

## To Members of the Town Council

Cllr. David Adelson	Cllr. Ruth Leach	Cllr. Nigel Phipps	Cllr. Michael Sutton
Cllr. Sue Bale	Cllr. Eamonn O’Nolan	Cllr. Tom Rogerson	Cllr. Katharine Turner
Cllr. Ellie Beck	Cllr. Sharon Miller	Cllr. Simon Sadler	Cllr. Catherine Walsh
Cllr. Geoff Holdcroft	Cllr. Doreen Pegg	Cllr. Robin Sanders	Cllr. Martin Wilks

You are hereby summoned to the **meeting of the Town Council** to be held at the **Shire Hall** on **Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2026 at 7pm.**



Greg Diaper  
Town Clerk  
17<sup>th</sup> April 2026

### Public Attendance

Members of the public and press are welcome to attend. The public will be invited to give their views/question the Town Council on issues on the agenda, or raise issues for consideration of inclusion at future meetings. This item will be limited to thirty minutes duration.

The Town Council, members of the public and press may record/ film or broadcast this meeting when the press and public are not lawfully excluded. Any member of the public who attends this meeting is advised that the Town Council cannot control 3rd party recording.

### **Woodbridge Town Council vision statement**

**The Council will strive to ensure Woodbridge is a safe, harmonious, and thriving town where all residents and the wider community feel welcome.**

**We will work to make Woodbridge a place where all generations can participate in a vibrant, inclusive society that is environmentally resilient.**

### **Agenda**

- 1. Apologies for absence.**  
To receive any apologies for absence.
- 2. Declarations of Member Interests.**  
To receive any declarations of interest in respect of items on this agenda.



**3. Requests for dispensations.**

To consider requests for dispensations from Members on matters in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest, other registerable or non-registerable interest. Members are reminded that they are responsible for ensuring their [Register of Interest](#) is up to date.

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

**5. Public question time.**

For the public to ask questions of the Council or raise issues for consideration at a future meeting of the Council. Thirty minutes maximum – three minutes per person.

**6. To agree and approve the [minutes](#) of the meeting held 18<sup>th</sup> March 2026.**

**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.**

**9. To note the following Town Council Accounts:**

- a. Payments made since the March Town Council Meeting
- b. Direct Debit payments for March 2026
- c. HSBC Corporate Card payments for March 2026
- d. Bank Reconciliation and Supporting Statements to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026
- e. Debtors report to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 (Confidential)

**10. To note the Council's financial position as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.**

- a. Income and Expenditure Report to 31.03.2026
- b. Balance sheet as of 31.03.2026

**11. Openness and accountability of Woodbridge Town Council:**

- a. To receive a report from the Town Mayor
- b. To receive an update from the Town Clerk
- c. To receive a report from Cllr. Sanders regarding matters arising from the Sizewell/ NSIP meetings

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

- 13. To note the receipt of a written report from District Councillors Leach and Molyneux.**
- 14. To question the District Councillors on matters contained in their written reports.**
- 15. To confirm the time, date (Tuesday 13 May) and location of the Annual Town Meeting and have an exchange of views on the possible agenda items.**
- 16. To consider the meeting schedule for 2026/27.**
- 17. To receive an update from the Town Mayor on the activities of the Woodbridge Twinning Committee.**
- 18. To receive an update on the campaign to improve services on the East Suffolk Line and seek Council support for the campaign**
- 19. To consider and approve the Council’s priority policies for:**
  - a. Health and Safety
- 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.**
- 21. To consider a request from the Woodbridge Fairtrade Group.**
- 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.**
- 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.**
- 24. To receive an update from the Town Mayor on a campaign soon to be launched to target speeding vehicles in Woodbridge.**

- 25. To receive an update from Cllr. Sadler and the Shire Hall Working Party and consider the recommendations contained therein.**
- 26. To consider recommendations from the Property Working Party.**
- 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.**
- 28. To receive an update on the Longshed.**
- 29. To receive an update on the Elmhurst Park kitchen garden.**
- 30. Closure.**

## **Item 8**

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

In order to accord with section 6.10 of the Council's Financial Regulations (below in italics), the Council must agree to authorise the monthly list of payments to the Council's contractors and suppliers (which may also include expenses payments to Members, grants, refunds etc).

*The RFO shall present a schedule of payments requiring authorisation at council level, forming part of the agenda for the meeting, together with the relevant invoices, to the council. The council shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself, shall authorise payment by resolution. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the agenda of that meeting.*

Provided via the Council's [website](#) is the list for April – **Members are asked to consider and approve the Town Council payments list for April 2026.**

## **Item 9**

### **To note the following Town Council Accounts**

- a. Payments made since the March Town Council Meeting
- b. Direct Debit payments for March 2026
- c. HSBC Corporate Card payments for March 2026
- d. Bank Reconciliation and Supporting Statements to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026
- e. Debtors report to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 (Confidential)

Provided via the Council's [website](#) are the above listed documents, **which Members are asked to note.** Members are advised that these documents are provided in the public domain to ensure full public accountability of the Council's accounts (excluded the debtors report), and to assist the Council's internal and external auditors during their review of the Council's finances.

## **Item 10**

### **To note the Council's financial position as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.**

Provided overleaf are the income and expenditure figures and statutory balance sheet to March 31<sup>st</sup>, which summarise the Council's financial position across its day to day budget headings, bank accounts and reserves.

**Members are asked to note the Council's financial position as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.**

## Income &amp; Expenditure by Budget 31/03/2026

Month No: 12

## Account Code Report

	Actual Year to Date	Current Annual Bud	Budget Variance	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent
<b><u>Income</u></b>						
1100 Hire of Elmhurst Park	975	1,000	25			97.5%
1110 Lease on Kitchen Garden	0	95	95			0.0%
1200 Hire of Kingston Field	590	300	(290)			196.7%
1210 KP-Property Income	4,500	0	(4,500)			0.0%
1216 Whisstocks Develop. Lrt Income	6,077	5,727	(350)			106.1%
1217 Museum Income	814	776	(38)			104.9%
1218 WRT Income	1,974	1,880	(94)			105.0%
1220 Tennis Court Income	2,163	2,163	0			100.0%
1230 Allotment Rents	636	535	(101)			118.8%
1235 Property Re-charges	(2,811)	0	2,811			0.0%
1400 Theatre Street Wayleave	283	0	(283)			0.0%
1500 Hire of Shire Hall	4,625	1,250	(3,375)			370.0%
1505 Hire of Shire Hall Mkt Square	805	1,000	195			80.5%
1510 SH (UF) Property Rent	1,299	1,300	1			99.9%
1520 Hire of Whisstocks Waterfront	5,975	3,000	(2,975)			199.2%
1525 Whisstocks Quay Property Inc.	3,450	0	(3,450)			0.0%
1600 Precept	555,624	555,642	18			100.0%
1605 Grants Received	955	0	(955)			0.0%
1620 Wedding Income	31,068	30,000	(1,068)			103.6%
1630 Other Income	6,345	0	(6,345)			0.0%
1635 Hop to it Income	1,303	0	(1,303)			0.0%
1690 Interest Received	19,575	15,250	(4,325)			128.4%
1700 Market Rents Received	3,883	6,000	2,117			64.7%
1860 SCC Locality Funding Income	2,000	0	(2,000)			0.0%
1870 CIL Income	6,878	6,000	(878)			114.6%
1871 Tide Mill Quay Inc	956	1,000	44			95.6%
1900 Building Insurance Re-charges	2,435	2,200	(235)			110.7%
1905 Capital Receipts	77,594	150,000	72,406			51.7%
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>739,971</b>	<b>785,118</b>	<b>45,147</b>			<b>94.2%</b>
<b><u>Overhead Expenditure</u></b>						
4000 Grounds Maintenance Contract	79,694	80,000	306		306	99.6%
4005 Maintenance	21,251	14,101	(7,150)		(7,150)	150.7%
4100 Utilities	12,541	9,700	(2,841)		(2,841)	129.3%
4125 Toilets - cleaning, maint, etc	1,181	2,000	819		819	59.0%
4131 Events/Activities	30,940	28,250	(2,690)		(2,690)	109.5%
4135 Projects	47,764	57,625	9,861	2,530	7,331	87.3%
4410 Allotment Expenses	302	200	(102)		(102)	151.0%
4510 Telephone	888	1,100	212		212	80.7%
4515 Cleaning	3,261	2,700	(561)		(561)	120.8%

