



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 9th December 2025 at 7.00pm for the purpose of transacting the following business.

Jane Scarrott – Town Clerk

3rd December 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 25.11.25 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 Clerk's Report
 - I. Update on the transfer of car parks to the Town Council
 - 4.4 Reports from Lead Councillors
5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
6. FINANCE
 - 6.1 To approve payments for December 2025 (To follow)
 - 6.2 To note the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 27.11.25
 - 6.3 Finance Committee recommendation to full council:
 - I. The Internal Auditor recommended that an Internal Control Statement be compiled – A draft was presented to members of the Committee, and it is suggested that adoption of the statement is recommended to Full Council with the following amendments made:
 - Ensure the statement is reviewed before 31st March 2026
 - Item 3.1 State a time frame in which the minutes of the Finance Meeting is circulated to Full Council – within 5 working days.
7. To note draft report received from the Internal Auditor (App 1)
 - 7.1 To review Standing Orders and Financial Regulations (App 2 and 3)
8. Update on Devolution and Local Government re-organisation
9. To consider quote received for Tree Survey remedial works
10. To note Digitalisation Working Group Notes from initial meeting held on 27.11.25
 - 10.1 To accept Digitalisation Working Group Terms of Reference
11. To receive Feedback from Festive Market
12. To agree response to Breckland Local Plan Consultation following input from public meeting held on December 5th
13. To consider grant application for Christmas Meal at Watton Sports Centre (To follow)

14. PLANNING To consult on planning applications received since the last meeting

15. To pass a resolution to exclude the public and press to consider confidential matters

15.1 To note the Minutes of the HR Committee Meeting held on 27.11.25

15.2 To update on Staff Job Evaluations

Item 3.1

Minutes of the meeting of Watton Town Council held on

Tuesday 25th November 2025 at 7.00pm in Wayland Hall

Councillors Present: - Gillian Tarrant (Chairman of the meeting), Tony Bridges, Keith Gilbert, Sarah Humphries, Tomos Hutchings, Tina Kiddell, Graham Martin, Keith Prince, Don Saunders, Jack White.

Officer present: Jane Scarrott Clerk

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE RECEIVED AND ACCEPTED from
Tina Cruz, Stan Hebborn and Sue Hebborn

2. NO DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST MADE

3. MINUTES

3.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on November 11th 2025 were accepted as a true record.

3.2 Updates from items raised at the meeting on November 11th 2025 not agenda items for this meeting:

- Office toilet is being replaced.
- Awaiting notification from Breckland Council that there has been no call for an election to fill the current two casual vacancies on the Town Council. If this is so the Council can begin the co-option process.
- Digitalisation Working Group to hold its first meeting on 27.11.25.

4. REPORTS

4.1 Chairman's Report

The Chairman has attended:

13.11.25 Finance Committee Meeting

13.11.25 CHT Management Committee Meeting and Food Hub Meeting

24/11 RAF Cadets Award Evening

4.2 Vice-Chairman's/District Councillors Report

- The Vice-Chairman voiced appreciation to the proprietor of the recently opened Watton Baguette Shop for his promotion of the town. It was noted that it is good to see such positivity in the High Street.
- It is understood that a meeting at Breckland Council w/b 01/12/25 will be looking at the possible transfer of the town car parks to Watton Town Council. It is hoped further information will be available following the meeting.

4.3 District Councillor's Report

District Councillor Keith Gilbert informed the Council that as he is a member of Breckland Council Planning Committee he cannot make any comment on specific sites within the Local Plan consultation as he cannot be seen to be predetermined. However he stressed that a public meeting should be called to facilitate discussion on the proposed development site adjacent to Wayland Wood.

It was agreed that a public meeting would be called specifically to put comments together regarding the proposed allocation in the Breckland Local Plan of land which is adjacent to Wayland Wood as development land (WAT 3). The meeting

would need to be arranged as soon as possible and be well advertised. A message will be posted on social media to inform members of the public of the planned meeting.

