

Minutes of the meeting of Watton Town Council held on

Tuesday 24th March 2026 at 7.00pm in Wayland Hall

Councillors Present: - Gillian Tarrant (Chairman of the meeting), Keith Gilbert, Stan Hebborn, Sue Hebborn, Sarah Humphries, Tomos Hutchings, Tina Kiddell, Graham Martin, Don Saunders, Jack White, Keith Prince, Gavin Bulmer, Cathy Halfacre, Jacqui White

Officer present: Michelle Thompson Deputy Clerk

I. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE RECEIVED AND ACCEPTED from Tina Cruz

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST MADE

Gavin Bulmer declared an interest in item 9.

3. MINUTES

3.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on March 10th 2026 were accepted as a true record with the following amendment – Councillor Sarah Humphries was in attendance at the last meeting but was not listed as present.

3.2 Updates from items raised at the meeting on March 10th 2026 not agenda items for this meeting:

- Interviews for the Office Support Clerk position are scheduled for April 2nd
- Biodiversity Working Group meeting to be held before the Full Council meeting on April 28th

4. REPORTS

4.1 Chairman's Report – Nothing to report

4.2 Vice-Chairman's Report - Nothing to report

4.3 District Councillor's Report – Nothing to report

The following issues were raised to the District Councillors:

- A sign has been erected for Regency Living Redhill Court which has been positioned in front of the Redhill Park entrance sign, this has caused issues with emergency services and finding the location – Sign to be reported to Breckland Council.
- Questions were asked regarding Breckland District Councils recent Staff award event. Councillor Hebborn to forward questions to District Councillor Tina Kiddell to address at the next District Council meeting.
- Can clarification be received as to who the responsible authority is for the CCTV camera at the bottom of Griston Road which has been mounted on a Norfolk County Council post. This is to be discussed further at the next Digitalisation Working Group meeting and forwarded to County Councillor Claire Bowes for investigation.

4.4 County Councillors Report – County Councillor not present and no report received. Councillor Claire Bowes to be reminded once again, for reports to be presented in time for them to be digested before meetings. The County Council will be approached about this and asked to attend more meetings.

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

- The Watton Annual Town Meeting is booked for April 21st, 7pm at Watton Sports Centre.
- Clerk and Deputy Clerk spoke to Craig Fowler who oversees the CCTV in the Town for Breckland Council. Originally it was agreed to have CCTV as an agenda item on March 24th but as discussed with Councillor White maybe it's worth re-visiting at a Digitalisation Working Group meeting before taking back to full council again.
Digitalisation Working Group meeting date to be scheduled.
- A meeting was held with a representative from West Suffolk College to talk about Apprenticeships. The talk was very educational and the prospect of Apprenticeships to either upskill current staff or for new positions will continue to be investigated.
- As Reclaim the Rain are working with Blue Green Urban to design and cost new drainage features such as tree pits, rain gardens, SuDS Planters and a water tank to help manage flooding within Watton High Street a Public Consultation was scheduled for April 1st at the Town Hall but this has now been cancelled due to Norfolk County Council's pre-election period.
- The Wayland Partnership Development Trust Memory Café no longer work with the Partnership therefore the Charity has changed its name to Watton and Wayland Memory Café.
- The Watton Town Council Hare Trail will be starting on Friday 3rd April – the EMO is on track to receive all 10 of the wooden Hares before 31/03/26 for them to then be distributed around Town Centre businesses. The two white hares, one being painted by HMP Wayland, are not strictly part of the Hare Trail, but it is hoped that they will also be installed before the trail starts.

4.6 Reports from Councillors

Councillor Tomas Hutchings reported that:

- He attended a workshop with Queer Norfolk & East Anglian Film Company about their project to save queer history.
- He attended a workshop with spinning wheel theatre for their 'let's make history' project. He will support them by joining their volunteer force to tour primary school children around Thetford.
- Museum for Watton informed that they have applied for a road closure for their Antiques Fair.
- He attended the AGM of the Wayland Chamber of Commerce, who accepted him onto their committee as an honours member of the Town Council.

4.7 Festival of Youth Report

Councillor Saunders and the Events and Marketing Officer made initial conversations with Wayland Academy to discuss the idea of holding a Festival of Youth event in 2027

It was resolved to move forward with the plans to hold the festival of youth in 2027

5. WORKS IN PROGRESS

The Works in Progress List was accepted as presented with the following:

- Update given on the Clock Tower's outstanding structural works.
- Office to investigate expenditure that has currently been spent on the Clock mechanism

- Councillor Don Saunders and Events and Marketing Officer to investigate English Heritage funding for the clock tower
- Biodiversity working group to look into Sustainability Audit and Climate Awareness policies
- It was noted that space is limited on the walls in the Council Chamber for the mayoral photos – it was suggested to extend the area up the walls.