## Income &amp; Expenditure by Budget 31/03/2026

Month No: 12

## Account Code Report

	Actual Year to Date	Current Annual Bud	Budget Variance	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent
4600 Salaries	132,009	119,032	(12,977)		(12,977)	110.9%
4601 Salaries PAYE Tax/NI	47,492	39,354	(8,138)		(8,138)	120.7%
4602 Salaries Pension Contribs	44,285	39,031	(5,254)		(5,254)	113.5%
4603 Salaries Travel/Mileage	1,629	600	(1,029)		(1,029)	271.5%
4604 Salaries Subsistence	287	400	113		113	71.7%
4620 Mayor's Expenses	1,411	1,500	89		89	94.0%
4625 Mayor's Receptions/Civic Tea	2,179	3,000	821		821	72.6%
4630 Deputy Mayor's Expenses	54	100	46		46	54.2%
4635 Hospitality	211	150	(61)		(61)	140.4%
4636 Staff Vacancy advertising	750	500	(250)		(250)	150.0%
4640 Stationery & Printing	1,290	1,000	(290)		(290)	129.0%
4642 New website	5,945	250	(5,695)		(5,695)	2378.0%
4645 Computer Maintenance Contract	14,915	12,500	(2,415)		(2,415)	119.3%
4650 Training (Staff)	1,275	1,250	(25)	400	(425)	134.0%
4655 Training (Cllrs) & Expenses	0	750	750		750	0.0%
4660 Photocopier	1,529	1,500	(29)		(29)	101.9%
4670 Postage	197	150	(47)		(47)	131.3%
4675 Wedding Expenses	740	750	10		10	98.7%
4685 Handyman Contract	1,592	1,500	(92)		(92)	106.1%
4750 Surgeries and External Meeting	369	500	131		131	73.7%
4800 Grants Scheme	17,750	17,750	0		0	100.0%
4805 Regatta Insurance	537	600	63		63	89.5%
4810 Tide Mill Grant	7,500	7,500	0		0	100.0%
4825 Remembrance Day Expenditure	1,087	1,200	113		113	90.6%
4830 Foreshore Rent -Tide Mill Quay	2,378	2,375	(3)		(3)	100.1%
4835 Crown Estates Mooring Fees	0	300	300		300	0.0%
4841 Youth Engagement	4,407	5,000	593		593	88.1%
4842 Young Adult Support (18-25)	4,290	5,000	710		710	85.8%
4844 Senior Support	3,168	5,000	1,832		1,832	63.4%
4846 NSIPS	500	2,500	2,000		2,000	20.0%
4847 International/Twinning	1,171	1,000	(171)		(171)	117.1%
4853 Christmas Light fund	6,859	9,000	2,142		2,142	76.2%
4881 Whisstocks (other) Expd.	4,409	2,900	(1,509)	63	(1,572)	154.2%
4900 Bank Charges	1,053	400	(653)		(653)	263.2%
4905 Insurance Costs	12,693	12,500	(193)		(193)	101.5%
4910 Audit & Accountancy Charges	2,285	2,500	215		215	91.4%
4915 Other Subscriptions (inc SALC)	2,028	2,000	(28)		(28)	101.4%
4920 Internal Auditor Charges	1,405	1,250	(155)	713	(868)	169.4%
4925 Legal Fees	11,663	13,000	1,337	2,000	(663)	105.1%
4930 Art Club fees	14,096	11,000	(3,096)		(3,096)	128.1%
5100 Amenities Cttee Exp	1,792	10,000	8,208	(0)	8,208	17.9%

## Income &amp; Expenditure by Budget 31/03/2026

Month No: 12

## Account Code Report

	Actual Year to Date	Current Annual Bud	Budget Variance	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent
5150 Planning Cttee Exp	649	1,000	351		351	64.9%
5200 Highways Cttee Exp	892	5,000	4,108	2,253	1,856	62.9%
5250 Climate Emergency Cttee Exp	9,914	10,000	86		86	99.1%
5310 Pest Control	180	500	320		320	36.0%
<b>Total Overhead</b>	<b>568,684</b>	<b>548,768</b>	<b>(19,916)</b>	<b>7,958</b>	<b>(27,874)</b>	<b>105.1%</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>739,971</b>	<b>785,118</b>	<b>45,147</b>			<b>94.2%</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>568,684</b>	<b>548,768</b>	<b>(19,916)</b>	<b>7,958</b>	<b>(27,874)</b>	<b>105.1%</b>
<b>Net Income over Expenditure</b>	<b>171,287</b>	<b>236,350</b>	<b>65,063</b>			
plus Transfer from EMR	115,398	0	(115,398)			
less Transfer to EMR	182,128	0	(182,128)			
<b>Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve</b>	<b>104,558</b>	<b>236,350</b>	<b>131,792</b>			

**Agenda Item 10 (b)****Woodbridge Town Council Current Year****Balance Sheet as at 31/03/2026****31st March 2025****31st March 2026**

<b>Current Assets</b>		
10,499	Debtors	925
14,568	VAT Control Account	29,657
3,107	Prepayments	789
6,921	Current Account	10,210
237,542	Money Manager Account	153,190
290,835	Suffolk Building Society	300,070
51	Petty Cash	89
200,775	Unity Trust Account	281,121
<b>764,299</b>		<b>776,050</b>
<b>764,299</b>	<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>776,050</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
8,678	Creditors	14,886
57,598	Accruals	10,630
2,970	PAYE/NI Creditor	6,225
33,060	Income in Advance	26,429
<b>102,306</b>		<b>58,169</b>
<b>661,992</b>	<b>Total Assets Less Current Liabilities</b>	<b>717,881</b>
<b>Represented By</b>		
132,037	General Reserves	125,596
529,955	Earmarked Reserves	592,285
<b>661,992</b>		<b>717,881</b>

The above statement represents fairly the financial position of the Authority as at 31/03/2026 and reflects its Income and Expenditure during the year.