4.4 County Councillors Report – County Councillor not present.

4.5 Clerks Report as presented in the agenda pack with verbal update given:

Wayland Hall

5 windows in the Council Chamber have been replaced. The builders have also been asked to replace the top window of the large north frame and the glass of a downstairs window.

The gas heating boiler at Wayland Hall has also been replaced due to a fault occurring resulting in no heat in the building.

The work was undertaken as an emergency with the expenditure agreed by the Chairman and the Chairman of the Finance Committee. All Councillors were in agreement to support the Chairmans request for ratification of the cost of £3770 plus VAT for the replacement boiler.

Watton and Saham Flood Action Group (WASFAG)

A WASFAG meeting was held on 17.11.15. A lot of information relating to flooding and climate change is available and it is of note that Breckland Council has recently published emergency planning information for ward members (shared with Town Councillors). It is hoped that when time allows information will be published on the WASFAG website.

Bird Flu

Notice published regarding a confirmed case of Avian Influenza at a premises near Watton.

Wayland Academy Prom Committee

The Wayland Academy Prom Committee is seeking support for the Prom in June 2026. It is suggested a grant application form is submitted.

Internal Audit

The Internal Auditor undertook his interim audit visit on 24.11.25 and his draft report has made some suggestions which will be considered by the Finance Committee at its meeting on 27.11.25 with recommendations to be brought back to Full Council.

20mph Speed Limit Consultation

Norfolk County Council is proposing to make various roads in Watton 20mph speed zone limits. The roads are Washington Drive and those off Washington Drive on the former RAF site along the Norwich Road.

4.6 Lead Councillors Reports

Cllr Hutchings reported that it was agreed at the WASFAG meeting that WASFAG will have a presence at the Festive Market and that it is likely Reclaim the Rain will provide an update in December on the plans for rain gardens in Watton High Street.

4.6i Cllr Bridges had presented a report regarding the play area at Watton Sports Centre.

There has been an issue with mushrooms growing in the bark safety surface at the play area and decisions need to be made regarding action needed. At present the play area has been closed due to Health & Safety concerns.

It was resolved to keep the play area closed until plans have been agreed.

A meeting will be arranged with Watton Sports Association which owns the land on which the play equipment is sited and quotes will be sought for possible alternative safety surfaces. The Memorandum of Understanding in place between the Town Council and Watton Sports Association was shared with those present.

Cllr White confirmed that he is willing to lead the proposed Digitilisation Working Group and he outlined some thoughts as to how a digital strategy could help build Watton and lead to recognition for the town. It was stressed that the Chamber of Commerce and Wayland Partnership, who are working towards the creation of a Digital and Creative Media Centre in the town, should be included in discussions.

5. WORKS IN PROGRESS

The Works in Progress List was accepted as presented.

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public present.

7. FINANCE

7.1 Payments for November 2025 were approved for payment as on the list presented prior to the meeting with the addition of payment of £134.40 to Ashill Fire Protection.

7.2 The Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 13.11.25 were noted.

7.3 **2026/27 Budget** - It was resolved to accept the recommendation from the Finance Committee to set the 2026/27 budget of £594370 as presented with a precept request of £519420.

It was resolved not to increase charges for the Cemetery, Market or Allotments during the 2026/27 financial year.

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

Updates received from Breckland Council, Norfolk County Council and the Norfolk Association of Local Councillors all passed to Councillors.

9. BRECKLAND LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

It was resolved to call a public meeting to facilitate discussion regarding site allocation WAT 3 in the draft local plan before making any comments on the Local Plan Consultation.

10. GREEN SPACES

It was resolved to request transfer of all the Breckland Council owned green spaces in the town to the ownership of Watton Town Council.

11. JUBILEE GARDEN

It was resolved not to turn Jubilee Garden into a wild flower meadow.

