

Minutes of the meeting of Watton Town Council held on

Tuesday 28th October 2025 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber at Wayland Hall

Councillors Present: - Gillian Turrant (Chairman of the meeting), Keith Gilbert, Stan Hebborn, Sue Hebborn, Sarah Humphries, Tomos Hutchings, Tina Kiddell, Graham Martin, Keith Prince, Jack White.

Officer present: Jane Scarrott Clerk

I. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE RECEIVED AND ACCEPTED from

Tony Bridges, Tina Cruz, Don Saunders

2. NO DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST MADE

3. MINUTES

3.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on October 14th 2025 were accepted as a true record. Comment was made however that the Footfall Camera Report was not noted at the meeting.

3.2 Updates from items raised at the meeting on October 14th 2025 not agenda items for this meeting:

- Hares are now ordered for the Watton Hare Trail.
- Quotes are being sought for a light head for the column at Church Walk.
- Council HR and Governance Support engaged to undertake job evaluations.
- HR consultant engaged to provide HR services is scheduled to spend a day in the Office on November 6th.

4. REPORTS

4.1 Chairman's Report

The Chairman has attended:

15th October Watton Society AGM

23rd Car parks and Finance Committee Meetings

28th October Charlotte Harvey Trust Fun Day

The Chairman voiced her thanks to all involved with the very successful Fireworks Evening on October 24th.

4.2 Vice-Chairman's Report

The Vice-Chairman reported that she had attended the Fireworks Evening which she described as phenomenal. She has also attended Breckland District Councillor Housing Allocation Training along with Cllr Gilbert. It was noted there is a demand for housing in the area far greater than the premises available.

4.3 District Councillor's Report

As above.

Cllr Gilbert reported that he is now, once again, a member of the Breckland Council Planning Committee.

Cllr Bowes was not present at the meeting but had sent a written report through prior to the start of the meeting.

4.4 County Councillors Report

Cllr Bowes was not present at the meeting but had sent a written report through prior to the start of the meeting.

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

- A draft of the Investigation Report into the County Wide Flooding from May to October 2024 has been sent to the Council. This has been shared with Watton & Saham Flood Action Group.
- Two items of wooden play equipment have been removed from play areas as recommended in the annual RoSPA play equipment report.
- There have been several instances of an horrendous sewerage smell within the Town Council Offices in the last couple of weeks. This is being investigated. Councillors stressed the need to address this issue as soon as possible.
- Quotes have been sought and passed to Breckland Council to possibly fit a light head on the bare pole at the east end of Church Walk.

4.5i Middle Street Consultation

From consultation with key stakeholders and local businesses, Norfolk County Council (NCC) has received a couple of questions which it would like the Town Council's views on:
1) The Kings Arms has asked whether license will be granted for them to have permanent outdoor tables and chairs? And if so would this conflict with the existing town's Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) relating to alcohol consumption in public areas?

It was felt this is a question which needs to be answered by Breckland Council's Licensing Team.

2) One of the local traders has requested delivery access to the proposed pedestrianised area. There may be a need to consider giving all local businesses within the Market Square access to keys to allow deliveries to their premises. But the question would be how the Traffic Regulation Order can be best enforced on the ground to ensure access to unlock the bollards is not being abused?

The Town Council is willing to help manage the bollards but it was suggested accepted procedures would need to be implemented to be fair to all.

NCC is preparing to carry out the full public consultation of plans for Market Square from the beginning of December 2025.

The Town Council is willing to help with consultation including provision of an exhibition within Wayland Hall.

4.6 Lead Councillors Reports

Cllr Stan Hebborn re-iterated how successful the 2025 Firework Event had been and again thanked all those involved. It was noted however that few Councillors helped on the evening and that future events need better commitment from Councillors.

An e-mail from the Events & Marketing Officer, updating on events, had been sent out prior to the meeting. Noted that £562.34 had been raised in the collection buckets at the Fireworks Event. This is down on previous years and thought to be due to the fact the people carry little cash. With this mind the Office is investigating the possibility of using a crowd funding platform.

4.6i Biodiversity Working Group

It was resolved that the Church Walk Walking Group should remain as a Task and Finish Group which can be called upon if necessary.

It was resolved to establish a Biodiversity Working Group. Membership will be considered at the next meeting of the Full Council.

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 October 2025 were approved for payment as on the list presented prior to the meeting with the addition of payment of £510 for removal of condemned play equipment at the Sports Centre and Bridle Road Play Areas, £396 to provide buggies for use at the Fireworks Evening and £270 for ACAS staff training.

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

Updates received are passed to Councillors.

Cllr Hutchings informed those present of the Norfolk County Council business case for one unitary authority for Norfolk. There are many unknowns including what future Council tax will be, if there will be staffing cuts and whether revenue costs will fall helped by removing duplication of services. It is however of note that money has been put aside to establish Neighbourhood Teams throughout the authorities area with aims which include the creation of harmonisation and fairness.

Councillors however were reminded that nothing has been decided regarding LGR and that at present there is a great deal of uncertainty around what will happen.

9. NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL PARISH PARTNERSHIP SCHEME

9.1 Norwich Road Trod

It was resolved to accept the updated cost to the Town Council of £6517 towards the proposed trod along the Norwich Road from east of the Lidl site to the bus shelter. The remaining 50% of the cost to be funded through the Norfolk County Council Parish Partnership Scheme.

It was a very close decision to go ahead with the trod due to the increase in cost, but it was felt the trod will be of benefit and that costs will only continue to rise.

9.2 Bridle Road dropped Kerb

It was resolved to accept the Parish Partnership offer of £694.94 to install a dropped kerb at the Bridle Road Play Area. Other works have been identified that may need to be undertaken to ensure the path which will lead off the dropped kerb is wide enough to be Disability Discrimination Act compliant. Costs to make the path compliant will be explored.

10. GRANT POLICY

It was resolved to accept the wording for the Town Council Grant Policy: The applying organisation should be a registered charity and/or be either based wholly in Watton, or able to demonstrate that its activities benefit Watton residents.

11. WAYLAND ACADEMY ACHIEVEMENT EVENING

It was resolved to sponsor a prize of £50 for the Wayland Academy Achievement Evening 2025.

The invitation to the Achievement Evening will be forwarded to Councillors.

12. CAR PARKS

It was resolved to continue to pursue Option 2 as offered by Breckland Council regarding the transfer of the three Breckland owned car parks in the town for nil consideration.

13. PLANNING

13.1 PL/2025/1559/FMIN Replacement windows and doors 24a High Street, Watton

No comments made

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

The Chairman of the HR Committee gave an update of the HR Committee meeting held on 23.10.25.