

Minutes of Watton Town Council Finance Committee Meeting

held on October 12th 2022, at Wayland Hall.

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

1. Apologies for absence received from Tobi Amadasun and Don Saunders. Sue Dent, who had been invited to the meeting (re. item 10), also sent apologies.

2. No Declarations of Interest made.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

(i) The Minutes of the meeting held on 15.09.22 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

(ii) Update from items in the Minutes of the Meeting held on 15.09.22

- **SERCO** – One year contract to empty the four litter bins at the play areas began October 3rd.
- **High Street bins** – Litter Bins have been delivered. It will be recommended to the Full Council to accept the quote of £1800 received from the preferred contractor to remove the old litter bins and install new.
- **Clock Tower** – Waiting to receive contract documents from Kings and Dunne. Smiths of Derby will also be chased to provide a quote to repair the clock mechanism and install automatic winding.
- **Communications Policy** – Policy to be presented to Full Council following HR meeting on 01.11.22 .
- **Church Walk** – The Clerk has again spoken to Ian Sharman at Norfolk County Council regarding responsibility of Church Walk and once more requested a meeting between Councillors and NCC Officers. Ian has promised a further e-mail to help clarify information provided in previous e-mails.
- **Hares Green and Officers Mess Site meeting** – Cllrs attended a site meeting to look at grounds maintenance works. Quotes are to be sought to possibly plant hedging to eventually replace post and rail knee high fencing around some green space areas.
- **Bridle Road** – The grounds maintenance contractor has provided a quote to site planters at Bridle Road play area to deter parking on the grass. This matter will be an agenda item for the next Town Council meeting.

(iii) Items raised by Full Council

At the Town Council meeting on 11.10.22 it was agreed that:

- an additional £2340 be allocated to purchase addition Christmas lights
- a donation of £5000 to be made to Watton Air Cadets (will be taken from CIF)
- a review of the market rules will be concluded by 31.03.23.

4. **Bank Reconciliation**

Bank reconciliation for 12.09.2022 presented and accepted. Checked and signed by Cllr Bishop as Internal Control Officer.

5. **Expenditure made since last meeting and Current Budget Position**

- Expenditure of note: £1895 for upgrade of the fire alarm system, £561 for Cemetery software and £250 allocated for Emergency Planning .

6. **2023/4 Budget**

- Noted that the legal cost code and the IT code allocation in the current budget may be overspent by the end of the financial year and an increase in the administration allocation is suggested for 2023/4.
- Events allocation may need to be increased for 2023/4.
- Noted that donations are listed in the budget spend but money is allocated from CIF.
- The cost of new litter bins and planters has been allocated to the grounds maintenance contingency within the 2022/3 budget but will be taken from CIF.
- “Other income” referred to within the predicted 2022/3 incomes refers to money to be taken from general reserves to support the predicted budget expenditure.

The Finance Committee hopes that there will be no need to increase the 2023/4 precept but there will be anticipated additional costs to the budget due to the Town Council taking on extra open space land and the associated grounds maintenance.

7. **Public Toilets**

Two quotes have been received for refurbishment of the public toilets. A project report will be presented to Full Council for a decision to be made. An allocation of £60k has been made within the four year budget plan for refurbishment of the toilets.

8. **Window and bus shelter cleaning**

Three quotes have been received for window cleaning at Wayland Hall and cleaning of the two bus shelters in the High Street. A recommendation will be made to Full Council that the quote from Stulee [current cleaners at the public toilets] be accepted.

9. **Financial Four Year Forecast**

The Financial Planning Document was presented and reviewed:

- The allocation of £8k for storage and erection of the market gazebos will be reviewed pending discussion to be held regarding the Wednesday Market.
- The notice board in the Cemetery is in need of replacement and discussion is needed re. maintaining the skip at the Cemetery. £5k budget allocation suggested for the Cemetery.
- The future allocation for Christmas lighting may be reduced.
- Facilities at the towns play areas could be enhanced using s106 money.
- An additional budget allocation for IT may be necessary.
- Suggestion made to investigate replacement of the town van using a lease scheme.
- Additional costs for grounds maintenance are anticipated as the Town Council increases its ownership of green spaces.
- Staffing budget will increase with addition of Food Hub Supervisor at CHT. Money to be charged to CHT.

10. Heritage Maps Project

Suggested locations for the heritage signs:

- Queens Hall car park – costs to be investigated to site map board on grassed area
- Vets car park notice board to be moved – could be used at Queens Hall
- Public toilets – on side of building
- Bus shelters – could be stick ons
- Memorial Car Park? Or Memorial Garden
- Town Hall wall.

Phase 1 - Signs which will be easy to put up should be ordered and placed at the public toilets, Wayland Hall and on the bus shelters. Signs could also be placed at Memorial and Jubilee Gardens.

Phase 2 – The location of signs in other areas is likely to be more costly. A meeting should be arranged with the BDC Heritage Officer and grant funding should be investigated.

Sue Dent will be asked to proceed as suggested.

Noted that the Council has allocated £2000 for the Heritage Signs Project.

11. Date of next Finance Committee Meeting:

Thursday 10^h November at 1:00pm - Focus will be on the 2023 budget.

Recommendations for the next Full Council Meeting:

1. To accept the quote of £1800 received from the preferred contractor to remove the old litter bins and install new in Watton High Street
2. To accept the quote from Stulee to clean the windows at Wayland Hall
3. To accept the quote from Stulee to clean the bus shelters in the High Street
4. To agree how to proceed with Heritage Signs Project:

Phase 1 - Signs which will be easy to put up should be ordered and placed at the public toilets, Wayland Hall and on the bus shelters as soon as possible. Signs could also be placed at Memorial and Jubilee Gardens.

Phase 2 – The location of signs in other areas is likely to be more costly. A meeting should be arranged with the BDC Heritage Officer and grant funding should be investigated.