12. PLANNING - no planning consultations received.

13. Resolution passed to exclude the public and press to consider staffing matters.

13.1 The Minutes of the HR Committee Meeting held on 13.11.25 were noted.

Item 3.2 Update from the meeting held 25.11.25

Agenda Item No.	
3.2	Toilet at Wayland Hall still to be replaced
4.6i	Meeting to be arranged with Watton Sports Association regarding the play area
10	Breckland Council informed that Watton Town Council is keen to take ownership of all open spaces offered in the parish.

Item 4.3 Clerks Report

Christmas period office closure

24th Dec 2025 – 2nd Jan 2026

Reclaim the Rain

Reclaim the Rain' is a pioneering joint project between Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils which will develop innovative ways to reduce flooding in small, rural communities. The £6.4 million project is funded by Defra and the Environment Agency as part of their Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme and runs until March 2027. Reclaim the Rain aims to promote and improve resilience to both flooding and drought in six selected small rural communities across both counties that will act as case studies. The three communities in Norfolk are Watton, Thompson and Woodton, near Bungay.

The plans for Watton include construction of features in the High Street to reduce the risk of flooding during very heavy rain or storms.

Reclaim the Rain commissioned a company called GreenBlue Urban (GBU) to design the features which include rain gardens, tree pits and special planters. These sustainable drainage features help capture excess surface water to create greener spaces and slow down the flow of water within the system.

On 18th December, GBU are meeting with key stakeholders including the Wayland Partnership, the Town Council, representatives of the Watton & Saham Flood Action Group, Anglian Water, Breckland District Council, County Highways and the County Lead Local Flood Authority.

All these stakeholders need to assess the proposals and decide which are going to work to not only improve the flood risk but also provide enhancement of the High Street. It is hoped that what is proposed will also help increase the footfall in the town.

ACAS Training

The Deputy Clerk attended ACAS Flexible working webinar on 20th November 2025

The Clerk attended ACAS Management Training on the 27th and 28th November 2025.

Middle Street Consultation

Public consultation is soon to commence on the proposals for Middle Street pedestrianisation. Before proceeding, NCC have advised that following some recent feedback received from those in the immediate vicinity, it would be prudent to seek some further information before this commences.

Businesses:

Some local businesses have raised concerns about access and deliveries:

- Fish and Chip Shop – concerned about potential loss of customer parking and the impact on their business

- The Kings Arms – are supportive in principle but require written assurances regarding: 1) a 24/7 tables and chairs licence or alternative, 2) guaranteed dray delivery access, and 3) controlled removal of outdoor furniture only for major works.

To address these issues, detailed information is needed to understand the current delivery arrangements for all businesses in the area. This will allow the development of solutions that meet the needs of as many businesses as possible while minimizing the risk of legal challenges.

Residents on Middle Street:

NCC's legal team have advised that vehicular access (not necessarily parking) to residential properties is of high importance and therefore if it is proposed to remove it, there must be a strong case to support the reasons why we believe the perceived loss can be mitigated (and/or) is outweighed by the benefits of the project. This means we will need to carry out further communication with the residents on Middle Street to find out how we can mitigate or prove that any change will have a minimal impact on their day to day lives.

Information gathering has begun and the TC will be kept updated on progress and next steps.

Item 6.2

Minutes from the Watton Town Council Finance Committee Meeting held on Thursday November 27th 2025 at Wayland Hall

Present: Don Saunders (Chairman), Stan Hebborn, Sue Hebborn, Gillian Tarrant and

Tomos Hutchings sat in the committee meeting but not as a committee member.

