracked masonry.

In addition, it is our recommendation that given the obvious age of the building and its historic construction, all future works adjacent/close to the property should be carried out with great care and with as little disruption to the building as possible. Adjacent works should not undermine the existing footings and vibrations should be kept below

the levels considered not to cause any significant damage to the building (BRE Digest 403 - Damage to structures from ground borne vibration provides a good insight into acceptable levels and how to minimise vibration). A technical description of the new works should be obtained and reviewed by a professional to allow an assessment to be made of the likely effects on the historic building.

Other Observations

Although not part of our original brief, the following observations were made whilst walking around the building:

- i. The main hall was refurbished in 2021. During our visit, we noted minor cracking in the finishes where the roof structure meets the North gable. In addition, a vertical hairline crack is present at First Floor level in the centre of the North gable. No obvious causes for these cracks was present during our visit, but it could be a sign that the North gable is insufficiently tied to the rest of the building and allowing these cracks to occur. It is our recommendation that these cracks be filled and redecorated in the short term to allow the cracks to be monitored. Should they reoccur, it would be prudent for further investigations into the roof and floor structure adjacent to the North gable to be investigated to ascertain what restraint is present and whether further strengthening is required.
- ii. Whilst on site, we were asked to look at some cracking present within the Ground Floor WC. The WC space has been formed within a previously larger room with 'modern' block walls that have been built perpendicular to and up to the East elevation of the building. The cracking (approximately 2mm in width) extends down the joint between the blockwork wall and external wall from the top of the wall to about halfway down. The crack then extends diagonally down along the external wall. It is our opinion that this cracking is likely caused by differential movement between the external wall and modern blockwork and could be caused by thermal expansion of the materials, damp or impact/vibration. We do not believe the block wall to be loadbearing in nature and would therefore recommend that the cracks be filled and redecorated. The crack should then be monitored to ascertain if it is ongoing and if so, further intrusive investigations could be carried out to ascertain the cause and allow repair recommendations to be made. At this point in time, it would be prudent for access to be obtained to allow an inspection of the external face of the East elevation to be made to determine if there are any corresponding defects present.
- iii. A chimney stack extends above eaves level at approximately halfway down the West elevation. This chimney is assumed to be fed by local back to back fireplaces at Ground Floor level (now closed), with a corbelled flue to bring the chimney's external face in line with the building's West elevation. The chimney stack protrudes from the First Floor wall by one brick width (100mm) and above eaves

level is approximately 555mm in depth x 1000mm in width. The chimney stack reduces in size as it gets higher to approximately 445mm in depth x 900mm in width. This slender chimney extends approximately 3.5m above eaves and is unrestrained for this height. It is evident that the upper (thinner) section of chimney is leaning by approximately 50mm in a Westerly direction. There are signs that the chimney has been repaired with cementitious mortar in the past, but the current condition of the chimney could not be ascertained from Ground Level. It is our recommendation that access be provided at high level to allow the chimney to be inspected more closely to determine if the movement observed is ongoing and requires repair. Given the location of the chimney (over a public area), it is our recommendation that this be undertaken as soon as possible.

