

Minutes from the Watton Town Council Finance Committee Meeting held on Thursday February 12th 2026 at Wayland Hall

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

Cllr Tomos Hutchings present as an observer.

1. Apologies for absence received from Sue Hebborn. Noted that Tina Kiddell is the “reserve” member of the Committee.
2. No Declarations of Interest made.
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 15.01.26.
 - i. The Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 15.01.26 were confirmed as correct and signed by the Chairman of the Finance Committee.
 - ii. Update from the Minutes of the Meeting 15.01.26:
 - Sponsorship of £5000 has been received for the 2025 Fireworks Evening.
 - As recommended by the Internal Auditor the Council has increased its Fidelity Guarantee insurance cover to £1m.
 - iii Other items raised at the meeting of the Full Council 10.02.26:
 - Expenditure agreed for gifts for Weeze to celebrate the towns 800th anniversary in 2026 and the 40th year of the Twinning Association in 2027.
 - Works at the Cemetery agreed to extend the ashes area and to remove excess soil in the Cemetery compound.
 - Resolution made that the Town Council will accept open space land as offered by Breckland Council. Noted that there will be associated legal costs and future maintenance of the open space will need to be financed. The review of management of the open spaces is something that could fall within the remit of the Biodiversity Working Group.

4. Bank Reconciliation

The Finance Committee members were issued with a Bank Reconciliation dated 31.01.26. [The Bank Reconciliation was checked and signed by the Internal Control Officer following the meeting.]

4.1 Net Position and Four Year Forecast

Members were also presented with net figures showing current expenditure against the budget, together with notes explaining possible overspends within Cost Centres.

Overall, once the agreed support from reserves is included within the budget figures it is expected the budget expenditure for the year will be much as anticipated.

The Four Year Forecast was considered and all future projects will be included in an updated document to be presented to the Finance Committee at the next meeting.

4.2 Planters

A request has been received from Watton Library for the two planters at the Library site to be included within the Town Council gardening contract. The contract will be checked and if additional planters need to be added the cost will be £250 per planter per year. This matter will be an agenda item again once the number of planters in the town is known.

4.3 Breathe HR Package

The Office is still trialling Breathe HR.

The additional "Learn" training module may be helpful particularly with new staff and at an additional £15 per month it is a cheap option to ensure essential training can be accessed. Total monthly payment from April would be £50 per month. However, after trialling it may be decided that the Rota, Time and Attendance add on may not be suitable and this would result in a lower cost of £39 per month.

It was agreed to delegate the decision to the Office regarding what package will best suit Town Council needs.

4.4 Community Hub Cleaner

The Community Hub Caretakers final day at work is 20.02.26 and it is unlikely any successor will be in post until the end of March.

Temporary cleaning for the Community Hub is looking to cost £23 per hour and the suggestion is that a contractor should be engaged for 12hrs a week for 4/5 weeks.

5 weeks at £276 (£1380) is around what the cost of the caretaker has been but this will cover cleaning only.

It will be recommended to Full Council that the Council bears the cost of temporary cleaning of the Community Hub until a replacement caretaker is in post.

4.5 PHS Contract

PHS has reviewed the contract the Town Council has with the company for emptying of sanitary bins. A revised framework contract for all three serviced sites has been as offered as below.

- Wayland Hall – existing sanitary bins + 4 oxy air fresheners & 3 hand dryers £1,020.66 pa
- Public toilets – existing sanitary & nappy bins + 3 oxy air fresheners £728.98
- Youth Centre – existing sanitary bins + 4 xtra air fresheners & 1 serviced entrance mat £619.74

Total £2,369.38 (v's £3,036 currently paid)

It was agreed that the Office should further investigate the offer and to proceed with it if savings are to be made.

5. IT Service Provision

The IT service provision for the Council is still under review and it was felt the current contract should remain in place until the Digitalisation Working Group has researched alternatives.

6. Date of the next meeting: Finance Committee:
Thursday April 16th 2026 @ 10.00am.

Recommendations to Full Council:

- To accept temporary contractor cost of £23 per hour for 12 hours a week to clean the Community Hub until a new caretaker is in post.