



WISBECH TOWN COUNCIL

25 November 2024 – 7.30 pm

MINUTES OF MEETING

Present: Councillor Imafidon, Chairman; Councillors Edwards, Foice-Beard, Hoy, Human, Ketteringham, Meekins, Monger, Oliver, Patrick, Read, Roy, Sagoo, Tanfield, Tierney and Wallwork.

Apologies: Councillor Pehlivanova,

Public participation: None requested.

Chairman/Mayor's introduction

Before proceeding to the first item of business, the Chairman/Mayor, Councillor Imafidon, made a statement directed at the members of the public and representatives of the local press who were attending this meeting. He mentioned that we are all in the King's Chamber and that the members of the council had been elected by the people of Wisbech and he requested that the members of the public and representatives of the local press be mindful and have respect for what councillors may say at the meeting.

Councillor Imafidon expressed the opinion that it is appropriate for members of the public to have the opportunity to participate in meetings of the council but, at the same time, they should not disrupt or interfere with the proceedings of the meeting.

55/24 Remembrance

Councillor Tierney reminded members that eleven years ago it had been agreed that Wisbech Town Council would use its final meeting each year to stand for one minute's silence to remember those who had died during the year. He made the point that members would be observing one minute's silence for those whose names are well-known to many but also for those who, while not famous or well-known, are nonetheless sadly missed by those who knew and loved them.

Councillor Tierney had produced a list of those to be remembered, which he read to council and consisted of the following:

Maggie Smith (actress), James Earl Jones (actor; the voice of Darth Vader), Glynis Johns (actress), Shannon Doherty (actress), Shelley Duvall (actress), Tony Todd (actor, who had played the role of Candyman), Michael Newman (actor), John Amos (actor), Gena Rowlands (actress), Donald Sutherland (actor), Barbara Rush (actress), Carl Weathers (actor), Ron Ely (actor, who had played the original 1960's Tarzan), Timothy West (actor), June Spencer (actress, who had played the role of Peggy Wooley in The Archers radio series), David Graham (voice actor, who had been the voice of both the Daleks and Grandpa Pig), Jeannette Charles (an actress who had portrayed Queen Elizabeth II in many movies and TV shows), Liam Payne (a member of the group One Direction), David Soul (actor and singer), Paul Di'Anno (former vocalist of the band Iron Maiden), Anne Whitfield (actress), Richard Lewis (comedian), Cissy Houston (acclaimed gospel and soul singer), Kris Kristofferson (actor and singer), Sergio Mendes (Brazilian pianist), Peter Sinfield (lyricist), Vic Flick (guitarist), Martin Lee (a member of the musical group Brotherhood of Man), Chris Serle (presenter), Arthur "Gaps" Hendrickson (who had been the frontman of the band Selecter), Colin Gibb (a member of the band Black Lace), Richard Tandy (the longtime Electric Light Orchestra keyboardist who voiced "Mr. Blue Sky" in the band's song of the same name), Shifty Shellshock (of Crazy Town), Phil Lesh (a member of the band The Grateful Dead), Quincy Jones (famed music producer), Dr Ruth Westheimer (sex therapist), Colin Renfrew (British archaeologist), Marius Bațu



(Romanian folk singer), Greg Hildebrandt (fantasy and sci-fi artist), Phil Donahue (broadcaster), Richard Simmons (flamboyant fitness guru), Boris the chimpanzee (the celebrated star of Chester Zoo, who made it to the great age of 58 years), Peanut the Squirrel and Fred the Raccoon (Tik Tok sensations, who had been taken and killed by an out-of-control bureaucracy), Bobby Allison (Nascar driver), Lynda Obst (producer), Georgina Cooper (supermodel), Geoff Capes (one time World's Strongest Man), Gary Shaw (footballer), Sven-Göran Eriksson (manager of the England Football team between 2000 and 2006), David Wilkie (British Olympic swimmer), Frank Field and John Prescott (Labour politicians), Alex Salmond (politician), Dexter Scott King (son of Dr Martin Luther King Jr).

