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

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

1. Apologies for absence received from Sarah Humphries.

2. No Declarations of Interest made.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 25.09.26
   i. The Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 25.09.26 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 25.09.26
      - Decision still needs to be made as to how the Pride in Breckland grant could be used.
      - The Grounds Maintenance preferred contractor has been commissioned to remove the wooden play equipment deemed beyond repair at Bridle Road Play Area.
      - The purchase of transparent sides for the market gazebos and a portable lighting system to support the set up of the market will be added to the agenda for the next meeting of the Full Council to ratify the expenditure.
      - Storage of the gazebos for the Weekly Market is something which needs further consideration.

   iii. Items raised at the meeting of the Full Council

      - The Grounds Maintenance preferred contractor has been commissioned to site a new bin and move a bench from the Community Hub into the High Street to replace the street furniture lost in a ram raid on the Old Post Office earlier in the year. The bench at the Hub will also be replaced.
      - The Council decided to allocate a budge of £500 for the 2026 Staff Christmas Lunch.

4. Bank Reconciliation

The Finance Committee members were issued with the Bank Reconciliation dated 30.09.26 and the current budget position. The Bank Reconciliation was accepted and signed by the Chairman of the Finance Committee.

5. Budget need for 2027 and Four Year Forecast

The Chairman of the Finance Committee and the Clerk had met previously to begin the budget setting process for 2027 and all cost codes were considered individually. Increases will be needed across most cost centres and initial figures will need further consideration before the budget is presented to Full Council.

The transfer of the car parks and open space land from Breckland Council to the Town Council will mean large increases are needed to the grounds maintenance allocations. Services, rates, subscriptions and staff salaries are also to rise and it will be difficult to make any reductions to the budget need so it is expected the precept will increase

accordingly. Proposed figures will be produced once the tax base number is received from Breckland Council.

The Full Council will need to consider issues raised regarding the transfer of open space land from Breckland Council as decision needs to be made regarding parcels of land which appear to have been encroached upon.

An updated Four Year Forecast is being produced with the following considerations to be included and costed projects to be put together where necessary:

- Grounds Maintenance Projects for Heritage Park and other open space areas
- Clock Tower Project
- Replacement of Play Equipment and safety surfaces at the Sports Centre Play Area
- Pollarding of trees/future maintenance at Church Walk
- Provision of water at Thetford Road allotments
- Renewal of the contract for the provision of Christmas lighting
- Renewal of the contract for the Fireworks
- Future staffing – is a Market Warden needed?

6. Date of the next meeting: Finance Committee:

Friday 13th November 2026 @ 9.30am