Signed :  
Chairman

Date : \_\_\_\_\_

Signed :  
Responsible  
Financial  
Officer

Date : \_\_\_\_\_

## **Item 11**

### **Openness and accountability of Woodbridge Town Council:**

- a. To receive a report from the Town Mayor

#### **Mayor's engagements since 16 March 2026:**

16 March	Meeting with the Chairman and a trustee of the <b>Sutton Hoo Ship's Company</b> with a focus on the community nature of the Longshed and to discuss plans for the launch of the ship.
19 March	Meeting on Kingston Field with the Students from <b>Suffolk Rural (Otley College)</b> who spent a day supporting our gardening team on the hedge and other tasks on Kingstin Field.
23 March	Meeting with Shona Norman and Simon Staford, <b>Seckford Foundation</b> to discuss the annual report of the Seckford Foundation.
25 March	Meeting with Jenny Riddell-Carpenter (MP) to update her on WTC plans for <b>Local Government Re-organisation</b> .
31 March	<b>Roadworks in Woodbridge</b> – response to our letter of complaint to Suffolk County Council received.
7 April	Meeting of the <b>Twinning Committee</b> to review current engagements and finalise plans for 2026.
9 April	<b>Local Government Re-organisation</b> – Consultation with Joeske van Walsum and Tristan Connell from the Woodbridge and Melton Society.
9 April	Meeting with Jenny Riddell-Carpenter (MP) to finalise arrangements for <b>the Gurkha Community Day</b> on Saturday 27 June. Councillor Ellie Beck joined the meeting as Council lead on the day and to receive an update on her <b>rail campaign</b> .
10 April	Call with Sally Longmate, CEO of Suffolk Association of Local Government ( <b>SALC</b> ) on support for our work on the <b>NSIPs</b> led by Councillor Robin Sanders and to update her on WTC plans for <b>Local Government Re-organisation</b> .
10 April	Short update meeting with Pat Clark, Chair of the <b>Woodbridge Riverside Trust</b> on the community nature of the Longshed and the emerging plans for post 2028.
13 April	Meeting with Jacq Barnard and Richard Brice to discuss the emerging plans for the launch of the <b>SHSC ship</b> . Councillor Robin Sanders joined the meeting.
13 April	<b>Shire Hall</b> . Meeting with Nick Jacob, architect, Joeske van Walsum, Chair of the Woodbridge and Melton Society, Sir Nick Young and the WTC Shire Hall Working Group to discuss the renovation project.
14 April	Roundtable discussion in Parliament hosted by Jenny Riddell-Carpenter (MP) on her campaign for more frequent <b>rail services</b> on the East Suffolk Line. Greater Anglia, Network Rail, Sizewell C, Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk Council participated.
16 April	In the context of <b>Local Government Reform</b> and the built spaces review, roundtable discussion in London hosted by Chapman Taylor, architects, on planning, development and funding.
17 April	Meeting at the Football club with David Cotton and Charlotte Nicolls to agree plans and catering for <b>the Gurkha Community Day</b> on Saturday 27 June. Councillor Ellie Beck joined the meeting as Council lead on the day.
18 April	East Suffolk <b>Planning</b> Association (ESPA) annual conference. Councillor David Adelson and I participated. Councillor Eamonn O’Nolan was on the panel in his capacity as CEO of the Deben Climate Centre. There were 6 members on the panel including the Ben Woolnough, Head of Planning at East Suffolk Council. A combination of the Government’s planning reforms and local government


re-organisation will mean that all of us will need to work even harder to ensure a strong local voice in the planning process to counter what appears to be a pro-developer focus that risks underweighting the need to build for stronger communities.

21 April **A12 upgrade** – meeting in the diary with the project manager at Suffolk County Council to discuss our response to the consultation and particular concerns with Grundisburgh roundabout. Councillor Robin Sanders and I will take the meeting. An oral update will be given in Council.

22 April **Local Government Reform.** Meeting in the diary at Deben View with Orwell Housing to discuss our plans. Iain Cochrane, our architect, will join the meeting. An oral update will be given in Council.

b. To receive an update from the Town Clerk

<b>Project</b>	<b>Position</b>
Shire Hall – Supplementary submission and window replacement works.	See items 12a and 25
Community Hall	<p><b>Accident</b> – The third party have confirmed via their insurers to DAC Beachcroft that they accept liability for the accident; we now await details of the finalised losses from the appointed loss adjuster.</p> <p>Brawdia, the Project Management Company appointed to manage the tendering process for the appointment of a contractor to undertake the work, have been contacted for an update on the project.</p> <p><b>Survey</b> – Officers were reminded of the requirement for a health and safety survey of the property by the Property Working Party. A health and safety survey of a building fabric is a comprehensive, structured assessment of a property's structural and non-structural elements to ensure they are safe, compliant, and fit for purpose. This survey focuses on the physical envelope—including foundations, walls, roofs, floors, windows, and doors—to identify hazards, defects, and maintenance requirements that could threaten occupant health or structural integrity.</p> <p>Online searches provide that such surveys have been commonplace in the high rise building sector since the Grenfell Tower fire, and the education section following the RAAC issues of recent past. Officers will work to identify organisations who can deliver such a survey for the Community Hall:</p> <p><a href="https://www.luciongroup.com/services/structural-building-fabric-surveys/">https://www.luciongroup.com/services/structural-building-fabric-surveys/</a></p> <p><b>Lease</b> – The Property Working Party considered the Heads of Terms provided by the Woodbridge Community Hall Management Committee and agreed</p>

	<p>that now isn't the time to consider entering into a new lease with that organisation for the use of the building.</p>
<p>Sale of properties</p>	<p>Theatre Street – See item 26</p>
<p>Whisstocks flood barrier</p>	<p>Following the high tides over the Easter period the gate was opened for a short time but then closed last weekend. As of today (21.04.26) we are entering a period of neap tides so ESSL have been instructed to re-open.</p> <p>The Environment Agency have confirmed that they have purchased an identical high-powered winch to that used by the Council to open and close the floodgate, which can be deployed at short notice should issues arise with our own winch. Discussion also provided that another proposal for closing the gate should the winch fail would be to deploy a large van or tractor/ telehandler to drag the gate closed via the adjacent floodgate and land used by MVP Engineering – Officers will investigate this proposal further soonest:</p>  <p>Both the Tru7 Group and Floodgate International have been contacted about other mitigation options but no responses have been forthcoming from either.</p>
<p>Woodbridge foreshore</p>	<p>A paper has now been received from the Tide Mill Trust – the Town Mayor and Town Clerk are scheduled to meet with the Chair and colleagues on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April for a first consideration of the document.</p>
<p>Changing Places toilet</p>	<p>The Planning Authority have provided a response of <a href="#">No Objection</a> to the proposal to prune the sycamore at the Hamblin Road site proposed for the CP toilet. The Town Clerk and DCllr Leach have separately chased ESC for an update in time for this meeting as to the potential lease for the site.</p>