Local people whose family have asked that they be included in our list are Stuart Smith, Michael Bedford, Steven Williams, Kathleen Brennan, Avis Gilliatt and Geoff Harvey. Local names are usually only added to this list if family or friends specifically ask the council to do so.

Councillor Tierney made the point that this is not a complete or exhaustive list and for any people who may have been missed it was certainly not intentional, and the council's minute's silence includes those un-named as well as those named.

All of those present at the meeting observed one minute's silence for all those people who had passed away during the year, remembering that each individual who is no longer with us, whether he or she died through natural causes or otherwise, is a loss to us all.

56/24 Membership of Committees

Members considered filling the vacancies in membership of the Planning and Community Infrastructure Committee, the Environment and Public Spaces Committee and the Wisbech Town Centre Committee, resulting from resignation of such memberships by Councillor Oliver.

Members decided, on the proposal of Councillor Hoy, seconded by Councillor Tierney, that

- (1) the vacancy in membership of the Planning and Community Infrastructure Committee be filled by Councillor Human;
- (2) the vacancies in membership of the Environment and Public Spaces Committee and the Wisbech Town Centre Committee be filled by Councillor Edwards.

57/24 Terms of Reference of Committees

Further to minute 42/24, members considered adopting revised Terms of Reference of the Council's Committees.

The Clerk had circulated to members, in advance of the meeting, a draft version of a revised Terms of Reference. He informed members that the Terms of Reference had been revised to re-allocate the responsibilities of the Staffing and Communications Committee and the Community Events and Festivals Committee as appropriate and to include responsibilities in relation to the operation and management of Wisbech Park Pavilion and the St Raphael Community Hall.

Councillor Monger suggested that a responsibility in relation to undertaking Health and Safety Risk Assessments be added to the Terms of Reference of the Resources Committee.

Members decided, unanimously, on the proposal of Councillor Human, seconded by Councillor Meekins, that the "Wisbech Town Council: Committees – Terms of Reference" document, appended to these minutes (amended to include the addition of a responsibility in relation to undertaking Health and Safety Risk Assessments to the Terms of Reference of the Resources Committee), be adopted.



58/24 Fenland District Council

(1) Information

The Clerk reported that the District Council's Environment newsletter for the month of October 2024 had been circulated, by e-mail, to all members of the council on 6 November 2024 and that information relating to CCTV performance for the period July to October 2024 had been circulated, by e-mail, to all members of the council on 20 November 2024.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

(2) PlayZones

Councillor Hoy, in her capacity as a member of Fenland District Council, informed members that it had been decided at 15 November 2024 meeting of the District Council's Cabinet that a funding application be made to the Football Foundation to develop PlayZone sites in Fenland, with the initial tranche consisting of two PlayZone project applications based at the Manor Field in Whittlesey and Barton Road in Wisbech. She mentioned that if a second tranche of funding were to become available, two further locations would be the subject of an application; one of those locations would be Wisbech Park.

Members decided that the information reported by Councillor Hoy be noted.

(3) Chapel Road Car Park, Wisbech

Councillor Hoy, in her capacity as a member of Fenland District Council, informed members that there had been concern at Fenland District Council (FDC) as to the possibility of not being able to agree terms with the National Trust (NT) in relation to renewal of the lease that FDC had with NT for the Chapel Road Car Park. However, through negotiations between the two parties, officers at FDC had been able secure renewal of the lease for continued use of that land as a car park.

Members were informed by Councillor Hoy that one of the conditions imposed by the National Trust upon renewal of the lease is that the land could no longer be used to accommodate the annual Mart and Statute Fairs; consequently, Fenland District Council would be seeking to identify alternative locations for these fairs and be undertaking public consultation in relation to the potential sites identified.

Members decided that the information reported by Councillor Hoy be noted.