Officer Present: Michelle Thompson

1. Apologies for absence received from Tina Kiddell.
2. Stan H declared an interest in item 4 due to knowing and recommending 3 of the IT companies who have quoted for the Councils IT services.
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 13.11.25.
 - i. The Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 13.11.25 were confirmed as correct and signed by the Chairman of the Finance Committee.
 - ii. Update from the Minutes of the Meeting 13.11.25:
 - 5 quotes have been received for IT provision. The quotes are based on a specification of the Councils current IT services. See item 4
 - The Town Council's contribution to the NCC Parish Partnership scheme has been paid towards the trod at the end of Norwich Road.
 - The Sports Centre play area will remain closed. The Sports Centre will be involved in future discussions, and the EMO is investigating option/quotes for re-surfacing.
 - The 25/26 Budget and precept was agreed by Full Council at the meeting on 25th November 2025.
 - iii Other items raised by Full Council
 - Drone images for events - 1 quote received has been received so far. It was noted that professional photographers do attend TC events that allow the Town Council usage of the images for free but clarity regarding insurance and volunteering is needed then other quotes can be sought.
 - The Internal Auditor recommended that a Internal Control Statement be compiled – A draft was presented to members of the committee, and it is suggested that adoption of the statement is recommended to full council with the following amendments made:
 - I. Ensure the statement is reviewed before 31st March 2026
 - II. Item 3.1 State a time frame in which the minutes of the finance meeting are to be circulated to all members of the council – Within 5 working days.
 - New Model Standing Orders (SO) have been issued by the National Association of Local Councils. Consequently, the internal auditor has recommended that a review of Standing Orders and Financial Regs (FR) is undertaken. The Clerk has started to track changes but point 19 in relation to Handling Staff Matters and annual appraisals will need agreeing before the SO's and FR's are presented to council.

As point 19 is HR related the TC HR provider will be contacted re HR policies before the SO's are adopted.

- Car Parks Heads of Terms – Before the Heads of Terms are agreed further investigating is needed on:
 - I. Street lighting
 - II. EV Charging points and if the revenue will come to the TC
- CCTV – Stan H to advise
- The Interim Internal Auditors report was noted, and recommendations are being implemented.

4. Current contracts including IT provision

A full list of current contracts was presented including options for H & S provision.

The current contacts list will be amended to include a column purely stating the contract renewal dates. This is to be an agenda item on the next Finance Committee meeting including quotes for the Emergency Lighting as this contract is due for renewal in Jan 2026.

IT Provision has been remitted to the Digitalisation Working Group

5. Date of the next meeting: Finance Committee:

11th December 2025 at 10:00am

Recommendation to Full Council:

- The Internal Auditor recommended that an Internal Control Statement be compiled – A draft was presented to members of the committee, and it is suggested that adoption of the statement is recommended to full council with the following amendments made:
 - II. Ensure the statement is reviewed before 31st March 2026
 - III. Item 3.1 State a time frame in which the minutes of the finance meeting is circulated to members – Within 5 working days.



WATTON TOWN COUNCIL

INTERNAL CONTROL STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2026

To be reviewed annually before April 1st each year.

1. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Watton Town Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is used economically, efficiently and effectively, safeguarded and justifiably accounted for.

The Council is responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

2. THE PURPOSE OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

3. THE INTERNAL CONTROL ENVIRONMENT

Personnel

3.1 The Council:

The Council makes decisions in line with its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations which are reviewed annually.

The Council reviews its obligations and objectives and approves budgets for the following year at its meetings during October to December.

The budget and level of precept for the following financial year should be agreed at or before the meeting of the Full Council in December.

The Council has appointed a Finance Committee which meets once a month. Members of the Committee undertake budgetary review and monitor progress against objectives, financial systems and procedures.

The minutes of the meetings of the Finance Committee, which may include recommendations, are circulated to all members of the Council within 5 working days to assist the Full Council to monitor progress against its aims and objectives.

3.2 Clerk to the Council/Responsible Finance Officer:

The Council has appointed a Clerk to the Council who advises the Council and who administers the affairs of the Council.

The Clerk is responsible for advising on the day to day compliance with laws and regulations that the Council is subject to and for managing risks. The Clerk also provides advice to help the Council ensure that its procedures, control systems and policies are maintained and adhered to.

3.3 Internal Control Officer

The Council annually appoints a member of the Council to act as Internal Control Officer to carry out internal scrutiny checks such as review of the monthly bank reconciliation and payment of staff salaries.

