

## Minutes of Watton Town Council Finance Committee Meeting

held on November 10th 2022, at Wayland Hall.

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

Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk in attendance

1. Apologies for absence received from Peter Bishop and Tobi Amadasun
2. No Declarations of Interest made.
3. Minutes of the previous meeting
  - (i) The Minutes of the meetings held on 13.10.22 and 08.11.22 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.
  - (ii) Update from items in the Minutes of the Meeting held on 13.10.22
    - **Clock Tower** – Further quotes will be sought regarding possibly fixing an automatic movement to the clock.
    - **Communications Policy** – Policy ratified by Full Council 08.11.22.
    - **Church Walk** – Meeting arranged with Officers from the County Councillor 15.11.22. The Town Council will investigate placing Tree Preservation Orders on the trees at Church Walk.
    - Quotes are being sought to possibly replace post and rail fencing around the open space area to the rear of Hares Green estate with hedging once the land has been transferred to the Town Council.
    - Planters are being placed around the open space area at Bridle Road to deter vehicles from parking on the grass.
  - (iii) Items raised by Full Council 08.11.22
    - A grant application from Watton Air Cadets was deferred until the Full Town Council meeting on 22.11.22.
    - A new member of staff has been recruited. £10,000 will be added to the 2023 staffing (service level agreement) budget to cover salary and on-costs.
    - A £50 donation was made towards Wayland Academy Achievement evening.
    - A protective overcoat is to be purchased for use by Father Christmas (£160).
    - A recommendation made by the HR Committee to, in principle, provide Councillors with laptops and appropriate training was agreed. Any large resultant expenditure will be taken from general reserves.
    - The Finance Committee was tasked with considering work to clear the guttering at Wayland Hall as pigeons are congregating on the roof and as a consequence the gutters are becoming full of guano. The landlord of the neighbouring Kings Arms pub had offered to spilt the cost of clearing the gutters of both buildings and a quote has been requested but not received. Therefore the Committee confirmed the Clerk's emergency spend of £1000 to be used if that amount would be adequate to pay for the works, but if not the quote (when received) should to be presented to Full Council. The invoice for the works would need to itemise the expenditure for each party.
4. **Bank Reconciliation**
  - Bank reconciliation for 10.10.2022 as presented with the agenda papers was accepted.

## 5/6. Expenditure made since last meeting and Current Budget Position/2023 Budget

Items 5 and 6 were considered together.

The budget position was considered together with the forecast to the end of the financial year and the four year plans.

Consideration was given to the needs for 2023 looking at current and predicted income and expenditure.

It was noted that the cost of photocopying has increased significantly. A suggestion was made to investigate the cost of purchasing recycled paper to be used for printing the agenda packs. A large amount of copying is undertaken to provide the requested hard copies of agenda packs.

Code lines within the budget were individually discussed and the budget summary sheet will be updated in preparation for final budget setting recommendations to be made at the next meeting of the Finance Committee. The suggested budget figures will then be presented to Full Council at the first meeting in January 2023 so the precept request can be submitted by the end of January.

Initial thoughts are that the precept request will need to be increased slightly but it is planned to keep the increase below the rate of inflation.

To note:

- Expected increase in grounds maintenance costs as the Council becomes responsible for additional land.
- Maintenance costs for Wayland Hall for planned works may be carried into 2023.
- Will there be costs for the Town Council associated with plans for Middle Street?
- Legal costs continually increase.
- Toilet refurbishment (estimated at £60,000) will be taken from the Community Improvement Fund not the working budget.

7. Date of next Finance Committee Meeting:

**Thursday 15<sup>h</sup> December at 1:00pm**