(4) Community Carol Service

Councillor Meekins, in his capacity as Chairman of Fenland District Council, reminded members that the Chairman of Fenland District Council's Community Carol Service would be taking place on 6 December 2024, commencing at 6.00 pm, at the Church of St Peter and St Paul, Wisbech and that he hopes to see attendance at the event by as many members of Wisbech Town Council as possible.

Members decided that the information reported by Councillor Meekins be noted.



59/24 Cambridgeshire County Council

Local Highway Improvement schemes 2025/26

Further to minute 44/24 (1), members considered withdrawal of the proposed Local Highway Improvement (LHI) scheme for the installation of bollards on the grassed area opposite Meadowgate School and the opportunity to identify a “replacement” scheme.

Councillor Hoy informed members that the council’s decision (at minute 44/24 (1)) to apply for the installation of bollards on the grassed area opposite Meadowgate School had been reported in the local press and that, consequently, the proposal had not been well received by staff at the school or parents of pupils at the school. She expressed the opinion that although the proposed scheme is a good one, it is not worthy of being pursued by this council as it is likely to generate a considerable amount of objection and, consequently, would not, in her opinion, be approved by the Local Highway Authority.

The suggestion was made by Councillor Hoy that the proposed Local Highway Improvement (LHI) scheme for the installation of bollards on the grassed area opposite Meadowgate School be withdrawn and that a scheme for the installation of parking restrictions (double yellow lines) on New Drove (the section opposite its junctions with Leach Close and Thurloe Close), Wisbech be submitted instead. Such a scheme would make the situation safer for vehicles exiting Leach Close and Thurloe Close.

Members decided, on the proposal of Councillor Hoy, seconded by Councillor Human, that the proposed Local Highway Improvement (LHI) scheme for the installation of bollards on the grassed area opposite Meadowgate School be withdrawn and that a “replacement” application be made to Cambridgeshire County Council under the Local Highway Improvements scheme for the financial year 2025/26 in relation to a scheme for the installation of parking restrictions (double yellow lines) on New Drove (the section opposite its junctions with Leach Close and Thurloe Close), Wisbech.

60/24 Cambridgeshire Constabulary

Members took the opportunity to consider any matters relating to crime and disorder in Wisbech, for reference to Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

Councillor Hoy mentioned that residents of Willow Way, Wisbech are suffering from noise nuisance (including the revving of engines at traffic signals) caused, almost every night, by “boy racers” using Churchill Road, Wisbech. She suggested that the police be requested to be “on the lookout” for this activity and try to tackle the issue.

Councillor Tierney commented that many motorists travel at excessive speed along Queens Road, and he suggested that there needs to be an increased police presence on that road to try to address the issue. He expressed the opinion that such activity is likely to be taking place on other long, straight roads in the town and perhaps those roads would also benefit from a police presence.

Councillor Wallwork mentioned that residents of Wisbech are appreciative of the higher visibility of police officers in the town.

Councillor Imafidon mentioned a recent vehicle accident on Lynn Road, which had resulted from a motorist speeding-away from traffic signals. In addition, he mentioned “illegal activity” which is taking place in Kooreman Avenue, of which he believes the police are aware, and he expressed the hope that a police presence is being applied in that part of town as a means of tackling the issue.

Members decided that councillors’ comments be noted and that they be forwarded by the Clerk to the local Policing Inspector.



61/24 Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 14 October 2024

Members decided, on the proposal of Councillor Ketteringham, seconded by Councillor Edwards, that the minutes of the Town Council meeting of 14 October 2024 be confirmed and signed.

62/24 Minutes of committees

Members received, for information, the minutes of committee meetings held since the last meeting of the Town Council, as follows:

- (1) Planning and Community Infrastructure Committee – 14 October 2024
- (2) Resources Committee – 28 October 2024
- (3) Planning and Community Infrastructure Committee – 11 November 2024.

Members decided that the contents of these minutes, including the decisions made by the committees, be noted.