3.4 Internal Auditor

The Council annually appoints an independent Internal Auditor who reports to the Council twice a year on its:

- bookkeeping arrangements
- corporate governance, financial regulations and risk management procedures
- salary payments and procedures
- budgetary controls
- income control
- asset registers
- bank reconciliations and end of year procedures

3.5 External Audit

An External Auditor is appointed by [Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd](#) (SAAA). For the 5 financial years from 2022/23 to 2026/27 this is PKF Littlejohn who submit their annual external auditors report to the Council.

4. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

The Council has responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control. The results of that review must be considered by the Council, which should also approve the Statement on Internal Control.

Statement approved and adopted by Watton Town Council at the meeting on

Chairman of the Council

RFO/Clerk

Item 8 LGR

Norfolk ALC Newsletter forwarded to Cllrs 03.12.25

Item 9

Loch Neaton

- T6, G4, T10 felling to near ground level.
- T5, T7, T8, Removing dead wood over 25cm Dia & greater.
- T11 Remove limb to branch collar.
- T9 Pollard to primary union (2.5m).
- All waste will be left on site and stack into habits plies.

Total price £3200.00 + VAT

Note two extra tree requiring work

- Scott pine in dead and Beech tree is decline.



Allotments & Jubilee Park

- T3, Remove hanging branch.
- T4, Removing dead wood over 25cm Dia & greater.
- G3, Remove ivy up to 2m

Total price £800.00 + VAT

St Mary's Churchyard

- T1 Reduce branch by 1 – 1.5m
- G1, G2, Removing dead wood over 25cm Dia & greater.

Total price £1200.00 + VA

Digitalisation Working Group

Thursday 27th November 2025

In Attendance:	Keith Prince, Sarah Humphries, Tomos Hutchins, Stan Hebborn, Jack White, Tina Kiddell, Michelle Thompson
Apologies:	None

1	Quick wins
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publicly available Wi-Fi – up the high street. The BT board being put on Chaston place will have public Wi-Fi. - DCMC is a great win for the town. It would be good to invite David to a working group meeting. - Digitalised reporting system that would help people to report council related matter – those matters unrelated to the council would be referred to the right authority body. - Rolling digital displays on the bus stops with advertisements and events etc. - We should only look to monetise digitalisation if there is a legitimate purpose to help fund council activity.
2	Funding
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We could look at borrowing money from the government to improve digital infrastructure. - There are also grants available to look at.
3	WTC upgrades
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We need to upgrade how the TC works. Should have a backup streaming system or at least let the public know when the streaming is not working. - Social media posting can be controlled by AI, for regular posting and advertisements. - Council run CCTV in the high street. - JW to audit and project plan for CCTV, Wi-Fi, and digital signage.
4	Terms of Reference
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to establish terms of reference for the working group so that there is a clear picture of what the group wants to achieve. - Once terms of reference have been set and agreed, the working group's plans will need to go to finance. - JW to draft up terms of reference to bring to the next meeting in December. - 3 councillors would be the minimum requirement, 6 would be the maximum, plus the Events and Marketing Officer. With the option of invitation of relevant members of the public. - Meetings could be run via Teams for inclusivity of those unable to attend in person.
5	Service Level Agreements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff in office to get the service level agreements from all companies used for digital usage. - JW to take quotes and refine, must provide the service level agreements.
Next Meeting Thursday 11th December 12:15	

Digitalisation Working Group (DWG) – Draft Terms of Reference (Revised)

1. Name of Group

Digitalisation Working Group (DWG)

2. Purpose

The purpose of the Digitalisation Working Group is to identify, evaluate and implement digital solutions that improve the efficiency, transparency and accessibility of the Town Council's operations and services.

The DWG is a *task-and-finish* group and will be established to deliver clearly defined tasks agreed by the Town Council (TC).