Decision/action points from previous meetings of the Council:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Action</b>
15	The Council noted that React IT were unable to attend the meeting. The Town Clerk was asked to organise for the presentation to be received during the working day.	Presentation received by Officers and Councillors on Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup> April – more on this at item 20.
11c	The Town Clerk was asked to encourage Brawdria to appoint a local building company to undertake the work.	Brawdria instructed as requested.
11c	The Town Clerk was asked to contact Tru7 group about the installation of alternative methods of opening and closing the Whisstocks Floodgate. Floodgate International be asked as to whether extra wheels should be fitted to the floodgate.	See Whisstocks flood barrier update above.
12	The Council requested that Cllrs. Beck and Miller meet with the Town Clerk and Estates Officer to consider the governance of the in-house gardening, specifically focussed on the execution of the gardening plan and funding requirements of the Estates Team.	Meeting held Friday 17 <sup>th</sup> April – Cllrs. Beck, Miller, Phipps, Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk.  Agreement that the Amenities Committee would oversee the implementation of the Gardening Plan. Estates Officer to organise a quarterly update open to all Councillors.
18	EMR movements	All movements completed before year end – opening position of the Council's Earmarked reserves provided overleaf.
19	Agreement of asset register figure	Updated asset register provided on the Council's <a href="#">website</a> and submitted as part of the year end accounting process.
20	The Town Clerk was asked to prepare a draft agenda for consideration at the April meeting of the Council.	See item 15

21	The 2025/26 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) report, to be published on the Council's website and submitted to the District Council, was agreed.	Published via the Council's <a href="#">website</a> and submitted to the Planning Authority, who confirm agreement of the figures provided.  Confirmation from ESC yet to be received via email, however their <a href="#">website</a> provides an amount of £5,707.66 to be paid for April 2026.
22	The Town Clerk was asked to prepare a draft meeting schedule for consideration at the April meeting of the Council,	See item 16
23	The Council approved the recommendation from the Amenities Committee that the Council does not seek to bid on the land for sale at Brock Lane.	Land has been re-advertised for £15,000 – Amenities Committee notified and Officers asked to communicate with agent that the Council withdraws its interest.

**Earmarked Reserves**

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<u>Account</u>	<u>Opening Balance</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>Closing Balance</u>
315 Future Years Maintenance Res.	27,415.97	0.00	0.00	27,415.97
325 EMR Amenity Projects	8,000.00	0.00	0.00	8,000.00
335 EMR Elections	5,000.40	0.00	0.00	5,000.40
340 EMR SH Building Mainenance	78,794.15	0.00	0.00	78,794.15
341 EMR Shire Hall Development	37,102.71	0.00	0.00	37,102.71
342 EMR Shire Hall Project	215,642.00	0.00	0.00	215,642.00
350 EMR Community Hall	4,165.00	0.00	0.00	4,165.00
355 EMR Changing Places	72,600.00	0.00	0.00	72,600.00
385 EMR Tide Mill	7,500.00	0.00	0.00	7,500.00
407 EMR Play area equipment	82,891.69	0.00	0.00	82,891.69
408 EMR Greater Whisstocks	9,805.00	0.00	0.00	9,805.00
410 EMR ESC Grant funding	367.83	0.00	0.00	367.83
411 EMR Estate Resilience	23,000.00	0.00	0.00	23,000.00
412 EMR Local Govt. Reorganisation	20,000.00	0.00	0.00	20,000.00
	<b>592,284.75</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>592,284.75</b>

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

## NSIP report for Woodbridge Town Council April 2026

### **Sealink (Applicant National Grid Electrical Transmission (NGET))**

The Examination Authority (ExA) held a further Open Floor Hearing (OFH) on the week beginning 23 March and 2½ days of further Issue Specific Hearings (ISH) after the OFH with the ISH.

ExA had decided to not arrange any further site inspections despite calls to do so by many parties. At the OFH, which allows Interested Parties (IPs) to raise any issue there was considerable consternation expressed with the lack of NGET taking on board the views and opinions of local residents both in Kent and Suffolk. Specific concerns centred on noise, visual intrusion, health and wellbeing, traffic and economic impact on local villages and towns. There was again detailed commentary on whether there is an actual need for the project (as opposed to upgrading current facilities) and many raised the issue substantive areas of disagreement with the Applicant and between the Applicant and Statutory Consultees such as the County and District Councils the Environment Agency, Port of London Authority etc,

The ISH, whilst centred on the same topics as earlier ISHs did examine in greater depth the various impacts and the Examiners were particularly wishing to hear comment on and the Applicant's rebuttal to, cumulative impacts of all current energy projects and planned new ones such as Sealink and Lionlink. Further it accepted discussion on need for the project.

The Applicant maintained its position that its project would not have substantial additional impact assessed on a purely quantitative basis of additional impact over existing impacts by others, and thus mitigation by it is not necessary/essential.

In relation to traffic Interested Parties rebuttals stated that where capacity was 60% a relatively small quantitative increase has minimal impact, but where capacity is say 95%, a small increase has a severe impact on delays and queues and the Applicant was ignoring this. On the matter of other impacts e.g health and wellbeing, air pollution, the Applicant stated it was not possible to separate out its impact from that generated by others and thus there is no point in undertaking monitoring/assessment to determine if additional mitigation is required.

Since the above meeting there has been a further deadline (Deadline 6) to submit written representations (WR) of oral statements at the ISH/OFHs and to add any further commentary arising from those hearings. Members of the Steering Committee of ESCEP submitted WR and I wrote a detailed commentary on the A12 MRN and impacts at Woodbridge junctions and in Woodbridge using traffic assessment data for the 2027 Do Minimum situation, which is fortunately present in the MRN detailed traffic analysis.

Deadline 6 was also a deadline for the Applicant to submit updates on its work and to address specific questions raised by the Examiners after the OFH/ISH hearings. Whilst it appears the Applicant is now accepting a 5½ working day/week rather than 7 day it has a number of exemptions. It now accepts that it will not reach agreement with ESC and SCC on a number of aspects and will rely on its case given to Examiners.

Throughout the Examination ESCEP Steering Committee has met every month to develop understand, prepare WRs and assist member towns and parishes at the latest meeting it was felt a quarterly update meeting for town and parish councils in June will not be particularly useful so the next such meeting will be in the autumn after the Sealink report and minister's decision is made and Lionlink examination commences.

### **Lionlink**

No further development since last month.

### **Sizewell C**

The new Friday Street and Yoxford roundabouts are operational as are small areas of the park & ride sites but concerns have been raised at the poor signage at the new roundabout with no signs saying which exist for the A12.

I attended the Sizewell C Community Forum (STF) in March at which the new CEO was introduced. It was reported the two villages bypass will now open in the later part of 2027. Concerns were raised again on HGV drivers and particularly rubbish thrown from cabs and use of laybys and adjacent fields as toilets which is widespread around Westleton/Yoxford area. Sizewell C team whilst listening do not seem to be proactive on this and said they need data, ie.parishes to report incidents so SZC can take action.

Finally in the minutes of the 10<sup>th</sup> February SZC Tourism Working Group concerns were raised that contractors are booking and paying for hotel rooms for 10 days and only using the rooms for 1 night. The remaining room rates rise (algorithm price setting) and this is putting off tourists Further the hotel other facilities, restaurant and bars are not being utilised.

