



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

To Councillors: You are hereby summoned to attend the Town Council meeting to be held in the Council Chamber, Wayland Hall on Tuesday 14th April 2026 at 7.00pm for the purpose of transacting the following business.

Jane Scarrott – Town Clerk

8th April 2026

Please note presentation at 6pm by George Curtis Coxshall on behalf of Barratt David Wilson Homes Anglia. Chamber will be open at 7pm for Members of the public.

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 24.03.26 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
 - 4.4 Reports from Lead Councillors
5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
6. Update on Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation
7. GRANTS/DONATIONS
 - 7.1 To consider grant application received from Watton Loch Neaton Bowls Club App 1
 - 7.2 To consider grant/donation application received from The Benjamin Foundation App 2
 - 7.3 To consider grant application received from 2nd Watton RAF Rainbows App 3
 - 7.4 To consider grant application received from Wayland Chamber Businesses Conference App 4
8. To consider suggestions received re Pride in Breckland Grant
9. PAYMENTS
 - 9.1 To agree payment of £1100 to Maytree for the 8 wooden hares
 - 9.2 To agree payment of £1830.50 for the Mayors Volunteer’s Celebration event on 19.04.26
10. To consider correspondence received re. Parish Footpath Audit
11. To consider gift for Weeze to acknowledge 40 years of Twinning
12. PLANNING - To consult on planning applications received since the last meeting

12.1	PL/2026/0297/CLOPUD Brought back from last TC meeting	Certificate of Lawfulness - Confirmation that the proposed new tenant (Royal Mail) can operate Units C1	Unit C1 & C2 Neaton Business Park,	https://publicportal.breckland.gov.uk/planning/index.html
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		& C2 under B8 use with no operating hour restrictions.	Norwich Road, Watton	?fa=getApplication&id=199210
12.2	PL/2026/0360/FMIN FMIN minor application Brought back from last TC meeting	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	https://publicportal.breckland.gov.uk/planning/index.html?fa=getApplication&id=199218&language=en
12.3	PL/2026/0305/ADV ADV Advert Application for consent to display an advertisement(s) consent Brought back from last TC meeting	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	https://publicportal.breckland.gov.uk/planning/index.html?fa=getApplication&id=199219&language=en
12.4	PL/2026/0305/ADV There have been amendments submitted to the aforementioned application	Proposed Royal Mail Fascia Signage.	Unit C1 & C2 Neaton Business Park, Norwich Road, Watton, IP25 6JB	https://publicportal.breckland.gov.uk/planning/index.html?fa=getApplication&id=199219
12.5	PL/2026/0441/DCA	Discharge of Conditions 3, 6, 7, 8 and 9 on PP 3PL/2022/0296/F	Land Off Field Maple Road, Watton	https://publicportal.breckland.gov.uk/planning/index.html?fa=getApplication&id=199305
12.6	PL/2026/0442/TRE	T1- Horse chestnut - Remove all new growth back to old reduction points approx start height 50ft finish 42ft approx approx start width 35ft approx finish 25ft	5 Forman Close, Watton, Thetford	https://publicportal.breckland.gov.uk/planning/index.html?fa=getApplication&id=199306
12.7	PL/2026/0449/CLOPUD	Proposed rear single storey extension	The Burrows Watton Green, Watton	https://publicportal.breckland.gov.uk/planning/index.html?fa=getApplication&id=199309

12.8	PL/2026/0483/TRE	<p>T1 - Horse Chestnut - Ht 19.6m S 10m - To reduce the crown by 3m to reduce the lever arm effect.</p> <p>T3 - Sycamore - Ht 18m - To pollard at 10m due to excessive lean towards neighbouring property</p> <p>T10 - Horse Chestnut - Ht 17 S 7m - To fell to a low stump or ground level due to excessive decay likely within the main stem from Ganoderma australe.</p> <p>T11 - Scots Pine - Ht 16.8m - Dead to remove.</p> <p>T12 - Scots Pine - Ht 15.7m - Heavy crown decline to fell tree.</p> <p>T13 - Sycamore - Ht 14.7m - To remove the dead stems only.</p>	THE VICARAGE Norwich Road, Watton	https://publicportal.breckland.gov.uk/planning/index.html?fa=getApplication&id=199351
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13. To pass a resolution to Exclude the Press and Public to consider confidential Staffing matters:
13.1 To agree recommendation from Staffing Interviews held on 02.04.26

Item 3.1

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

1. **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 reported 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.

