

Minutes of the virtual meeting of WATTON TOWN COUNCIL Finance Committee

held on January 29th 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

Members previously presented with Budget Update dated 28.01.21 and Bank Reconciliation for 11.01.21.

1. NO APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE RECEIVED

2. NO DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST MADE

3. MINUTES

3(i) The Minutes of the Meeting held on 11.12.20 were accepted as a true record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chairman asap.

3(ii). Update from the meeting held on 11.12.20

- Outstanding float money and shopping payments from the help given during the initial Covid lockdown will be taken from the money allocated by the Town Council for Covid support.
- A Tree Report has been commissioned as agreed by Full Council 08.12.20. The Clerk will enquire when this will be undertaken.
- The PEPSO will be asked to investigate obtaining trees for the perimeter of the Bridle Road Play Area to deter vehicles from parking on the grass.
- Proludic will be commissioned to install a pump track (as quoted) at Bridle Road Play Area as soon as it has been confirmed that s106 funding can be used towards the project.
- It is understood there is a s106 agreement in place relating to the Barratts development on the Thetford Road, and although there is expectation that this will be an off-site recreational contribution to provide a skate park within Watton, the wording of the document is not specifically stating a skate park will be provided.

4. RECENT EXPENDITURE AND BUDGET POSITION

- A board room horseshoe shaped table with chairs has been purchased by the Museum4Watton for use in the Wayland Hall Council Chamber.
In principle the Town Council has agreed to spend up to £2000 towards purchase or refurbishment of the table. The Finance Committee will recommend that this decision is formally endorsed and that £2000 will be allocated from the Wayland Hall refurbishment budget.
- It was felt there is a need to upgrade both the Clerks and the Deputy Clerks laptops and enquiries will be made to obtain prices. If necessary, contingency money within the budget could be used to finance the upgrade.
- The Mayor is still to receive her 2020/21 allowance.

- The Charlotte Harvey Trust has made the decision not to pay to keep a commercial waste bin on site. As the Council uses the current bin enquiries will be made to the cost of fortnightly bin emptying which the Council would need to consider.
- Noted that the Charlotte Harvey Trust aims not to be beholden to Watton Town Council and thus all future costs for sundries will be invoiced directly to CHT.
- Additional SLA costs charged by Swaffham Town Council are to be queried as Watton Town Council has not been approached about payment made for home working.
- Norfolk County Council had indicated that the lamp posts in the High Street were to be repainted in 2019. This has not happened, and enquiries will be made.
- A request was made that the Christmas Lights should be an agenda item for the next Town Council meeting with Councillors to:
 - I. Review the current contract for providing the lights.
 - II. Agree to undertake a survey of the attachments and electrical connection points for the lights.

The 2020/21 budget is running much as expected and any virement between cost codes which may be necessary will be considered at the next meeting. Overall, there is still no expected overspend on the total budget figure for the year.

5. INTERIM AUDIT REPORT

Five points were raised on the Interim Audit:

R1 will be addressed by ensuring scanned copies of the bank statements are made to the Finance Committee to enable members to confirm the completeness and accuracy of the monthly bank reconciliation.

R2 will be addressed as the uncashed cheque for Firework gratuities will be investigated and re-issued if necessary.

R3 will be addressed by establishing a method whereby scanned invoices can be issued to Councillors to be checked against the BACS run each month. Councillors who have undertaken this task previously at meetings will be asked how they would prefer to receive the invoices. R4 has been addressed in that all fees and charges have been confirmed for the forthcoming financial year.

R5 will be addressed once options for investment have been explored and Council has agreed if funds should be moved to any investment account at the present time. CCLA, <https://www.ccla.co.uk/> will be approached for options.

6. WAYLAND HALL ELECTRIC CONTRACT

The Wayland Hall electricity contract is up for renewal on April 5th 2021.

Renewal prices will be investigated including contacting green energy firm, Good Energy, as recommended by Norfolk ALC.

7. s106 FUNDING

The Town Council has submitted an application to use the £14490.20 s106 funding available from planning 3PL/2014/0330. Decision awaited from Breckland District Council with money to be spent by 21.12.21.

Notification has received that there is also around £130000 s106 funding to be spent by October 24 and another £69000 to be used at Lovell Gardens Play Area. BDC Officers Simon Wood and Charlotte Brennan will be invited to attend the Finance Committee meeting in March to advise as to where funding can be used and to provide an update on the s106 community land at the Officers Mess, Norwich Road development site.

8. THREE YEAR PLAN

The Finance Committee is looking to compile a plan for future projects and members of the committee were presented with Draft 1 of a Financial Planning Discussion Document. Members were asked to add suggestions to the draft document and return the draft to the Clerk to collate and present Draft 2 at the Finance meeting in March.

9. DATE OF NEXT FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

Friday Feb. 12th 2021 @ 12.30pm

Friday March 12th 2021 @ 12.30pm

For Town Council Agenda:

- 1. Recommendation** that the decision to allocate up to £2000 from the Wayland Hall refurbishment budget to support purchase of table and chairs for the Council Chamber is endorsed.

For Town Council Agenda in March:

- 2.** To review the current contract for providing the Christmas lights.
- 3.** To agree to undertake a survey of the attachments and electrical connection points for the Christmas lights.