## **Item 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.

Chapel Properties have been commissioned to undertake repairs to the windows, soffits, fascia as identified from the two surveys previously undertaken of the property. Upon closer inspection once the scaffolding on the building had been installed, and following a site visit up the scaffold alongside the Town Clerk and Estates Manager, Chapel provided an itemised list of additional works that they have identified be required.

This list was shared with the Town Mayor and Chair of the Finance Committee, and in the view that these repairs are required to ensure the long term viability of the building and in most cases to prevent significant health and safety issues, it was agreed that the Town Clerk authorise this work in line with the powers provided to him under section 5.16 of the Councils Financial Regulations. In line with the requirement of that regulation, **Members are asked to note the additional work agreed with Chapel Properties, the total sum of which is forecast to be in the region of £13,000, and will be paid from EMR 340 – Shire Hall building maintenance.**

The Town Clerks communication with Chapel in regard of this additional work and photos from the site visit are provided on SharePoint.



Suffolk County Council have been approached about the four streetlights on the building which they confirm are their property. If they do not have the funds to undertake the re-

painting, it has been proposed that the Town Council fund this work to ensure the completeness of the project.

Project managers from Chapel Properties attended the meeting of the Property Working Party on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April and provided an update on the project. The major take away from this meeting is the requirement for an additional two weeks of the project to complete all works required – the Town Clerk is progressing the extension of the parking bay suspension with East Suffolk Council.

- 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 Council’s Head Gardener presented the Mayors Monthly, which focussed on the gardening plan and other projects ongoing on the Council estate:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wUlvKvTcyY>

The agenda for March detailed the set-up costs of the in-house gardeners which were forecast to be on budget – as presented at item 10, expenditure code 4000 was almost fully utilised but not overspent, whilst EMR 360, was spent in totality as the Council agreed it could be at the start of this project.

**Overhead Expenditure**

4000	Grounds Maintenance Contract	79,694	80,000	306	306	99.6%
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The Council’s two electric vans have their own separate insurance policies, whilst all new equipment stored in the gardeners shed have been added to the Council’s insurance policy at zero cost. The improvements of the Elmhurst Park gardeners shed and public toilets have been assessed by surveyors and we await a valuation report to present to our insurers.

The agreement with Nurture came to an end on March 31<sup>st</sup> without issue (although their 1100 litre bins still remain in Elmhurst Park despite numerous chases). Jess, Frankie and Liam are working to implement the Gardening Plan as approved by the Amenities Committee, and as provided at item 11b, will schedule a quarterly meeting to which all Councillors are invited to be advised of their progress.

Two matters have been requested by Cllr. Walsh for consideration by the Council which are relevant to this item:

**Elmhurst Park toilets opening hours:**

*Please can we put an item on the TC agenda to overturn the timings made by the Amenities committee for the locks on the Elmhurst Park toilet, to lock said toilets at 16.30 during the long light summer evenings seems rather ridiculous , I'm thinking in the context of couples / families having picnics in the park at weekends and also families using the playground after school.*

*It seems to be a ludicrous time to close them, I appreciate the avoidance of the clocks change but I dont know what the difference is to have different times.*

*I do not think the members of the public will be very impressed by these timings, the ones I spoke to firmly said they wanted longer summer openings.*

The minute referred to by Cllr. Walsh from the April 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Amenities Committee states:

*The Committee also requested that toilet opening times be set in a way that avoids disruption when the clocks change in spring and autumn. E.g. 08.30 – 16.30 Summer and 7.30 – 15.30 Winter. Appropriate signage should also be installed to clearly display the opening times for users.*

#### **Bin emptying on the Town Council estate:**

*Sadly I went on local social media after the Easter Weekend and saw the posts on the "Overflowing Bin Situation in parts of the Parks and Whistocks in Woodbridge".*

*Please could an item go on the next Amenities Meeting in regard to doing a trial in Elmhurst Park by taking all the Bins away and thus following the " take it home" Policy or the "No bins,no litter,just nature" policy that is followed by other establishments, too numerous to mention.*

There was significant public concern about the condition of the Council bins during the Easter bank holiday weekend. Uploaded to SharePoint is a letter addressed to the Estates Manager from East Suffolk Services Ltd accepting full responsibility for the unacceptable scenes that weekend.

Across the Council's estate there are forty-eight litter and thirteen dog/ fido bins; the agreement with ESSL is that these will be emptied on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday, however Liam is in close communication with ESSL and a move to daily checks and emptying on a Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday is in discussion.

**Members are asked to consider the two requests from the Cllr. Walsh.**

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

The Working Party to be chaired by Cllr. Miller has yet to meet; the work undertaken so far has been the downloading of the title documents of the four priority open spaces identified during the first stage of the process:

- Houchells Meadow
- Castle Street
- Newham Avenue play area
- Model boat pond

These documents are provided via SharePoint.

March 2026 Parish Report  
East Suffolk Council GLI Group – Councillor Update

### £1.5m Thriving Places Fund Announced to Support East Suffolk's Smallest Communities

East Suffolk Council recently announced a new £1.5m programme that's set to revitalise the district's towns, village and rural communities.

Announced at the Town Councils' Conference held at High Lodge at Hinton, Saxmundham, the Thriving Places fund is planned to deliver projects that will strengthen the long-term resilience and sustainability of the district's smallest communities.

Launching in April 2026, the fund that will run for two years will be open to town and parish councils, CICs and social enterprises, charities and not for profit organisations and community groups to upgrade facilities, aims to help improve public spaces and make a difference to the lives of local people.

Leader of East Suffolk Council, GLI Cllr Caroline Topping said: "Our smaller communities are important to the fabric of East Suffolk, and we want to support them to be local centres of trade and ecommerce. A place for people to gather and places which build community understanding and cohesion, with that in mind, we are pleased to announce our Thriving Places Fund.

"Specifically targeted at smaller towns and communities in East Suffolk, this funding aims to revitalise and enhance local centres to encourage local enterprise, improve community participation, strengthen the local visitor and cultural economy, enable local carbon sustainable investment.

"We recognise the challenges our rural communities face – such as declining infrastructure, reduced access to services and the impact of social isolation, and to address the historical lack of place-based investment in these smaller communities, we are prioritising this funding support to meet each communities' specific needs. The Thriving Places Fund aims to address these challenges and empower each locality to develop projects that will have a lasting and positive impact on the lives of local people."

Communities can apply for grants of up to £50,000 to support local projects which aim to reduce inequalities in the area, help people to adapt to changes, help to protect important local assets like buildings or spaces, improve access to services, skills, wellbeing activities and local facilities and support long-term local growth.

Capital grants of between £10,00 and £50,000 will be available for purchasing or improving physical assets, while revenue grants between £5,000 and £25,000 can be utilised to cover project-specific activities and operational costs. Up to 60% of project costs will be covered by the new grants and up to 80% for successful applications from community and not-for-profit organisations. Each year communities can apply within

four funding rounds, with the final decision made by a grant panel consisting of senior East Suffolk councillors and officers.

The fund is open to all areas of the district apart from the town council areas of Felixstowe and Lowestoft due to the significant Council and external funding both towns continue to benefit from such as the £20m in Pride of Place funding that's being awarded from central Government.