Item 4.2 Update from the meeting held 24.03.26

Agenda Item No.	
4.3	<p>Redhill Court/Redhill Park sign – Email received from Breckland Council “With regard to your request unfortunately there is nothing that we at Street Naming & Numbering can do regarding the new large marketing sign covering the previous name built into the wall. However we will install a new street nameplate within the next 4-6 weeks, on the left hand side of the entrance in the Highways County verge, stating the street name of ‘Redhill Park’.”</p>
4.5	<p>Hare Trail started 3rd April</p>
13.1	<p>Formal statement compiled, sent to residents and published on the TC website</p> <p>“Watton Town Council Official Statement regarding increase to Council Tax</p> <p>Watton Town Council welcomes the opportunity to provide clarification regarding the Council’s budget setting process for the 2026/27 financial year.</p> <p>In recent years the Town Council has increased the precept by a minimal percentage which has resulted in money being drawn down from reserves. This approach is unsustainable.</p> <p>The budget for 2026/27 was set at £594,370, which will include £25,000 to be allocated for the possible transfer of the car parks in the town from Breckland District Council to Watton Town Council. The £25,000 allocated for the car parks will be held in a high-interest account until such time as it is required.</p> <p>An informal Car park survey was made available to residents in October 2025, which asked whether they would be willing to accept a potential £10 per year increase in Council Tax to ensure that car parks in the town remain free of charge to users. The survey results indicated that 85% of respondents were in favour of this approach.</p> <p>The Town Council predicted Income for the 2026/27 financial year was estimated to be £54,950 and, as set out in the agreed four-year financial plan, £20,000 from reserves will be used to support rising staff costs including National Insurance contributions. To cover this and other excepted annual expenses, the suggested 2026/27 precept request was set at £519,420.</p> <p>With a tax base of 3,044.5, it was estimated that the Band D charge for a property in Watton will be £170.61. This represents an increase from the 2025/26 financial year of £19.63, or approximately 13% which equates to less than 40p a week increase.</p> <p>Due to the Devolution and Local Government reorganisation it is possible the Town Council could receive open space land from the District Council which will also require funds for upkeep and maintenance.</p> <p>Watton Town Council remains committed to maintaining transparency in its financial planning and ensuring that residents are kept informed of decisions affecting the community.</p> <p>Watton Town Council”</p>

Item 4.3 Clerks Report

BT Street Hub - Chaston Place

Email from BT

“There wasn’t progress for some time due to the location not meeting Global’s scoring threshold – however, I’m pleased to inform you that there has been significant progress in the last 6 months. The foundations for the proposed Street Hub 3 were installed early October 2025, and the kit for build has been recently dispatched as of beginning this year.

Unfortunately, I don’t have a specific live date, but I would expect this to go live sometime during late spring/summer as the kit is already dispatched.”

Next Neighbourhood Police Meeting



🗣️ Have your say in local policing!

Your local officers host quarterly Neighbourhood Police Meetings for residents and businesses in the Watton and surrounding area

- ✅ Share concerns
- ✅ Discuss community issues
- ✅ Meet your local team

Join in person or online.

👉 Find details at www.norfolk.police.uk

✉ Email: SNTBreckland@norfolk.police.uk

📱 Find details on our Facebook page: Breckland Police

Your voice matters—help shape a safer community!



Norfolk PTS

Upcoming training dates sent round to Cllrs on 07.04.26

Please let the office know if you would like to attend any of the training sessions.

Annual Town Meeting

To be held at Watton Sports Centre on April 21st at 7pm

Item 7

In this financial year from March 31st 2025 – 1st April 2026 the Town Council has awarded the following Grants and Donations to local organisations

Grants

Applicant	Amount	Report received
Charlotte Harvey Trust	£1580.00	
Watton Carnival Committee	£1000.00	
Watton Ladies Group	£67.81	
Watton Christmas Hamper Appeal	£67.40	
Watton Junior School	£500.00	

Donations

Applicant	Amount	Report received
Watton & Saham Flood Action Group	£258.00	
The Wayland Partnership	£4333.74	
Wayland Academy Achievement Evening	£50.00	

The Town Council budgeted £5000 for grants, £7289.00 has been spent in total (£3215 in grants and £4641.74 in donations). No allocation is made in the budget for donations, money being drawn from reserves.

