

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

Thursday November 15th 2019 at

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

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

Officers Present: Jane Scarrott Town Clerk

1. NO APOLOGIES RECEIVED

2. NO DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST MADE

3. MINUTES

3(i) The Minutes of the Meeting held on 11.10.19 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

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

- Members of the Town Council have visited Watton Sports Centre to see the refurbished kitchen at the Sports Centre which was part funded by a £7000 donation from the Town Council. It was noted that the Council has been assured that members of the public can use all facilities at the Sports Centre without being a member of Watton Sports Association.
- Quotes have been obtained to refurbish the small children's play area at Bridle Road. Pocket Parks grant funding will be applied for to help fund works, but if this is not successful s106 funding will be investigated.
- Confirmation is awaited regarding what the contract for service of the personal alarm system at Wayland Hall covers.
- Museum 4 Watton is still to be asked whether they have any preference for retaining the water cooler in the Council Chamber.

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

The current budget position and bank reconciliation of October 7th was presented to those present.

- The Town Council agreed expenditure at the Full Council meeting of 12.11.19 for gratuities and expenses arising from the 2019 Fireworks Evening, £1513.51 for materials to replace the fan in the public toilets and £90 to provide lighting for the craft marquee at the Festive Market 2019.
- 4.1 The Bank Reconciliation dated 07.10.19 was presented and signed by the Internal Control Officer.

5. INTERNAL AUDITORS REPORT

The Internal Auditor conducted his interim audit visit on 04.11.19 and his written report is awaited. Verbally, he advised that he believed that with reference to Council Staff Pay, National Insurance Contributions (NIC) should be calculated on gross pay, not net pay following superannuation deduction. Advice is being

sought from Norfolk Local Pension Government Scheme. It is possible that Pay Roll for Watton TC, (currently conducted by Arden Kendall) will need to be addressed in light of the above.

6. SUGGESTED WORKS FROM COUNCILLORS TOWN RIDE AROUND

1. A proposal will be put to the Full Council to provide a water connection to the Thetford Road allotments, pending approval from the land owner.
If the quote received from Anglian Water to provide a water supply is accepted a plan will be put together for water usage by allotment holders.
2. A proposal will be put to the Full Council to identify sites for a flag pole (preferably Town Council owned) and then to seek a specialist contractor for guidance and costs.
3. A quote has been requested from the Town Council preferred contractor to clear the edge of the Lovell Garden Play Area adjacent to Gilman's Drift.
4. The High Street is in need of general street maintenance: weeds are not being dealt with, metal litter bins are corroded and need replacing, brick surrounds from former tree bed brick surrounds should be removed and flower tubs could be re-sited more appropriately.

It was suggested Norfolk County Council Highways should be approached regarding removal of the tree bed surrounds.

Pat Warwick offered to consult with the High Street Retail Group with the suggestion being that a report could be presented to the Town Council for consultation.

7. REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Financial Regulations were reviewed with the proposal to be made to Full Council that the regulations need no amendment.

8. BUDGET NEEDS 2020/21

Consideration was given to the current budget position and the expected future spend in 2020/21.

Budget codes were considered individually with recommendations noted:

- Neighbourhood Plan (NP) - It is uncertain how long the NP may take to complete and therefore what further consultant fees may be incurred. It is expected that up to £9000 could be claimed from Breckland District Council to support the NP once the process has been completed.
- Increase to general maintenance code from £2000 to £14000 in anticipation of replacing the 10 litter bins in the High Street.
- Increase to bus shelter code from £1250 to £4000 to extend the use of the shelters.
- Increase to allotment code of £1000 to provide water to Thetford Road Allotments.
- Increase to Market Town Initiative by £1000 to £7000. Don Saunders offered to investigate the future of the market gazebos and what is the position regarding the current partnership working with Swaffham Town Council. This information can be fed into the group agreed at the last WTC meeting to look into issues relating to the Market.
- Add £500 to Fireworks code and £1000 to the Festive Market code.

- Grant allocation to be raised by £1000 to £6000.
- To add a 3% safeguarding figure of £4000 to staff salary coding.
- To increase Service Level Agreement coding by £3000 to £15000 to cover anticipated pension contributions. WTC Clerk to speak to Swaffham Town Clerk re. the increased cost in SLA, as currently we have no paperwork to support this.

The Finance Committee suggested a 3% increase to the 2020 precept demand would be acceptable if this can be achieved by transferring money from reserve funding to support the 2020/21 budget.

It was also suggested that a recommendation should be made to Full Council in January that the Council considers allocating Councillors with a role to oversee aspects of Council functions. Areas could include Jubilee Gardens/Grounds Maintenance and Grant Policy etc.

9. DATE OF NEXT FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING:

Friday November 29th 11.00am

The only agenda item will be to set the budget and precept request for the financial year beginning April 1st 2020

Recommendations to be made to the Full Council 26.11.19:

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2. A proposal will be put to the Full Council to identify sites for a flag pole (preferably Town Council owned) and then to seek a specialist contractor for guidance and costs.