

Minutes of the meeting of WATTON TOWN COUNCIL meeting held on

Tuesday May 12th 2026 at Wayland Hall, Middle Street, Watton, Norfolk IP25 6AG

Councillors Present:– Sarah Humphries - Chairman, Gavin Bulmer, Keith Gilbert, Cathy Halfacre, Stan Hebborn, Sue Hebborn, Tomos Hutchings, Graham Martin, Keith Prince, Don Saunders, Gillian Tarrant, Jacqueline White.

Officer Present: Jane Scarrott Clerk

5 members of the public present. Meeting is live streamed.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Sarah Humphries nominated and seconded as Chairman and with no further nominations duly elected.

2. CHAIRMAN SIGNED DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

3. OUTGOING CHAIRMAN PRESENTED WITH PAST CHAIRMAN BADGE

The incoming Chairman thanked the former Chairman/Mayor for her year in Office.

4. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Tomos Hutchings was nominated, seconded and duly elected as Vice-Chairman.

Cllr Keith Gilbert left the meeting.

5. APOLOGIES for absence received and accepted from

Tina Cruz and Jack White

Noted that Tina Kiddell has resigned as a Town Councillor

6. NO DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS MADE

7. MINUTES

7.1 The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 28th April 2026 were accepted as a true record of the meeting and duly signed by the Chairman.

7.2 UPDATES FROM MEETING HELD 28 04 26

- Sarah Suggitt and Rob Walker from Breckland Council will be attending the Council Meeting on June 23rd at 6pm to update on the Breckland Street Warden Scheme.
- Saham Toney Parish Council is willing to contribute 50% of the cost to support the annual hosting of WASFAG website.
- Wayland Academy has suggested the date of Wednesday June 3rd for Councillors who may wish to visit the garden project.
- HR Consultant attended staff meeting on 29.04.2026 and visited the Office again 11.05.26. Another visit is scheduled for 15.05.26

8. REPORTS RECEIVED:

8.1 CHAIRMANS REPORT

Incoming Chaiman had no report to give.

8.2 VICE-CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Incoming Vice-Chairman had no report to give.

8.3 CLERK'S REPORT

Written report submitted in the agenda pack with verbal update given:

- Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) – noted that the Council IT Policy may need review in preparation for agreement of Assertion 10 of the AGAR.
- The transfer of the current Breckland owned car parks in the town to the Town Council is progressing. Paperwork is with the solicitors.
- Noted that a plant/seed swap is being held at the Community Hub.

8.3i Councillors were asked to renew requests for receipt of a hard copy of the agenda packs for Town Council meetings.

8.4 HR COMMITTEE REPORT WRITTEN REPORT RECEIVED AND NOTED

The Chairman of the HR Committee had submitted a report which was included within the agenda pack for the meeting.

8.5 FINANCE COMMITTEE WRITTEN REPORT RECEIVED

The Chairman of the Finance Committee had submitted a report which was included within the agenda pack for the meeting.

8.6 CEMETERY WORKING GROUP

No meetings of the Cemetery Working Group held in 2025.

Cemetery Update:

- Faculty granted to allow removal of excess soil from site.
- Grave digging contract to be reviewed in August.
- Ashes section has been extended.

8.7 WATTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (NP) STEERING GROUP REPORT

No meetings of the Steering Group held in 2025.

8.8 CHURCH WALK WORKING GROUP REPORT RECEIVED

No meetings of the Church Walk Working Group held in 2025.

8.9 MUSEUM4WATTON WORKING GROUP

No meetings of the Museum4Watton Working Group held in 2025.

8.10 LOCH NEATON WORKING GROUP

No meetings of the Loch Neaton Working Group held in 2025

8.11 REPORT FROM CHARLOTTE HARVEY TRUST RECEIVED AND NOTED

A report from the CHT Management Committee was given at the Annual Town Meeting - this Report can be seen on the Town Council website.

8.12 EMERGENCY PLAN UPDATE

(i) The Chairman offered to work with the Office and act as the Lead Councillor for Emergency Planning

8.13 MARKET WORKING GROUP UPDATE

The Market Report included within the agenda pack for the meeting was noted.

