

Minutes of Watton Town Council Finance Committee Meeting

held on February 10th 2022, at Wayland Hall.

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

Officers present Jane Scarrott – Clerk, Michelle Thompson – Deputy Clerk

1. No Apologies for Absence received.
2. No Declarations of Interest made.
3. Minutes of the previous meeting
 - (i) The Minutes of the meeting held on 13.01.22 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.
 - (ii) Update from items in the Minutes of the Meeting held on 13.01.22
 - Copy of the solicitors letter re. parking on the grass at Bridle Road has been delivered to residents directly adjacent to the play area.
 - Leak to the roof at Wayland Hall has been repaired.
4. Bank Reconciliation dated 10.01.22 accepted and checked by Peter Bishop as Internal Control Officer.
5. Expenditure made since the last meeting and current budget position

Members of the Committee had been presented with summary reports relating to income and expenditure against the budget.

Expected imminent future costs will include training course fees and protective clothing for the new Town Operative, additional costs for printing and delivery of the Watton Neighbourhood Plan, as agreed at the Full Council meeting 08.02.22, and minor electrical works at Wayland Hall.

It was agreed to go ahead with the quote received to undertake works to the down pipe at Wayland Hall to eliminate dampness to the west wall of the building.

New office furniture will be purchased once re-decoration of the Office has been completed.

A recommendation regarding events will be passed to the next Full Council meeting:

To set a budget of £3000 to cover costs for the planned Platinum Jubilee picnic – to be taken from within the cost centre or from the Community Improvement Fund if necessary.

6. Allotment Fees 2023

It will be recommended to Full Council that the 2023 allotment fees should not be increased.

Water usage at the Thetford Road allotment site will be monitored before any future decision is made regarding any increase in allotment fees.

7. 3 Year Planning

IT provision – costs have been obtained for IT services and digital phones for the Office plus 15 .gov e-mail addresses for Councillors. Figures will be produced for the next Finance Committee meeting so comparison between providers can be made.

Public Toilets – The Clerk is continuing to investigate possible renovation of the public toilets following an initial view that total refurbishment is needed. However since some minor maintenance works have been undertaken and a new cleaner has been engaged by the contractors total refurbishment is perhaps less pressing. However research will continue so the Town Council is aware and can be prepared for future costs of a total refurbishment project.

Street Furniture – Recommendation to be made to Full Council that a project be put in place to replace street furniture in the High Street led by nominated Lead Councillor (Peter Bishop volunteered for this role). Funding to be met from reserves.

8. Christmas Lights 2022

A recommendation will be made to Full Council that quotes be sought to link the Christmas Lights display to the street lighting columns on both the south and north side of the High Street, incorporating Middle Street, from the Bull at the east end to the Health Centre at the west end. A real or artificial Christmas tree to be included.

Agreement is needed so that a contract can be agreed at the Full Council meeting on March 8th as planned and resolved.

9. Council Newsletter

A recommendation will be put to Full Council that an electronic newsletter should be produced by the Office (to include contributions from Councillors) in January, May and September each year.

10. Financial Regulations

To recommend to Full Council that delegation of expenditure to the Clerk should be increased to £1000 and that Financial Regulations (Regulation No. 4) will be amended to reflect this.

11. Investment Policy

To recommend to Full Council that, following review, the Investment Policy needs no amendment at this time.

12. Date of next Finance Committee Meeting:.

Thursday March 10th 2022 at 1.30pm.

13. Resolution passed to exclude the public and press to consider pay roll issues raised by the Internal Auditor.

Two members of staff have not received their incremental pay increase as was agreed and this will need to be back dated to 01.04.21. Correction will be made in the February 22 pay roll.

Recommendations to Full Council:

1. To set a budget of £3000 to cover costs for the planned Platinum Jubilee picnic – to be taken from within the events cost centre in the 22/23 budget or from the Community Improvement Fund if necessary.
2. That the 2023 allotment fees should not be increased

3. To initiate a project, led by a nominated Councillor, to replace street furniture in the High Street. Funding to be met from reserves.
4. To seek quotes to link the Christmas Lights display to the street lighting columns on both the south and north side of the High Street, incorporating Middle Street, from the Bull at the east end to the Health Centre at the west end. A real or artificial Christmas tree to be included.
5. The Office to publish an electronic newsletter in May, September and January each year to include contributions from Councillors.
6. Delegation of expenditure to the Clerk to be increased to £1000 and that Financial Regulations (Regulation No. 4) to be amended to reflect this.
7. Following review, the Investment Policy needs no amendment at this time.