

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

held on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2020

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

Also Present: Jane Scarrott Town Clerk

## 1. NO APOLOGIES

## 2. NO DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST MADE

## 3. MINUTES

**3(i)** The Minutes of the Meeting held on 25.09.20 were accepted as a true record and will be signed by the Chairman as soon as possible.

### **3(ii) UPDATE FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 25.09.20**

- With office staff still mostly working from home the heating at Wayland Hall is being used only infrequently. However at times it has been cold for users of the Museum.

Settings for the heating will be checked and it was noted the gas boiler is due to be serviced on November 11<sup>th</sup> 2020.

- Locality has been invited to address the Town Council to help to possibly progress a Town Plan.

- Swaffham Town Council has responded positively to the request made relating to the possibility of extending the number of hours the PEPSO works for Watton Town Council. (This is to facilitate additional time for the PEPSO to carry out work for the CHT).

The Finance Committee welcomed the response from STC agreeing to increase our PEPSO Service Level Agreement time by 7.5 hours per week with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020.

However it was agreed that the suggestion made that Watton should take over the remainder of the PEPSO employment contract is not something the TC should be minded to undertake at present. It was noted that the 3 year employment contract held by Swaffham has only 7 months left to run and carries with it specific employment responsibilities which do not form part of a Service Level Agreement (SLA).

It will be recommended to the Full Council that:

Whilst welcoming and accepting the agreement with Swaffham Town Council to increase the PEPSO weekly hours, Watton Town Council should not agree to take over the employment contract which ends in June 2021

Further consideration will be given to the PEPSO position during the next six months.

## 4. MARKET REPORT

Members of the Committee had previously been presented with a report relating to market charges. A copy of the report is attached.

From the Report the following recommendations will be made to Full Council:

1. To introduce a new schedule of charges from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2021:

Small Pitch (up to 10sq metres) £10

Medium Pitch (up to 30sq metres) £20

Large Pitch (up to 60sq metres) £30

- Charity traders - One off pitch – free with Regular pitch - 50% of pitch charge
2. To continue to offer the loyalty saving as outlined in the report.
  3. To continue to press for the pedestrianisation and development of the Market area in Middle Street/Old Dereham Road.
  4. To continue to support programmes which focus on maintaining and developing the Market as an integral element in the character and USP of the town.

## **5. EXPENDITURE AND CURRENT BUDGET POSITION**

- Noted that the decision was made at the Full Council Meeting on 27.10.20 to allocate £3000 from the Festive Market budget 2020 to purchase a book as a Christmas gift for all year 6 and under children who attend Westfield School or nurseries within Watton.
- No further expenditure has been made since the Full Council meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup>.
- Noted that any application for s106 funding for provision of equipment for older children at Bridle Road play area could be supported through the money allocated for youth provision in the 2020 budget.
- It was suggested that the Town Council might consider covering the cost of the St Mary's Families Key Worker to hire a room at the Charlotte Harvey Trust (CHT) building. This will be something for the CHT Management Committee to look at and bring back to the Full Council.

## **6. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE PROJECTS**

It was suggested the grounds maintenance needs should be split into Cemetery Works and Open Spaces to reflect the current grounds maintenance contract. The specifications of the two contracts will be shared with members of the Finance Committee as it may be beneficial to include regular works within the contract rather than be commissioning on an ad hoc basis.

## **7. INITIAL DRAFT OF 2021 BUDGET**

The 2021 Town Council Budget and Precept Request will need to be agreed at the Full Council meeting on December 8<sup>th</sup>. Therefore a Finance Committee meeting will be held with the 2021 budget as the sole agenda item. The previous year's figures, up to date budget position and tax base information will be provided prior to the meeting.

Cost Centres in the budget can be renamed to better reflect expenditure and suggestions are that the Neighbourhood Plan cost centre becomes Neighbourhood Planning/Regeneration and Events is retitled Events/Activities and that Youth Provision be re-located within this cost centre.

It is predicted 2020 expenditure will remain within cost centres but some virement within the headings may be necessary.

## **8. S106 APPLICATION 3PL/2014/0330**

The Town Council hopes to fund further improvement to the Bridle Road Play Area site through a s106 funding application (£14490 available). Purchase of equipment for the older children age group up to a total of £20000 is being investigated with additional money (if needed) to be allocated from youth provision in the budget to support the s106 claim.

## **9. REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

Financial Regulations should reflect procedures so if was felt Watton Town Council Fin. Regs need to be updated to reflect the move to electronic banking. Regulations will be checked to ensure there are no contradictions to amounts set when expenditure can be made. Once suggested amendments have been made Fin. Regs will be reviewed by the Finance Committee before presentation to the Full Council.

**10. DATE OF NEXT FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETINGS:**

**November 12<sup>th</sup> 2020 2pm**

**November 27<sup>th</sup> 2020 10.00am**

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FULL COUNCIL MEETING:**

1. The Finance Committee recommends that, whilst welcoming and accepting the agreement with Swaffham Town Council to increase the PEPSO weekly hours (SLA), Watton Town Council should not agree to take over the employment contract which ends in June 2021. Further consideration will be given to the PEPSO position during the next six months.
2. To receive the Market Report and agree the following recommendations:

**MARKET CHARGES**

- 2.1 To introduce a new schedule of charges from April 2021:

Small Pitch (up to 10sq metres) £10

Medium Pitch (up to 30sq metres) £20

Large Pitch (up to 60sq metres) £30

Charity traders - One off pitch - free

Charity traders - Regular pitch - 50% of pitch charge

- 2.2 To continue to offer the loyalty saving as outlined in the report.

- 2.3. To continue to press for the pedestrianisation and development of the Market area in Middle Street/Old Dereham Road.

- 2.4. To continue to support programmes which focus on maintaining and developing the Market as an integral element in the character and USP of the town.

3. To support improvement to equipment for older children age group at Bridle Road Play Area up to a cost of £20000 part funded by a s106 funding allocation but with the Town Council to allocate money from the youth provision budget if necessary.