

**Minutes from the joint Finance and HR Committee Meeting held on
January 23rd 2025 at Wayland Hall**

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

Officers Present: Jane Scarrott, Michelle Thompson and Lorren Woodgett.

Items 1-4 led by Chairman of the HR Committee, 5-8 led by Chairman of the Finance Committee.

HR Matters

1. No Apologies received. Noted that Sue Hebborn is the reserve for the HR Committee.
2. Resolution passed to exclude the public and press to discuss confidential staffing matters.
3. No Declarations of Interest made.
4. Matters raised at the HR Meeting held on 10.01.25:

Training

Some discussion took place regarding the need for staff and Councillor training. It was generally felt that face to face training is preferable to on-line training and that if necessary for all staff to be present for training the Office might need to be closed.

The Training Policy will be looked at and consideration given to what should be considered as essential training and what would be seen as Professional Development Training.

Noted that training should be "recognised" training.

Staff were requested to identify potential training with a view to listing which training should be considered a priority.

The Full Council will be asked to support the recommendation to increase the training budget.

4 Matters raised at the HR meeting held 10.01.25

(i) Staffing re-structure

An all staff training workshop has been arranged for February 13th. The training provider is to provide an explanation to staff regarding the training and why it has been commissioned.

An organisational re-structure of staffing has been suggested and a quote of £8125 plus VAT has been received for this to be undertaken. A recommendation will be made to Full Council to accept the quote.

Noted that the Memorandum of Understanding which has been agreed between the Town Council and the Charlotte Harvey Trust will need to be considered as part of the re-structure.

A suggestion was made that Councillors should also be involved with training and wording could be incorporated into Standing Orders that Councillors are expected to attend relevant training.

(ii) Cover for Town Operatives

A recommendation will be made to Full Council to consider a contract with the preferred grounds maintenance contractor for provision of support for the Town Operatives should one or both be off work.



Concern was raised that the market gazebos are suffering from general wear and tear and that it is difficult for the Town Operatives to dry the gazebos when they have been out in the rain. Staff were asked to research options around drying the gazebos.

(iii) Town Council bank card

A recommendation will be made to Full Council to increase the monthly expenditure limit on the Town Council bank card to £3000.

It was noted that staff are to be referred for Occupational Health assessment.

It has been agreed to establish a working group to prepare a long term staffing strategy.

Finance Matters

5 Minutes of the meeting held on 12.12.24

(i) Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting 12.12.24 were confirmed as correct and signed by the Chairman of the Finance Committee.

(ii) update from the Minutes of the Meeting 12.12.24

- Noted that Office staff are still to review the Grants and Donations Policies.
- Precept request for 2025/26 has been submitted to Breckland District Council.
- Full Council will be asked to ratify the decision that no increase to Cemetery, Market or Allotment Fees is to be made during the forthcoming financial year.
- The owner of the Thetford Road Allotment Land has confirmed that she is happy to proceed with transfer of ownership of the land to the Town Council. Full Council will be asked to agree to proceed with the transfer and accept additional associated costs. It was suggested a meeting should be held with allotment holders in due course to inform them of the action being taken.

(iii) Other items

- It has been agreed to place footfall counters at two locations (with the existing CCTV cameras) at either end of Watton High Street. The CCTV brackets belong to Breckland Council. *[Watton Town Council has agreed to support the cameras at an estimated cost of £630pa]*
- It was stressed that Church Walk does not belong to Watton Town Council. The Town Council chooses to undertake some maintenance but any works along Church Walk should be with the consent of Norfolk County Council.
- Events
 - Watton and Wayland Times has offered to sponsor the literacy focused Family Fun Days scheduled for the summer and Bretts Stone Masons has offered funding for refreshments.
 - Details of quotes received from 3 security companies, who could provide security and first aid cover for this years events, were shared with members of the Committee. A recommendation will be made to Full Council to accept the quote from Force8.
 - Watton Sports Centre is to be kept available as an alternative location for the 2025 Festive Market should weather conditions be against holding the event in the High Steet.



- The requested Clock Tower Report will be compiled once the review of the quinquennial report has been undertaken.

6. Bank Reconciliation

The Bank Reconciliation dated 12.12.24 was presented to the Committee and checked and signed by the Internal Control Officer.

Budget Position

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

Agreed by Full Council:

- Additional £150,000 to be invested with CCLA.
- £8480 for replacement of windows at Wayland Hall.
- £5000 donation to the Benjamin Foundation.
- £35 subs for the Loyal Company of Town Criers.
- £545 to review the quinquennial report for the Clock Tower.

6.1 It was agreed that the gas and electricity contracts for Wayland Hall, the Public Toilets and the Linmore Unit would be reviewed by the energy consultant who undertakes price comparison for the Town Council and recommendations will be followed.

7. Review of Four Year Forecast

- Noted that the contract for provision of Christmas Lighting is due for renewal.
- A possible increase to the training budget will be included within the four year forecast.

8. Date of the next meetings

HR Committee: 14th February 2025 11.00am

Finance Committee: 14th February 2025 12.00pm

Recommendations to Full Council:

1. To increase the Training Budget.
2. To accept the quote received of £8125 plus VAT to commission an organisational staffing re-structure for Watton Town Council.
3. To consider a contract with the preferred grounds maintenance contractor for provision of support for the Town Operatives should one or both be off work.
4. To increase the monthly expenditure limit on the Town Council bank card to £3000.
5. To ratify the decision that no increase to Cemetery, Market or Allotment Fees is to be made during the forthcoming financial year.
6. To agree to proceed with the transfer of the Thetford Road Allotment land to the Town Council and to accept additional associated costs.
7. To accept the quote of £2015 plus VAT from Force8 to provide security and first aid cover as necessary for the 2025 Town Council events



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