A resolution to exclude the public and press was requested to consider confidential matters relating to the Watton Weekly Market.

8.14 HERITAGE PARK WORKING GROUP REPORT RECEIVED

8.15 BIODIVERSITY WORKING GROUP NOTES FROM INITIAL MEETING HELD ON 28.04.26 WERE PRESENTED

8.16 BIODIVERSITY WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS:

8.16i It was resolved to accept the Biodiversity Mission Statement as presented which will be posted on the Town Council website and social media.

8.16ii It was resolved to pass £50 of the £200 budgeted for the Biodiversity Group to the Wayland Academy Garden Project, to be paid against invoices submitted.

It was also agreed to purchase compost and herb plants to fill the planter at Jubilee Garden.

8.17 DIGITILISATION WORKING GROUP UPDATE

Initial discussions were driven by requests relating to public Wi-Fi provision within the Market Place and High Street, alongside longer-term aspirations for CCTV improvements to support security and crime prevention.

During the course of this work, it became apparent that plans were already in place for BT to install public Wi-Fi infrastructure, and that Breckland Council already operates a CCTV scheme which may provide a basis for future collaboration or expansion.

The Working Group has also explored a number of additional ideas, including the possibility of developing an updated town website and other digital initiatives.

The Digitalisation Working Group has not met since 12.02.26 as at present there are no significant active projects requiring ongoing oversight by the group. Therefore, once queries relating to CCTV have been resolved or concluded, it is proposed that the Digitalisation Working Group be suspended, with the option to reconvene in the future should new digital initiatives or requirements arise.

8.18 REPORTS FROM LEAD COUNCILLORS

8.18i Police Priority Setting Meetings – report included within the agenda pack.

8.18ii Stevens Almshouses Charity – report included within the agenda pack.

9. MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING

9.1, 9.2 and 9.3 The Memorandums of Understanding with Loch Neaton, the Sports Centre (relating to the play area) and the Charlotte Harvey Trust were noted.

10. REPORT FROM EVENTS AND MARKETING OFFICER RECEIVED AND NOTED

Written report from Events & Marketing Officer presented prior to the meeting.

11. REPORT FROM COMMUNITY PROJECTS OFFICER RECEIVED AND NOTED

Written report from Community Projects Officer presented prior to the meeting.

12. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terms of Reference for the HR and Finance Committees were presented and noted.

Terms of Reference for the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Steering Group were presented and noted.

Biodiversity Working Group, Cemetery Working Group, Church Walk Working Group, Digitalisation Working Group, Heritage Park Working Group, Loch Neaton Working Group and Watton and Saham Flood Action Group Terms of Reference were presented and noted.

Terms of Reference for Lead Councillors were presented and noted.

(Noted that a minor typo needs correction on the Loch Neaton Working Group Terms of Ref.)

13. COMMITTEE MEMBERS

13.1 ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) COMMITTEE:

- Don Saunders
- Cathy Halfacre
- Jacqueline White

13.2 JACQUELINE WHITE ELECTED AS CHAIRMAN OF THE HR COMMITTEE

13.3 ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE:

- Don Saunders
- Tomos Hutchings
- Sarah Humphries

13.4 DON SAUNDERS ELECTED AS CHAIRMAN OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

14. WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

It was noted that Working Groups will only be called to meet when necessary and that they are task and finish groups.

14.1 CONFIRMED COUNCIL MEMBERS OF NP STEERING GROUP:

- Graham Martin
- Keith Gilbert

14.2 ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH WALK WORKING GROUP:

- Keith Gilbert
- Tomos Hutchings
- Stan Hebborn
- Graham Martin

14.3 CEMETERY WORKING GROUP

Noted that all Councillors are members of the Cemetery Working Group.