Further details on the funding will be available in April.

### [Youth Councillors visit heart of British democracy](#)

The day started with a tour of Westminster Hall and the House of Commons, with Youth Councillors given many opportunities to learn about how the British democratic system works.

Youth Councillors were then able to ask Jess Asato MP questions, before holding a debate in the Boothroyd Committee Room, which fostered lots of discussion on a wide range of topics. Some of the issues raised throughout the day included social media and AI, violence against women and girls, community cohesion as well as the setbacks they face as young people living in a rural community.

The day was received positively by all Youth Councillors, with many feeling inspired to continue championing young people's voices both locally and nationally.

GLI Cllr Katie Graham, who attended the tour alongside the Youth Council, said:

"We should all feel proud of the Youth Councillors, who really showed their passion for representing young people in East Suffolk during their visit.

"I found the whole experience very uplifting, sitting in the halls of one of the world's most historic, and architecturally impressive democratic spaces, listening to our youth councillors engage so confidently and insightfully with the issues of their time."

Jess Asato, Member of Parliament for Lowestoft, said:

"It was fantastic to welcome East Suffolk Youth Council to Parliament and to see their curiosity first-hand. They certainly didn't hold back when we sat down in the committee room, I was properly grilled with some thoughtful and challenging questions.

"I particularly enjoyed hearing their mixed views on the role of social media in young people's lives. Seeing such engaged and passionate young people discussing the issues that matter to them is incredibly encouraging, and I wouldn't be surprised if a few of them ended up sitting on the green benches themselves one day."

The Youth Council was set up in 2024 to ensure the voices and concerns of younger residents are heard. It is an apolitical council, with its own rules of procedure designed to promote open discussion.

Youth from every secondary educational community in East Suffolk, including the homeschooled, are represented on the Youth Council.

## Bringing Homes Back to Life in East Suffolk

So far in the financial year 2025/6 the Council has helped to bring 20 long term empty properties back into use, with 25 returned to use for the previous year. In the district there are currently 652 long term empty properties, with the number of properties standing empty for ten or more years currently standing at 106.

Each year the Council reviews the number of empty properties and works closely with their owners to bring them back into use – either by providing financial support to get them ready for the housing market or giving them guidance on how they can sell or rent out their home.

Housing Renovation Grants of up to £15,000 can help owners to carry out improvement works to get the property ready for letting out to tenants. This funding can help cover costs such as electrical rewiring, installing first time central heating, or remedying significant damp or structural issues. To keep the grant, property owners must live in the home for 20 years or if they are renting it out, it must be charged at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates for 15 years, with council-referred tenants taken for the first two years.

Owners of properties in areas surrounding Sizewell could benefit from two grants to help them to provide accommodation to those working at Sizewell C. Grants of up to £7,000 per bedspace are available and can cover costs including structural works, electrical wiring, heating installation, windows and doors, plumbing, installing kitchen and bathroom facilities and additional parking. The grant will also support the creation of Homes of Multiple Occupancy (HMO) to licensable standards. Minor Works Grants can provide up to £3,000 per bedspace for people wishing to repurpose an unused bedroom within an existing home into accommodation for a Sizewell C worker. Additional Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) funding of up to £2,500 is also available where a property holds a valid EPC certificate of a rating D-G.

The Council provides support to empty homeowners if they are looking to sell by seeking valuations from local estate agents and working with local auctioneers who can offer reduced rates. Landlords can also be referred to East Suffolk Lettings which can help with renting properties and managing tenancies on the condition that rent is charged at LHA levels or within 10%, with a financial incentive offered as part of the sign-up process.

GLI Cllr David Beavan, East Suffolk's cabinet member for Housing said: "Empty homes are wasted resources that burden both taxpayers and local communities. In the midst of a housing crisis, it is unsustainable to allow vacancy rates to rise when these buildings could be repurposed to provide the much-needed homes our communities desperately need.

"While we are penalising owners of empty properties through long-term empty Council Tax premiums of up to 300% due to the impact they cause, we want to encourage owners to get in touch with our Private Sector Housing team so that we can support

them. It's positive to see 20 homes brought back to life with the help of our team and we hope that by raising awareness of the problem, we can encourage more property owners to come forward."

### Children Encouraged to Get into Gardening on World Book Day

Free Field to Fork activity booklets were distributed to primary school children in East Suffolk to help encourage a love of both reading and gardening.

1,750 children across the district received the booklets, which are designed to engage and inspire children to learn about gardening.

The booklets have been produced in collaboration with the Royal Horticultural Society, and include free nature activities, games and recipes.

Children will also be provided with a growing kit, which will include a variety of seeds, planters and accompanying gardening resources. These kits will complement the booklets, transforming each child's knowledge about gardening into practical skills.

GLI Cllr Sarah Whitelock, cabinet member for Communities, Culture, Leisure and Tourism, said:

"I am pleased to see our Field to Fork scheme once again supporting families with the cost of living, encouraging them to grow their own vegetables and giving them the tools to do so.

"These booklets also support the National Year of Reading, which is encouraging people across the UK to read about things that inspire them. In East Suffolk, these booklets will hopefully influence the next generation of gardeners and inspire more children to learn more about horticulture."

Sarah Galvin, RHS Head of National Community Programmes, said:

"We are delighted to have teamed up with East Suffolk Council to create these booklets as part of the Field to Fork scheme. Gardening with young people is a powerful way to spark curiosity about the natural world.

"From learning where our food comes from to improving health and wellbeing and caring for the environment, these hands-on experiences can ignite a passion, helping to kickstart the next generation's lifelong journey with gardening."

The Field to Fork booklet highlights the Council's support for the National Literacy Trust's National Year of Reading, for which East Suffolk Council is a pledge partner. Throughout 2026, the Council will be supporting other initiatives that encourage residents to get into reading.

### Ease the Squeeze on Cost of Living

Are you, or someone you know, worried about the increasing cost of living? We understand the pressures faced by many people today and we are working closely with

key partners to ensure support is available to help ease the squeeze for households in East Suffolk.

To make it as easy as possible for you to access the services and support available, locally and nationally, we have gathered information about them in one place:  
[www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/community/squeeze/](http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/community/squeeze/)

For the most up to date information regarding East Suffolk Council, please visit:  
[www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk](http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk)

View the Well Minds East Suffolk booklet: [tinyurl.com/9xhka624](http://tinyurl.com/9xhka624)

## **Item 15**

**To confirm the time, date (Tuesday 13 May) and location of the Annual Town Meeting and have an exchange of views on the possible agenda items.**

The Council considered a similar item at the March meeting, the minutes from which provide:

**20. To confirm the time, date (Wednesday 13 May) and location of the Annual Town Meeting and have an exchange of views on the possible agenda items.**

The Council confirmed that the Annual Town Meeting be scheduled for Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May at 7pm, and the Town Clerk asked to contact the Woodbridge Town Football Club for their availability.

The exchange of views proposed a number of potential topics for discussion, but the Council noted that the meeting is specifically for parishioners to raise matters of interest to the Council, rather than the Council dictate the agenda items to be considered. The Mayor was asked to make sure all speeches were tightly controlled. There was a view that 10 minutes was too long.

