

Minutes of Watton Town Council Finance Committee Meeting

held on June 15th 2023, at Wayland Hall.

Present: Kathryn Stallard – Chairman, Peter Bishop, Stan Hebborn, Sue Hebborn, Tina Kiddell, 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 13.04.23 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.
- (ii) Update from items in the Minutes of the Meeting held on 13.04.23
- Pigeon control has been installed to the roof at Wayland Hall.
 - A Museum 4 Watton Working Group meeting will be arranged to consider matters relating to Wayland Hall, including the heating and plumbing.
 - Locations for the new Heritage Map signs are progressing.
 - The Walsingham Gates are still in need of painting. Approaches are being made to local companies who may be able to assist with refurbishment of the gates. It is suggested that the Town Operative can paint the pillars once the gates are taken off as access will be made easier.
 - Maintenance work to the clock tower is due to begin at the end of June.
 - Grounds maintenance quotes were accepted at the Full Town Council meeting on 13.06.23, including a quote to install a compound at the Cemetery to hold two skips, to plant the tubs at Bridle Road and repair work to the plinth of the town sign in Watton High Street.
 - Nothing further has been heard from the Christmas lights contractor regarding provision of an artificial Christmas tree for 2023. The contractors will be chased again and also asked what additional lighting for the town would cost. Tina Kiddell offered to approach possible sponsors for the Christmas tree.
 - Planters and litter bins have been replaced in the High Street.
 - Hedging at Hares Green will be considered again in the Autumn.
 - It will be checked whether work to rectify concern with voids beneath the safety surface at the new play area at Hares Green has been undertaken.
 - Nothing further has been heard from the owner of the Thetford Road Allotment site regarding the possible transfer of the land to a Charity.
 - The Town Council has recently signed papers for the transfer of the Alternative Community Land at the former Officers Mess site along Norwich Road. A meeting with the Clerk of Dereham Town Council has been scheduled for July 13th to hear how Dereham Town Council has established a new park.
 - It was suggested an audit of benches around the town should take place.
 - Town Council took the decision to stay with our current IT providers and .gov e-mail addresses have been provided for all Councillors.
 - The public toilets have been refurbished with complimentary reports received.
 - A staffing review is currently being undertaken.

- A temporary repair has been undertaken to the Mayors Chain.
A recommendation will be made to Full Council that the purchase of a new chain for the Mayor should be explored as the current chain will be fully engraved by 2024.

(iii) Matters considered by Full Council 13.06.23: agreed to engage preferred contractor to undertake some outstanding grounds maintenance jobs and to grant £500 to the Armed Forces Family Club to help commemorate Armed Forces Day in Watton. It was also resolved that the PEPSO should advise but not physically assist with a planned community picnic at Loch Neaton.

It was resolved at Full Council to investigate organisation of a bike event in Watton High Street during 2023. **A recommendation will be put to Full Council that prior to setting a budget for the Bike Event, an outline proposal for the format of the event, (including the possible use of outside agencies, risk assessment/management, marshalling and public liability insurance) and an indication of potential cost should be provided by the Councillors leading on the event.**

4. **Bank Reconciliation**

Bank reconciliation for 05.05.23 presented and accepted. Checked and signed by Cllr Bishop as Internal Control Officer.

Councillors were also presented with income and expenditure figures to date.

5. **Church Walk**

Noted that a site meeting had been undertaken at Church Walk on 13.06.23 with Don Clark who had previously assisted to make new gates which have replaced the originals. It appears that the pillars and railings are original listed features, but the gates are not.

The Council has received an e-mail from Norfolk County Council to say that letters have been sent to residents along Church Walk who appear to have damaged/obstructed the grass verge.

6. **Lovell Gardens Play Area**

It will be recommended to Full Council to accept the tender document received from the consultant engaged to compile the tender and to add £20,000 from reserves to boost the available £60,000 s106 funding.

7. **Litter/dog waste bins**

A request has been received for a dog waste bin to be installed along the new Thetford Road trod.

It was suggested that the Breckland Council policy for emptying litter/dog waste bins be confirmed and to research the cost of installation of a black bin along the trod.

An audit of bins around the town is needed and a policy can then be drawn up regarding replacement and installation of bins as several requests for new bins are requested and have been refused previously due to perceived reluctance from Breckland to provide an emptying service.

8. Wayland Hall

It was suggested a meeting of the Museum Working Group should be scheduled to discuss all things relevant to use of Wayland Hall by the Museum, including the plumbing and heating system.

Noted that work is to be undertaken to the boiler on 23.06.23.

It will be recommended to Full Council to allocate up to £5000 (including VAT) in the 2023 budget to install an electronic blind to cover the large end window in the Council Chamber.

9. HR Consultancy

A recommendation will be made to Full Council to consider entering into a yearly service contract with CBR Business Solutions for HR and Employment Law Consultancy.

10. Wayland Hall Gutter Clearance

A recommendation will be made to Full Council to accept the quote received of £3168 for gutter clearing at Wayland Hall.

11. General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) compliance

Following the concern that IT service providers approached for quotes may not have been GDPR compliant it is suggested that the Town Council should seek quotes for a consultant to undertake an audit of processes to ensure GDPR compliance within the Council.

12. Report from HR Committee Meeting 14.06.23

The HR Committee met on 14.06.23 to consider a possible increase to further develop the capacity of the Council staffing team and recognise its role in managing the CHT Community Hub.

The current expectation is that £50,000 will need to be allocated from General Reserves to cover staffing changes under consideration. This figure from reserves will gradually reduce over forthcoming years as allocation is made within the annual budget with the possible need for a greater demand for wages from the precept.

A meeting will be booked with the HR, Finance and Charlotte Harvey Management Committee to further discuss staffing need.

13. Financial Four Year Forecast

Additional staffing costs will be represented in the four year forecast.

Consideration will be given to possible hire of event organisers to manage Town Council events which may also have a bearing on future expenditure.

14. Review of Financial Regulations

No amendment is recommended to Financial Regulations and thus **Full Council will be requested to accept Financial Regulations as reviewed with no changes necessary at this time.**

Date of next Finance Committee Meeting:

Thursday 13th July at 1:00pm

Recommendations for the next Full Council Meeting:

- that prior to setting a budget for the Bike Event, an outline proposal for the format of the event, (including the possible use of outside agencies, risk assessment/management, marshalling and public liability insurance) and an indication of potential cost should be provided by the Councillors leading on the event.
- the purchase of a new chain for the Mayor should be explored as the current chain will be fully engraved by 2024.
- to allocate up to £5000 (including VAT) in the 2023 budget to install an electronic blind to cover the large end window in the Council Chamber.
- to accept the tender document received from the consultant engaged to compile the tender and to add £20,000 from reserves to boost the available £60,000 s106 funding.
- to consider entering into a yearly service contract with CBR Business Solutions for HR and Employment Law Consultancy.
- to accept the quote received of £3168 for gutter clearing at Wayland Hall.
- to accept review of Financial Regulations with no amendments.