14.4 CONFIRMED COUNCIL MEMBERS OF THE MARKET WORKING GROUP

- Tina Cruz
- Tomos Hutchings
- Sarah Humphries
- Gavin Bulmer

14.5 ELECTED MEMBERS OF MUSEUM4WATTON WORKING GROUP

- Tomos Hutchings
- Stan Hebborn
- Gillian Tarrant

14.6 ELECTED COUNCIL MEMBERS OF THE WATTON SPORTS ASSOCIATION WORKING GROUP – to be confirmed

- Tina Cruz

14.7 ELECTED COUNCIL MEMBERS OF THE HERITAGE PARK WORKING GROUP

- Sue Hebborn
- Stan Hebborn
- Graham Martin

14.8 ELECTED COUNCIL MEMBERS OF THE WATTON AND SAHAM FLOOD ACTION GROUP

- Tomos Hutchings
- Keith Gilbert

14.9 ELECTED COUNCIL MEMBERS OF THE BIODIVERSITY WORKING GROUP

- Tomos Hutchings
- Don Saunders
- Gavin Bulmer
- Graham Martin
- Cathy Halfacre
- Keith Prince

14.10 Noted that the Digitalisation Working Group will be called upon if needed. Membership to remain as:

- Stan Hebborn
- Jack White
- Tomos Hutchings
- Sarah Humphries

15. COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES/LEAD COUNCILLORS

Council Reps:

Chamber of Commerce – Stan Hebborn
Men's Shed – Graham Martin

SNAP Meetings – TBC
Watton Sports Centre – Tomos Hutchings
Cadets – Keith Prince
RAF Watton Families Club – Stan Hebborn
Wayland Partnership – Tomos Hutchings

Lead Councillors:

Allotments – Don Saunders
Breckland Council - Don Saunders
Planning – Keith Gilbert
Cemetery and Grounds Maintenance – Don Saunders
Fireworks Event – Stan Hebborn
Festive Market – Sarah Humphries
Antiques Fair – Mueseum4Watton now managing this event
Bike Event – TBC
Heritage – Tomos Hutchings
Provision for the Elderly – Don Saunders
Social Welfare – Don Saunders
Youth Provision – Don Saunders
Market – Tomos Hutchings and Tina Cruz
Twinning – Keith Gilbert

16. INTERNAL CONTROL OFFICER

Don Saunders will be the Internal Control Officer.

17. QUARTELY CHECK OF STAFF WAGES

Don Saunders has previously undertaken monthly checks of staff wages and will continue to do so.

18. MONTHLY INVOICES AGAINST PAYMENTS

Sue Hebborn and Gavin Bulmer will check monthly invoices against payments.

19. BANK SIGNATORIES

Current agreed bank signatories were listed in the agenda pack. A signatory to replace Tina Kiddell will be considered at a future meeting.

20. ARMED FORCES COVENANT

The Armed Forces Covenant was reviewed with no amendments suggested.

21. INTERNAL AUDITOR

It was resolved that Trevor Brown will remain as Internal Auditor for Watton Town Council for 2026/27.

22. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Risk Management Plan was reviewed and amendment to the sections referencing Data Protection and Freedom of Information will be re-worded.

23. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

An update on the repair of the clock in the High Street was requested. The Town Council is waiting for general building maintenance work to be completed on the Clock Tower building before consideration is given to the repair of the clock itself.

Cllr Gavin Bulmer offered to review Health & Safety concerns relating to access to the clock mechanism and an offer was also made to look at what work may be needed to the clock mechanism.

24. ADMIN LAPTOP

It was resolved to accept the quote of £1091.25 plus VAT to purchase a new laptop for the Receptionist/Office Support Clerk.

25. STANDING ORDERS/FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Noted that no changes are to be made to Standing Orders or Financial Regulations at this time.

26. PLANNING

26.1 PL/2026/0599/FMIN The installation of 8 new floodlight columns to serve the tennis courts on the Wayland Academy site in Watton WAYLAND HIGH SCHOOL Merton Road, Watton, Thetford, Norfolk, IP25 6BA

No comments

26.2 PL/2026/0608/HOU Proposed single storey extension with 3No. velux windows to the rear THE BURROWS Watton Green, Watton

No comments

26.3 PL/2025/0751/OMAJ Erection of 9 dwellings with all matters reserved. Land Off Merton Road, Watton

The Town Council supports the representations presented by Watton & Saham Flood Action Group.

Resolution passed to exclude the public and press to consider matters relating to Watton Wednesday Market:

The Wednesday Market has been cancelled for 13.05.26 due to issues around insurance for the current location in Middle Street/Old Dereham Road. All endeavours will be made to relocate the market within the High Street area.