63/24 Mayor's report

The Mayor informed members of the activities and events that he had attended since the last meeting of the council.

The Mayor expressed his thanks to the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Tanfield, for her support and to Councillor Human, the most recent Past Mayor, for his support and guidance.

Members were informed by the Mayor that he had attended, on 25 October 2024, the opening of the Royal British Legion's Poppy Shop in the Horsefair Shopping Centre and that he had taken the opportunity to express his thanks to the Chairman and other members of the Wisbech Branch of the Royal British Legion who had been present at the opening for all that they do for the town.

The Mayor expressed his thanks to all who had been present at the Remembrance Sunday event on 10 November 2024. He mentioned that he had also attended the Remembrance Day event at the Nestle Purina factory the following day.

Members were informed by the Mayor that he had attended the opening of a 3G pitch at Wisbech St Mary and that he had been honoured to attend the first visit to Wisbech by members of the British Association of Friends of Museums. He had been pleased to hear the positive comments which had been made about Wisbech by those visitors to the town.

The Mayor mentioned that he had attended the re-opening of the Sunken Garden at Peterborough.

Members were informed by the Mayor that he had attended the funeral of the late Avis Gilliatt on 20 October 2024; the second funeral of a Past Mayor of Wisbech within recent weeks. He commented that it had been an emotional experience, and he had been happy to represent Wisbech Town Council at the funeral.

Mention was made by the Mayor that Greencore had donated the sum of £1,000 to the Mayor's Charity Fund.

The Mayor referred to the council's Wisbech Unsung Heroes Awards 2024 and encouraged members to submit nominations.

Members decided that the comments of the Mayor be noted.



64/24 Leader of the Council's report

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Hoy, informed members that

- she had appointed Councillor Edwards to deputise for her in relation to her role as Leader of the Council
- the Town Clerk and she had witnessed, earlier today, in the company of the Christmas Lighting Installation Contractor the testing of the lighting which has been installed to date. Almost all the work covered by the contract has been completed; if time allows, the contractor would be undertaking works to enhance the display on the Market Place; there would be further testing before the end of this week in readiness for switch-on on 1 December 2024
- preparations for this year's Christmas lights switch-on event, to take place on 1 December, are going well; it is "shaping-up" to very a very exciting event
- Wisbech Castle is very busy; there are a significant number of bookings for paranormal investigations. There would a Christmas-themed event taking place at Wisbech Castle on 15 December.

Members decided that the comments of the Leader of the Council be noted.

65/24 Clerk's report

The Clerk reported to members on: updates in relation to council projects/initiatives; correspondence received which would be of interest to councillors; advance notice of events/activities etc.

Projects and service delivery

Community Support

Council officers continue to share other partners' information and undertake "sign posting" to other services/organisations as appropriate, particularly at a time when life is more difficult for many people. To this end, the Town Clerk attends various meetings, including those of the Fenland Charities Network and the Cambridgeshire Financial Capability Forum.

Other "sign posting" and information-sharing takes place within the membership of the Love Wisbech partnership (which is chaired by the Town Clerk), as well as the groups mentioned above.

The council provides financial support to charitable organisations and community groups and its budget for the financial year 2024/25 includes a sum of £19,000 to provide financial support to projects which benefit the local community. Some of that funding was allocated by the council's Resources Committee on 15 April 2024 (minute R27/23 refers), 15 July 2024 (minute R7/24 refers) and 30 September 2024 (minute R11/24 refers). The remaining balance on the Financial Support budget is £5,280. Further applications will be considered by the Resources Committee on 9 December 2024.

Wisbech Market Place

The final element of the highway works associated with the Wisbech Market Place enhancement scheme is the installation of a new gateway at the Church Terrace entrance to the Market Place. However, the Local Highway Authority (LHA) is not able to undertake the work until such time as the security fencing to the front of the former "Cashino" building is removed; a matter which is in the hands of the developer of the site and CNC Building Control.