The budget grant allocation for 2026-27 was again set at £5000.

Reserves are being increasingly called upon.

The bank rec as of 31.03.26 shows overall funds held by the Town Council of £538054. As the Council accounts are based on income and expenditure this is not the final end of year figure (it will be less!).

The Council holds commuted sum monies of £183783 and has previously agreed that 50% of its annual budget need should be held for worst case scenario.

Therefore if these figures are used as a guide it is estimated than uncommitted reserves stand in the region of £56,000. This is not a large amount to call on in any emergency!

Item 7.4

Wayland Chamber has submitted a grant application for a conference in Watton but is also looking to submit a second application to support the position outlined below.

The Chamber is engaging a Freelance Membership Champion to focus on driving up Business membership.

Job Title: Remote Local Freelance Membership Champion (Part-Time)

Overview

Wayland Chamber of Commerce is a local business membership organisation dedicated to promoting local business, representing and looking after business interests and helping inform traders on business matters. We work in, with and for the local community.

Role Summary

We are seeking a hard-working, reliable, detail-oriented customer-facing administrative professional to assist the Management Committee in the following areas:

- by creating and maintaining a business contact database
- actively recruiting new members
- liaising and interacting with existing members
- encouraging and supporting participation in Chamber events
- encouraging taking up advertising opportunities in our annual directory
- community engagement
- secure sponsorship for events.

This is an exciting opportunity for an organised person who can maintain good records, exhibits high people skills, together with great verbal and written communication skills and has a genuine interest in promoting the Chamber. The successful candidate will provide this support on a contract basis, growing our business membership.

Key Responsibilities

- Create and maintain up to date records of all commercial businesses in the Wayland area, and those others who conduct business within the area, providing information of key people, contacts and brief company profiles.
- Recruit new members to the Chamber with a target to double membership each year.
- Connect and build links with potential new members and existing members encouraging participation at Chamber events, sponsorship and community engagement.
- Prepare regular written and verbal progress reports to the Management Committee as required.
- Assist in providing any reasonable additional support as requested

Other Responsibilities

- Preparation of promotional materials, advertising and social media content and delivery.
- Visiting and engaging with businesses in order help build and strengthen the impact of the Wayland Chamber of Commerce and elevate its perceived standing in the wider community.

Required Skills and Experience

- **Experience:** Proven experience in a similar administrative and/or customer-facing role is essential.
- **Technical Proficiency:** Strong computer skills, including expertise in Microsoft Word, Excel etc.
- **Organisation:** Excellent planning, organisational skills, and a proactive approach to managing multiple priorities and meeting deadlines.
- **Communication:** Strong written and verbal communication skills, confident with tele-sales.
- **Confidentiality:** Ability to handle sensitive information with discretion and maintain a high level of professionalism.
- **Work Environment:** Must have own laptop, a reliable internet connection, a phone for business use and a dedicated workspace, as this is essentially a fully remote position, although it may be beneficial to work and share office space with the Chamber Executive Secretary in Ashill from time to time.

Details

- **Hours:** Working an average of one day per week
- **Location:** Remote working but residing local to the Wayland Area.
- **Compensation:** Hourly rate or fixed price, to be agreed.
- **Duration:** Initial 3-month contract with potential to extend to 12 months with possible ongoing opportunities, thereafter.

How to Apply

If you are an organised and dependable individual looking to make a meaningful impact in Wayland we'd love to hear from you. Please apply by submitting your CV, together with a brief covering letter highlighting your relevant experience and key skills to chair@waylandchamber.co.uk. Please also state why you would like to do this work.

Item 8 Pride in Breckland Grant

Analysing Watton Town Delivery Plan:

Prelude:

Given the extraordinary circumstance following Breckland District Council's decision to launch the Pride in Breckland grants to the x5 towns of Breckland, it would be valuable to Watton Town Council to analyse the Watton Town Delivery Plan (*referred to as **WTDP** henceforth*) with the residents of Watton at the centre of discussions.

As the youngest councillor, I advocate for the money to enhance the built landscape, improve accessibility of civic services, improvements to open and green spaces and supporting x4 charities who are described as 'core assets' *for Watton* by WTDP. These are the services **all** can benefit from, however directly benefit young people (16-25) who avidly pursue socialising in third spaces such as parks, public land & Watton-based charity venues.