3. Defined Task(s)

The Town Council will specify the task(s) assigned to the DWG. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Reviewing current digital processes and identifying areas for improvement.
 - Recommending suitable digital tools, platforms, or systems.
 - Supporting implementation where appropriate.
 - Presenting findings and recommendations to the TC.
-

4. Membership

- The DWG will consist of **3–6 Town Councillors** plus one member of staff.
 - Members of the public with relevant skills or experience may be invited to contribute.
 - The **Chairman or Vice-Chairman** of the Working Group will chair all meetings, ensuring discussions remain inclusive, fair and constructive.
 - After each meeting, the Chair or Vice-Chair will report progress to the TC.
 - Notes will be taken by the EMO, Deputy Clerk, or Clerk.
 - Meetings may be held virtually when appropriate.
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5. Dissolution of the Group

- The DWG will be dissolved once the assigned task(s) are completed.
 - If the DWG wishes to dissolve early, it must notify the TC.
 - The TC may request a review of the DWG at any time.
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- **General Notes**

1. The Town Council is the accountable body for the DWG.
2. The TC will approve these Terms of Reference.
3. The DWG will report to the TC as required.
4. The Chair and Vice-Chair will act as facilitators during meetings.
5. An agreed timetable will be established for all actions.
6. Meeting dates will be communicated to the TC.
7. Agendas will be produced by the EMO, Deputy Clerk, or Clerk after consultation with the Chair.
8. Experts or individuals with specialist knowledge may be invited to attend discussions but will not be formal members of the DWG.

- **Quick Wins for Digitalisation**

To ensure early progress and visible benefits, the DWG may prioritise the following quick-win initiatives:

1. Improve Communication & Transparency

- Introduce or enhance online reporting tools (e.g., resident issue-reporting forms).
- Clearer, more accessible information on the TC website (meeting dates, agendas, project updates).

2. Digital Documentation & Workflow

- Move frequently used forms (allotments, bookings, enquiries) to digital versions.
- Standardise cloud storage for documents (e.g., Google Drive / OneDrive).
- Introduce digital signatures for internal approvals.

3. Modernise Internal Processes

- Evaluate scheduling or task-management tools for staff (e.g., Trello, Asana, Microsoft Planner).
- Introduce automated reminders for key deadlines (policies, inspections, renewals).

4. Enhance Community Engagement

- Improve social media coordination and scheduling.
- Create a simple e-newsletter sign-up through the website.

5. Small Technology Upgrades

- Assess and update outdated devices/software (printers, laptops, antivirus).
- Improve Wi-Fi access or video-meeting capability for hybrid TC meetings.

These items require minimal cost or disruption and can deliver rapid benefits while the DWG develops broader recommendations.

Item 11

Feedback from Events and Marketing Officer

The Festive Market this year went smoothly, we only had 3-4 stall holders out of 47 not turn up on the day which is pretty good. All of the stall holders I spoke to gave positive feedback and so did all of the visitors we spoke to.

Town Crier Mike stepped up to be Father Christmas this year and he was absolutely fantastic, I did offer him a fee/donation as this is way out of the realm of what we usually ask of him - but he has declined as he wanted to help us out of a tight spot.

The bands and the flash mob were well received, the flash mob is something that Sue has wanted to try for years and I'm glad it worked really well!

Jemma from M&A Partners, who sponsored us £100 towards the grotto gifts, attended the market and I met with her to talk through the event and what their sponsorship paid for. I thanked her again for their sponsorship.

I would like to thank Anne, Steve, Michelle and Jane Lambert for assisting me on the day. I would also like to thank Tina Cruz and Sarah Humphries for setting up and running the Tombola stall for me.

I would also like to massively thank Don and Sue Dent, who were both there from early morning to assist me with set up. I could not have run the event without the two of them, setting up was a very tight schedule and I struggled to get any volunteers to help with this.

Feedback from Deputy Clerk

As Lorren has already said, the Festive Market was a big success!

From a staffing perspective it's a long old day and a lot of TOIL is accrued. Us staff really do need commitment from councillors for future events and some investigation into paying a contractor to set up and put down the gazebos – I believe the cadets helped put up the gazebos but was unable to assist with the put down so this was left to Sue D, Lorren and myself doing the heavy lifting with some help from Steve and Anne.