At its meeting on 23 September 2024 the Wisbech Town Centre Committee decided (at minute T22/24) that the council would seek tenders for the Wisbech Market Place Cleansing Contract; the committee made minor amendments to the requirements of the current contract (as set out at minute T22/24).

Tenderers have been given the option to submit quotations/proposals for undertaking the daily cleansing of the Market Place by hand sweeping, mechanical sweeping or a combination of both (say, hand sweeping in the mornings and mechanical sweeping in the evenings).

The contract would initially be for a period of 12 calendar months, with continuation beyond that period being subject to the agreement of both parties.

The tenders received will be considered at the next meeting of the Wisbech Town Centre Committee.

Wisbech Market

Following various changes during the last three years or so due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Wisbech Market has been operating “as normal” since 12 April 2021 but, in common with trading levels in most town centres, trading has not returned “pre-lockdown” levels.

Council officers continue to explore ways of attracting not only market traders for all days of the week but to encourage car booters on Thursdays and Sundays. This is important both in terms of generating income for the council and contributing towards the viability and vibrancy of the town centre.

Between June 2023 and June 2024, the council had operated a financial concession arrangement aimed at attracting more traders to Wisbech market (minutes T7/23, T12/23, T17/23 and T24/23 refer).

At minute T6/24 the Wisbech Town Centre Committee decided that, given the lack of take-up of the concession arrangement which had been offered by the council, officers would not continue to devote time to promoting that arrangement in general but would offer the arrangement specifically to those traders which attend the council’s community events and festivals. That was tried but with no success.

At its meeting on 23 September 2024 the Wisbech Town Centre Committee approved (at minute T16/24) a proposal from the council’s Markets Officer that the closing time of the market be brought forward to 2.00 pm (instead of 3.00 pm) for the months of November to February inclusive.

This arrangement was implemented on 1 November 2024 and has been well received by the traders.

Allotments

The council continues to receive enquiries in relation to plots at the council’s allotment sites.

With the cost-of-living crisis having an impact upon people’s lives, new tenants have been extremely grateful for the opportunity to rent allotments from the council, to enable them to grow their own fruit and vegetables.

All allotment sites are now full and, to try to reduce waiting times for a plot, only 3 preferences for a site are being taken. The Environment and Public Spaces Committee decided on 29 July 2024 (at minute E3/24) that, in future, whilst waiting lists are being operated, the council would accept applications for allotment tenancies only from residents of the parish of Wisbech and restrict



applications to one per household; any non-parishioners who had already been accepted onto a waiting list would, however, not be removed.

At its meeting on 29 July 2024 (at minute E3/24), the council's Environment and Public Spaces Committee decided that allotment rents be increased (from £0.06 per square metre) to £0.12 per square metre per annum with effect from October 2025.

Because of complaints received over the summer regarding unauthorised burning of household items on certain allotments sites, the Environment and Public Spaces Committee reviewed, at its meeting on 29 July 2024, the council's policy in relation to bonfires on allotment sites.

The committee decided (at minute E3/24) that, with immediate effect, the lighting of bonfires at allotment sites be no longer allowed. Although the banning of bonfires has generally been accepted by most tenants, officers have received written representations, opposing this change of policy, from some tenants; these will be reported to the next meeting of the Environment and Public Spaces Committee.

There have been reports of horsetail (mare's tail) weed on Waterlees and Dowgate allotments. It is understood that roots of established horsetail plants can grow to 2 metres in depth and spread rapidly. This is likely to dissuade potential tenants from taking on these plots. There is no quick remedy, and it takes intense work to control. The Environment and Public Spaces Committee may wish to consider allowing a rent-free period of one year in relation to renting any affected plots to enable new tenants to tackle the situation to prevent further spread.

Some tenants at Cox's Lane and Halfpenny Lane sites had requested upgrades to the entrance barriers at these sites to become full gates. This matter was considered by the council's Environment and Public Spaces Committee on 29 July 2024 (at minute E3/24) and the committee decided that officers would obtain quotations for the manufacture and installation of gates at those sites. Quotations are still awaited.