Chapter 4 of WTDP is already broken up into 5 distinct ambitions which I will lead with as I continue. The total of the grant is £12,210.

Grant Description & Purpose:

(Taken from a letter addressed to Watton Town Council (09/03/26)

'This grant is being provided to support projects which enhance the district and meet the needs of local communities.

To enable this proposal, a revenue grant will be provided to each of the 5 market towns at the start of 2026/27. This is a single grant for a single year.

The aim is to allow the Town Council's to have as much flexibility as possible on how to spend the funding.

The funding will be made available from 01 April 2026.'

In defining the spend scope it is proposed that, Watton Town Council should spend the grant on 'Place-Based Improvements', being mindful of the priorities set out in the Watton Town Delivery Plan. The funding can be used to support initiatives that improve civic pride or the vitality of the town. For example:

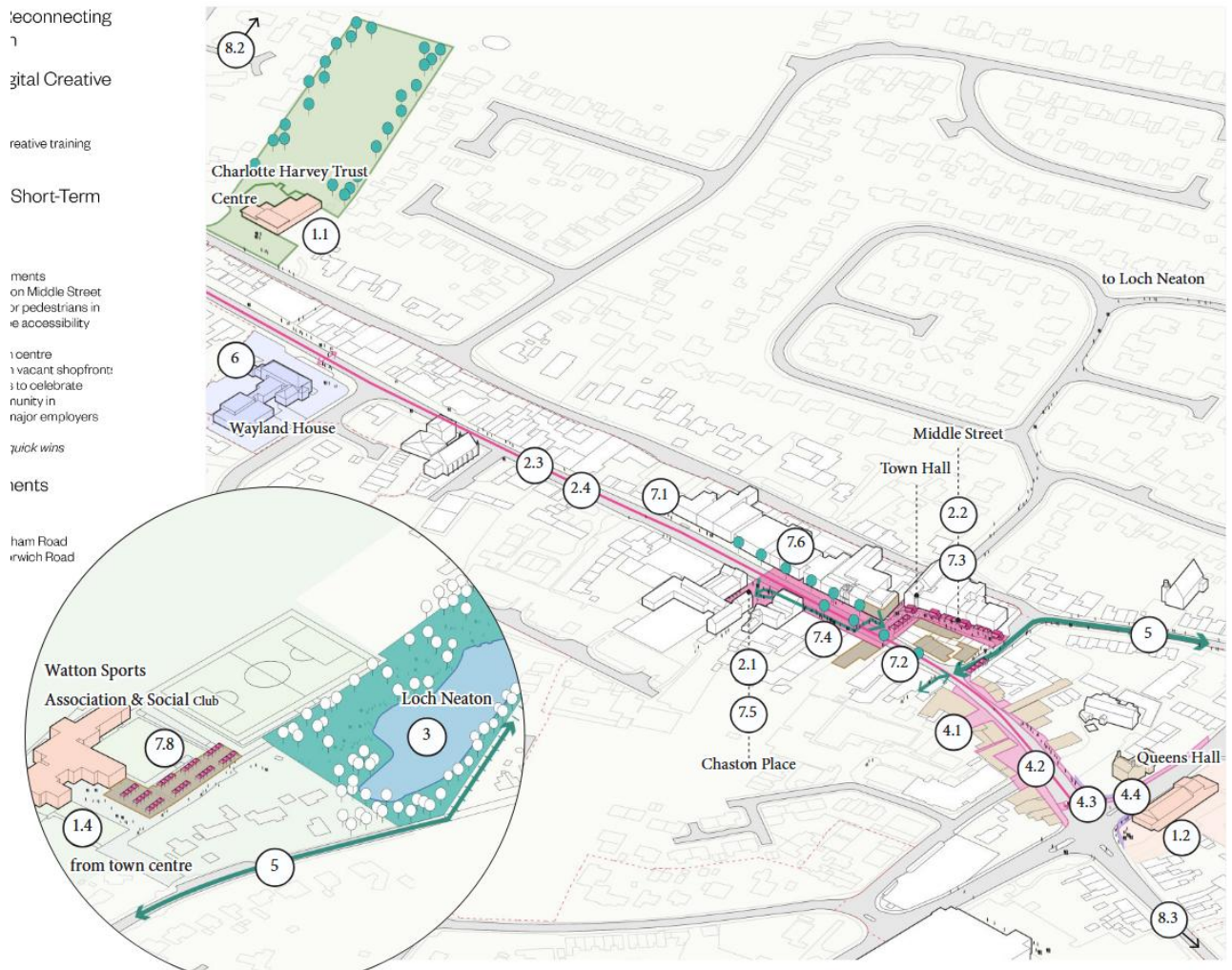
- **Public realm improvements**
- **Cultural, arts or heritage projects**
- **Environmental initiatives (planting, clean up)**

