

Minutes of the meeting of Watton Town Council held on

Tuesday 22nd July 2025 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber at Wayland Hall

Councillors Present: - Gillian Tarrant –Chairman, Sarah Draper, Keith Gilbert, Stan Hebborn, Sue Hebborn, Tomos Hutchings, Tina Kiddell, Graham Martin, Keith Prince, Don Saunders, Jack White.

Officer present: Jane Scarrott Clerk

I. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE RECEIVED AND ACCEPTED from

Tony Bridges and Tina Cruz

2. NO DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST MADE

3. MINUTES

3.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on July 8th 2025 were accepted as a true record.

3.2 Updates from items raised at the meeting on July 24th 2025 not agenda items for this meeting:

- An arboriculturist has made a site visit to look at the cherry trees at the west end of the High Street and his report is awaited.

4. REPORTS

4.1 Chairman's Report

The Chairman has attended:

10th July Finance Committee Meeting

13th July Watton Carnival

14th July Rainbows Presentation Evening

15th July Watton Ladies Group 5th Anniversary Celebration

15th July Breckland planning consultation

22nd July US Air Force 'Change of Wing Command' 100th Air Refuelling Wing at RAF Mildenhall

4.2 Vice-Chairman's Report

A written report from the Vice-Chairman had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting.

Some debate took place regarding the content of the report and the decision made at the previous Full Town Council meeting regarding the Safer Street Warden Scheme. It was stressed that this matter should not be considered for review before six months as no new information has come forward.

4.3 District Councillor's Report

Report from District Councillor Tina Kiddell had been forwarded to Town Councillors prior to the meeting.

4.4 County Councillors Report

No report received from County Councillor Claire Bowes.

4.5 Clerks Report as presented in the agenda pack with verbal update given: 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 Tarrant, Tomos Hutchings, Tina Kiddell, Graham Martin and the Clerk attended.

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.

Cllr Tomos provided a written report of the site submissions for Watton which had been e-mailed to Councillors prior to the meeting.

[Once a link to the public consultation on proposed sites is available it will be shared with Councillors.]

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 the Town Council 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 Town Delivery Plan. [Investing in your Town - Breckland Council](#)

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

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 the 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 (possibly during the May half term school holiday) at which those that have completed a trail form would be entered into a prize draw.

Antiques wrap up

Due to the poor weather forecast the High Street aspect of the Antiques Market this year was cancelled. Last year, after cancellations and no-shows on the day there were 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 (cost of £35 to close the car park). 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.

This would cut us down to two events in the High Street during the year, but there is thoughts 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.

4.6 Lead Councillors and Representatives Reports

No reports submitted, however it was noted that Cllr Hutchings is happy to share the report he had written for the postponed Wayland Partnership Meeting.

5. WORKS IN PROGRESS

The Works in Progress List was accepted as presented.

- It was noted that the Faculty application has been submitted regarding removal of soil from the Cemetery.
- Noted that a meeting of the Market Working Group is needed to consider the future use of the market gazebos.
- Building maintenance works are still to take place on the clock tower after which the Council will consider works to repair the clock itself.

6. NO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - no members of the public present.

7. FINANCE

7.1 Payments for July 2025 were approved for payment as on the list presented prior to the meeting.

7.2 The draft minutes from the Finance Committee held on 10.07.25 were noted.

7.3 Recommendation from the Finance Committee:

- i. **It was resolved** to pay the 25/26 subs of £1118.29 to Norfolk Association of Local Councils (Norfolk ALC).

8. UPDATE ON DEVOLUTION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT RE-ORGANISATION (LGR)

Information is shared with Councillors as it is received.

The Clerk is scheduled to attend a Norfolk ALC meeting on LGR.

9. S106

It was noted that s106 funding of £7627.04 is held by Breckland Council and it is suggested this money should be applied for asap.

Suggestions put forward include works to Bridle Road Play Area and a trod for Heritage Park.

This matter will be an agenda item for the Full Council meeting on August 12th when more information and costs should be available.

10. PLANNING

10.1 PL/2025/1001/VAR 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

No comments

It was noted that the Council has received notification of unauthorised development at Otterwood Kennels, Dereham Road.

11. Resolution passed to exclude the public and press.

11.1 The draft minutes of the HR Committee held on 10.07.25 were noted.

11.2 HR Support

It was decided to revisit the choice of HR providers before any decision is made regarding which service providers to engage. Further information will be considered at the next HR Committee meeting.

11.3 Memorial request

It was agreed not to make any decision relating to the request received for a non-standard ashes memorial at Watton Cemetery.

The family will be informed that the current request is not within the rules but that the rules are to be reviewed. The Office will begin the review and bring any decisions needed back to Full Council.

Noted that if the Town Council is to make any representations regarding the retrospective planning application PL/2025/0756/FMIN for Otterwood Kennels it will reflect comments made by Saham Toney Parish Council as the development sits in Saham Toney parish.