



# Watlington Parish Council

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## Minutes of the Meeting of the Operations Committee held on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2026 at 7pm in the Parish Office

Present:

Councillors:

Mike Deighton (MD)  
Nicky Smallbone (NS)  
Keith Jackson (KJ)  
Tim Horton (TH)  
Leo Pesci (LP)  
Sylvia Glover (SG)

Officer:

Jo Pugh (JP)

In attendance:

Jenny Wilkinson, Cllr Karyn Buck, Cllr Claire Wenley

### MINUTES

042/26 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Jules McIntyre

043/26 Chairman remarks:

MD welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked members for their continued contributions.

044/26 Minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> March which were received by Council on 14/04/26 to be agreed as a correct record

There was an error in the March minutes stating that a new 'informal' path should be installed from the car park onto Hill Road Spring Lane, and that the existing path leading onto Spring Lane be closed. This should instead have stated that the path be installed from the car park onto Spring Lane.

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting be accepted.

045/26 Declarations of Interest

MD declared an interest as a member of the Speedwatch Group

046/26 Action List status and Matters arising

The following items were completed between publication of the agenda and this meeting:

- Lantern has been replaced in recreation ground.
- Shed electrics have been connected.
- Guttering and waterbutt has been installed on the shed and shed treated with wood preservative.
- Civil works completed for CCTV in Paddock – will go live on 12th May.
- The playhouse roof in the paddock has been reinstated and the wobbly tree is now stable.
- SODC have reported that they will replace the post mounted bin Brook St/Cuxham Road (outside No. 3).
- Paddock, benches have been removed along with ground fixings in readiness for Artspine sculpture.

MD asked for councillor volunteers to install replacement blind slats at the Parish Office - KJ and LP volunteered. MD also invited members to assist with organising the key log - no volunteers came forward.

Item	Details	Action Needed	By Whom	Actioned / Status
CCTV	Paddock, Recreation Ground Toilets, Parish Office	Obtain quotes	LP	Paddock CCTV: 14/04 TLGO grounds work. w/c 04/05: NC Electrical installation requested TBC (electrics for cabinet CCTV) 05/03 Parish Office CCTV installed. Quotation to be requested for Recreation Ground Toilet CCTV if appropriate.
Health & Safety	Nimble e-learning H&S courses	To be booked for Caretaker	JP	In progress
Hill Road /Spring Lane Corner hedging	Improvements to the area	Martin Gammie and Nigel Adams to agree details of hedge planting specs - work to commence Oct/Nov 2026.	MG/NA	Following meeting MG to contact the tree officer outlining the proposals. Ascertain if a TPO tree work application with supporting method statement would be required. Nothing can happen until next year. Hedge Oct/Nov 2026. ON HOLD
Hill Road Car Park - Pothole	Pothole near clothes bank	To be patched	JP	11/12 work not completed satisfactorily, the tarmac has not hardened. 14/04 TLGO to rectify when the surface is dry.
Paddock dog waste survey	Survey to establish residents thoughts on dog waste and littering in the Paddock	Collate results and report to Ops in April.	JP	Survey Closed. Results downloaded and shared with Ops Committee.
Paddock	Broken table on corner near play area	Ground fixings to be removed.	JP/TLGO	w/c 14/04 - works to be carried out by TLGO
Paddock Play Area	Play house missing roof to be made safe for play	Roof to be reinstated	JP/TLGO	w/c 14/04 - repairs to be carried out by TLGO
Paddock Play Area	Tunnel Net fixing is broken	Replacement parts to be installed	DH	Completed.
Paddock Play Area	Springers x 2	Order tractor and rooster/chicken. Obtain installation quotes.	JP	Equipment delivered TLGO - Requested installation quote
Paddock Play Area	Tree on rhs is wobbly	Replant tree and re-stake - or remove if necessary,	JP	16/12/25 TLGO instructed.
Parish Office Caretaker Space	Groundworks	Create storage area at east side of office.	JP	Completed
Parish Office Caretaker Space	Electrics	Electrics for shed to be installed	JP	NC Electrical: work scheduled 21-23 April
Parish Office Caretaker Space	Plumber	Obtain quote for external tap	JP	Quotes received. Waterbutt to be installed and guttering.
Parish Office External Works	Storage Shed	Shed to be installed	JP	Completed
Parish Office External Works	Storage Shed - guttering and waterbutt	Guttering and waterbutt to be installed	JP	13/04 Materials ordered. Keith Hopkins engaged.
Parish Office External Works	Grit Bin	Grit bin to be installed	JP	31/03 Ordered
Parish Office External Works	4 yd Skip	Area to be cleared at front of office	JP	14/04 Skip delivery to Parish Office. 17/04 skip collection.
Parish Office Interior Refurbishment	Interior paintwork	Keith Hopkins engaged	JG	Completed with the exception of the small office that needs to be cleared out.
Parish Office Exterior Refurbishment	Exterior paintwork	Keith Hopkins engaged	JP	Completed with the exception of treating the new shed with wood preservative.
Parish Office Interior Refurbishment	Deep Carpet Clean	Obtain Quotes	JP	Quotes received. To be instructed following completion of interior decorating (small office).
Parish Office Interior Refurbishment	Replacement blind slats	Install Replacement blind slats	JP	02/04 Ordered.
Parish Three Year Tree Survey	To identify and agree low and medium priority work to be carried out.	MD to contact Fiona Danks re Tree Group	MD	MD to attend next WEG meeting.
Planters	Replace planters throughout the town	Fill and plant out new planters / dispose of old	TH/KJ/MD/JM	Completed.

