

Minutes of Watton Town Council Finance Committee Meeting

held on June 16th 2022, at Wayland Hall.

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

1. No Apologies received as all members present.
2. No Declarations of Interest made.
3. Minutes of the previous meeting
 - (i) The Minutes of the meeting held on 12.05.22 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.
 - (ii) Update from items in the Minutes of the Meeting held on 12.05.22
 - **Bridle Road** - A suggestion is still to be made to Council to use the old flower tubs removed from the High Street as a barrier to discourage parking on the grass at the Bridle Road play area.
 - **Church Walk** – Councillors would like to meet with Ian Sharman, Case Officer, Norfolk County Council to discuss responsibilities relating to Church Walk. This has been requested but no response received to date.
As there are issues of some urgency to consider, it was felt appropriate that the Clerk should follow up again on the request for a meeting.
 - **Wayland Hall** – quotes have been obtained for suggested work to upgrade the fire alarm system at Wayland Hall. However, it is felt the asbestos report for the building needs to be updated prior to work being undertaken. Quotes are being sought.
 - **Clock Tower** – awaiting the report of the quinquennial building survey which was undertaken on May 10th.
 - (iii) Items raised at the Full Council meeting on June 14th 2022:
 - Donation agreed of £5000 to the Wayland Partnership.
 - Grant agreed of £500 to Watton Loch Neaton Bowls Club
 - £5000 allocated to support weekly market by engaging contractor to put the Wednesday road closure of Middle Street in place.
4. **Bank Reconciliation**
 - Bank reconciliation for 09.05.2022 presented and accepted. Checked and signed by Cllr Bishop as Internal Control Officer.
 - The quarterly income and expenditure position against the budget will be presented at the next meeting of the Finance Committee.
 - Members were presented with lists of contracts held by the Town Council and suppliers used. The lists will be considered at the next meeting of the Finance Committee.
5. **End of Year Accounts**

Members were presented with a copy of the Internal Auditors Final Report 2021-2, Bank Reconciliation for 31.03.22 and other end of year accounting reports as produced by the Scribe accounting package used.

The Internal Auditors Report and Annual Return will be presented at the Full Council meeting on June 28th to be “signed-off” before the deadline date of June 30th. The Annual Return and associated documents will then be submitted to the appointed External Auditor PKF Littlejohn.

6. Policy Review

The Finance Committee has considered the Expenses Policy, Communications Policy and Social Media Policy.

- **A recommendation** will be made to Full Council to accept the review of the Expenses Policy with the only suggested amendment being to include the months when the Chairman’s Allowance should be paid May, August, November and February.
- **A recommendation** will be made to Full Council to consider merging the Communications Policy and Social-Media Policy into one document. A draft combined policy will be compiled and presented to the Finance Committee at the meeting on July 14th.

7. Legal Matters

The Finance Committee was presented with a table giving a brief update on current legal matters which are in the hands of solicitors acting on behalf of the Town Council.

An approach will be made to Breckland District Council (BDC) for information relating to the transfer of the Church Road allotment land to the Town Council. The registration of the land is being delayed as it is believed no conveyance documents are held by the Town Council. It is hoped some documents may be held by BDC as the land was originally part of a s106 agreement.

The Report will also be presented to Full Council at the meeting on June 28th after a resolution to exclude the public.

9. Financial Four Year Forecast

Suggested revision to the future financial forecast was made:

- With the expectation that utility costs will continue to rise the allocation within the annual budget will be doubled. Investigation will also be made regarding the possible use of renewal energy to power and heat Town Council buildings.
- Allocation of £25k to support costs of the hoped for pedestrianisation of Middle Street.
- To note that the Town Council will, when necessary, look to purchase suitable land for a new Cemetery.
- Allocation of £25k for provision of a replacement town van.
- Allocation of additional funding to support the weekly market.

Suggested that a Cemetery Working Party meeting should be held to consider issues that have been raised including requests for memorial benches.

It will be recommended to Full Council that the Town Operative be requested to paint the Walsingham Gates as soon as convenient.

10. Date of next Finance Committee Meeting:

Thursday July 14th 2022 at 1.30pm.

Agenda items/Recommendations to Full Council:

1. to accept the review of the Expenses Policy with the only suggested amendment being to include the months when the Chairman's Allowance should be paid: May, August, November and February.
2. to consider merging the Communications Policy and Social-Media Policy into one document.
3. that the Town Operative be requested to paint the Walsingham Gates as soon as convenient (after a resolution to exclude the public and press).
4. To present update report of current legal matters (after a resolution to exclude the public and press).