

**Minutes from the Watton Town Council Finance Committee Meeting held on
Thursday November 13th 2025 at Wayland Hall**

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

1. No Apologies for absence received.
2. No Declarations of Interest made.
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 23.10.25.
 - i. The Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 23.10.25 were confirmed as correct and signed by the Chairman of the Finance Committee.
 - ii. Update from the Minutes of the Meeting 23.10.25:
 - The Office is still considering its IT needs and looking at quotes for IT service provision. It was suggested the Finance Committee could hold an additional meeting to consider any future contract.
 - An application has been submitted to Norfolk County Council Parish Partnership scheme to create a trod towards the bus shelter at the Carbrooke end of the Norwich Road.
 - The Office continues to review service contracts as they come up for renewal.
 - iii Other items raised by Full Council

Noted that the Town Council is to consider what maintenance work may be needed at the Sports Centre Play Area. It was felt the Sports Centre should be involved in future discussions.

4. Bank Reconciliation

The Finance Committee members were issued with a Bank Reconciliation dated 31.10.25 which was checked and signed by the Internal Control Officer.

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

Points raised:

- The Finance Committee looked at the likely cost to chase a small cemetery debt and it was suggested it would be more than it is worth to continue with any recovery process through the court. However, the Chairman and Clerk will make an attempt to meet with the debtor as a final attempt to recoup the outstanding money.
- A suggestion was made to investigate grant funding for works to the Clock Tower rather than increase the budget line for the clock tower.
- Noted that the weekly market runs at a loss, chiefly due to the cost of outsourcing road closure measures. It was felt that in the future this may be brought back in house but how to staff this would need consideration.

5. Budget 26/27

Members were presented with a suggested budget for 2026/27 and possible options regarding the precept request.



The Finance Committee will recommend that the Council sets the budget need at £594370 which will include £25000 to be allocated for the possible transfer of the car parks in the town from Breckland District Council to Watton Town Council. Income is estimated at £54950 and as in the agreed four year plan £20000 from reserves will be used to support staffing costs. Therefore the suggested 2026/27 precept request is for £519420.

With a tax base of 3044.5 it is estimated the Band D charge for a property in Watton will be £170.61. This is an increase from 25/26 of £19.63 or 13%.

It was noted the informal survey put out to residents asking if they would be willing to accept a possible £10 per year increase on their Council tax to keep car parks in the town free of charge to the user indicated 85% in favour.

Noted that if the budget is agreed the £25000 allocated for the car parks would be transferred to the high interest CCLA account until needed.

Should the imminent general budget see an increase in employer national insurance contributions then it is possible some adjustment may be needed within the budget.

6. Review of the Four Year Forecast

The Four Year Forecast will be in its final year in 2026 and it was stated that it will be for any new Council to consider plans for the next four years of its term.

7. Date of the next meeting: Finance Committee: **Thursday November 27th @ 10.00am.**

Recommendation to Full Council:

It is the view of the Finance Committee to accept the budget as presented set at £594370 for 2026/27 with a precept request of £519420.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. Curran', written in a cursive style.

11.12.25