Item	Details	Action Needed	By Whom	Actioned / Status
Planters	Planting of town planters	Obtain quotes for plants as per design by Esther Pesci	JP/EP	Completed
Recreation Ground - Salt Bin	Salt bin for car park and paths	Order 90l grit bin.	DH	w/c 14/04 To be installed at the recreation ground and filled with salt.
Recreation Ground - childrens play area	Play bark chippings	Obtain quotes to remove existing play bark, replace/repair gravel boards and weed membrane. Obtain quotes to replace existing play bark approx. 40m3	JP	Chippings to be raked when dried out. Awaiting quote from TLGO - due w/c 14/04
Recreation Ground - Two Benches	Duplicate plaque to be replaced with 'Beacon Festival' plaque	To be installed	DH/JP	Completed.
Recreation Ground - MUGA Fencing extension	Ball stop netting on three sides of the MUGA, to increase the height by 3 metres	Planning permission application to be submitted. Grant funding applications to be submitted	RG / JRW/JP	01/04 Planning Application acknowledgement received - 25/05 decision due 23/02 Councillor Grant Application submitted by JRW for £1k. £500 grant received from Doris Field.
Recreation Ground - Play area street lamp	Broken lamp	28/11 Meet with electrician (MD). Source replacement lamp. Engage electrician.	JP	NC Electrical: 21/04 installation scheduled 9am. Tower ordered - 8am delivery
Recreation Ground - Sails and Posts	1 x additional post required and new sails for next year	1 x posts to be installed and sails to be ordered and installed.	MD	Mid April 1 x post to be ordered Contractor to be engaged
Recreation Ground - Solar Lights	More units have been vandalised – to be replaced or repaired asap.	Install replacement head units.	DH	Completed.
Recreation Ground - youth shelter (small)	Concrete base	Agreed to engage TLGO subject to available funds.	JP	Awaiting budget review
Town lighting	Identified faults to be rectified by OCC.	Follow up with Christopher Marks	MD	All complete except 2 x bollards on Cuxham Road - Bloor/OCC's responsibility to complete.
Waste Bins - SODC	Outside 12 Cuxham Road by footpath sign and Outside 3 Brook St /Cuxham Rd junc. junction	Contact SODC to replace bins.	JP	12 Cuxham Rd has been repositioned. 14/04 SODC Parks Team to replace post mounted bin on Brook St/Cuxham Rd. Nb. SODC no longer provide post mounted bins.
Watcombe Road	Large Potholes on tarmaced surface (Hill Road end)	Repair potholes	OCC	26/03 OCC Highways to complete repairs within 28 days

## 047/26 Finances

### a. Budget Review - 2025-26

The Year End Management Accounts were not available for the meeting and will be circulated in due course. It was noted that only a small balance will remain in the 2025–26 Special Projects budget once all works have been completed.

## 048/26 Town Matters

### a. Planters – consider purchase and installation of additional planter

Residents near the War Memorial have requested replacement planters for the existing wooden units, which are in poor condition. It was noted that the planters also serve as a barrier to prevent vehicles parking on the pavement. Following discussion, it was agreed to reposition the three planters currently located around the tree to the location of the existing ones, subject to residents' agreement. NS and MD to progress this.

