

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

Friday May 24th 2019 at

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

Councillors Present: Kathryn Stallard (KS) – Chairman of the Committee, Peter Bishop (PB), Sue Hebborn (SH) and Pat Warwick (PW).

Officers Present: Jane Scarrott Town Clerk

1. APOLOGIES RECEIVED FROM: Tina Kiddell

2. NO DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST MADE

3. MINUTES

3(i) The Minutes of the Meeting held on 12.04.19 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

3(ii) Update of matters from the minutes not covered elsewhere:

- A further meeting of the Church Walk Group is to take place on Weds. 29th May at 11.00am

- The recycling bins located by the public toilets in Watton are managed by Breckland District Council (BDC). The Town Council has recently been sent forms to claim future recycling credits for materials deposited in the bins.

- Amplifying equipment has been trialled and improvements to recordings of meetings have been made, but investigation is ongoing. Stan Hebborn is assisting with this and will be asked to update on progress.

- The Town Council has received a response to the letter sent to PKF Littlejohn(PKF) regarding the complaint the Council has made relating to the External Review process 2017/18. PKF Littlejohn has charged the Council 2.5 hours of senior management time, for additional services rendered, to deal with correspondence sent to the External Auditor from a resident.

An acknowledgment of the response will be sent and a copy of the response will be shared with members of the Finance Committee. KS, PW and the Clerk will compile a further letter to PKF and make a complaint to the Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments (SAAA). The draft letters will be shared with Councillors and copied to Norfolk Association of Local Councils.

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

- Noted that the company which hosts the Town Council website has needed to undertake work to ensure safety of the site and a charge may follow. It was suggested the contract for hosting the website should be reviewed and this will be a future agenda item.

- Two members of staff will be booked to attend a course for Portable Appliance Testing at a cost of £145 per person.

- Attendance at a Councillor training session at £60 per person has been requested.



- A request has been made for the Town Council to submit a planning application for a skate park. It was noted that the Finance Committee has reservations around a planning application being made for the suggested Thetford Road site.

5. REVIEW OF COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT FUND (CIF)

No movement of the CIF and therefore CIF remains at £79150. It is possible consideration will be given to reallocating remaining funds once the end of the year figures are confirmed.

6. REVIEW OF END OF YEAR ACCOUNTS

The end of year accounts were shared with the Finance Committee and will be presented to Full Council for approval following the visit from the Internal Auditor on Friday May 31st.

7. BRECKLAND COUNCIL FOOTWAY LIGHTING REPORT

The Town Council has requested information relating to the special expenses cost that Breckland District Council (BDC) adds to the Council Tax bill for Watton purported to be to pay for maintenance of the footway lighting in the parish. The report received was felt to be insufficient and it was suggested BDC should be asked to attend a future Town Council meeting to explain why the special expenses figure has been higher in Watton for the past five years than in other Breckland towns.

8. COUNCIL DEBIT CARD

It is an agenda item for the Town Council meeting on May 28th to consider applying for a debit card for the Town Council Unity Account to be used for on-line purchases. It was suggested a monthly limit of £500 should be set on the card.

9. INVESTMENT STRATEGY

It is statutory guidance, and a recommendation from the Internal Auditor, that the Town Council compiles and adopts an investment strategy.

This is being investigated with examples from other Councils to be shared with members of the Finance Committee.

10. DATE OF NEXT FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING:

Friday June 14th 11.00am

Future meetings will be held on the Friday following the first Full Council meeting of the month.