Contents:

1. WTDP Map
2. Attractive Watton
3. Inclusive Watton

4. Destination Watton
 5. Welcoming Watton
 6. Connected Watton
 7. Final Recommendations
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1. WTDP MAP (full map with key available online)



2. Attractive Watton

The WTDP lists 2 notable initiatives for enhancing our town centre, Chaston Place upgrades and Middle St pedestrian prioritisation. Through Norfolk County Council and Reclaim the Rain, both of these initiatives have been designed made it to initial rounds of consultation.

- **Reclaim the Rain** are detailing final designs and move to public consultation later in the year. Their project brings rain gardens with sustainable drainage systems to Watton High St. It aims to reduce the strain on systems that were not designed for their current flows. Heavy and quick downpours have caused cases of interior and exterior flooding, in addition, some gulleys and guttering are not aligned with drainage system on the road causing surface water to spill in places unintended.

Watton Town Council may wish to support this project by accepting responsibility for maintaining above the surface of new rain gardens, which may include litter picking or weeding.

- **Middle St Pedestrianisation** was fully designed; however, its barrier was competing for funding from Norfolk County Council. Some NCC contracts are due for renewal in April, but given local elections and local government reorganisation, I have my fingers crossed.

Adjacent to these ideas are, 'Improvements to accessibility and to the streetscape'. Ideally I would like to see an audit of current benches and notice boards, to follow with an increase in quantity, with due thought to the recent expansion of Watton and routes into town.

Clean streets can lead to reduced anti-social behaviour and fly tipping, however Watton Town Council resolved not to add any more bins. This can also be achieved with a community litter pick, following in nearby communities' footsteps of Dereham & Swaffham.

3. Inclusive Watton:

What local gaps in provision can we target in alignment with the provided spending scope?

- **Website improvements**, as part of wider digitalisation. Focus on a multiple language feature, and tourism for Watton.
- **Youth Provision:** The Case for Cultural Learning, Cultural Learning Alliance (2017) states that students from low-income families who engage take part in arts activities are x3 times more likely to get a degree. The same group who engages in structured activities outside of school are 20% more likely to vote as young adults. Research from the Government's Department found that underachieving young people who take part in sport typically see a 29% increase in numeracy skills and a 12-16% rise in other transferable skills.

These statistics heavily lend itself to investing grant moneys into youth programmes, arts and culture, sports and more generally can be prescribed as an invitation to join their community through shared interest.

The **core charity assets** to Watton who coordinated these services or support these programmes are the Charlotte Harvey Centre, Queen's Hall, Wayland House and Watton Sports Centre. With other great additions of Museum for Watton & Loch Neaton who promote arts, culture, heritage and are public third spaces.

Additional community groups and charities operate independently within Watton with significant funding challenges such as - Benjamin Foundation Youth Group, Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Wayland Partnership, Memory Café, Stroke Club, Men's Shed etc. These groups often fill provisional gaps with dedication and passion for the mutual benefit of Watton residents.

4. Destination Watton:

There are multiple areas in which make Watton a destination town, those charities are worthy causes of town council support, where appropriate and proportionate.

- **Watton Sports Centre & Loch Neaton** - The only Loch in England and supports sports provision for surrounding villages. Loch Neaton was also the allocated as the gateway and starting point for a new Watton to Swaffham walking and cycle route.
- **Wayland Woods** – An SSSI and one of over 50 Nature Reserves under NWT. Unique heritage with Babes of the Woods, The Wayland Hundred, a popular site of sustainable living pre-enclosure and the largest green space in Watton.
- **Future DCMC** – A new state of the art digital and creative training centre.
- **Heritage buildings** – such as St Mary’s Church, Willow House and many more.
- **Wayland Show & Bike Show** –Town Council managed events, and others such as the Wayland Agricultural Show, often bring people in from outside of Watton.

