

Minutes of the **meeting of the Town Council** held at the Shire Hall on **Wednesday 22nd April 2026 at 7pm**

Councillors:

Present: Cllrs. David Adelson, Ruth Leach, Sharon Miller, Eamonn O’Nolan, Doreen Pegg, Nigel Phipps, Simon Sadler, Mike Sutton, Katharine Turner and Catherine Walsh.

Apologies: Cllrs. Sue Bale, Ellie Beck, Geoff Holdcroft, Tom Rogerson, Robin Sanders and Martin Wilks.

In Attendance: Town Clerk (Mr G E Diaper) and eight members of the public.

1. Apologies

The Council agreed to approve the absence of Cllrs. Sue Bale, Ellie Beck, Geoff Holdcroft, Tom Rogerson, Robin Sanders and Martin Wilks.

2. Declarations of Member Interests.

Cllr. Adelson declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in item 29 as a member of the Woodbridge Growers and stated he would leave the meeting prior to that item.

3. Requests for dispensations.

There were no requests for a dispensation in relation to items on the agenda.

4. To receive a short presentation followed by a question-and-answer session from Sergeant Rocky Hussain, Suffolk Constabulary

Sergeant Hussain was unable to attend.

5. Public Question Time

Seven members of the public addressed the Council about various issues facing Woodbridge today.

A resident of Castle Street spoke to his note, which focussed on the noticeable increase of traffic, parked vehicles and anti-social behaviour in the past thirty years.

He requested that traffic calming (speed humps) and vehicular speed restrictions be a priority for Woodbridge.

A resident of Quay Street spoke to his note which raised concerns about the increase of abnormal traffic in Woodbridge, most notably at weekends and bank holidays in the last two years. The increase in groups of motorcyclists, mopeds with L plates and modified cars was leading to significant anti-social noise nuisance for those living in central Woodbridge. An increased police presence particularly at weekends to deal with these issues, for which excuses have been made for too long, would be welcomed by all.

A resident of Theatre Street raised concerns about speeding traffic (particularly motorbikes) on that road, which is very narrow in places. His instinct is that someone will soon be badly injured or killed, and therefore an increased police presence alongside traffic calming should be considered immediately.

A parent from Kyson ward spoke of her experiences with speeding and anti-social driving during the local school run. She advised that many parents now drive their children to school as they are too concerned about their safety on the walk to school in the town. This is not a good outcome for those who do walk to school and it negatively affects a child's development of greater independence. A townwide 20mph limit and traffic calming is needed immediately to slow vehicles – Woodbridge should champion the safety of children, Active Travel initiatives and safer road crossings. A child's safety should not be on par with driver convenience. A round of applause indicated the strength of feeling in the room.

A young adult resident of Admirals Walk addressed the Council about his concerns regarding the rise of anti-social behaviour in Woodbridge particularly around vehicle issues but also around fly-tipping. He understands that anti-social behaviour is now the second most reported crime in the town after theft. But in his view it is seriously underreported and not taken seriously by the police.

A resident gave to the Council the question she had hoped to ask of the Police, which was would the police use Section 59 of the Police Reform Act if evidence is gathered by those affected by anti-social motorists, to prosecute repeat offenders.

The Chair of the Woodbridge Riverside Trust thanked the Council for their ongoing support for that organisation but raised a concern about the item to be considered in the confidential session which was to consider an update on the building for which they hold the lease. The Mayor advised that she should have no concerns about the item to be considered as regards the lease.

6. To agree and approve the minutes of the meeting held 18th March 2026

The Council approved the minutes of the meeting held 18th March 2026 as a true record.

7. To note the receipt of the minutes from this Council's Committees:

- a. Planning – 18.03.26
- b. Climate and Ecological Emergency – 25.03.26
- c. Planning – 01.04.26
- d. Amenities – 01.04.26

8. To consider and approve Town Council payments list for April 2026.

The Council approved the Accounts and Payments List for April 2026 – **£34,842.38.**

The Council noted that the payments list for April has been checked by Cllrs. Holdcroft and Phipps.

9. To note the following Town Council Accounts:

- a. Payments made since the March Town Council Meeting – **£16,706.20**
- b. Direct Debit payments for March 2026 – **£679.25**
- c. HSBC Corporate Card payments for March 2026 – **£1569.74**
- d. Bank Reconciliation and Supporting Statements to 31st March 2026 – **£744,679.04**
- e. Debtors report to 31st March 2026 (Confidential)

10. To note the Council's financial position as at 31st March 2026.

- a. Income and Expenditure Report to 31.03.2026 – Income **£739,971.00** and **£568,684.00**
- b. Balance sheet as of 31.03.2026 – **£717,881.00**

11. Openness and accountability of Woodbridge Town Council:

- a. To receive a report from the Town Mayor

The Mayor spoke to his list of engagements since the March meeting of Council, inviting Councillors to the Gurkha Community Day on June 27th at the Woodbridge Town Football Club.

