



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 22nd July 2025 at 7.00pm for the purpose of transacting the following business.

Jane Scarrott Town Clerk

16th July 2025

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 08.07.25 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 District Councillor's Report
 - 4.4 County Councillor's Report
 - 4.5 Clerk's Report to include update from the EMO
 - 4.6 Reports from Lead Councillors and Representatives
5. To note the Works in Progress List
6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
7. FINANCE
 - 7.1 To approve payments for July 2025 (To follow)
 - 7.2 To note draft minutes from the Finance Committee Meeting held on 10.07.25
 - 7.3 To consider Finance Committee recommendation
 - 7.3i That the 25/26 Norfolk Association of Local Councils subs of £1118.29 are paid.
8. Update on Devolution and Local Government re-organisation
9. To consider how the Council could use the remaining s106 money held by Breckland Council
10. PLANNING To consult on planning applications received since the last meeting:

10.1	PL/2025/1001/VAR https://publicportal.breckland.gov.uk/planning/index.html?fa=getApplication&id=197986&language=en	Variation of conditions 2 and 3 on 3PL/2022/0876/F -reposition external staircase, alterations to layout and change of materials to windows	56 High Street, Watton
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11. To pass a resolution to Exclude the Press and Public to consider confidential matters
 - 11.1 To note the Draft HR Committee Minutes from the meeting held 10.07.25
 - 11.2 Recommendation from the HR Committee:

To engage Peninsula to provide HR and H&S services for a trial period of 12 months at a cost of £499.50 per month.

- 11.3 To consider memorial request

Item 3.1

Minutes of the meeting of Watton Town Council held on

Tuesday July 8th 2025 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber at Wayland Hall

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

Officer present: Jane Scarrott Clerk

Also present: County/District Councillor Claire Bowes and 2 members of the public.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE RECEIVED from**

Tina Cruz and Keith Prince

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST MADE**

Tony Bridges declared an interest in item 10.2.

3. **CO-OPTION** to fill the two casual vacancies on Watton Town Council

Sarah Humphries was proposed, seconded and agreed as a Town Councillor.

Jack White was proposed, seconded and agreed as a Town Councillor.

4. **MINUTES**

4.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on June 24th 2025 were accepted as a true record.

4.2 Updates from the meeting held on June 24th if not agenda items:

- Report on Wayland Hall received from the structural engineer and shared with Councillors.
- Independent report on the Cherry trees in the High Street will be commissioned.

5. **REPORTS**

5.1 Chairman's Report - written report provided in the agenda pack.

The Chairman has attended:

- the Wayland Chamber of Commerce lunch on 27.06.25 held to acknowledge a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ukraine City of Zhovka.
- 27.06.25 a 105th birthday celebration at Dorrington House.
- 29.06.25 Open Gardens.

5.2 The Vice-Chairman did not give a report.

5.3 Clerks Report

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

Men's Shed Annual BBQ

The Wayland Men's Shed has invited the Mayor and representatives from Watton Town Council to their annual Barbecue. The event is to take place Watton Sports Centre from 1pm on Saturday 30th August.

(Councillors asked to let the office know if they would like to attend with any dietary requirements e.g. vegetarian.)

S106 funding

The S106 funding application for the re-surfacing of the hockey pitch at Watton Sports Centre has been approved.

[Since the meeting the Town Council has been informed Breckland Council holds a remaining £7627 s106 funding.]

Town van

It was noted that the Vivaro town van needs a new clutch.

It was agreed to delegate the decision to the Clerk to authorise the expenditure for necessary repair of the clutch.

Breckland Local Plan Meeting

Breckland Local Plan Meeting to be held at Watton Sports Centre July 15th 17:30.

5.4 Lead Councillors Reports:

i. Heritage Report included in the agenda pack.

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A representative from the Stevens Almhouses Trust spoke of the need for the Council to nominate a Trustee for the Trust. Councillors were informed of the commitment needed and this matter will be an agenda item again for a future Town Council meeting.

7. DEVOLUTION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION (LGR) – updates are forwarded to Councillors as received.

It was noted that the Council is no longer a member of Norfolk Association of Local Councils (Norfolk ALC) but it may be that this position should be reviewed as Norfolk ALC will be the body likely to deliver the best information regarding LGR to parish councils. The Finance Committee will be asked to look again at membership of Norfolk ALC.

Information regarding Devolution and LGR will be shared on Watton Town Council social media.

8. GRAVE DIGGING SERVICES

The Deputy Clerk was thanked for her comprehensive report on grave digging services.

It was resolved to follow the recommendation in the report to appoint Phil Robson to undertake grave digging for burials at Watton Town Council. H. Brett & Son will be contracted to dig ashes plots.

