Minutes from the Watton Town Council Finance Committee Meeting held on Friday August 14th 2026 at Wayland Hall

Present: Don Saunders (Chairman), Sarah Humphries, Tomos Hutchings
Officers Present: Jane Scarrott and Michelle Thompson

1. No Apologies for absence received.

2. No Declarations of Interest made.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 17.07.26
   i. The Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 17.07.26 were confirmed as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman of the Finance Committee.
   ii. Update from the Minutes of the Meeting 17.07.26
      - Cllr Saunders to set a date with Watton Sports Centre to discuss the Sports Centre Play Area.
      - The Market Working Group is investigating new locations for the Wednesday Market and therefore no hire agreement has yet been put in place for use of the car park at the Queen's Hall. As part of the research the land agent managing Chaston Place and the car parks in St. Giles Road has been approached. The Market Working Group is hopeful Chaston Place may be used to site part of the market but there has been no further discussion regarding the future of the associated car parks. The Office is also in discussion with the landlady at the Crown regarding possible use of the Crown Car Park.
      - It was noted that the Annual RoSPA inspections of the play areas have been undertaken and the recommendations include removal of the wooden play equipment at Bridle Road Play Area. It is suggested the old play equipment needs to be taken away and research undertaken to find grant funding to support revamp of the play area.

   iii Items raised at the meeting of the Full Council

      - Wayland Fields
        A resident of Wayland Fields has approached the Council regarding the possibility of the Town Council taking responsibility for the LEAP at Wayland Fields.
        It was noted all open spaces including the LEAP were subject to a s106 agreement and a management company has taken responsibility and will receive funding through the agreement.
        It will be recommended that the Town Council does not further investigate taking responsibility for the LEAP at Wayland Fields.
      - Grant application Watton Westfield School
        Noted that the application does not meet the criteria of the Town Council Grants Policy, therefore it will be recommended to Full Council not to make the requested grant.
      - School Field
        The field at Wayland Academy which was gifted to the school as part of a s106 agreement could be managed by the Town Council for the benefit of the community.

The school will be approached to enquire whether a 99 year lease or transfer of ownership could be considered.

- Heritage Park
  It will be recommended to Full Council that the EMO be tasked with obtaining quotes for a landscape architect to put plans together for Heritage Park and possibly the school field.
- DCMC Donation
  The Council has been asked to consider making a donation of £15000 to the Wayland Partnership to support the planning application for the Digital and Creative Media Centre which is hopefully to be built on the site of Wayland House. The project is unlikely to be able to secure further funding until planning has been granted.
  Full Council tasked the Finance Committee to consider a donation as requested.
  The Town Council is facing additional funding pressures as it takes on more responsibilities and a financial statement is to be compiled to outline the current commitments.
  However, it was suggested that a recommendation should be put to Full Council to support the DCMC by donating £7500, half the estimated cost of the planning application. It was stressed no further funding should be given to the Wayland Partnership during the current financial year and that the Partnership should resume regular meetings with its partner organisations.

4. Bank Reconciliation

The Finance Committee members were issued with the Bank Reconciliation dated 31.07.26 and the current net position. The Bank Reconciliation was accepted and signed by the Chairman of the Finance Committee.

5. Building Works Wayland Hall and the Clock Tower

Additional quotes have been received for outstanding works at Wayland Hall and the Clock Tower and the contractor who undertook works previously has provided an updated quote.
Quotes received have been shared with Full Council which requested the Finance Committee to look at the quotes in detail.
The recommendation from the Finance Committee is that the contractor who has been used by the Town Council for previous works to Wayland Hall and the Clock Tower should be engaged as quoted.

6. Four Year Forecast

The Four-Year Forecast is now within Year 4 of the original plan.
It was suggested that as the current Four-Year Forecast is in its final year it should be rewritten to guide the Council over the forthcoming four years.
The Finance Committee will dedicate the next meeting to review of the Four Year Forecast. Maintenance of additional open space land and possible major works at Bridle Road and the Sports Centre Play Areas will need consideration within the Plan.

7. Date of the next meeting: Finance Committee:

Friday 25th September 2026 @ 9.30am – one agenda item to be the Four Year Plan

Recommendations to Full Council:

1. That the Town Council does not further investigate taking responsibility for the LEAP at Wayland Fields.

2. To refuse the grant application received from Watton Westfield School as it does not meet the grant criteria of the applicant being a voluntary body.

3. To obtain quotes to engage a landscape architect to develop plans for Heritage Park and possibly the field at Wayland Academy.

4. To support the DCMC by donating £7500, half the estimated cost of the planning application. It was stressed no further funding should be given to the Wayland Partnership during the current financial year and that the Partnership should resume regular meetings with its partner organisations.

5. To accept the quote from the contractor previously used by the Town Council for maintenance works to the Clock Tower at a cost of £6252.