

Minutes of the meeting of Watton Town Council held on
Tuesday 8th September 2026 at 7.00pm in Wayland Hall

Councillors Present: - Sarah Humphries (Chairman of the meeting), Gavin Bulmer, Tina Cruz, Keith Gilbert, Cathy Halfacre, Stan Hebborn, Sue Hebborn, Tomos Hutchings, Graham Martin, Don Saunders, Gillian Tarrant, Jack White.

Officer present: Jane Scarrott Clerk

3 members of the public present for part of the meeting.

I. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE RECEIVED FROM:

Stan Hebborn, Sue Hebborn, Keith Prince, Jacqueline White.

2. NO DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST MADE

3. MINUTES

3.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on August 25th 2026 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

3.2 Updates from items raised at the meeting on August 25th 2026 not agenda items for this meeting:

- High Street Bin and Bench – agenda item 13. 08.09.26
Quotes for replacement bin and bench in the High Street has been submitted to the insurers with a settlement offered.
- Public Toilets arson – The ladies and disabled toilets are open. The Insurance company appointed a specialist cleaner to deep clean the mens toilets and a quote has been received from the previous refurb contractor for the remedial works required. A visit from the insurance assessor is being scheduled.
- Open Spaces– The Clerk visited the solicitor acting for the Town Council and issues relating to the transfer of current Breckland owned open space to the Town Council were considered and clarification is being sought from Brecklands solicitor regarding points raised.
- Contractor has been given the go ahead for the maintenance works for the Clock Tower. A commencement date for the works has been requested.
- An Expression of Interest for the Love Your Market Town grant was submitted on 27.08.26 and a full application is now being prepared.

4. REPORTS

4.1 Chairman's Report

The Chairman attended:

- the High Street Bike Event on August 30th.

(It was suggested that music could be provided on the High Street for this event next year and perhaps an 'open mike' session could be made included)

- Lakenheath Civic Leaders Tour on 02.09.26
- Event at Buckingham Lodge on 08.09.26 to acknowledge Mental Health Week.

The Chairman is writing her regular article for the Watton & Wayland Times to be submitted on 11.09.26.

4.2 Vice-Chairman's Report

The Vice-Chairman attended a training session with Norfolk Wildlife Trust on 26.08.26 and he reported that the weekly Wayland Wood's work-parties will recommence on 09.09.26. The Vice-Chairman also volunteers with Beside Youth CIC to support a weekly youth group at Watton Community Centre.

The Vice-Chairman attended the Dereham Civic Service on 30.08.26 and volunteered at Loch Neaton on 03.09.26.

It was noted that no amendments to the Biodiversity Policy have been suggested and thus the Policy is accepted. The next meeting of the Biodiversity Working Group, chaired by the Vice-Chairman, is scheduled for October 27th at 6.15pm.

4.3 Clerks Report as presented in the agenda pack with verbal update given:

- Police Neighbourhood Meeting 7th October 7pm Wayland Hall.

4.4 Reports from Lead Councillors

- Planning Lead Councillor Keith Gilbert updated the meeting regarding the introduction of a National Scheme of Delegation for planning applications and he strongly suggested that the Town Council should submit stronger responses to planning applications. He requested that Councillors engage more with the planning process and respond to consultations in more detail.
- A query was raised regarding planting lime trees to replace those which have been lost along Church Walk. The Biodiversity Working Group will investigate this.
- Request made for celebrations of the 40th anniversary of the Twinning Association to be an agenda for each Full Council Meeting. Cllr Gilbert has attended a meeting of the Twinning Association and a date needs to be set for the next Town Council Twinning Working Group Meeting.
- County Councillor Jack White reported that the resurfacing of the Thetford Road up to the junction with the B1108 is near completion.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- A member of the public addressed the Council with his concerns regarding removal of the graffiti wall at Lovell Gardens Play Area.
- A resident of Wayland Fields addressed the Council with a request that the Town Council takes over management of the Local Equipped Area (LEAP) of Play at Wayland Fields

6. DEVOLUTION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

Local Government Reorganisation is being paused but it is believed the plans to create a Norfolk and Suffolk Mayoral Strategic Authority remain. This matter will stay as an agenda item at each meeting until further notice.