- iv. Although not of great concern at this point in time, it should be noted that there are areas of eroded mortar joints and spalled bricks in the external elevations that require repointing or replacement in suitable materials commensurate with the existing construction. This is worst at low level on the West elevation where rainwater is likely splashing against the building and should be remedied to prevent damp entering the building and to prevent the accelerated erosion of the surrounding masonry.
- v. A damp stain was present on the ceiling in the North West corner of the building at Ground Floor level. Although gutters are present around the perimeter of the building and appear to be working correctly, we could not inspect them to ascertain that they were clear and free draining. It is our belief that this stain is likely caused by a leaking downpipe or local plumbing. However, it does appear that the downpipe on the North West corner of the building has been repaired in the relatively recent past and refixed in place. Therefore, the cause of damp may now be fixed and we would recommend that the stain be redecorated and the area be monitored in the future for further damp staining. In addition, given the nature of the assumed clay bearing strata, it is important that surface water be managed around the building and it is our recommendation that the gutters and drains be inspected as part of the Hall's ongoing maintenance plan to ensure there are no leaks.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In considering historic buildings and monuments, it is worth remembering that they were not always designed to meet current British Standard design criteria or current Building Regulations. More often than not, the application of current design criteria will only prove structural failure. As a consequence, these historic structures stand as a precedent of the form and rely on their overall condition for stability. Long term maintenance is therefore their only safeguard to future stability. Many historic structures have proven themselves and their resilience to local weather or loading conditions by simply existing and staying upright. However, changes in these loading patterns or their conditions will adversely affect their long term stability and should be avoided. In the case of the cracks

present within the North gable, we believe them to have been caused by external influences and to be minor defects only.

Overall, the building appears to be in a generally good condition, with minor defects being caused by poorly designed previous alterations or repairs. That being said, we do believe that the western chimney stack should be appraised as soon as possible to ensure it is structurally stable or to allow repair/stabilisation works to be specified/undertaken.

With a building of this nature it is our recommendation that a formal maintenance plan be created and followed by the Client to ensure that future defects are not caused by poor maintenance. Ideally, this would have a list of recommended works that the building requires with timescales on when they need to be undertaken to make it as easy as possible for the future custodians of the building to look after the building.

Below we have tabulated and prioritised our recommendations, which should be read alongside those above. The priorities are as follows:

U	Urgent works requiring immediate action.
S	Short-term works requiring attention within 2 years.
M	Medium-term works requiring attention within 5 years.
L	Long-term works requiring attention within 10 years.
MAINT.	Maintenance works (of which STC denotes short term cyclical and LTC long term cyclical).
IMP.	Works desirable as an improvement.

Item Description	Priority
Early consultation with the Local Conservation Officer should be made to ascertain if some of the proposed works can be completed as a repair to the historic building fabric, without the need for an LBC application.	U
The North gable cracks should be repointed with a suitable lime mortar and monitored. Should they open up again, steel bed joint reinforcement should be used to stitch the cracked masonry.	S
All future works adjacent/close to the property should be carried out with great care and with as little disruption to the building as possible. Adjacent works should not undermine the existing footings and vibrations should be kept below the levels considered not to cause any significant damage to the building.	IMP.
The cracks present between the roof structure and North gable should be filled and redecorated in the short term to allow the cracks to be monitored. Should they reoccur, it would be prudent for further investigations into the roof and floor structure adjacent to the North gable to be investigated to ascertain what restraint is present and whether further strengthening is required.	S

The WC cracks should be filled and redecorated. The crack should then be monitored to ascertain if it is ongoing and if so, further intrusive investigations could be carried out to ascertain the cause and allow repair recommendations to be made. At this point in time, it would be prudent for access to be obtained to allow an inspection of the external face of the East elevation to be made to determine if there are any corresponding defects present.	S
Access should be provided at high level to allow the West chimney to be inspected more closely to determine if the movement observed is ongoing and requires repair.	U
Spalled bricks and eroded mortar joints should be repointed or replacement in suitable materials commensurate with the existing construction.	S
The North West corner's Ground Floor ceiling stain should be redecorated and the area should be monitored in the future for further damp staining	S
The gutters and drains should be inspected as part of the Hall's ongoing maintenance plan to ensure there are no leaks.	U / MAINT.
A formal maintenance plan should be created and followed by the Client to ensure that future defects are not caused by poor maintenance. Ideally, this would have a list of recommended works that the building requires with timescales on when they need to be undertaken to make it as easy as possible for the future custodians of the building to look after the building.	IMP.

Photographs taken on 11/07/2024



Photograph 1 – North gable.



