

Minutes of the meeting of WATTON TOWN COUNCIL Finance Committee held on

Tuesday June 19th 2018 at

Wayland Hall, Middle Street, Watton, Norfolk IP25 6AG

Councillors Present: Kathryn Stallard – Chairman of the Committee, Peter Bishop and Pat Warwick.

Officers Present: Jane Scarrott Town Clerk

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies received from Tina Kiddell.

2. NO DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST MADE

3. MINUTES

3(i) The Minutes of the Meeting held on 15.05.18 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

3(ii) Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere:

- Quotes have been received for the agreed specification for works at the Cemetery to be presented at the next Full Council meeting. Consideration will be given to replacing benches past repair at the Cemetery with recycled plastic benches at the time the grounds work is undertaken.
- Benches around the town are in need of painting but this is something the Town Operative could be tasked to do.
- The Town Van has no identification and wrapping with appropriate signage will be arranged once an agreed and usable motif can be sourced.
- An account has been established with Land Registry.
- It had previously been agreed that evening hire of the Council Chamber should not be offered due to caretaking costs that would be incurred but that hire could be permitted during normal Town Council Office hours so negating the need for engaging anyone to lock/unlock the room. Charitable groups are offered the room free of charge during the day.

The Finance Committee recommends that if other, non-charitable groups, were to use the Chamber during the day a hire charge of £25 per hour should be set and all use should be agreed by the Full Council.

4. PAYMENTS

Payments made since the last Council meeting:

Road Closure for 2018 Festive Market	£36.00
Community Engagement Day 2018 stall	£10.00
Wayland Show 2018 stall	£36.00

It is envisaged that a desk and chair will be ordered for the Projects, Events & Support Officer.

Suggested purchase of flag poles for buildings along the High Street and appropriate flags to mark events was supported in principal by the Finance Committee, but this will be an agenda item at the next Full Council meeting to clarify expenditure including associated costs to fly the flags.

5. MOBILE PHONE FOR TOWN OPERATIVE

It was agreed a reasonably priced Tesco 'pay as you go' mobile phone will be purchased for use by the Town Operative.

6. CURRENT BUDGET POSITION AND VIREMENT

The current budget position is considered healthy at this date which is only 2 months into the new financial year. Virement from the Community Improvement Fund (CIF) of £3000 to boost the administration/legal cost centre and of £7000 (Watton Sports Centre donation) to boost the grants & donations cost centre has already been agreed.

Other money which will need to be vired from the CIF to support commitments in 2018:

- Estimated £11000 to cover costs of the Projects, Events and Promotions Support (PEPS) Officer
- Cost of consultants fees to undertake cemetery report (unknown cost at present)
- Estimated £15000 for cemetery maintenance works

7. REVIEW OF COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT FUND (CIF)

If the expenditure already committed in 2018 (as above) is taken into consideration the CIF which was £117000 at the beginning of the financial year will drop to £75000 (without including unknown cost of cemetery report) and if £5000 is also deducted to support the proposed Market Town Initiative (MTI).

In year 2 of the 3 year budget it is estimated another £17000, which is already looking to be committed for the PEPS Officer and the MTI, will take the CIF down to £58000 and the same in year 3 will result in only £41000 remaining in the pot.

It was noted the 3 year budget was originally set with the view that the precept would not be subject to a large rise (as in 2108) again within the 3 years of the budget and CIF expenditure would not be replenished through raising the precept.

8. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT AND INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

Councillors had previously been presented with copies of the Annual Governance Statement 2017/18 and the Internal Audit Report.

Suggestions made by the Internal Auditor included adding an agenda item of "Financial Report" to each Council meeting and it was recommended that a budget sheet and bank reconciliation should be presented at each end of the month Council meeting.

It was also suggested that the wording of any motion passed at a meeting needs to be specific to ensure understanding by all.

9. SCRIBE SOFTWARE TRAINING

It was agreed a further session of training in use of the Scribe accounting software would be booked for staff and members of the Finance Committee to attend with a view to focusing on the production of reports.

10. SERVICE CONTRACTS

A list of current contracts held by the Town Council is under compilation but more work is needed. Contracts in place are in need of review and other arrangements with service providers may need to be formalised moving forward.

11. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Financial Regulations have been checked against the recently reviewed and accepted Standing Orders 2018 with no amendments necessary to ensure both documents reflect one another.

However, it will be recommended to Full Council that the sentence in Regulation 5.1 “The council shall seek credit references in respect of members or employees who act as signatories” be removed.

12. DATE OF NEXT FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING:

July 12th at 11.00am

Agenda to include possible investment of Council reserves.

Recommendations to be made at the Full Council meeting on June 26th 2018:

1. The fee of £25 per hour will be charged for non-charity meetings which have been approved by Watton Town Council.
2. The Town Council will discuss the purchase of flagpoles and appropriate flags, and other associated issues which would arise from this purchase.
3. The sum of £15,000 will be vired from the Community Improvement Fund into the Cemetery Maintenance cost centre.
4. The requirement for signatories to undertake Personal Credit Checks will be removed from Watton Town Council’s Financial regulations.
5. Funding for Watton Town Council’s contribution to the Swaffham and Watton Joint Project Officer will be vired from the Community Improvement Fund.