Minutes from the Watton Town Council Finance Committee Meeting held on Thursday April 16th 2026 at Wayland Hall

Present: Don Saunders (Chairman), Stan Hebborn, Sue Hebborn, Gillian Turrant
Officers Present: Jane Scarrott

1. No Apologies for absence received.

2. No Declarations of Interest made.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 12.02.26.
   i. The Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 12.02.26 were confirmed as correct and signed by the Chairman of the Finance Committee.
   ii. Update from the Minutes of the Meeting 12.02.26:
   - As agreed at the meeting on 12.02.26 the Office IT service provision will remain with the current provider for the forthcoming year. The Office is in the process of checking the contract before any agreement is signed.

   iii Other items raised by Full Council:

To review the Council Grants Policy [agenda item 13 for this meeting].

4. Bank Reconciliation

The Finance Committee members were issued with a Bank Reconciliation dated 31.03.25. The Bank Reconciliation will be checked and signed by the Internal Control Officer.

Members were presented with net figures showing current expenditure against the budget.

4.1 Four Year Forecast

Members were presented with an updated Four Year Forecast and reminded that the current Forecast shows 26/27 as the final year and thus a new Forecast will be considered by the incoming Council in 2027.

5. Equipment Hire Policy

The draft Equipment Hire Policy was considered and it was agreed that a recommendation will be made to Full Council to accept the Policy but to exempt the Market. Equipment will be available for charitable organisations within the town to borrow but a cash deposit of £100 will be required.

6. Maintenance of Reclaim the Rain Assets

It will be recommended to Full Council that the Council accepts to undertake the maintenance schedule for the Reclaim the Rain assets as outlined.

7. Dash-cams for Town Vans

It was agreed that dash-cams should be fitted in the two town vans at an estimated cost of £200 per van.

8. Bad Debt

A recommendation will be made to Full Council that an outstanding debt of £570 plus a small claim court cost of £75 should be written off. It is believed the cost of recovery would outweigh the debt.

9. Grave Digging Fee

As a result of mis-communication a grave digger needed to be engaged at short notice resulting in an additional charge of £160 for the undertaker.

It will be recommended to Full Council that as gesture of goodwill and to support working relationships with the Funeral Director the Council will offer to pay half of the additional charge.

10. Play Area Works

Watton Town Council adopted the Right to Play Pledge on 12.03.24 as follows:

We pledge to make all our play areas accessible, inclusive, and safe environments that challenge, excite, stimulate, and promote the interaction of all young people of all abilities.

Value all children and young people's Right to Play.

Adopt a statement for Inclusive and Accessible Play Areas in Play Area policy.

Adopt the three inclusive design pillars of Accessibility, Multi-Sensory and Supporting Infrastructure.

Apply Inclusive Principles to all Play Area refurbishment and new projects.

Demonstrate in planning and grant application that Inclusive Principles have been included in design.

Consult with the community, particularly young people, to advocate inclusive design and refurbishment to make play areas accessible to all.

With this pledge in mind the Council has been investigating accessibility of Bridle Road Play Area and the Sports Centre Play Area. Quotes have been sought to assist with pushchair/wheelchair access to both sites.

Quotes received to date are expensive and the Finance Committee felt grant funding should be thoroughly researched and only when outside funding can be obtained could consideration be given to undertaking further accessibility works at the Bridle Road or Sports Centre sites.

11. HR Consultant

It will be recommended to Full Council that the contract with the current HR consultant is extended.

12. CANVA

It was agreed to subscribe to CANVA Pro at a cost of £100 per year.

13. Grant Policy

The Grant Policy will be reviewed following research. Suggestions made include introducing criteria to include match funding and a clause that the same organisation can only apply to the Town Council for a grant once each financial year.

The Town Council is considering its financial position and commitments it will have during the year. With a need to be frugal the grant applications submitted to the Town Council meeting on 14.04.26 will be considered at the next Full Council meeting with the following recommendations from the Finance Committee:

1. The Loch Neaton Bowls Club to be offered £400 with expectation that match funding will be found by the Club to meet the full costs of the application. Money to be allocated retrospectively against invoices received.
2. Match funding will be offered to the Rainbows if they are unable to raise full funds requested themselves.
3. It was suggested The Chamber of Commerce should look for support from other avenues.

14. Date of the next meeting: Finance Committee:

No date set due to possible change to the membership of the Committee at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council. Date will be set at the Annual Meeting.

Recommendations to Full Council:

1. To accept the draft Equipment Hire Policy
2. That the Council accepts to undertake the maintenance schedule for the Reclaim the Rain assets as outlined:

Raingardens (without trees)

0

Tree Pits

2-4 wks after planting – check to see if anchor straps need re-tensioning

Check soi level

6 months

Maintain regular irrigation during growing season, frequency and water volume determined by climatic conditions

Visual inspection to check for pest and disease.

Clear leaf litter in Autumn.

Clear irrigation and aeration inlets.

5 years

Visual inspection to check for pests, disease and damage.

Formative pruning and crown lifting if necessary.

Check suitability of grill and guard.

10 years

Check growth and remove guard/grill as required.

3. that an outstanding debt of £570 plus a small claim court cost of £75 should be written off

4. that the Council will pay 50% (£80) of an additional grave digging charge

5. that the contract with the current HR consultant is extended

6. Grants:
    - The Loch Neaton Bowls Club to be offered £400 with expectation that match funding will be found by the Club to meet the full costs of the application. Money to be allocated retrospectively against invoices received.
    - Match funding will be offered to the Rainbows if they are unable to raise full funds requested themselves.
    - The Chamber of Commerce should look for support from other avenues.