9. SAFER STREET WARDENS SCHEME

After much debate **it was resolved** not to contribute to the Breckland Council Safer Street Wardens Scheme.

10. PLANNING

Noted that planning PL/2024/0796/FMIN Proposed 3no. dwellings on site of former gas works was granted approval by Breckland Planning Committee. The Town Council had raised concern that the proposed 3rd dwelling at the front of the site will have a negative visual impact on a non-designated Heritage Asset.

Tony Bridges left the meeting and returned after item 10.2.

10.1 PL/2025/0912/PAAF Field 1km North West of Merton Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed: Excavations or Deposits of Waste Material reasonably necessary for the purposes of Agriculture The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) - Schedule 2, Part 6 A balanced cut and fill earth moving operation to create two structures: 1) An interceptor attenuation lagoon 2) A farm reservoir.

The Town Council is keen to support this application as it is part of the local Reclaim the Rain project.

No objections

10.3 PL/2025/0936/TCA 3.5m all over reduction of ash to allow more light into garden.
3.5 m of turkey oak to gain more light into garden. 4 m prune back of overhanging beech branches to prevent limb failure. High Street Watton IP25 6AW

No objections

11. RESOLUTION PASSED TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC AND PRESS to consider confidential matters.

11.1 Councillor Declarations

Legislation now disqualifies any individual who is subject to the notification requirements of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (commonly referred to as being on the Sex Offenders Register) from becoming a councillor.

The Councils Co-option form will be amended to reflect this.

Item 3.2 Update from the meeting held 10.06.25

Agenda Item No.	Update
4.2	Report for the High Street cherry trees commissioned.
5.3	New clutch fitted in TO2 van. Cost of £1466.

Item 4.5 Clerks Report

Car Parks Update

Having requested an update on the possible lease of the car parks Breckland Council has replied urging the Town Council to wait until BDC comes forward with a further offer. It has been captured that Watton has rejected the leasehold as previously offered and would like a freehold.

Local Plan Update

Between April and May 2022, Breckland Council undertook a formal Call for Sites consultation as part of the full update of the Local Plan. This was a way for landowners, developers, individuals, parish and town councils and other interested parties to suggest sites for development or for protection as Local Green Space.

In December 2024 the Government published the revised NPPF alongside mandatory housing targets. For Breckland this increased the target from 625 dwellings per annum to 903. Given the significant increase in housing that is required by Government to be delivered a further call for sites was necessary in relation to sourcing additional housing land. The call for sites also asked for potential sites for gypsy and traveller provision.

All site submissions can be seen on the Breckland interactive map:

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?webmap=06a5294b7c654f95a7a3d0855193ed36>

A meeting for local parish and town councillors was held with representatives from Breckland at Watton Sports Centre on 15.07.25. Town Councillors Gillian Turrant, Tomos Hutchings, Tina Kiddell, Graham Martin and the Clerk attended. App.1 - Map as provided at the meeting.

The main message to come from the meeting was, that there will be a formal consultation later in the year, but parish and town councils are being asked to submit comments before the consultation goes live as Breckland is keen to incorporate local knowledge into their decision making regarding which sites will be taken forward into the Local Plan.

The Council perhaps needs to consider whether the Watton Neighbourhood Plan would support the site submissions [Watton Neighbourhood Plan Referendum Version](#)

Skate Park Update

Representatives of the Town Council have been invited to attend a meeting scheduled for July 23rd regarding the opening of the skate park at Watton Sports Centre. The Deputy Chairman and the Clerk will attend.

Projects

Claire Burton, Breckland Council Placemaking and Partnerships Manager has informed us that BDC has £50K set aside as Capital Spend from the 25/26 UKSPF funds for Future Breckland projects. Spend must be complete by 31 March 2026.

Ideas are wanted for potential spend in the town – with preference given to the priorities listed in the relevant Town Delivery Plan. [Investing in your Town - Breckland Council](#)

Thoughts of projects and potential amount (£) are needed by Monday 4 August 2025.

The EMO has been tasked with investigating a possible hare sculpture trail for the town but please pass any suggestions or thoughts you may have to the Office.

We don't have a lot of time to get anything to Breckland.

From EMO:

Watton Hare Trail

8 Hares placed around different areas of Watton, each hare would have a letter that would make up a word.

Two hares would be placed at opposite ends of the high street marking the 'gateway' to Watton, improving on the 'Welcoming Watton' ambition of Town Delivery Plan, as well as the 'Attractive Watton' ambition. The other 6 hares would be placed at significant places around the Town (e.g. St Mary's Church, Chaston Place, Museum4Watton etc.).