### b. Traffic Calming – to discuss possibility of shared ownership of Sentinel Speedwatch Unit

MD presented to the Committee on behalf of Doug Harris, Speedwatch Co-ordinator as he was unable to attend. Visual materials and Speedwatch data were circulated for members' review. Members noted that approximately 20% of vehicles recorded were still exceeding 25mph. It was suggested that increased speeding may be linked to frustration caused by ongoing diversions. It was also noted that all drivers recorded as speeding will receive a letter from TVP. The new Sentinel device is able to capture number plate images. Concerns were raised that Speedwatch equipment can sometimes lead to confrontation, and

not all interactions are well received. It was noted that volunteers can stand at a distance from the operator of the proposed equipment, as the process involves monitoring vehicles rather than direct engagement. Benson and Sydenham have expressed interest in joint ownership.

049/26 Parish Council Assets, Amenities and Responsibilities (owned/responsibility for)

a. Public Conveniences

i. To discuss issues with vandalism (see Correspondence)

MD thanked JW for monitoring the PC on behalf of the WPC. Following vandalism over the Easter break, Members agreed that all incidents should be formally logged by DH/JW, including exact times where possible. It was further agreed that the gates would be locked intermittently, and signage installed in line with the agreed wording. JW reported that Pangbourne had been contacted for advice on vandal-resistant toilet roll dispensers and had shared their solution. **Action:** JW, DH and the Office will source dispensers and arrange for installation.

b. Recreation Ground

i. Container Toilet Unit – TH report on options

Given the lack of a viable plan and ongoing deterioration of the asset, Members agreed that further delay was not justified. **Resolved:** to sell the existing units and to investigate the costs of providing portable toilets all year round.

c. The Paddock – see action list

i. Dog Waste Survey – review and agree next steps

Members reviewed the survey results and agreed that no further action would be taken at this stage. The results will be published in the Watlington Times. **Action:** JP to source signage to clarify dog waste may be disposed of in any bin.

d. Parish Office and grounds – see action list and items below

i. Reduction of Energy Usage – update and agree next steps

Solar Panels on Parish Office: KJ/TH reported that limited green funding is available and that use of reserves may need to be considered. It was noted that any proposal to the Finance Committee would require a full business case, including costs, payback period, and feasibility. A structural survey of the roof would be required before proceeding.

ii. Moss removal from roof of Parish Office – to discuss and agree next steps

Following a review of the quotes **Resolved:** to engage Connexion Exterior Cleaning

iii. Multi-stem tree reduction – to discuss and agree

The Office sought advice on the multi-stem tree at Gorwell/Old School Place. The tree surgeon recommended reduction to allow managed regrowth as a hedge, retaining a natural barrier and habitat. **Resolved:** to proceed with JC Tree Services' quote, subject to Tree Officer approval.

050/26 OCC / SODC Related

a. OCC Priority Action flood projects 2026/27, previously circulated

OCC Priority Action flood projects 2026/27 - Flood Project Funding Expressions of Interest. The purpose of these Priority Action projects will be for communities to deliver small scale works to reduce flooding from surface water run-off, ordinary watercourses, and groundwater. No action.

051/26 Parish Office / Administration / Governance

a. Operations Committee Terms of Reference – to review and agree updates

**Action:** TH, MD and NS to review the Terms of Reference in detail and bring revised wording back to a future meeting.

052/26 Christmas Common – SG report

Road closures from Gigaclear and Thames Water are continuing to cause disruption and noise, often at unpredictable times including weekends and evenings. Residents are frequently forced to take diversions via Watlington, adding to traffic congestion. Services are being affected: postal deliveries and collections are sometimes delayed, and bin collections remain unreliable despite repeated reports to the council. Local business the Fox and Hounds has seen reduced passing trade, though advance bookings - especially on weekends - remain strong.

On planning matters, residents successfully opposed an appeal to build two modern houses in a prominent field at the entrance to the hamlet. Separately, a local shepherd reported incidents of dogs attacking his sheep, resulting in several lambs being killed. He confronted a suspected owner and has since moved the flock to a different field.

053/26 Correspondence – attached

- Email from resident regarding vandalism in Public Conveniences
- OCC Priority Action flood projects

054/26 Items for next agenda

To consider the production of a maintenance calendar for all assets.

**Meeting Closed:** 9:00pm

**Distribution List:** Mike Deighton, Jules McIntyre, Leo Pesci, Nicky Smallbone, Tim Horton, Sylvia Glover, Keith Jackson

**Co-opted:** Jenny Wilkinson