There is also some mention of a Watton to Swaffham cycle route, this is a large undertaking, however new routes and footpaths are also mentioned in the Watton Neighbourhood Plan as well as the WTDP.

5. Welcoming Watton:

WTDP highlights the following (*personal comments in between*):

- **‘New Watton identity artwork and wayfinding opportunities to announce arrival. This could be on flank walls and blank frontages.’**

Commissioning art is a good way to support local artists, promote town identity and heritage. There is no need for a new emblem, as the current town sign is exemplary. However alternative renditions of this could applied or replicated in gateways of Watton.

- **‘Improved retail frontages to boost visual appeal of this part of the town.’**

Breckland District Council has launched multiple high st store grants. I am unsure it is within our ability as a Town Council to support a widely accessible grant process.

- **‘Temporary activation of vacant units including window displays, meanwhile uses and pop-up spaces.’**

Renting vacant units is an astronomical expense, and I believe to be the leading cause in High St closures. I am unsure it is within our ability as a Town Council to rent out vacant units at full cost.

- **‘Green infrastructure’.**

Given the newly formed and soon to meet prior to full council in April, biodiversity working group, green infrastructure is a popular and necessary contribution to the built landscape. The initial budget being £200, could be tripled to £600 to increase the output of biodiversity in the built areas. Furthermore:

- Reclaim the Rain have an excellent design for green infrastructure in Watton High St, it is in all of our interest to support this project where appropriate.

- Placemaking within carparks to boost their appeal, accessibility and perception of the spaces can include but should not be limited to biodiversity increases.
- An audit into WTC planters may give us a greater insight into our current metrics of biodiversity.

6. Connecting Watton:

- Promoting health and green spaces with walks designed for Watton and distributed in accessible places, free. EG Heritage Trail, Hare Trail, Tree Trail etc.
- Promote and support initiatives like Park Run or introduce cycle routes.
- Work with and promote sports, health and community charities who operate within Watton.

Written by Cllr Tomos Hutchings

Submission from Councillor Bulmer

Loch Neaton

Funding could possibly be used by Loch Neaton to improve accessibility, such as footpath resurfacing, repairs to the boardwalks, improved lighting etc.

The Loch is specifically mentioned in the Watton Development Plan as it supports the goal of increasing accessible green space, promoting health and well-being and Strengthens Wattons identity as a key community asset.

Watton Sports Centre

The sports centre has a number of maintenance and modernisation requirements all of which could use funding boosts.

The Sports Centre aligns with the Watton development Plan as it directly supports the plans ambition to improve sport, leisure and community facilities.

It also matches the Neighbourhood Plan priorities for new community facilities and health and well-being provision.

Digital Creative Media Centre

The DCMC project is being led by the Wayland Partnership and currently requires funding for planning permission submissions and further detailed design works.

The DCMC project aligns with the Watton Development Plan as it will bring connectivity and modernisation to our High Street. It supports the aims of more new community facilities as well as providing local employment opportunities.

I would be very happy to reach out to all three of these organisations for specific details on what they would prioritise if any funding was awarded and how much

money they need for some of their current plans, if that would help to inform any debate about these local assets.

Again, for absolute clarity, as a committee member of the Wayland Chamber of Commerce I do have to declare interest in the DCMC but as a local resident with a teenage child growing up in Watton right now, we need to support organisations such as these that are trying to make Watton a great place to be.

From Wayland Partnership

“If there is anything we can put on as part of the Pride in Breckland pot being given to the market towns please let me know. I can see that our main categories would be likely to be culture, heritage and the arts.”

Thoughts from the Office:

It is suggested the Pride in Breckland grant of £12210 offered by Breckland Council should be used on ‘Place-Based Improvements’, being mindful of the priorities set in the Watton Town Delivery Plan.

Watton’s Town Delivery Plan lists interventions as:

- **Inclusive Watton** – Improving Local Provision
- **Attractive Watton** – Enhancing the Town Centre
- **Welcoming Watton** – Gateways into the Town Centre
- **Destination Watton** – incorporate Loch Neaton (and other attractions e.g Museum)
- **Connected Watton** – suggestion in Plan is to re-connect Watton and Swaffham

How could the grant be used to achieve the above aims:

- Local leisure provision could be promoted - walks accessible for all, promotion of amenities (Museum, Wayland Gallery, Loch Neaton) and services in the town centre (such as free car parks, public toilets, good venues for refreshments for walkers).
- Town Centre could be enhanced by greater planting which could link in with Reclaim the Rain and the Biodiversity Working Group.
- The Town gateways could be enhanced again with more planting (Watton has good floral displays which could be made outstanding) and possible art work/appropriate signage relating to the local walks and other leisure amenities.
- If Watton can be seen as an outstandingly attractive town centre through floral displays and art work and leisure opportunities are promoted “Destination Watton” may be a possibility!
- Improved/additional signage including the town entry signs could also be considered.