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

7. FINANCE

7.1 Payments for March 2026 were approved for payment as on the list presented prior to the meeting with the addition of P M Robson – Gravedigging of £340.00

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

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

Councillor Kiddell that the Government should confirmed its decision on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Norfolk this week.

9. PRIDE IN BRECKLAND GRANT

The Pride in Breckland Grant “is being provided to support projects which enhance the district and meet the needs of local communities.” Watton Town Council have accepted the grant of £12,210; it is suggested that the grant should be spent on ‘Place-Based Improvements’, being mindful of the priorities set out in the Watton Town Delivery Plan.

It was resolved to add this item to the next Biodiversity Working Group meeting agenda along with asking the Events and Marketing officer to research if the grant money could be used on part of the Heritage park project.

Meanwhile Councillors were asked to submit any suggestions to the office, suggestions will then be collated and brought back to the next full council meeting for consideration.

10. EQUIPMENT LOAN HIRE POLICY

It was resolved to defer the policy to the next Finance Committee meeting to discuss the implication of potentially having to register for VAT and the refundable deposit amount.

11. BRECKLAND COUNCIL REVISED LOCAL LIST 2026

Breckland Council have informed the Town Council of a consultation they are holding regarding the Breckland District Council Local List. The Local list is a Validation checklist for applicants to use to ensure they submit all information to make a planning application valid. The Town Council has been asked to respond as representatives of the public.

It was resolved to support what is already included in the revised Local list.

12. PLANNING

12.1 PL/2026/0273/FMIN - Change of use of cafe Class E to Sui Generis Bingo Hall - 44 High Street, Watton

No comments

12.2 PL/2026/0322/CLOPUD - Certificate of Proposed Use for the preparation and cooking of food for business distribution (once or twice per week only, on one or two days each week (for example, Saturday and/or Sunday), for approximately 4–6 hours in total on each day (between 9:00 am and 6:00 pm)) - 28 Wessingham Road, Watton, Thetford

No comments – Support application

12.3 PL/2026/0336/FMAJ - Erection of 12no. self-contained holiday-rental units and associated private amenity, parking, refuse storage and landscaping - Richmond Park Golf Club Saham Road, Watton

The Town Council are willing to support Holiday rental but not full time residential. The Watton and Saham flood Action group will also be consulted regarding any potential flooding issues from the river wissey.

12.4 PL/2026/0297/CLOPUD - Certificate of Lawfulness - Confirmation that the proposed new tenant (Royal Mail) can operate Units C1 & C2 under B8 use with no operating hour restrictions. - Unit C1 & C2 Neaton Business Park, Norwich Road, Watton

More information to be requested from Breckland District Council regarding operation/usage of the site and planning application to be brought back to the next Town Council meeting

12.5 PL/2026/0360/FMIN - FMIN minor application - Proposed continued B8 (storage and distribution) use of Units C1 & C2 with unrestricted 24/7 operation, the installation of external air-conditioning and ventilation plant with associated ductwork and minor elevation amendments including signage, and formalisation of staff and operational vehicle parking arrangements. - Unit C1 & C2 Neaton Business Park, Norwich Road, Watton, IP25 6JB

More information to be requested from Breckland District Council regarding operation/usage of the site and planning application to be brought back to the next Town Council meeting

12.6 PL/2026/0305/ADV - ADV Advert Application for consent to display an advertisement(s) consent - Proposed continued B8 (storage and distribution) use of Units C1 & C2 with unrestricted 24/7 operation, the installation of external air-conditioning and ventilation plant with associated ductwork and minor elevation amendments including signage, and formalisation of staff and operational vehicle parking arrangements. - Unit C1 & C2 Neaton Business Park, Norwich Road, Watton, IP25 6JB

More information to be requested from Breckland District Council regarding operation/usage of the site and what type of advertisement display is being proposed. Planning application to be brought back to the next Town Council meeting

12.7 PL/2026/0368/DCA - Discharge of Conditions 13 on PP 3PL/2022/0806/F - New Green Business Park Norwich Road

No comments

12.8 PL/2026/0372/HOU - Proposed demolition of existing rear single storey extension and construction of new rear single storey extension with roof terrace, new two storey side extension and installation of PV panels. - 3 Swaffham Road, Watton, Thetford, Norfolk, IP25 6LA

No comments

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

13.1 Correspondence has been received from members of the public regarding the increase in Council tax for the year 26/27.

A formal statement will be provided in reply to the residents and published on the Town Council website.

DRAFT