

# Minutes of the virtual meeting of WATTON TOWN COUNCIL Finance Committee

held on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2020

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

Officers Present: Jane Scarrott Town Clerk

## 1. NO APOLOGIES

## 2. NO DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST MADE

## 3. MINUTES

3(i) The Minutes of the Meetings held on 30.10.20 and 12.11.20 were accepted as a true record of the meetings and will be signed by the Chairman asap.

3(ii). Update from the meeting held on 30.10.20

- Boiler service undertaken at Wayland Hall 25.11.20.
- Debbie Wildridge Locality Development Officer gave a presentation to the Council on 16.11.20 relating to establishing Community Asset Trusts.

## 4. BUDGET POSITION

Councillors were presented with a Bank Reconciliation dated 09.11.20 and budget position dated 25.11.20.

- Noted that some money given out as floats for shopping during the Covid lockdown are still to be returned.

### 4.1 Funding for Neighbourhood Plan (NP)

No money has yet been claimed from Breckland District Council (BDC) to support the NP. Breckland Council will match fund for up to 50% of an award secured through the Government's Locality department [capped at £4,500 per plan]. The Clerk will investigate whether a claim can be made to BDC at this time rather than wait until the Plan has been "made".

Places4People have been commissioned to complete the Watton Neighbourhood Plan at a cost of £5684. A timeline will be requested for expected completion of the work.

It is felt there is a certain level of urgency to complete the NP as the Town Council may also wish to consider Town regeneration for which the NP would provide evidence. A consultant would be needed to compile a Town Plan and if agreed funding would be taken from the CIF if necessary. £10000 has been allocated in the 2021/22 Budget for Neighbourhood Planning/Regeneration.

## 5. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Review of the Financial Regulations at this time was deemed appropriate as changes in financial procedures have been necessary during lockdown.

The Finance Committee was presented with slightly amended Financial Regulations and a suggested addition to Financial Regulations, in the form of an Emergency Payments Procedure, to be implemented when needed and agreed by Council.

A recommendation will be made to Full Council to accept the amended Financial Regulations and the Emergency Payments Procedure.

## **6. TREE REPORT**

It is recommended a tree report is commissioned every 2 years and this is now due. Three quotations have been received which the Finance Committee has looked at. A recommendation will be made to Full Council to accept the fee proposal of £595. Noted that the arboriculturalist chosen has been satisfactorily engaged by the Town Council previously.

## **7. s106 APPLICATION 3PL/2014/0330**

Investigation is on-going relating to obtaining quotes to install further equipment at Bridle Road Play Area for the older children to hopefully be financed through a s106 application. To date six play equipment providers have been approached to provide quotes for the Town Council meeting on January 12<sup>th</sup> 2020.

## **8. 2021/2022 BUDGET AND PRECEPT REQUEST**

The Finance Committee has considered the budget need for 2021/22 and it was agreed the Budget as presented will be recommended to Full Council for acceptance.

The anticipated budget need for 2021/22 remains as first recommended at £427605.

The suggested Precept request: £384155

This less than 2% rise to the precept should result in a slight reduction to Band D charge per household (estimated to be £139.53).

The Finance Committee will now look to compiling a 3 year budget which will consider sustainability and carbon footprint reduction. The Town Council will investigate possible future replacement of the Town van with an electric vehicle.

It was suggested a condition survey should be undertaken of Wayland Hall to assess works needed and consideration should be given to how the costs associated with the public toilets might be reduced. If future refurbishment of the toilets is planned it would be useful to know the usage and a recommendation will be made to Full Council to purchase an electronic counter.

Discussion also took place regarding plans for the continued use of the market gazebos and a further recommendation will be made that a Working Party is formed to consider the future of the gazebos with a report and recommendation to made to Full Council at the meeting of the Council on February 9<sup>th</sup> 2021.

## **9. DATE OF NEXT FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING: Friday December 11th 2020 @ 10.00am**

### **Recommendations to be made to Full Council:**

- 1. To accept the amended Financial Regulations and Emergency Payments Procedure**
- 2. To accept the quote to undertake a Tree Report at a cost of £595**
- 3. To accept the 2021/22 Budget as presented**

- 4. To set the 2021/22 Precept request at £384155**
- 5. To purchase an electronic counter to monitor use of the public toilets**
- 6. To establish a Working Party to consider the future of the market gazebos, with a report and recommendation to made to Full Council at the meeting of the Council on February 9<sup>th</sup> 2021.**