

**Minutes from the Finance Committee Meeting held on
November 14th 2024 at Wayland Hall**

Present: Kathryn Stallard (Chairman), Peter Bishop, Stan Hebborn, Don Saunders.

Officers Present: Jane Scarrott and Lorren Woodgett

1. Apologies received from Tina Kiddell.
2. No Declarations of Interest made.
3. Minutes from the previous meeting
 - (i) The minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 26.09.24 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.
 - (ii) Update from the previous meeting:
 - The Town Operatives have cleaned and painted the Walsingham Gates at the west end of Church Walk. Thanks were voiced.
 - The Town Council is waiting to hear further information regarding the possible transfer of the Thetford Road Allotment site to the Town Council.
 - A third skip is still to be booked to complete the clearance of rubbish from the Thetford Road Allotment Site. This will be undertaken when the Town Operatives are available to ensure the skip is not abused! It was also noted that a skip will be needed to assist with clearing rubbish from the Threxton Road Unit.
 - Quotes have been sought to clean the gutters at Wayland Hall. Site visit undertaken 14.11.24.
 - A fuel card for use by the Town Operatives has been ordered.
 - Noted that if the High Street traders undertake a Halloween event again in 2025 the Town Council would be happy to promote it.
 - Discussion took place around the future of the market. At present the market is generously supported by the Town Council as it is financially subsidised by an estimated £75 p.w. With the plans for the possible pedestrianisation of Middle Street it is felt there should be more focus on the market in 2025 with the Town Council adopting a greater pro-active approach.
 - Noted that improvements to the lighting at Wayland Hall are still to be undertaken.
 - Following receipt of the report commissioned to investigate the heating controls at Wayland Hall it will be recommended to Full Council that:
 - a. Works to the controls as recommended in the report to be commissioned at a cost of £1975 plus VAT
 - b. An annual service of the gas boiler and associated equipment to be undertaken at a cost of £670 plus VAT
 - c. A three year annual service contract is entered into at a cost of £945 plus VAT p.a.
 - d. Quotes be sought for other works as identified in the report from the contractor

To note: The contractor who compiled the report was the only one of four companies approached who responded to a request to provide quotes. The company is a member of the Building Engineering Services Association (BESA) and subscribes to SFG20 (members

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list) for the UK Standards for maintenance and has undertaken work for other local authorities including schools and other public organisations.

(iii) Items raised by Full Council

- In response to grant/donation requests received recently it will be recommended to Full Council that the Office staff be tasked with reviewing the grants and donations policies.
- Thanks were voiced to the staff who had compiled the Christmas Lights Report presented to Full Council 12.11.24. It was noted that the agreement made was to defer any decision regarding additional Christmas lighting until 2025. It was suggested Christmas lighting should be considered by Council again in April 2025.

4. Grounds Maintenance 2025

Tenders for grounds maintenance were considered and it was agreed to recommend to Full Council to accept the following:

Grounds Maintenance (not including VAT)

2025 £14900.07

2026 £15198.58

2027 £20263.55 (includes pollarding of trees at Church Walk)

Cemetery Grounds Maintenance (not including VAT)

2025 £8544.64

2026 £8715.53

2027 £8889.84

Gardening (not including VAT)

2025 £17283.00

2026 £17629.65

2027 £17982.24

The decision for the recommendation was based on best value and the desire to use a known and trusted contractor. The preferred contractor was the only company to put in tenders for all three grounds maintenance contracts.

5. Bank Reconciliation

The Bank Reconciliation dated 31.10.24 was presented to the Committee and checked and signed by the Internal Control Officer.

[Finance Committee members had been issued with net position figures prior to the meeting.]

5.1 2025/25 Budget

The current budget position was considered. The expectation is that expenditure will be within budget for 24/25 but some virement within cost centres may be needed by the end of the financial year. To date the money allocated from reserves to support the budget has not been called upon.

Members of the Committee talked through the code costings within the budget and set some initial estimates for 2025/26.



The Clerk will input further figures, including anticipated income, prior to the December meeting of the Finance Committee with the aim of presenting the budget need to Full Council in January.

It was noted that the premises and staffing budget will need consideration and thought should be given regarding the cost of the possible transfer of management of the car parks in the town and the future provision of vehicles for the Town Operatives.

6. Four Year Forecast

Amendment will be made to the Four Year Forecast to note that the Council will target the promotion of the weekly market in 2025, will consider additional Christmas lights in 2025 and will further research how to provide power to the clock tower.

7. Date of the next meeting of the Finance Committee: 12th December 2024 1.00pm
January 14th 2025 will be a Staffing Meeting (joint HR/Fin. Committee).

Recommendations to Full Council:

- Works to the heating controls as recommended in the Wayland Hall report to be commissioned at a cost of £1975 plus VAT
- Annual service of gas boiler and associated equipment at Wayland Hall to be undertaken at a cost of £670 plus VAT
- To enter into a three year annual service contract at a cost of £945 plus VAT p.a.
- Quotes be sought for other works as identified in the report from the contractor
- To accept the tenders for 2025/25 grounds maintenance contracts:
Grounds Maintenance (not including VAT)
2025 £14900.07
2026 £15198.58
2027 £20263.55 (includes pollarding of trees at Church Walk)

Cemetery Grounds Maintenance (not including VAT)
2025 £8544.64
2026 £8715.53
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2026 £17629.65
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- Office staff to review the Grants and Donations Policies