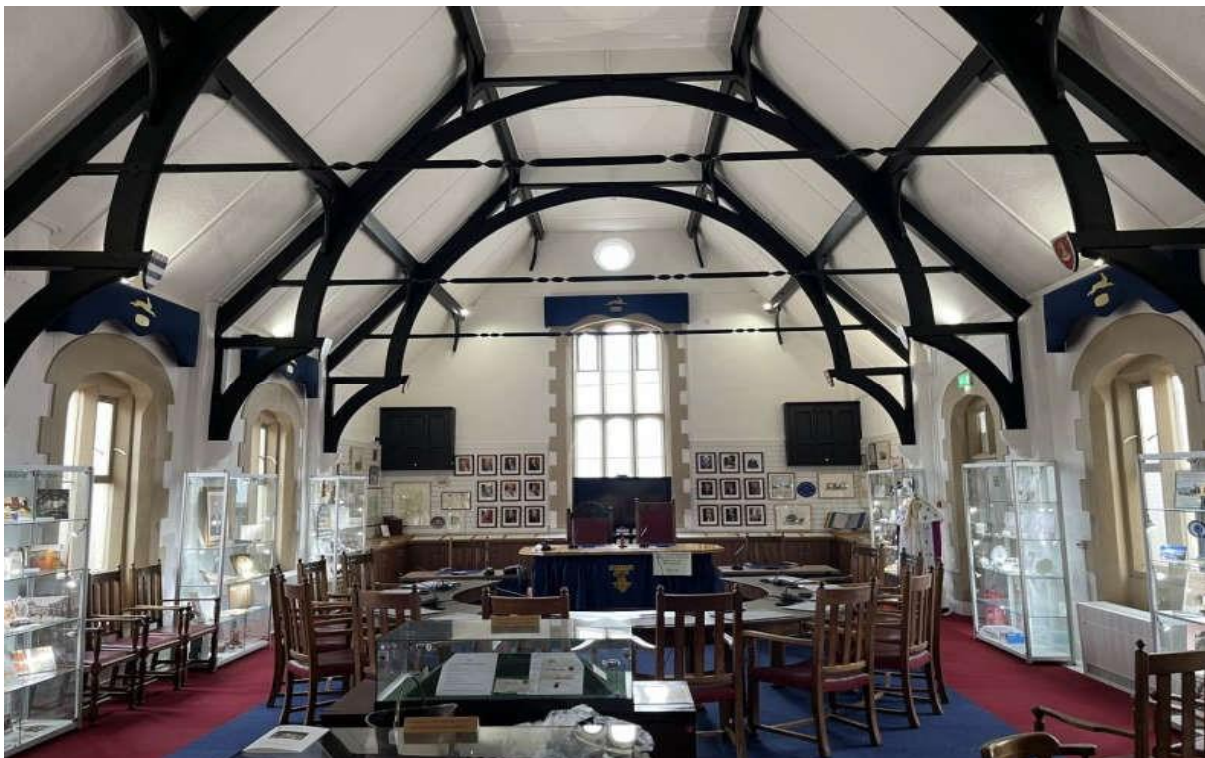
Photograph 2 – North West corner cracking.



Photograph 3 – North West corner corbel (note previous cementitious repairs).



Photograph 4 – North end of West elevation showing repaired downpipe.



Photograph 5 – Council Chamber looking towards North gable.



Photograph 6 – Crack to junction between roof structure and North gable.



Photograph 7 – Cracking to WC wall.



Photograph 8 – Cracking to blockwork over Ground Floor doorway.



Photograph 9 – Davey Place alleyway with chimney over.

[It has been suggested high level outdoor areas could initially be investigated further through use of a drone. The Town Crier is willing to do this!]



Photograph 10 – ‘Leaning’ chimney looking South.



Photograph 11 – ‘Leaning’ chimney looking North.



Photograph 12 – ‘Leaning’ chimney’s corresponding fireplace.



Photograph 13 – Damp staining to North West corner of building at Ground Floor