The annual tenancy "renewals" process has been completed and new plots marked-out at Mile Tree Lane and Southwell Road allotment sites. Viewings are being undertaken with a view to letting the plots at these sites. Following completion of this, the vacant plots at Halfpenny Lane, Dowgate Road and Waterlees will be re-let.

Works to fill the potholes at the Dowgate Road allotment sites have been completed from the main road to the council's storage containers. The rest of the roadway still needs to be done. Cox's Lane has had its final topcoat of plainings laid.

Community events and festivals

Following a planning meeting – chaired by the Town Clerk - on 19 September 2024, this year's Remembrance Sunday (10 November 2023) event took place successfully; it had been well attended and had run smoothly.

The Community Events and Festivals Working Party's planning of this year's Christmas Lights Switch-on event, scheduled for 1 December, is almost complete and has been supported extremely well by sponsors. PM Bars Ltd and BNI Marshland are both Headline Sponsors, donating £1,000 each. Total sponsorship to date is £2,300, with many local companies sponsoring 'in kind' with goods and services.

The planning for this year's Wisbech Christmas Fayre (which will take place on Sunday 8 December) has concluded. The final planning meeting took place on 19 November 2024.



The arrangements have, as usual, been made by a steering group (Chaired by the Town Clerk) which includes representatives from Wisbech Town Council, Fenland District Council, The Horsefair Shopping Centre, the Library Service, Wisbech Lions, Wisbech Rotary Club, Wisbech and Fenland Museum etc.

The Town Council is, once again, running the Wisbech Unsung Heroes Awards, the aim of which is to recognise those townspeople who go the extra mile for their community. Nominations opened on 21 October and will close on 6 December 2024. The Town Council has received some nominations so far and the advertising will be “stepped-up” to attract as many nominations as possible.

Those who are shortlisted for an award will be invited to a presentation evening on 25 January 2025. It is proposed that the presentation evening will be held at the St Raphael Community Hall.

Town Hall/office

Maintenance work to the Town Hall is undertaken as necessary.

At its meeting on 23 September 2024 the Wisbech Town Centre Committee decided that the council would obtain quotations for re-decoration works to the ceilings of the Council Chamber and the Mayor’s Parlour and the re-decoration of the walls and ceiling of the stairway between the ground floor and the first floor of the Town Hall (minute T17/24 refers).

Council officers have been seeking to obtain quotations from local contractors for this work. One contractor visited the Town Hall on 10 October 2024 to assess the work required, for the purpose of submitting a quotation. No quotation has been received to date.

Another contractor attended the Town Hall on 11 November 2024; a quotation is awaited. A contractor who made an appointment to attend the Town Hall on 12 November was a “no show”. A contractor who attended the Town Hall on 13 November decided that he would not submit a quotation as the job is “too big” for him. Officers are waiting for a further contractor to book an appointment to visit the Town Hall for the purpose of submitting a quotation.

Toilets

The toilets at the Horsefair Shopping Centre, which have been open under the management of Wisbech Town Council and operated on behalf of the council by a contractor since 11 July 2022, continue to operate successfully.

Repair works are undertaken as necessary, often undertaken by the contractor which operates the toilets for Wisbech Town Council.

In accordance with the decision of the Wisbech Town Centre Committee at minute T4/24, the old lighting units in the toilets at the Horsefair Shopping Centre, which had reached the end of their useful life and had started to malfunction, have now been replaced. Other minor works required to keep the toilets operational (such as removing a blockage in the urinals and repairing dripping taps) have been undertaken.

At its meeting on 23 September 2024 the Wisbech Town Centre Committee decided that the contact between Wisbech Town Council and Hibernian Property Management Limited in relation to the daily operation and supervision of the toilets at the Horsefair Shopping Centre be extended to cover the remaining period of the lease between Wisbech Town Council and New River Retail (the owners of the shopping centre); that being midnight on 6 June 2027 (minute T15/24 refers).