- b. To receive an update from the Town Clerk

Woodbridge Community Hall – The Town Clerk was asked to ensure that concerns about unauthorised access onto the building were prioritised as part of the Health and Safety survey.

- c. To receive a report from Cllr. Sanders regarding matters arising from the Sizewell/ NSIP meetings.

Councillors Sanders was not present at the meeting but was thanked for this report. The Mayor provided a short update to the written report relating to the Sealink project. The Examiner had issued a 21-page request to National Grid with a myriad of questions and demands for additional information to be submitted by the end of April. Some of this was prompted by the submission from Councillor Sanders and the group of local councils that he chairs (ESCEP).

12. To consider the significant projects of the Council.

- a. The Shire Hall – an update on the work undertaken by Chapel Properties to date, including additional work identified and agreed. It is expected that the project will overrun by two weeks with the scaffolding now scheduled to come down on 15 June.

The Council noted the additional work approved by the Town Clerk which followed up close inspections of the building by Chapel Properties which identified further health and safety risks associated with the property. The total cost of this work is forecast to be in the region of £13,000 and is to be funded from EMR 340 (Shire Hall Maintenance).

The Town Mayor advised that he would write to the Project Manager to ask for full breakdown of any further costs that Chapel Properties are forecasting for the project.

- b. In house gardening/ maintenance – Update on the first few weeks of complete control of the Council's estate, including bin emptying and public toilet provision.

- The opening times of the Elmhurst Park toilets – could longer opening hours be accommodated during the summer months? The Council was minded to fund any reasonable costs involved in such a change.
- The bin empty schedule/ agreement in place with East Suffolk Services Limited – could the collection days be altered or increased to ensure a better service for the town. Notices, similar to those seen in Martlesham and Melton, should be attached to the bins across the estate. Consideration of the trial removal of bins at a specific location was also requested, including the requirement for public engagement and communication.

- c. Local Government Reform – green space due diligence; built spaces plan

Nothing to report.

13. To note the receipt of a written report from District Councillors Leach and Molyneux.

No report had been received from DCllr Molyneux.

14. To question the County and District Councillors on matters contained in their written reports.

The Council noted that Cllr. Leach was unable to answer any question in a public meeting due to the restrictions placed on her during the pre-election period. Members were asked to direct any questions to Cllr. Leach via email.

The Council thanked Cllr. Leach for her work during this Council.

15. To confirm the time, date (Tuesday 12 May) and location of the Annual Town Meeting and have an exchange of views on the possible agenda items.

The Council noted the time, date and location of the Annual Town meeting:

Time – 6.30pm for 7pm start

Date – Tuesday 12th May, 2026

Location – Woodbridge Town Football Club

An exchange of views on the agenda provided that public participation in the meeting should be the main focus of the evening with the views of residents preceding any intervention by Councillors and our MP– the Town Mayor will prepare the agenda accordingly.

16. To consider the meeting schedule for 2026/27.

The Council agreed the meeting schedule for the first three months of the 2026/27 Civic Year:

May

Wednesday 20th May – Annual Meeting of the Town Council @ 6pm

Wednesday 27th May – Planning @ 5.30pm, Finance @ 7pm

June

Wednesday 3rd June – Climate @ 5.30pm, Amenities @ 7pm

Wednesday 10th – Planning @ 5.30pm, Highways and Transport @ 7pm

Wednesday 17th June – Town Council @ 6pm

Wednesday 24th June – Planning @ 5.30pm, Finance @ 7pm

July

Wednesday 1st July – Climate @ 5.30pm, Amenities @ 7pm

Wednesday 8th July – Planning @ 5.30pm

Wednesday 22nd July – Town Council @ 6pm

Wednesday 29th July – Planning @ 5.30pm, Finance @ 7pm

An item will be added to the June meeting of the Town Council to consider the schedule for the remainder of the Civic Year.

17. To receive an update from the Town Mayor on the activities of the Woodbridge Twinning Committee.

The Town Mayor provided an update on the activities of the Woodbridge Twinning Committee. Members were invited to the International Picnic on Kingston Field scheduled for Sunday 12th July.

18. To receive an update on the campaign to improve services on the East Suffolk Line and seek Council support for the campaign.

