

Minutes of the meeting of Watton Town Council held on

Tuesday November 11th 2025 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber at Wayland Hall

Councillors Present: Gillian Tarrant – Chairman, Tony Bridges, Tina Cruz, Stan Hebborn, Sue Hebborn, Keith Gilbert, Sarah Humphries, Tomos Hutchings, Tina Kiddell, Graham Martin, Keith Prince, Don Saunders, Jack White

Officer present: Jane Scarrott Clerk

Lucy Austin, Principal of Wayland Academy present to address the Council.

1. NO APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE RECEIVED

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST MADE:

Sue Hebborn declared an interest in item 8.

3. MINUTES

3.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on October 28th were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

3.2 Update from the meeting held on October 28th not agenda items for this meeting:

- Dyno-Rod and Anglian Water attended Wayland Hall on Nov 4th to investigate the sewerage smell. Nothing was found although the problem still exists. The Office is once again looking for quotes to replace the Office toilet to eliminate the old toilet as possibly causing the issue.
- Norfolk County Council Parish Partnership Scheme acceptance form has been signed and returned for the agreed trod along the Norwich Road.
- The Highways Engineer has been chased up for a diagram/spec of the dropped kerb to enable quotes to also be obtained for possibly widening the paths at Bridle Road play area to make them compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act.

4. REPORTS

4.1 Chairman's Report

The Chairman has:

31st October Attended the launch of the Wayland Chamber of Commerce Digital Creative Media Centre (DCMC) at the Dragon Hall, Norwich

1st November Helped to put up the poppy display at the Methodist Church

3rd November Attended the Squirrels Award Evening

5th November Laid a wreath at St Ethelberts church Wretham and attended service for Polish and Czechoslovak War Graves

8th November Attended the Remembrance Service at St Mary's Church at the Commonwealth War Graves

9th November Attended the Remembrance Service at the War Memorial and took part in the parade along the High Street and the service at the Methodist Church

11th November Attended the Armistice Day 11.00am remembrance at Chaston Place

The Chairman thanked all those involved in the remembrance events and also reminded those present that tombola prizes and volunteers will be needed for the Festive Market.

4.2 Vice-Chairman's Report

The Vice-Chairman attended the launch of the DCMC, the Remembrance Service at the Memorial on 09.11.25 and at Chaston Place on 11.11.25.

4.3 Clerks Report

Written report presented in Councillors Agenda Pack:

- Noted the Breckland Policing Priorities and dates for Neighbourhood Meetings.
- As a result of Councillors stepping down the Council acknowledged that there are two vacancies on the Town Council. Breckland Council has been informed and will begin the process to fill the vacancies.
- The Clerk attended the Breckland Town & Parish Council Forum on 03.11.25.
- Car Parks Update – the Clerk has had a meeting with Officers of Breckland Council and it is sounding more positive that the three Breckland owned car parks in the town may be able to be transferred to the Town Council at nil consideration. However, to protect all parties it is likely a legal opinion will be sought before progressing further. More will be known after a meeting at Breckland Council on November 17th.
- The Witch Trail Report by Cllr Hutchings submitted in the agenda pack for the meeting was noted.

4.4 Lead Councillors Reports

Tony Bridges, Lead Councillor for Youth, asked that the Sports Centre Play Area be included as an agenda item for the next Full Meeting of the Town Council.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Lucy Austin, Principal of Wayland Academy, spoke of the rapid changes and commendable achievements Wayland Academy has made in recent times. The Academy achieved an Ofsted rating of good in 2023 but is looking to move this to “exceptional” by the time of the next Ofsted visit. This year the school has celebrated the best exam results it has ever achieved. Staff and students should be recognised and congratulated.

The Principal expressed a desire for the Council to visit the school and an open invite will be made available via the Town Council Office.

6. DEVOLUTION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION (LGR) –

See information on <https://www.breckland.gov.uk/LGR>

7. FINANCE

7.1 The minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 23.10.25 were noted.

7.2 **It was resolved** to pay £359 to Force8 Events for security at the Fireworks Evening.

7.3 **It was resolved** to agree advance payment of £400 to Mobile Disco Network to attend the Festive Market 2025.

7.4 **It was resolved** to accept the quote for equipment as needed for the Town Operatives to attend a course to qualify them in the use of a chain saw.

8. GRANT APPLICATION

8.1 Watton Christmas Hamper Appeal

It was agreed an offer would be made to purchase 50 boxes of mince pies to support the Watton Christmas Hamper Appeal.

8.2 Watton Evening Women's Institute

It was agreed not to offer the grant as requested by Watton Evening Women's Institute for CPR/defibrillator training but information will be passed on regarding possible sources of free training providers.

9. NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL (NCC)

The Response submitted to the Norfolk County Council Questionnaire re. flooding as presented in the agenda pack for the meeting was noted.

10. BIODIVERSITY WORKING GROUP

The Council is looking to establish a Biodiversity Working Group.

It was suggested an invitation should be made to all Councillors to join the group with those interested in volunteering to be members of the group to arrange to get together for an initial meeting.

Tomos Hutchings, Stan Hebborn and Keith Prince showed interest in possibly being members of the group.

11. DIGITALISATION WORKING GROUP

The Council will look to establishing a Digitalisation Working Group to make use of technology wherever possible to benefit the Council and the Town.

Suggestion was made to liaise with the Wayland Chamber of Commerce and make links with the Wayland Partnership which is progressing with a Digital and Creative Media Centre at the west end of the High Street.

Cllr White was asked to put some costings together to bring back to the Council and Councillors interested will be invited to be part of the Group.

It was noted that BT is thought to be installing a BT street hub at Chaston Place and this is likely to provide public wi-fi.

12. FREE TOWN WI-FI

It was felt that the possibility of the Council providing free public wi-fi in the town could be investigated by the Digitalisation Working Group.

13. MEMORIAL GARDEN BENCH

Some debate took place as to whether the bench at Memorial Garden should be re-sited further back from the road.

Consideration was given to spending public money to move the bench again and **it was resolved** not to do so.

It was noted the Office struggles to find tradesmen such as builders and plumbers to undertake small jobs and it was suggested notices be posted at local builders merchants stating the Council would be keen to hear from people willing to quote for jobs.

14. PLANNING

14.1 PL/2025/1563/FMIN Proposed change of use for a residential dwelling: The property will transition from Residential (Use Class C3) to a Day Nursery (Use Class E(f)). The proposed changes include internal renovations to the building. Additionally, the applicant plans to provide secure access and a play area for the children attending the nursery. Opal House, 61 Griston Road, Watton IP25 6DN

Comments raised regarding possible Highway issues with additional traffic using Griston Road which is a cul-de-sac.

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

15.1 The Minutes of the HR Committee Meeting held on 23.10.25 were noted.