

Minutes of Watton Town Council Finance Committee Meeting

held on December 16th 2021, at Wayland Hall.

Present: Kathryn Stallard – Chairman, Peter Bishop, Sue Hebborn, Don Saunders

1. Apologies for Absence received from Pat Warwick
2. No Declarations of Interest made.
3. Minutes of the previous meeting
 - (i) The Minutes of the meeting held on 11.11.21 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.
 - (ii) Update from items in the Minutes of the Meeting held on 11.12.21

Walsingham Gates

The Council will consider painting the Walsingham Gates in the New Year.

Bridle Road

Cars again seem to be regularly parking on the grass outside the houses at Bridle Road Play Area. In the New Year a copy of solicitors letter previously delivered to households will be re-issued by registered post to residents adjacent to the play area.

IT

Costs of providing all Councillors with a .gov e-mail address will be investigated and considered.

Bridle Road Goal Posts

Quotes have been requested for replacement play equipment at Lovell Gardens Play Area, to use available s106 money. The option to relocate the old goal posts at Lovell Gardens to Bridle Road is also being researched.

Parish Partnership

The Town Council has made three applications to the Norfolk County Council Parish Partnership Scheme 2021:

- Trod along the Thetford Road
- Solar lighting for the two High Street bus shelters
- SAM 2 sign

4. **Bank Reconciliation**

No bank reconciliation presented as Barclays Bank statement for December has not yet been received.

5. **Expenditure**

Current expenditure considered in conjunction with budget setting.

Noted that a legionella risk assessment is to be booked for Wayland Hall at an estimated cost of £450 plus VAT.

6. **Asset Maintenance List and Wayland Hall Maintenance List**

- The Asset Maintenance List was considered with several action points to be added (amended draft attached).
- Annual known and estimated future costs will be added to the Wayland Hall Maintenance List.
- Roman Roofing will be asked to investigate issues of water ingress in the Council Chamber.
- English Heritage will be approached to offer guidance as to how often a building survey should be undertaken on the Clock Tower.

7. **3 Year Planning**

The 3 yr planning working document will be amended to be in line with the Asset Maintenance Lists.

Consideration will be given to when the town van should be replaced once a new Town Operative has been appointed. The van will be an agenda item for the Finance Committee once the TO has been in post one month to enable their input.

8. **2022/23 Budget**

- Recommendation to be made to Full Council that there should be no increase to either cemetery or market fees in 2022, and that allotment fees will be considered by the Finance Committee in March 2022 once the water bill for the allotments has been received.
- The 2022/23 Budget was accepted as presented and will be passed to Full Council to ratify and set the precept request at the Full Council meeting on Jan. 11th.
- Suggested that the CIF money could be used for a refurbishment of the public toilets and to support the planned pedestrianisation of Middle Street.
- Youth Provision line in the budget to become "Community Provision" to encompass all age groups. Youth provision was originally included within the budget for a suggested three years.

It was noted that the aim is to keep the Watton Band D Council Tax residents contribution the same for 22/23 as it was in 21/22. The tax base for Watton has increased slightly so this can be achieved and will present a slight increase to the precept request for 22/23. The tax base for 22/23 has been given as 2812, which if multiplied by the Band D contribution of £139.28 equals a precept request of **£391669** (against 383474 in 21/22). The budget will be supported by £50,000 from general reserves. It is estimated that there will be an overall budget underspend in the current financial year and therefore it is likely that there will be money to be added to general reserves at the end of the financial year.

Any additional projects, not within the budget, will need to be financed from general reserves with external funding sought where possible.

The Town Council will compile information relating to the budget and planned expenditure, including the cost of the Firework Event and the Christmas Lights, to be shared with residents. This information could be included in the planned Council newsletter and in the Wayland News.

9. Date of next Finance Committee Meeting:

Thursday January 13th 2022 at 2.00pm.

Recommendations to Full Council:

1. that there should be no increase to either cemetery or market fees in 2022
2. the 2022/23 Budget should be accepted as presented with the precept request to be set at £391670.