The Town Clerk was asked to prepare a draft agenda for consideration at the April meeting of the Council.

The Woodbridge Town Football Club was unavailable on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May; as per the title of this item, Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May has been booked and 'Save the date' poster published:



Uploaded to SharePoint is an email invite sent to the 90 plus charities and organisations on the Council's contact list, response to which has been limited to this point.

Provided overleaf is the draft agenda for consideration at this time. For information:

- The agenda will need to be published no later than Friday 1<sup>st</sup> May to accord with legislation (seven clear days required).
- The agenda will be published before the County Council elections scheduled for Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May – the elected person will be invited to speak to the meeting at item 7.
- Attendees who wish to speak outside of the meeting with elected representatives are being encouraged to attend from 6pm.

**Members are asked to confirm the time, date (Tuesday 13 May) and location of the Annual Town Meeting and have an exchange of views on the possible agenda items.**

# To all electors in the Parish of Woodbridge

Notice is hereby given that the

## Annual Town Meeting

Will be held at the

# Woodbridge Town Football Club, Fynn Road, IP12 4LS

on

## Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2026 at 7.00pm

The Local Government Act 1972 provides that a Town Meeting shall assemble annually between 1 March and 1 June in every year. It is a meeting of Local Government Electors of the Parish for the purpose of discussing the town's affairs.



**WOODBIDGE TOWN COUNCIL**

Town Clerk: Mr G E Diaper

Shire Hall, Market Hill, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 4LP

Telephone: 01394 383599 | Email: [townclerk@woodbridge-suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@woodbridge-suffolk.gov.uk) | Website: [woodbridge-suffolk.gov.uk](http://woodbridge-suffolk.gov.uk)

The Town Mayor presides at the meeting and the Council's Standing Orders apply. The under-mentioned business will be conducted – local government electors for the parish of Woodbridge are qualified to attend and participate in this meeting (LGA 1972 s 13(1)).



Councillor Nigel Phipps

Mayor of Woodbridge

1<sup>st</sup> May 2026

### **Agenda**

**1. Welcome.**

Introductions from the Mayor of Woodbridge, Cllr. Nigel Phipps

**2. Apologies for absence.**

**3. Consideration and approval of Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2025.**

**4. To receive a report from the Town Mayor on the Civic Year 2025/26.**  
(Limited to ten minutes)

**5. Public question time.**

To receive questions from the public and reports from local organisations.  
(No time limit).

**6. To receive a report from the Member of Parliament for Suffolk Coastal, Jenny Riddell-Carpenter MP.** (Limited to ten minutes)

**7. To receive a report from the County Councillor for Woodbridge,** (Limited to ten minutes)

**8. To receive a report from the East Suffolk District Councillors for Woodbridge, Cllr. Ruth Leach and Cllr. Stephen Molyneux.** (Limited to ten minutes)

**9. Closure.**

## **Item 16**

### **To consider the meeting schedule for 2026/27.**

The Council considered a similar item at the March meeting, the minutes from which provide:

#### **22. To consider the meeting schedule for 2026/27.**

The Town Clerk was asked to prepare a draft meeting schedule for consideration at the April meeting of the Council, including the following suggestions:

- Town Council meetings to start at 6pm, with no other meeting beforehand.
- Two meetings of the Planning Committee per month.

Since that time, consideration has again been given to the merging of the Amenities and Climate and Ecological Emergency Committee, but after discussion it was felt that these Committees be kept separate, but with their meetings held on the same night, with a trial period in the time before the August break. A draft schedule for that period is provided below:

### **May**

Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May – Annual Meeting of the Town Council @ 6pm

Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May – Planning @ 5.30pm, Finance @ 7pm

### **June**

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> June – Climate @ 5.30pm, Amenities @ 7pm

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> – Planning @ 5.30pm, Highways and Transport @ 7pm

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June – Town Council @ 6pm

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June – Planning @ 5.30pm, Finance @ 7pm

### **July**

Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July – Climate @ 5.30pm, Amenities @ 7pm

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> July – Planning @ 5.30pm

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> July – Town Council @ 6pm

Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> July – Planning @ 5.30pm, Finance @ 7pm

**Members are asked to consider the meeting schedule for 2026/27.**

### **Item 17**

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

Uploaded to SharePoint are the minutes from the most recent meeting of the Woodbridge Twinning Committee – the Mayor will provide a verbal update on the recent activities of the group.

**Members are to receive an update from the Town Mayor on the activities of the Woodbridge Twinning Committee.**

### **Item 18**

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

Uploaded to SharePoint is a paper from the Mayor following his attendance at a meeting with Jenny Riddell-Carpenter MP at a meeting in London to discuss the future of the East Suffolk line.

As members are likely aware, a campaign by the MP is currently calling for:

- 1. Better early morning and late evening services.*
- 2. A regular half-hourly service on the Ipswich–Lowestoft line.*
- 3. A renewed push to reinstate the Lowestoft–London service.*

**The Mayor will speak to his paper and seek Council support for the campaign.**

## **Item 19**

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

A – Health and Safety

**The Council requested the following updated to the draft policy first presented in February:**

- The inclusion of First Aid and Fire Marshall training for Councillors.
- Reference to the Estates Officer being responsible for maintenance of tools used by the Estates Team.
- Re-word sections so that 'aim to ensure' is used instead of 'absolutely ensure'.

An updated policy is uploaded to SharePoint for consideration.

**Members are asked to consider and approve the Council's Health and Safety policy.**

## **Item 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 following item was considered at the February meeting of the Council:

### **PRACTITIONERS' GUIDE ASSERTION 10 – DIGITAL COMPLIANCE**

**What is SAPP (Practitioners' Guide)** – [Small Authorities' Proper Practice Panel](#) (previously JPAG, Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance).

**What is the Practitioners' Guide** – It supports the preparation of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and provides best practice that all councils should follow.

**What is Assertion 10** – A new assertion on the AGAR whereby the Council must state whether it has followed digital and data compliance during the current financial year.

**When does Assertion 10 come into force** – It is in force as of 1 April 2025 and will be part of the AGAR for the financial year ending March 2026.

### **Is Woodbridge Town Council currently compliant with Assertion 10?**

<b>What</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Compliant</b>
Data protection and security	Using authority-owned email accounts.	Yes
Accountability and transparency	Using authority-owned email accounts.	Yes
Consistency, trust and professionalism	Using authority-owned email accounts.	Yes
Ease of data gathering for Data Subject Access or Freedom of Information requests.	Using authority-owned email accounts.	Yes
IT Policy which covers use of emails.	Having a clear IT Policy	No
Website	Authority-owned, gov.uk website.	Yes
Website accessibility	At a minimum the website must include an <a href="#">accessibility statement</a> which explains why some or all the website is not compliant. This can be carried	Yes

	out if it would place a disproportionate financial burden on the council to update the website.	
Data Protection	Registered with the ICO as a data controller.	Yes
Freedom of Information	Publication scheme.	Yes
Transparency Code	Publishing all documents and financial information required.	Yes

The Council would be unable to answer 'Yes' to Assertion 10 at the current time as we do not have an approved IT policy.