The Hare trail would be ongoing for 4-6 weeks leading up to a 'Spring Fayre' high street event (date TBC but thinking during the May half term school holiday) at which those that have completed a trail form (with the correct word spelled out) would be entered into a prize draw. Three winners would be selected to win one of the wooden hares along with a gift hamper. Entry for the hare trail could be £1 per trail form and then all proceeds would be donated to the Mayor's chosen charities for the year.







Wild in Art supplies the statues for the 'GoGo' trails in Norwich, one of their medium sized (910mm height) Hare's is £820 +VAT (inclusive of delivery) and one of their large sized (1960mm height) hare's is £1695 +VAT (inclusive of delivery), it would be good to have two of these that would then be installed at the gateways of Watton as permanent fixtures. These fiberglass statues arrive ready to be painted, which they could be painted by the local children at our free Community Fun Day events – which take place every Tuesday of the school holidays throughout the year. The other 6 Hares would be created by a local artist, Shaun Gilbert, costing around £380 each.



Antiques wrap up

Due to the poor weather forecast we had to cancel the high street aspect of the Antiques market this year. Last year, after cancellations and no-shows on the day we had 15 stalls on the high street. This year, before any cancellations and no-shows we had 15 stalls planned for the high street. It seems that the event is getting smaller each year and so it has been discussed that it might be a good idea to move the outside element of the event up to Kittell Close carpark – which would only cost £35 to close. That way the event would be more enclosed and not look as sparse. The museum did exceptionally well this year, despite there being nothing on the high street – so I don't think moving the high street aspect to the Kittell Close carpark would harm the museum's business.

Obviously, this would then cut us down to two events in the high street during the year, but Sue and I were discussing the possibility of holding a 'Spring Fayre' in the high street during the May half term holidays, this would essentially be a Spring Market, like the festive market. I believe this could be done for a medium-low cost and would bring a lot of people to the high street.

	Resolution	Date/ Agenda item	Action	Link to 4YP/NP	Lead	Current Position – 16.07.25	Status
128	To apply for a Faculty to permit removal of excess soil from Watton Cemetery	10.06.25 7.3iii	Application to be made		Office	Office to do!	
127	To obtain an independent report regarding the cherry trees at the west end of the High Street	10.06.25 7.3i	Report commissioned		Office	Report awaited	
126	Apply to the Norfolk County Council Parish Partnership Scheme 2025 to help fund a dropped kerb to allow easier disabled access to the Bridle Road Play Area site	08.04.25 10	Apply for funding		Office	Emailed Highways engineer and County Councillor on 09.06.25 Highways Engineer is investigating whether a dropped kerb is feasible	
125	Purchase a third SAM2 Vehicle Activated Sign as funded by the NCC PPS	08.04.25	Purchase SAM 2 sign		Office	SAM2 sign has been purchased and arrangement made for post to be installed	
124	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	11.03.25 4.4i	Gather information		Office	EMO is currently collating a directory	
120	Quote accepted to carry out the following works to the Clock Tower: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • site inspection of the tower • review of the present quinquennial survey 	14.01.24 15	Accept quote and arrange works		Office	Site inspection of the tower took place 30.01.25 Building Surveyor report received and forwarded to contractor	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> production of a list of works and discussion of the list with a view to producing a minor schedule of works. 					Awaiting date for works to be undertaken.	
116	To establish a working group to prepare a long term staffing strategy.	22.10.24 7.3iii			Fin HR	Staffing Re-structure report received – see HR Com. minutes from 10.07.25	😊
114	To hold discussions with BDC regarding possibility that the Town Council can take over the car parks in the town	24.09.24 8	Hold discussions with BDC		Office	Awaiting revised Heads of Terms for lease of car parks	😊
111	A policy relating to the use of Council resources, such as the market gazebos, should be compiled.	10.09.24 11	Compile policy		Office	Draft report compiled Deferred until after a meeting of the Market Working Group has been held – Date needs to be set for meeting	😊
104	To produce a staff well-being policy	23.07.24 4.6	Compile policy		HR	All other HR policies have been implemented, Staff Well-Being Policy still to do	😊
85	Cllr Bridges to compile Play Area Policy	22.08.23 4.6i a,b,c,d	To present Policy to Full Council in 2025		TB	Awaiting Draft Policy – Cllr Bridge to liaise with the Office	😊
82	Landscaping of Portal Avenue Community Land.	08.08.23 7.3	Research landscaping.	4YP NP	Office	EMO has started compiling a google sketch of ideas for Heritage Park	😊
68	Seats – to undertake audit of seats around the parish.	11.10.22 5	Undertake audit of seats.		Town	DC and TO have begun an audit of all street furniture Future project for EMO to populate Scribe Civility Asset Management Software	😊
45	All initial urgent repairs recommended by the Quinquennial Inspection Report on Wayland Hall	14.09.21 6.1	Some works have been undertaken.	4YP	Office	Remaining works to be quoted by builders who are to repair the windows at Wayland Hall.	😊