From “feedback” received from the council’s contractor, it is clear that most members of the public are very appreciative that the council had taken action to secure the re-opening of these toilets.



Wisbech Castle

Repair and maintenance work to Wisbech Castle is undertaken as necessary. So far this year there has been re-decoration of the Clayton Room, repair and extension of the intruder alarm system, lighting works to Wisbech Castle and the vaults etc.

Wisbech Castle continues to be an extremely popular venue for paranormal investigations and almost every weekend this year has a booking for an event. Enquiries continue to be received regularly, and bookings are being taken for 2025. There are now only 24 Saturday dates available for paranormal events in 2025 and 4 of those are likely to be reserved shortly. Trevor Ketteringham remains a stalwart in undertaking the caretaking of Wisbech Castle and he receives many compliments.

The only wedding at Wisbech Castle this year took place on 2 November. It was an 'alternative' wedding with a Halloween theme and was run smoothly by Trevor Ketteringham and Amanda Scott, both of whom were also guests of the bride and groom.

A Christmas-themed event will be held at Wisbech Castle on 15 December 2024.

Staff of The Retreat hair salon have very kindly decorated Wisbech Castle for Christmas with decorations that the business has donated. A fantastic job has been done in installing a number of Christmas trees and beautiful decorations around the public rooms of Wisbech Castle.

Land at Somers Road, Wisbech

The Town Clerk is still seeking to secure renewal of the lease (with Cambridgeshire County Council) for the area of land, off Somers Road, adjacent to the Queen Mary Centre, which leased by Wisbech Town Council for the purpose of increasing the amount of car parking provision in the town. The Town Council's solicitors have received recently from the County Council's solicitors a final version of the lease and have sent to Fenland District Council (FDC) the licence element (see below) for signature.

In accordance with the decision of the Environment and Public Spaces Committee at minute E10/22, this site has been in use since 5 June 2023 by Fenland District Council's contractor (for a period of 77 weeks) as the works compound in association with the re-development of 24 High Street, Wisbech. That arrangement is covered by way of a licence agreement between Wisbech Town Council (as lessee of the land) and Fenland District Council (as the client for the re-development scheme) and will be referenced in the new lease between Cambridgeshire County Council and Wisbech Town Council.

The contractors which are using the land off Somers Road as a works compound will, before "handing-back" the land to Wisbech Town Council, ensure that it is in no worse condition than it was at the beginning of that use. There is some "slippage" on the programme of re-development works at 24 High Street, which means that this land will be needed as a works compound for a period longer than the 77 weeks originally proposed; possibly continuing until March 2025, as opposed to November 2024.

New pavilion at Wisbech Park

The opening of the cafe at the pavilion took place on 26 March 2024, the operator of the café being Crazy Cow Catering Limited.



The Heads of Terms of a lease between Fenland District Council and Wisbech Town Council and the subsequent draft lease allow Wisbech Town Council to “hire-out” both the community room and the office elements of the pavilion. At minute E6/23 the Environment and Public Spaces Committee decided that the fee for hire of the community room be £20 per hour and the fee for rental of the office be £325 per month.

The community room at the pavilion is receiving bookings; there are now bookings for every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings by local groups. The room has also been used for ad hoc meetings and a small number of parties.

A couple of viewings of the office took place some months ago but the room did not meet the respective needs of those enquirers. The opportunity to hire/rent the community room and the office is being shared regularly on social media but despite the continued advertising of the availability of the office, there had been no further interest expressed. Given that situation and the fact that there is a lack of storage space in the building, the Environment and Public Spaces Committee decided on 16 September 2024 (at minute E7/24) that it should no longer be considered as an office for rental but as a storage space associated with the use of the community room.

The new public toilets at the pavilion opened on 2 May 2024. Consequent to that opening, the existing toilet block in Wisbech Park was taken out of use.

