

## Minutes of the meeting of Watton Town Council held on

Tuesday March 11<sup>th</sup> 2025 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, Kathryn Stallard, Gillian Tarrant.

Officer present: Jane Scarrott Clerk

County Councillors Claire Bowes and Fabian Eagle also present.

### 1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE RECEIVED from**

Tina Cruz, Tina Kiddell, Cat Turley-Long and Steve Turley-Long

### 2. **NO DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST MADE**

### 3. **MINUTES**

3.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on February 25<sup>th</sup> 2025 were accepted as a true record.

3.2 Updates from the meeting held on February 25<sup>th</sup> if not agenda items (noted in the agenda pack):

- Church Walk – The Clerk and Deputy Clerk attended a Teams Meeting with Members of the Norfolk Trails Team re. perceived encroachment of verges on Church Walk. Waiting for update on action that Norfolk County Council might take.
- Signs for Heritage Park have been ordered.
- Signed TR1 Land Registry document giving ownership of the Thetford Road land to Watton Town Council has been returned to the Solicitor.
- Contractor has been instructed to undertake electrical works at the Linmore Unit as agreed.
- Draft lease with the Museum4Watton has been passed to the Museum for comment.

### 4. **REPORTS**

#### 4.1 Chairman's Report

The Chairman gave no report!

#### 4.2 Vice-Chairman's Report

The Vice-Chairman attended the Official opening of the new kitchen at the Charlotte Harvey Centre Community Hub on 11.03.25.

#### 4.3 Clerks Report

Written report presented in Councillors Agenda Pack.

Noted that the Clerk has met with Clerks from three of the four other market towns in Breckland and the thoughts are that the Town Councils are keen to consider taking freehold of the current Breckland owned car parks in their towns. It is not known however if this is possible.

#### 4.4 Lead Councillors Reports:

4.4i **It was resolved** that the Office should gather information on the provision of services for the elderly in Watton with the intention of presenting a report to Full Council in September 2025 to help enable the Council to make a proposal regarding how it might provide or support future provision.

Cllr Martin reported that daffodils in Church Walk have been vandalised. This will be reported to the Police and Breckland Council will be contacted about the progress of installation of a camera along Church Walk.

Cllr Hebborn as Council Rep. for the Wayland Chamber of Trade reminded those present of the Well-Being Day to be held at the Charlotte Harvey Community Hub on March 18<sup>th</sup>.

As Chairman of HR, Cllr Hebborn, also referred to the staffing update in the Clerks Report and noted that the staff are currently being interviewed as part of staffing re-organisation.

## **5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

County Councillor Fabian Eagle, Norfolk County Council (NCC) Cabinet Member for Economic Growth, spoke about a new initiative from NCC: £250,000 has been allocated to support “Norfolk High Streets Matter”. Pilot towns are being chosen where help will be given to local businesses.

The Love Your Market Town initiative is also to be extended with the hope that it will be supported through partnerships between local traders, the town councils and NCC.

County Cllr Claire Bowes informed the meeting that re-surfacing and re-lining work will be undertaken in Watton during 25/26.

Claire also reminded the meeting that Breckland Council is updating its Local Plan as there is a need to deliver 903 dwellings per annum in the district. There will be a fresh call for sites and further consultation with adoption of a new plan scheduled for 2027.

## **6. DEVOLUTION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION**

Noted that Breckland Council is holding a special council meeting on 20.03.25 to debate its responses and solutions for “reorganisation” locally.

## **7. NORFOLK ALC MEMBERSHIP**

The Norfolk Association of Local Councils subscription fee for 25/26 IS £1143.92.

**It was resolved** to affirm the previous decision not to re-join Norfolk ALC at the present time.

## **8. CLOCK TOWER REPORT**

UKPN visited the Clock Tower on 5th March to investigate the electricity supply to the building. An estimate of a minimum of £14,000 has been received to provide an electricity supply to the Clock Tower to replace the current unmetered supply.

**It was resolved** not to consider any further work to the clock mechanism until needed maintenance works to the Clock Tower building has been undertaken, but options for the clock itself will continue to be investigated.

## **9. WATTON AND SAHAM FLOOD ACTION GROUP**

**It was resolved** to accept the draft Terms of Reference for the Watton and Saham Flood Action Group as presented. The document will now be shared with Saham Toney Parish Council.

## **10. DOUBLE YELLOW LINES**

A request for double yellow lines to be installed along Harvest Road from the junction with Norwich Road has been made. The County Councillor is waiting to hear back from the local Highway Engineer regarding queries raised including the provision of double yellow lines.

## **11. SAFER STREET WARDENS**

Correspondence has been received from the Leader of Breckland Council requesting support to extend the Thetford Safer Street Warden Initiative to create a dedicated roaming workforce across the Breckland district.

The Town Council felt more information was needed before any decision could be made.

## **12. PLANNING**

12.1 PL/2025/0155/CLOPUD proposed conservatory to rear of property – 242 Lovell Gardens, Watton.

It was agreed to support the recommendations made by Watton & Saham Flood Action Group.

In response to a query raised, Councillor Claire Bowes offered to investigate why Breckland Council planners are taking so long to complete land searches.

## **13. RESOLUTION PASSED TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC AND PRESS to consider confidential matters.**

13.1 Cemetery Working Group – recommendations made at the Cemetery Working Group meeting held prior to the Full Council meeting will be agenda items at the next meeting on 25.03.25.