

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

Friday August 17th 2018 at

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

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

Officers Present: Jane Scarrott Town Clerk

1. APOLOGIES

No apologies received.

2. NO DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST MADE

3. MINUTES

3(i) The Minutes of the Meeting held on 12.07.18 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

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

- The Town Operative has stated he is willing to purchase a mobile phone for work use and be reimbursed for the cost. If he is unable to do this a member of the Finance Committee will purchase a phone for the use of the Town Operative.
- The Grant Policy has been amended, as suggested at the last meeting, to reflect General Data Protection Regulations.
- Peter Bishop offered to inspect the benches in the Cemetery with the Town Operative with a view to replacing those past repair when the grounds maintenance work is undertaken in the Cemetery in October.
- It was noted Barclays Bank has informed the Council that the Council is no longer to benefit from holding a Community Account and that once the account has been changed bank charges are likely to be increased. Progress is being made to open an account with Unity Bank which it is hoped may offset Barclay's new charges.

4. EXPENDITURE MADE SINCE THE LAST MEETING AND CURRENT BUDGET POSITION

No expenditure noted since the last payment list presented to Council on July 28th.

Spending agreed by the Council since April which has not been within the original set budget allocations was considered with it noted that approximately £44600 will need to be taken from the Community Improvement Fund to cover the additional expenditure.

Other unplanned costs to purchase flag poles and flags and to undertake clearing of the Cemetery will be taken from the relevant contingency pots within the budget.

It was suggested £2000 should be vired from the Events contingency in the budget to create a new code heading of "Commemorative" in the Events cost centre.

It was noted that the allowance in the budget of £25000 to undertake maintenance work to Wayland Hall should cover the planned work to the roof including associated costs.



5. REVIEW OF COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT FUND (CIF)

The rate of calls upon the CIF was noted. In the light of virements already agreed within the first 4 months of the financial year, the fund will fall to approximately £72400 by the end of the financial year 2018/19. It was agreed consideration must be given to include expenditure within future budgets which will cover known costs such as the part salary for the new Projects, Events and Promotions Support Officer and any Market Initiative contributions.

6. RESPONSE LETTER TO MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC

Members of the Finance Committee agreed that the draft response compiled by the Chairman of the Committee to reply to a member of the public who has questioned accounting procedures will form the basis of the reply to be sent. Members of the Finance Committee will be sent a copy of the reply prior to this being sent to the member of the public.

7. PURCHASE OF ADDITIONAL FLAGS

It was recommended that additional flags for the High Street to commemorate Armed Forces Day and Remembrance Day will be purchased up to an agreed cost of £200.

8. PAST MAYOR'S BADGES

Investigation will be undertaken regarding purchase of past mayor's badges. The price for purchase of 10 badges has been given as an estimated £1000. The Deputy Mayor's jewel is in need of repair and the Mayor's chain is due to be cleaned with the names of the past three mayor's to be engraved. It was suggested a local jeweller be approached to possibly undertake this work.

9. TOWN VAN

Discussion took place regarding the options to replace the town van with a larger model. General consensus was that this is not an appropriate time to consider replacing the van but the situation could be reviewed in 18 months time.

A local company has quoted £40 per panel to wrap the town van and this price will be checked once enquiries have been made as to whether wrapping the van and adding a notice stating "no tools are kept in this vehicle" could reduce the cost of insurance. It was agreed up to £200 will be spent on wrapping or signage for the van. Watton Town Council plus the web site address and phone number to be either wrapped or signed on the van.

10. HIGHWAYS MATTERS

The Council is waiting for more information from the Highway Engineer regarding possible projects to alleviate speeding and parking problems around Westfield School and speeding along the Thetford Road. Concern was expressed that in terms of funding for the necessary work, the Town Council's remit and funding does not extend to Highways. It was felt that should Watton Town Council agree to financial support for either of the projects through the Norfolk County Council Highways Parish Partnership Scheme, residents would be subjected to double taxation through both the Watton Town Council Precept and Norfolk County Council tax. It was noted that support for a

resolution of the current issues at the two sites could be expressed appropriately by letters from Watton Town Council to the bodies responsible, raising these as matter for urgent attention.

11. PUBLIC TOILETS OPENING HOURS

It was agreed the contractors will be asked to unlock the public toilets on a Wednesday at 6.30am rather than 7.00am as at present. This will incur an additional cost of £2.96 per week.

12. DONATIONS POLICY

Item for the next agenda.

13. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE AND GRAVE DIGGING CONTRACTS

It was suggested a small working group comprising Stan Hebborn as Chairman of the Cemetery Working Group, Tina Kiddell, Kathryn Stallard and Peter Bishop should be tasked with reviewing the grounds maintenance contract and grave digging contract with a view to taking recommendations to the Full Council. It could be a suggested option that TTSR should be considered as the preferred contractor for a further year.

14. DATE OF NEXT FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

September 28th at 11.00am

October 16th at 11.00am to begin consideration of 2019 budget