The Council agreed a vote of support for our MP's campaign to improve the frequency of rail services on the East Suffolk Line. Without strong public support, the investment needed to provide residents and visitors with a viable alternative to the car will not happen.

19. To consider and approve the Council's priority policies for:

d. Health and Safety

Further to minor amendments regarding the 'offer' of First Aid and Fire Marshal training to Councillors, the Council approved the Health and Safety policy.

20. To consider an IT policy for the Council in order to adhere to new digital compliance requirements as introduced as part 2025 edition of the Practitioners' Guide.

The Council noted the requirements placed upon the organisation by Assertion 10 of the AGAR which requires the Council to have, amongst other controls, a policy for the management of its IT systems.

Noting the concerns raised by Cllrs. following Cyber Security training provided by the Council's IT support company, the Council agreed it could not adopt either of the policies which had been provided for consideration. The decision was predicated on the use by Members of their own IT equipment to undertake Council business, and the risk that this may provide to the organisation. Council also noted the significant costs involved in providing all sixteen Members with Council supplied and supported IT equipment.

Cllrs. Phipps and O'Nolan, and the Town Clerk, were asked to seek the advice of the Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC), in order to guide the Council to a point where it can agree a suitable policy, protecting the interests of the organisation and to accord with Assertion 10. Until that time, the Council noted it would not be able to answer 'Yes' to that assertion on the AGAR.

21. To consider a request from the Woodbridge Fairtrade Group.

The Council agreed it supports the application to renew the status of Woodbridge as a Fairtrade Community and congratulates the local volunteer team in their recent efforts to encourage more use of Fairtrade goods in the town.

22. To note the decision of the monitoring officer in relation to the Code of Conduct Complaint CC794645973 – Mr Adrian Ratcliffe -v- Councillor Nigel Phipps and agree on next steps.

The Council noted the decision of the monitoring officer in relation to the Code of Conduct Complaint CC794645973 – Mr Adrian Ratcliffe -v- Councillor Nigel Phipps, that found that Councillor Phipps did not engage the Code of Conduct. The monitoring officer in his report noted that openness is one of the Nolan principles of public life. Council agreed that the Town Clerk should make the changes to the Council's co-option application form that (1) would require membership of a political party to be declared and (2) to consider whether all information that would need to be entered into the Register of Interests if co-opted, should also be included in the application form.

23. To exclude the Public and Press from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 because of the confidential information being discussed

The Council agreed that items 24, 25, 26 and 27 would be taken in the public session. Items 28 and 29 would remain in confidential session.

24. To receive an update from the Town Mayor on a campaign soon to be launched to target speeding vehicles in Woodbridge.

The Council agreed that it supports the campaign launched by the MP for Suffolk Coastal to target anti-social behaviour involving motorcycles and other vehicles in Woodbridge.

Cllr. Leach abstained from the vote due to the restrictions placed on her during the pre-election period.

25. To receive an update from Cllr. Sadler and the Shire Hall Working Party and consider the recommendations contained therein.

The Council noted the decision of the National Lottery Heritage Fund not to provide grant funding to the Council.

The Council agreed that it's relationship with Tricolor Associates is now at an end.

The Shire Hall Working Party were asked to consider the Council's position on the future of the building at their meeting on May 6th.

26. To consider recommendations from the Property Working Party.

The Council approved the following recommendations from the Property Working Party:

Lloyds Building – That the Council are 'minded to' continue negotiations with the owners about the potential use of the that property by the Council. The Town Clerk was asked to organise another visit to the property.

Kingston Pavilion – That the Town Clerk open discussion with the current tenant about extending the lease of the property until March 31st, 2029. The Council approved the two quotations from Total Renovations to undertake repair work to the roof and kitchen of the property and mandated the Finance Committee to account for those sums (total ex VAT amount, £3550.00).

Theatre Street – That a deadline for the completion of the sale be set at July 1st, 2026.

27. To note the publication of the advert for the Finance and Admin. position and consider a proposal from the Staffing Committee regarding additional staffing requirements.

The Council noted the publication of the advert for the Finance and Admin. position and the proposal from the Staffing Committee regarding the appointment of a temporary CEO to the organisation, which has been formally remitted to the Finance Committee in the first instance.

28. To receive an update on the Longshed.

The Town Mayor provided an update on a recent meeting with the Sutton Hoo Ships Company.

Cllrs. Adelson and Sutton left the meeting.

29. To receive an update on the Elmhurst Park kitchen garden.

The Town Mayor provided an update on a forthcoming meeting with the Chair and Trustee of the Woodbridge Growers.

Closure

The meeting was closed at 9.49pm.

Councillor Phipps, Chair