Assertion 10 now makes it clear: councils must protect personal data and ensure up-to-date IT policies that reflect current risks, and not outdated templates. Online research provides that a Council IT policy fit to meet the requirements of Assertion 10 should include the following:

### 1. Purpose and Scope

✔ Example: "This policy applies to all councillors, employees, contractors, and volunteers who use IT systems to carry out council business, whether on council-owned or personal devices."

- ✔ Be clear that it applies to everyone involved. Not just the clerk
- ✔ Cover use of personal devices (e.g. a councillor using their home laptop to read emails)

### 2. Council Email Use

✔ Require all official communications to come from a council-owned email address (e.g. townclerk@woodbridge-suffolk.gov.uk).

🔒 Why? Because if the clerk leaves and everything is on randomclerk@gmail.com, you may lose access to critical information and breach GDPR.

- ✔ Set up a generic, permanent email account
- ✔ Ban forwarding to personal inboxes
- ✔ Include instructions on password strength and email access

### 3. Data Protection and GDPR

✔ Example: "Personal data must not be stored unencrypted on USB sticks, personal laptops, or cloud services like Dropbox unless approved by the council."

- ✓ Remind users the council is a Data Controller and Processor
- ✓ Refer to your existing Data Protection Policy
- ✓ Include guidance on handling FOI requests and subject access requests (SARs)

#### 4. Website Management and Accessibility

✓ Your website must meet WCAG 2.2 AA standards and publish all required documents (minutes, AGAR, councillor details, etc.)

! Example failure: A council's website doesn't include a contact page, isn't accessible to screen readers, and doesn't publish financial info, this breaches the Transparency Code and could trigger a complaint.

- ✓ Assign responsibility for updating the website
- ✓ Include frequency checks for accessibility and broken links

#### 5. Use of Council Equipment

✓ "Councillors borrowing a council laptop must not install additional software without permission."

- ✓ Specify who owns the equipment and what happens when a role ends
- ✓ Explain how to request IT support or raise security concerns

#### 6. Cybersecurity and Online Safety

✓ Require antivirus software, two-factor authentication, and regular updates on council devices.

🛡️ Example threat: A councillor clicks on a phishing link in a fake HMRC email and unknowingly installs spyware.

- ✓ Provide guidance on spotting suspicious emails
- ✓ Ban reuse of passwords across personal and council accounts

#### 7. Social Media and Communications

✓ Example: "Only the clerk or chair may post on the council's Facebook page. Councillors should not comment as individuals on behalf of the council."

- ✓ Set expectations on tone and professionalism
- ✓ State who can post, moderate, and respond
- ✓ Include rules for WhatsApp, Facebook groups, or local forums

#### 8. Training and Review

✓ Example: "All staff and members will receive annual refresher training on IT security and data protection."

✓ Include when the policy will be reviewed (annually is best)

✓ Mention who is responsible for updates (e.g. clerk, staffing committee)

⊘ What Your IT Policy Should Not Do

✗ Be too technical. Avoid jargon, this should be accessible to all councillors.

✗ Duplicate your Data Protection Policy. Refer to it instead.

✗ Include unrealistic rules. For example, don't require weekly backups if no one knows how to do them.

✗ Allow personal emails without restriction. Even small councils need digital discipline.

As a member of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), Officers were able to download the model IT policy produced by NALC to assist Councils in adhering to Assertion 10. That document, edited to reflect the position of the Council, has been uploaded to SharePoint for consideration.

**Members are asked 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.**

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As the Council did not agree an IT policy during the 2025/26 financial year, it will not be able to answer yes to Assertion 10 on the AGAR. A paper will need to be provided to the external auditor explaining the steps that the Council is taking to ensure compliance with that assertion, and hence the Council must still consider and hopefully agree an IT policy.

The NALC model IT policy provided for consideration at the February meeting of the Council was rejected by Members for a number of reasons, but specifically the onerous requirements placed on Members using their personal devices.

Uploaded to SharePoint are two policies which could be considered for adaption by the Council. The advanced policy has been supplied by the Clerk of Beaconsfield Town Council, an organisation with a budget in excess of £800,000 and with sixteen Councillors.

**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.**

One question which arose from the Cyber training session held last week was whether or not the Council should supply Councillors with IT equipment. Whilst both policies cover BYOD, it could be considered best practice for Councillors to have IT equipment provided and maintained by the Council in order to undertake the IT work required of the role.

React have been approached for a ballpark figure for the provision of sixteen laptops and the required support, and that number is provided below.....

Laptops = £9,200 ex VAT (one off)

Labour = £1,520 ex VAT (one off)

Cyber protection and MS License = £20,269.44

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## **Item 21**

### **To consider a request from the Woodbridge Fairtrade Group.**

The Woodbridge Fairtrade Group have provided the following request to the Council for support for their renewal application for Fairtrade Town status:

Fairtrade for Woodbridge – application to renew Fairtrade status 2026

The Fairtrade Foundation first officially declared Woodbridge a Fairtrade Town in 2008 and we held that status until 2014 when some of the key volunteers moved away from the area.

A new voluntary group was formed in 2022 and we gained the status of Fairtrade Community in June 2023. We are now embarking on the process of applying to renew this status as this is a three-yearly statutory requirement of the Fairtrade Foundation.

As part of this process, the FT Foundation will want to see evidence of how we have promoted Fairtrade in the town over the last three years and what support we have locally. The support of Woodbridge Town Council is key in this endeavour (as it was in 2023) so we ask members to show their support at the council meeting on 22 April 2026.

The motion could go something like this:

“Woodbridge Town Council fully 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.”

More details about our recent work can be found on [www.fairtrade4woodbridge.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade4woodbridge.org.uk).

We have been creating ‘starter packs’ of Fairtrade goods for local enterprises to try out before committing to stock FT items and recently held a meeting with all our new supporters which was well-attended. We still have more work to do but the following shops are now FT stockists:

East of England Co-op Supermarket and other stores, St Mary’s Church Shop, Oxfam, Les Chocolats Belges, Holland & Barrett, Grape Tree, Notcutts, Poppy’s Pantry. In addition, many organisations now use FT items in their kitchens, during refreshment breaks etc.

You will have seen a FT presence in most of the local street fairs and appropriate events, e.g. Christmas Street Fair, Regatta, Craft Fair, Food & Drink Festival, Earth Day.

Thank you for your support.

Sue Bale, on behalf of the volunteer team.

**Members are asked to consider a request from the Woodbridge Fairtrade Group.**

## **Item 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 Mayor advised at the completion of the March meeting the outcome of the Code of Conduct complaint made against him following the Council's co-option process undertaken at the January meeting of the Council. Agenda item 18 from that meeting detailed the Council agreed process for co-option:

[https://woodbridge-suffolk.gov.uk/site/assets/files/2902/town\\_council\\_agenda\\_-\\_21\\_01\\_26\\_v2-1.pdf](https://woodbridge-suffolk.gov.uk/site/assets/files/2902/town_council_agenda_-_21_01_26_v2-1.pdf)

Uploaded to SharePoint are the Mayors response to the complaint, and the decision of East Suffolk Council Monitoring Officer.

**Members are asked 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.**