

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

Friday June 14th 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 24.05.19 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

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

- Noted that Church Walk is considered a Norfolk Heritage site and that the gates are Grade II listed.
- The recycling bins located by the public toilets in Watton are managed by Breckland District Council (BDC). The Town Council is to investigate whether it would be beneficial should the Council take "ownership" of the recycling bins at the site.
- Breckland District Council has been asked to attend a future Town Council meeting to explain why special expenses for Watton are higher than in other Breckland towns.

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

- It was suggested an income code should be added to the Scribe accounting system to aid book keeping by specifically identifying Mayor's charity income.
- The current coding name in the budget and on Scribe for a "pump track/other facility" will be changed to "Youth Provision".
- Noted recent Town Council decisions relating to expenditure:

Small Claims Court fee	£70.00
Contribution to support installation of Community Shed	£500.00
Poppies	£150.00
- Consideration will be given to replacing the vacuum cleaner used by the cleaner at Wayland Hall.
- £3.00 per photograph has been quoted to reframe the photographs of the Mayors on display in the Council Chamber to include their years of Office.
- Quote has been sought to provide vinyl stickers for the suggested sign to be used outside the Cemetery to advise when a service is taking place at Watton Cemetery.



- 4.1 Bank balances for 31.03.19, 04.04.19 and 13.05.19 were checked and signed by Peter Bishop prior to the meeting.
- 4.2 It was agreed at Full Council that staff and Councillors should attend training and seminars should they wish to do so and associated expenses will be met as in line with current Town Council policy.

## **5. INTERNAL AUDITORS REPORT 2019**

The Action Plan compiled by the Internal Auditor, following his visit on May 31<sup>st</sup> 2019, included recommendations to ensure historic Cemetery records are formally recorded and, in accordance with the latest statutory guidance, the Council should adopt an investment strategy.

To address these points raised:

- It was suggested consideration should be given to how long it is likely to take for all Cemetery records to be recorded and brought up to date and whether more staff time might be needed to complete the task.
- A draft Investment Strategy will be compiled with the intention that an Investment Strategy can be presented to Full Council in September 2019. Research will be undertaken into possible ethical investment options.

## **6. END OF YEAR FINANCE AND FUTURE PROJECTS**

It will be recommended to Full Council that money should be moved from the General Fund to the Community Improvement Fund (CIF) so the amount held in the CIF would be brought up to £100,000. It was noted that previously it has been confirmed that CIF money provides support for agreed projects. It was further noted that future projects may be led by the Benjamin Foundation or other such partners.

Moving £20850 from the General Fund to the CIF will result in £100000 held in the CIF and £306816 remaining in the General Fund.

Future Projects:

- Suggestion made that consideration should be given to a possible re-vamp of the equipment in the fenced small children's area at Bridle Road Play Area to time this with needed repair to the safety matting. The PEPSO will be asked to research any possible grant funding.
- The cost to re-connect an electricity supply to provide power to the fountain at Memorial Garden has been quoted at a minimum of £1700. It was felt this idea should be put on hold at present as no allocation has been made in the current budget.
- Ideas to support High Street events and enhance the appearance of the area, including possible flags and heritage signs for the High Street, could be provided through Market Town Initiative (MTI) funding. The Council is currently investigating whether a High Street Design Appraisal, or similar, can be undertaken through the Neighbourhood Plan process and any identified outcomes may then be considered eligible for MTI funding.
- Noted that budgeting for events needs to be agreed by Full Council and notes from events meetings should be shared with Full Council.

## **7. PKF LITTLEJOHN 2018/18 AUDIT FEES**

It was felt the outstanding invoice of £1065 for extra work, charged as a result of queries raised with the External Auditor by a member of the public, should be paid. A letter will accompany the payment stating that the Town Council feels it has legitimate reasons to raise a complaint against PKF. To date no sufficient response has been received to previous correspondence with PKF.

Copies of all correspondence with PKF will be sent to SAAA with a covering letter stating that the Council understands there is no choice in External Audit provision but Watton Town Council now has no confidence in PKF as there has been tardiness in responding to the Town Council and the time and procedures taken to dealing with what was classed as an "unofficial" complaint is not acceptable. Norfolk Association of Local Councils will sent copies of the correspondence to SAAA.

## **8. MARKET REPORT**

Safety measures suggested in the market report commissioned by the Town Council include the provision of signage and the use of larger cones. Costs are being researched with prices to be presented to the Council once obtained.

## **9. REPLACEMENT BOILER – WAYLAND HALL**

British Gas has quoted £11522.28 plus VAT to replace the boiler ay Wayland Hall. This has been necessitated by the inability to replace the leaking boiler flue in its current position. A new flue would however need to exit on to Harvey Street and listed building consent must be given to allow a hole to be made in the external rear wall of Wayland Hall.

Listed building consent will therefore be applied for and this matter will be an agenda item for the next Town Council meeting.

## **10. IT SERVICES**

Contracts for IT services are due to be reviewed but it was agreed that an SSL Certificate should be added to the Town Council website at a cost of £120 plus £75 labour to install/configure. As problems logging on to the Town Council web site have been experienced this measure this will be implemented.

What is in a SSL certificate?

SSL Certificates are small data files that digitally bind a cryptographic key to an organization's details. When installed on a web server, it activates the padlock and the https protocol and allows secure connections from a web server to a browser.

The primary reason why SSL is used is to keep sensitive information sent across the Internet encrypted so that only the intended recipient can access it. When a SSL certificate is used, the information becomes unreadable to everyone except for the server you are sending the information to.

## **11. DATE OF NEXT FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING:**

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> 10.00am**

Future meetings of 2019 will be held on the Friday following the first Full Council meeting of the month:

August 16<sup>th</sup> 11.00am

Sept. 13<sup>th</sup> 11.00am

Oct. 11<sup>th</sup> 11.00am

November 15<sup>th</sup> 11.00am

December 13<sup>th</sup> 11.00am

Recommendations to be made to the Full Council:

1. To recommend that money should be moved from the General Fund to the Community Improvement Fund (CIF) so the amount held in the CIF would be brought up to £100,000. CIF money could provide support for future projects within the agreed Council target areas which could include providing funding to other partners.
2. To recommend acceptance of the quote from British Gas to replace the boiler and reposition the flue at Wayland Hall