	for which the Town Council are responsible for will be undertaken.						
21	To commission audit of energy usage in Council premises.	22.09.20 5.1		4YP	Office	Work to heating system at Wayland Hall has been undertaken. see 77 Audit of Energy could be incorporated within a review of the Sustainability Audit	😊
13	Watton Town Council will consider model Climate Change Awareness Policies for possible adoption.	6 12.11.19	Clerk to investigate and present model policies to Full Council.	4YP	Clerk	Sustainability Audit to include Climate Change Awareness Policies	😊
	To undertake a Town Council Sustainability Audit.	12 24.09.19	To undertake Audit.		Office		
4	To display photos of past Mayors in Council Chamber.	14/309	To collate photos and display.		Office	2 more photos to be obtained Note to be posted in the Chamber to state these 2 photos are unobtainable.	😊

NP – Watton Neighbourhood Plan

4YP – Town Council Financial Four Year Forecast

Item 7.2

Minutes from the Finance Committee Meeting held on July 10th 2025 at Wayland Hall

Present: Don Saunders (Chairman), Stan Hebborn, Sue Hebborn, Gillian Tarrant
Officers Present: Jane Scarrott

1. No Apologies for absence received.
2. No Declarations of Interest made.
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 12.06.25.
 - i. The Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 12.06.25 were confirmed as correct and signed by the Chairman of the Finance Committee.
 - ii. Update from the Minutes of the Meeting 12.06.25:
 - Noted that to date no further correspondence has been received from Breckland Council regarding the possible lease of the town car parks.
 - It has been agreed to commission an independent opinion regarding whether or not the cherry trees at the west end of the High Street have outgrown the planters.
 - The builder commissioned to undertake work to replace the windows in the Council Chamber at Wayland Hall has been asked to quote for other outstanding works on the Wayland Hall Quinquennial Report.
 - iii Other items raised by Full Council

Noted that the Clerk was delegated the authority to arrange for the TO2 van to have a new clutch fitted. The cost is estimated at £1466.

The suggestion has been raised that the Council might consider re-joining the Norfolk Association of Local Councils to ensure appropriate sector information is received relating to Local Government Re-organisation and Devolution. The Finance Committee considered this and a recommendation will be made to Full Council that Norfolk Association of Local Councils subs of £1118.29 for 25/25 are paid,

4. Bank Reconciliation

The Finance Committee members were issued with a Bank Reconciliation dated 30.06.25 which was checked and signed by the Internal Control Officer.

Members were presented with net figures showing current expenditure against the budget.

Noted that legal fees may go beyond the budgeted figure once the costs to renew the Museum4Watton lease have been paid.

The Office has purchased a waste carriers licence at a cost of £164 to allow emptying of litter bins to be undertaken in house by the Town Operatives. The current contract with Breckland Council to empty the bins at the Play Areas will cease in October 2025.

The cleaning of the public toilets has raised some concern lately and it is known the present cleaner is leaving employment with the current contractor. If the standard of cleaning does not improve the Council may need to consider engaging a different

contractor. It was suggested investigation could also be undertaken regarding implications should the Council wish to directly employ someone to clean the toilets.

4.1 Watton Skate Park

Watton Skate Park is near completion at Watton Sports Centre. The Sports Centre is suggesting an opening ceremony. With further correspondence likely to be forthcoming from the Sports Centre regarding this it was felt this matter should be remitted to a future meeting.

5. Internal Auditors Report

The Internal Auditors Final Report for 24/25 was presented to Full Council on 10.06.25.

Noted that the 24/25 accounts have been received by the External Auditor.

The Finance Committee has considered the recommendations from the Internal Auditor with the Office to action:

1. To assist in evidencing compliance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (Section 4), the Clerk will provide examples of check lists the Council could adopt as part of its Internal Controls.
2. The Asset Register has been brought up to date but there is a need to compare the Asset List with insurance documents to ensure adequate insurance cover is in place.

6. Review of the Four Year Forecast

Councillors were presented with a financial update position, including current committed spend.

A site meeting will be booked with the developers of Heritage Park and consideration will be given to whether a footpath can be created from the neighbouring estate across the open space land and whether this could be funded through s106 money. The use of remaining section 106 money held by Breckland Council will be an agenda item for the next Full Council meeting.