I think a rota system is needed to ensure all staff and volunteers are given breaks from their allocated jobs but this could be resolved if there were more volunteers to cover.

Item 12 Breckland Local Plan

Breckland District Council is currently consulting on the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan.

Responses to the consultation need to be submitted by December 15th.

The Council called a public held on December 5th to facilitate discussion regarding site allocation WAT 3 in the draft Local Plan.

Breckland planners have said “If you wish to organise a public meeting to discuss the Local Plan then that is your prerogative. In light of other consultation events, it is unlikely that officers will be able to attend an event.

However, it is important to note that the consultation period does end on the 15th December so we would strongly advise you, and others, to get your comments to us before then. The Council is on a very tight timescale to prepare the Plan and as such does not have much discretion here – and does need to treat everyone fairly / consistently. At the current time we do not anticipate extending this deadline.

We will have less discretion (i.e none) at the next consultation stage (likely to be summer 2025) where the rules will set a hard deadline with only comments received before the deadline being sent on to the Planning Inspector for formal consideration.

I would be happy to arrange for a couple of our team to meet with a couple of Town Council representatives to discuss the site (WAT 3 (088)) early in the New Year. Clearly, the conclusions of any public meeting you hold could inform the approach your representatives would take at that meeting and if the allocation is carried forward into the Regulation 19 Draft Plan (next summer) be included in your response that Plan.

If your have any queries or wish to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to get in touch.”

In order to reach as many people as possible, and answer as many of your questions regarding the plan as possible Breckland Council **is hosting an online virtual engagement event on Monday the 8th of December**. Leader of Breckland Council, Sam Chapman-Allen and Director of Planning and Building Control, Simon Wood will be in attendance to answer questions. Questions can either be pre-submitted by emailing the Local Plan Team at localplan@breckland.gov.uk, or asked live in the event chat during the event.

E-mail forwarded to Cllrs 02.12.25 giving registration details for the event.

Item 14.1

**Minutes of the meeting of Watton Town Council HR Committee held on
Thursday November 27th 2025 at Wayland Hall**

Cllrs present: Stan Hebborn – Chairman of the Committee, Sarah Humphries, Don Saunders and Jack White

Staff present: 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 13.11.25 were accepted as a true record and duly signed by the Chairman.

It was acknowledged that the Council office has received the HR app proposal from Jack White.

5. Staffing Update

- Job descriptions have now been reviewed and sent for evaluation
- A staff welfare check has been undertaken on a member of staff, no issues were raised. It was suggested that a welfare diary could be kept and as part of the HR app an anonymous wellbeing survey could be available to all staff members. The Deputy Clerk will follow up on the welfare check with the staff member.
- Issues have arisen regarding replacing the toilet in Wayland Hall, it has been suggested that a preferred local suppliers list is compiled. Events and Marketing officer to investigate alongside notices to post at local builders merchants stating the Council would be keen to hear from people willing to quote for jobs.
- The new HR Services provider is contracted for 4 hours per week but if more hours are needed the clerk has authority to authorize the extra hours.
- New Model Standing Orders (SO) have been issued by the National Association of Local Councils. Consequently, the internal auditor has recommended that a review of Standing Orders and Financial Regs (FR) is undertaken. The Clerk has started to track changes but point 19 in relation to Handling Staff Matters and annual appraisals will need agreeing before the SO's and FR's are presented to council.

As point 19 is HR related the TC HR provider will be contacted re a timeline for reviewing the current HR policies before the SO's are adopted.

- When the HR policies are reviewed can generic welfare concerns be included where appropriate, which will ensure that if staff raise an issue with their line manager and the issue is not addressed within 7 days that the HR chairman is then called upon this would give staff reassurance and protect both staff and management in the event of a grievance.
6. The next HR Committee meeting will be held on:
Thursday December 11th 2025 at 11.15am.