

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

Friday January 17<sup>th</sup> 2020 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. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST MADE:**

Pat Warwick declared an interest in item. 4 relating to the budget for Civic Functions.

**3. MINUTES**

3(i) The minutes of the meetings held on 15.11.19 and 29.11.19 were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

It was noted that the meeting scheduled for December 13<sup>th</sup> 2019 had not taken place due to an insufficient number of Councillors being available.

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

- The Clerk is still to confirm what is covered by the contract for service of the personal alarm at Wayland Hall. It was queried whether the system needs a separate phone line to operate and where calls would be received.
- As the water cooler in the Council Chamber is not used it will be removed.
- It was noted that there is interest to pay to HMRC relating to the underpayment of National Insurance contributions as identified by the Internal Auditor. The contract for payroll provision is to be reviewed.
- To date a gardener has not been found to undertake work at Jubilee Garden. It was suggested this matter should be an agenda item for the next Town Council meeting.
- The staff have taken the Christmas quiet period to undertake a much needed review of office filing. There is still some outstanding filing and this matter is in hand but will be monitored.
- The PEPSO is looking to book a one day visit from a mobile skate park possibly during the Easter 2020 School holiday to ensure money allocated for youth provision within the 2019 budget is used within the 2019/20 financial year. An event to coincide with the 2020 Olympic Games is also being investigated by the PEPSO. It is envisaged both events could be held at Watton Sports Centre.
- It was noted that a Councillor will need to be identified as Event Organiser for the bank holiday VE Day Celebrations Event on 08.02.2020, as staff may not be present on the day.
- Enquiries will be made with Swaffham Town Council relating to the cost of the Service Level Agreement Watton Town Council has with Swaffham TC.

Some discussion took place regarding whether it would be beneficial to the Council to nominate "lead Councillors" to various projects or areas of Town Council work e.g. the

allotments, the market, Jubilee Gardens. The Office could be assisted by direct input from nominated Councillors. A proposal will be put to the Full Council that the Finance Committee will present a draft procedure to the Full Council of areas and levels of responsibility for Lead Councillors.

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

The current budget position and bank reconciliation for December was presented to those present.

Noted additional agreed spending not listed on the budget update:

- Donation of £10000 to the Benjamin Foundation
- Erecting and dismantling of 2019 Christmas Lights
- Repair to play equipment at Watton Sports Centre Play Area quoted at £921
- Register of Burials book ordered approx. cost of £200

Also of note:

- The Office Support Clerk has been booked to attend IT training at a cost of £20 per session.
- A quote to install a tap and piping for the proposed water supply to the Thetford Road allotments has been sought and the price quoted by Anglian Water for the connection to the mains water supply is to be checked to ensure there will be no additional cost should any traffic management be required during installation.
- It is possible the birds nest swing seat at Lovell Gardens Play Area may need to be replaced. There is s106 money allocated to be spent at Lovell Gardens and an application could thus be made for the seat to be funded with s106 money. A request will be made for relevant officers from Breckland District Council to attend a future meeting of the Finance Committee to inform the Committee about the current s106 funding available.
- Tree works are planned at various sites in February and it is possible extra work to that already identified may be needed at Bridle Road Play Area.

It was questioned whether any underspend in the civic functions budget could be given to boost the Mayor's Charities at the end of the financial year. It is believed this is the practice at other local councils. It was stated that, in principal, the Finance Committee would be supportive of the idea and the clerk was tasked with investigating this idea before the suggestion is considered further.

4.1 The bank balance dated 09.12.19 was checked and signed by Cllr. Bishop.

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

**Friday February 14th 11.00am**

Recommendations to be made to the Full Council 28.01.2020

1. To agree that further investigation should be undertaken into the idea of "Lead Councillors" to support different areas of the work within the Council, including the development of agreed projects.

The Council further agrees that a draft procedure should be drawn up to be presented by the Finance Committee. The draft procedure should suggest areas of interest, and should underpin the role and level/limit of responsibility of agreed "Lead Councillors".

2. To note that as previously agreed, the PEPSO is working to arrange the mobile skate park event within the Financial Year. The Council agrees that the PEPSO may investigate the feasibility of an event to coincide with the Olympic Games.