7. Date of the next meeting:

Finance Committee: **Thursday August 14th @ 10.00am.**

Agenda items or recommendations for Full Council:

1. Recommendation that the 25/26 Norfolk Association of Local Councils subs of £1118.29 are paid.
2. Agenda item – to consider how the Council could use the remaining s106 money held by Breckland Council.

Item 9 s106

Breckland Council will hold a remaining £7627.04 if the recent application made by the Loch Neaton Trustees for a Basketball and Seat Scheme is accepted.

The Office is trying to obtain a specification from the Highway Engineer for a possible dropped curb or a trod for Bridle Road and once costs are known it may be that s106 funding could be applied for to assist implementation of either scheme.

A further suggestion to possibly make use of the money is for a footpath from the adjacent estate across Heritage Park. The Office is trying to arrange a site meeting with the developers at Heritage Park.

Item 11.1/2

Minutes of the meeting of Watton Town Council HR Committee held on Thursday July 10th 2025 at Wayland Hall

Cllrs present: Stan Hebborn – Chairman of the Committee, Don Saunders and Sue Hebborn

Staff present: Clerk and Deputy Clerk

1. No Apologies for absence received.
2. Resolution passed to exclude the public and press to consider confidential staffing matters.
3. No Declarations of Interest made.
4. The minutes of the HR Committee meeting held 12.06.25 were accepted as a true record and duly signed by the Chairman.
5. Staffing Update

Councillors were presented a summary of the Staffing Report received from the consultant.

Points noted:

- The suggested new Staffing Structure is acceptable to the three members of staff who will form the Senior Management Team. To date, other members of staff have had sight of the Report but have not been specifically asked to comment.
- If the Deputy Clerk and Community Projects Officer accept additional responsibility their pay grades would need to reflect this. For both to receive one incremental point increase to their salary would result in an increase to the staffing budget of £1266.28 p.a. on current pay scales (includes employer NI and pension contributions).

No general pay increase for 25/26 is yet known but an offer of 3.2% has been rejected.

An upgrade of one increment point would result in the hourly rate for the DC increasing by £0.36 and for the CPO by £0.24.

- Creation of a Senior Management Team made up of the Town Clerk (TC), Deputy Town Clerk (DC) and Community Projects Officer (CPO) may see some of the work load moved away from the Town Clerk, but for all three there will be some day to day staffing responsibilities plus a need for meetings of the Management

Team and time will need to be found for this to happen and to conduct any “appraisal meetings”.

It is felt job descriptions may need to be reviewed.

- A new Performance and Management Policy will need to be compiled. It is suggested the Management Team look at compiling a draft policy.

- Investigation, including costs, needs to be undertaken re. use of any staff intranet platform.

Advice from HR Service providers may be beneficial in implementation of the recommendations.

Conclusion/Current Position

- TC, DC and CPO have had initial informal discussion as to how to proceed.
- HR Guidance may be needed to confirm appropriate action is being taken around job descriptions and appropriate pay increases.
- Suggest that the Management Team is agreed by Council and tasked with meeting to begin looking at a new Performance and Management Policy and to investigate a possible intranet platform for staff.

The suggestion from the HR Committee is that those who are to be part of the Senior Management Team meet to consider how to proceed which would include amendments to their job descriptions to be presented to the HR Committee.

It was noted that the current contract for HR services is due for renewal and some discussion took place regarding whether a different provider should be engaged.

It was agreed a recommendation will be made to Full Council to trial an alternative provide for 12 months at a cost of £499.50 per month which will include both HR and Health & Safety services. The package offered by Peninsula is considered to be best value for the HR and H&S services needed at the present time.

6. Council acknowledgement and implementation of the Legal disqualification of councillors under the Local Government (Disqualification) Act 2022.
At the Full Council meeting held on the 8th July Councillors were made aware of the disqualification relating to anyone named on the sex offenders register. The Council's co-option forms will be amended to include notice of the disqualification.
7. The next HR Committee meeting will be held on:
Thursday August 14th 2025 at 11.00am.

Recommendation to Full Council:

1. To engage Peninsula to provide HR and H&S services for a trial period of 12 months at a cost of £499.50 per month.

Item 11.3

The current Cemetery rules are not clear:

8.13iii Memorials for Cremated Remains must not exceed:

Desk type tablet 0.5m square with a maximum of 0.1m high

Maximum dimension of foundation stone 0.6m x 0.6m. The top of the foundation stone to be level with the surrounding ground.

Historically it has been accepted that all memorials in the ashes section of the Cemetery are desk type tablets. There are one or two which are not.