7. PLAY INSPECTION REPORTS

The reports of the annual RoSPA Play Inspections of the Play Areas at Lovell Gardens, Watton Sports Centre, Hares Green and Bridle Road were presented prior to the meeting together with quotes to undertake the maintenance works identified.

It was resolved to accept the quote of £11081.91 plus VAT to undertake the works but with any works which can be undertaken in house to be completed prior to commissioning the contractor. At least 50% of the cost of the repairs will need to be financed from reserved funding.

8. WAYLAND FIELDS

It was resolved not to accept management of the Local Equipped Area (LEAP) of Play at Wayland Fields.

9. HR COMMITTEE RESERVE

Paul Toombs volunteered to be the reserve for the HR Committee. If he is called upon meetings will need to be held after 5pm.

10. MARKET

10.1 **It was resolved** to relocate the Wednesday Weekly Market to the Crown Car Park off Watton High Street as from 16.09.26.

It was also resolved to investigate obtaining a Deed of Variation of the transfer agreement for the Thetford Road Car park which would allow use of the site to house the weekly market.

County Cllr Jack White will also approach Norfolk County Council Highways regarding a possible further temporary road closure for Middle Street so consideration could then be given to the Market returning to that location.

10.2 **It was resolved** that no charge will be made for weekly market stall pitches for the next six months.

10.3 **It was resolved** that up to £500 would be allocated to purchase promotional materials for the re-launch of the market on 16.09.26.

The purchase of new gazebos for use at the Market will be considered by the Finance Committee.

11. HALLOWEEN

It was resolved that the organisers of the High Street Halloween Trial will be approached with an offer of support for the event by opening the Clock Tower in the High Street for viewing from the outside and use as an information point.

12. RECLAIM THE RAIN

It was resolved that the Vice-Chairman and Clerk will draft a letter of support to Green Blue Urban to support Reclaim the Rain to ensure that High Street regeneration efforts continue promptly.

County Councillor Jack White was asked if he could make enquiries regarding Highways support for the proposals from Reclaim the Rain.

13. HIGH STREET BENCH AND BIN

It was resolved that the Finance Committee should consider the cost to install a replacement bench and bin by the bus stop in the High Street.

14. CAR PARK BINS

It was resolved to replace the litter bin at the Thetford Road Car Park with a new lidded litter bin to match those in the High Street.

15. BRECKLAND LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

It was resolved that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Clerk will meet to draft a response to the Breckland Local Plan to be presented to the Full Council on 22.09.26.

16. WAYLAND HALL

It was resolved not to go ahead at this time with the work quoted to the boiler control panel at Wayland Hall, but to wait and include an amount in the Four Year Plan for possible upgrade as may be necessary.

Following Cllr Tarrant leaving the meeting a motion was proposed and passed to continue the meeting beyond 9.00pm.

17. PLANNING

17.1 PL/2026/1153/HOU Proposed Single Storey Extension to Side, and Installation of Velux Rooflight and Roof Lantern, Raising Height of Existing Flat Roofs to Side Elevations, Covered Area to Front including Dropped Kerb 32 Nelson Court, Watton, Thetford, Norfolk, IP25 6EL

No comments

17.2 PL/2026/1190/DCA Discharge of Conditions 3 and 6 on PP PL/2026/0052/FMIN 53 Griston Road, Watton, Thetford, Norfolk, IP25 6DN

No comments

17.3 3PL/2019/0991/D Reserved matters application for residential development of 177 dwellings following outline permission 3PL/2015/0254/0 DEVELOPMENT SITE Mallard Road, Watton, Norfolk

Office to research for next agenda

18. Resolution passed to exclude the public and press to consider confidential staffing matters.

18.1 It was resolved to accept the nationally agreed 3.3% salary increase for all staff.