

Minutes of the virtual meeting of WATTON TOWN COUNCIL Finance Committee

held on March 12th 2021

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 and Michelle Thompson Deputy Clerk

Breckland District Council (BDC) Officers Simon Wood Director of Planning and Building Control and Charlotte Brannan s106 Monitoring & Compliance Officer were present to give updates on s106 agreements relevant to Watton:

- The application for s106 funding made to finance the proposed bike track at the Bridle Road Play Area is still going through the internal approval process at BDC.
- Simon reported that he felt a positive meeting had been held with Adam Bell from Bennetts Homes and members of Watton Town Council regarding the transfer of the Officer's Mess Community Land to Watton Town Council. Adam is to send a proposal to the Town Council as to how to proceed to handover. It is likely the s106 will be varied to allow monies linked to the Open Space land allocated on site to be also spent on the Community Land. A suggestion was made that Watton Town Council could be the signatory on any new agreement rather than include BDC as "agent".
- Noted that the s106 agreement states that the developer is to pay any reasonable legal costs associated with the transfer and that WTC would want sight of the agreement stating that NCC Highways will be adopting the roadway across the Community Land and that Anglian Water will be adopting the attenuation tanks which sit beneath the land. Definitive proof is needed before transfer!
- Watton TC is also expecting to receive open space land at the Abels Hare's Green development and again sight will be wanted of the agreement that Anglian Water are to adopt the attenuation tanks and drainage which lies beneath the land. Handover should take place once the site is 80% occupied.
- Simon offered to clarify the s106 provision for outdoor sports contribution within the Barratts Thetford Road development. Noted that a contribution of £92000 is to be made to Wayland Wood. [A request will be made for a copy of the s106 agreement.]
- Noted that as part of the Local Plan process a district wide open space review is being planned.

[Investigation will be made as to what, if any, s106 agreement is in place for the Tesni development off Mallard Road).

1. NO APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE RECEIVED

2. NO DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST MADE

3. MINUTES

3.1 The Minutes of the Meeting held on 12.02.21 were accepted as a true record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chairman asap.

3.2 Update from the meeting held on 12.02.21

- Noted that grounds work undertaken at Bridle Road Play Area has cleared a lot of overgrowth to the rear of the site and space has been gained.
- New laptops for the Clerk and Deputy Clerk have been ordered. One has arrived but the second has not been received through Royal Mail special delivery. Indication is that it reached Watton Sorting Office.
- A new larger waste bin is now located at the Youth & Community Centre.
- Satnav system in the town van has been upgraded.
- CCLA investment is on hold until physical signatures can be obtained to complete the application form.

4. RECENT EXPENDITURE AND BUDGET POSITION

Members previously presented with Budget Update dated 09.03.21 and Bank Reconciliation for 08.02.21.

Some virement within cost centre headings may be needed at the end of the financial year but no overall overspends are anticipated and there is likely to be a budget underspend for 20/21.

4.1 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING (NP)

- Likely that further costs for the NP will not fall into the next financial year and therefore there will be an underspend of around £5000 in the 20/21 NP cost centre.
- Subscription of £360 to Parish Online to support the NP will be paid in April 2021 with the consultant's fee still to be invoiced.
- The NP Group is planning to meet and the draft NP will be forwarded to BDC at some point for comment.

4.2 CHURCH WALL

- Waiting to receive crime number and breakdown of quote for building work before an insurance claim can be submitted for repair of damage caused to the wall by unknown vehicle.
- Once repair is undertaken to the damaged wall the TC will consider other maintenance work that may be needed to the wall due to the proximity of a large tree in the Churchyard.

5. TREE REPORT

Tree Report dated 16.02.21 presented to the Finance Committee. It was suggested professional quotes should be sought to undertake the suggested works in the autumn.

6. s106 FUNDING

Considered prior to the meeting when BDC Officers were present to update. A copy of the BDC tree report relating to the Officers Mess site will be requested,

7. WALSINGHAM GATES

A report, costing £300, will be commissioned on the condition of the Walsingham Gates. The report can then be used to assist with possible grant applications to help fund works needed.

8. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

- The Office will compile an inventory of the whereabouts of the brackets and electrical connection points which support the Christmas lighting in the High Street.
- Safety checks are needed on the brackets and connection points and a quote to do this will be obtained before the next Fin. Committee meeting.
- Blachere will be asked to give a presentation to the Full Council next year to show what alternative Christmas lighting might be available for the future.

9. THREE YEAR PLAN

The Finance Committee will use the Financial Planning Document which has been compiled to aid future budget planning. Kathryn offered to present a document to Full Council to explain how the Three Year Plan might be used to guide spending.

10. DATE OF NEXT FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING: April 16th 2021 @ 12.00

Recommendation to Full Council:

- **Due to Covid 19 restrictions there has been little opportunity for money to be raised for the Mayors Charities: Loch Neaton and the Men's Shed.**
The Finance Committee therefore recommends that the 20/21 Civic Budget of £4000, which has not been spent due to Covid, be donated in equal proportion to Loch Neaton and the Watton Men's Shed.