

Minutes of Watton Town Council Finance Committee Meeting

held on September 28th 2023, at Wayland Hall.

Committee members present: Kathryn Stallard – Chairman, Peter Bishop, Stan Hebborn, Sue Hebborn and Don Saunders.

Staff present: Jane Scarrott

1. Apologies for absence received from:

Tina Kiddell

2. No Declarations of Interest made.

3. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

(i) The Minutes of the meeting held on 10.08.23 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

(ii) Update from items in the Minutes of the Meeting held on 10.08.23

- The project to install an electronic blind for the large end window in the Council Chamber at Wayland Hall is in progress with the blind expected to be fitted the first week of October. The Town Council will need to engage an electrician to complete the electrical installation.
- The consultant who produced the Wayland Hall Quinquennial Inspection Report will be asked to quote to update the report and compile a list of identified outstanding works.
- Maintenance work on the clock tower building has been undertaken. The Council will now approach English Heritage to investigate whether an electric clock mechanism would be permitted within the listed clock tower.
- The Council's preferred grounds maintenance contractor has been requested to research provision of a small skip to hold excess soil from grave excavations.
- Work needs to be undertaken to the support base at Chaston Place ready to position the new artificial Christmas Tree for 2024.
- The Play Area at Hares Green remains closed due to a problem with discolouration coming from the rubber surfaces. The Town Council will inform the contractors who arranged installation of the safety surface that any claim against the Council as a result of the discolouration will be offset to them.

(iii) Items raised at Full Council meeting 26.09.23:

Agreed expenditure included £6000 donation to the Benjamin Foundation, £500 grant funding to Watton Air Cadets and the cost of arranging a DBS check for the Council's Lost Children Officer.

Events

A recommendation will be passed to Full Council "To liaise with the Watton Air Cadets in the first instance to ascertain the level of assistance they can offer for events, but to agree a budget increase of up to £10,000 to supply adequate

manpower and security to cover need for the 2023 Fireworks Evening and Festive Market”.

It is envisaged that larger events in 2024 will be passed to an events management company to organise and deliver. A Finance Committee extraordinary meeting was provisionally booked for November 21st to decide on an Action Plan for events for 2024. The Community Support Officer will be asked to attend this meeting.

4. Bank Reconciliation

Bank reconciliation for 11.09.23 presented and accepted. Checked and signed by Cllr Bishop as Internal Control Officer.

Councillors had been presented with updated budget figures prior to the meeting and it was noted that the 2023/24 Budget is on track.

(i) Photocopier

It was agreed that the current service provider for the photocopier will be contracted to supply a new Konica device with an estimated quarterly rental price of £325. The old copier will be removed and the memory cleansed.

5. Four Year Forecast

The Four Year Forecast was considered, with it noted that the Finance Committee would be supportive of the HR Committee investigating an increase of the staffing complement.

It was also felt there should be a greater focus on the development of the Watton Wednesday Market.

6. Dates of future Finance Committee Meeting:

Thursday 26th October at 1.00pm

Thursday 16th November at 1.00pm (Interim Internal Audit taking place)

Tuesday 21st November at 1.00pm (provisional depending on staff availability)

Thursday 14th December at 1.00pm

Recommendation for the next Full Council Meeting:

- To liaise with the Air Cadets in the first instance to ascertain the level of assistance they can offer for events, but to agree a budget increase of up to £10,000 to supply adequate manpower and security to cover need for the 2023 Fireworks Evening and Festive Market.