The Pride in Breckland grant is not sufficient to re-connect any pathway between Watton and Swaffham but it could be used to promote and enhance current and new trails around the parish and possibly moving out to neighbouring parishes. See [Norfolk health, heritage and biodiversity walks - Enjoying the Norfolk ...](#)

£12210 is not a large amount of money but it could be used to build on what already exists by enhancing planting, promoting and expanding the walking trails which could be used to lead to facilities within the parish and possibly looking at including some art work either at the gateways, on the trails or by re-placing the town sign.

It is suggested the Biodiversity Group could lead and possibly work with partners such as the Wayland Partnership, Museum4Watton and Loch Neaton.

Item 10. of the agenda could also link in.

[Norfolk health, heritage and biodiversity walks - Enjoying the Norfolk ...](#)

Item 10

Dear Parish / Town Clerk

Please forward this correspondence to your Chairman and Councillors

As Chairman of Norfolk Ramblers I am writing to you concerning Rights of Way and Footpaths in your Parish. You may know that Ramblers endeavour not only to lead walks but help to keep the Rights of Way and footpaths open and in an accessible condition for all to enjoy. Responsibility for maintaining these is shared between the landowner and Norfolk Highways but more and more paths are becoming difficult to walk, which then results in further decline and use. The Norfolk Highways budget for maintain paths is also diminishing. Ramblers do sterling work with their volunteers who undertaking smaller maintenance issues.

It is well documented that walking is a good, easy to access, and inexpensive way of maintaining fitness and good physical and mental health for all age groups and Norfolk Ramblers are proposing that each Parish has a documented audit of their paths and Rights of Way, which can be accessed by any member of the public from the minutes published on the Parish website. Each Parish Council should have either an appointed footpath warden or a Councillor who is responsible for this facility. It would be helpful to both residents and those planning walks from further afield if a detailed audit of the state of the paths could be published as a Report at the Annual Parish Meeting, or more frequently if you wish. Attached is a copy of part of a report from a local Parish Council, prepared for an Annual Parish Meeting which shows 'best practice'. An annual audit enables any defects or problems to be reported to Norfolk Highways, or to the landowner, and hopefully resolved before paths become overgrown or inaccessible through neglect, wilful obstruction, lack of signage etc.

If you are unsure of how the footpaths are numbered on the Rights of Way Definitive Map for your Parish, or how to report defects to Norfolk Highways, or who is responsible for what, please get in touch. I will be pleased to help.

Your co operation with this suggestion will hopefully benefit your residents, as well as visitors to your Parish, and will add to the enjoyment of the Norfolk countryside for all.

If you are already completing and publishing a comprehensive footpath audit on your Parish website similar to the one attached, please ignore this correspondence, and thank you.

Item 11

Local company Bowles and Walker was asked to design and price for a gift for Weeze, to be taken in May for the 800th celebration but unfortunately it was too late so we have suggested that this gift is used next year for the 40th Anniversary of Twinning.

The company is however proposing this 3D logo design in an A3 size, presented in a box frame, where a message can be placed at the top (in the white section) and in the bottom (yellow section).

"Celebrating Twinning of Watton and Weeze" at the top and "40th Anniversary" at the bottom



Items 12.1, 12.2 and 12.3

Breckland Council response in regard to planning applications:

PL/2026/0297/CLOPUD

PL/2026/0360/FMIN - FMIN minor application

PL/2026/0305/ADV ADV Advert Application for consent to display an advertisement(s) consent

“With regards to numerous applications on the above site. Royal Mail would like to operate from the building as an operational/distribution unit which falls under use class B8 (storage and distribution). The proposed signage would be a ‘Royal Mail’ sign to the front of the unit which would not be illuminated.

The proposed advertisement application has been inaccurately described, and a re-consultation will be sent out shortly, as it currently reads exactly the same description as the full application at the site which is misleading.”