On 16 September 2024 the Environment and Public Spaces Committee considered issues in relation to the operation of the café at Wisbech Park Pavilion, including the relationship between Wisbech Town Council and Crazy Cow Catering Ltd (minute E7/24 refers).

The committee concluded that the arrangements covered by the Tenancy at Will between Wisbech Town Council and Crazy Cow Catering Ltd in relation to operation of the café at Wisbech Park Pavilion had not worked satisfactorily and, consequently, decided that the Tenancy at Will be terminated. Crazy Cow catering Ltd ceased trading, after being given notice, at the café on 21 October 2024.

In terms of seeking to attract a new operator for the café, an Expressions of Interest notice was published on 9 October 2024. Those who expressed an interest in becoming the operator of Wisbech Park Pavilion café were sent a bid/application form. The closing date (and time) for the council’s receipt of completed bid/application forms had been 25 October 2024 (at 5.00 pm).

Because of the low number of bids/applications received by 25 October, the deadline for the council’s receipt of completed bid/application forms was extended until 1 November 2024 (at 5.00 pm).

As at 1 November 2024, there had been 2 viewings of the café. Both of those parties have submitted a bid/application. A third bid/application has been received from a party which viewed the building in January of this year. In addition to the three formal bids, a proposal has been submitted by the County Council.

With the consent of the Chairman of the Environment and Public Spaces Committee and the Leader of the Council, an additional interested party was subsequently invited to visit to the café. That visit took place on 14 November 2024. No bid/application has been submitted so far.

The next stage in the process of selecting a new café operator will be for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Environment and Public Spaces Committee, the Leader of the Council and the Town Clerk to “interview” those who have submitted an application/bid.



There have been several “teething troubles” with the building – following recent works to replace the drainage and flooring, and the toilet itself, in the changing places toilet facility, there are currently no outstanding issues.

St Raphael community hall

Following Wisbech Town Council’s agreement to the Heads of Terms of a lease for the building, a formal lease from Fenland District Council (FDC) had been awaited. A lease was received recently from FDC’s solicitors. This has now been signed by the Town Clerk, on behalf of Wisbech Town Council, and FDC’s solicitors will now arrange signing by Fenland District Council.

Fenland District Council (FDC) has undertaken all the external repair and maintenance work that had been required to the community hall. FDC had also commissioned a Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) of the building and would install the necessary fire-fighting equipment recommended by way of the FRA. Upon completion of those works the District Council would “hand-over” the building to the Town Council. Those works were completed on 18 September, which means that the building is now “open for business”.

Councillor Foice-Beard and the Town Clerk have been involved in discussions with officers of the County Council’s Early Years service and representatives of the Youths of Fenland CIC in relation to potential regular, ongoing hirings of the building.

Youths of Fenland CIC has commenced its use of this building.

A fridge and a cooker have been purchased and installed. A number of tables and chairs have been purchased.

A surveyor engaged by Cambridgeshire County Council inspected the building on 14 November 2024, to see what works would be required to enable it to meet the needs of the Early Years Team.

Christmas lighting in Wisbech

Three tenders were for the contract for installation (and removal) of the council’s Christmas lighting scheme were considered, firstly, by the Wisbech Town Centre Committee on 23 September 2024 (at minute T22/24) and, secondly, by the Resources Committee on 30 September 2024 (at minute R12/24). As a result of those considerations, a quotation was accepted and, consequently, a contract has been awarded by Wisbech Town Council to TS Services Ltd.

Installation of the Christmas lights is proceeding according to plan and the contractor is going above and beyond the requirements of the contract to ensure that more lighting is installed around the town. The contractor has installed lighting across Market Street and will be installing additional lighting within the central area of the Market Place (involving the central feature and the surrounding trees).

New lighting for South Brink – to replace that which did not work (because it had reached the end of its life) last year – has been purchased and installed.

There is very regular liaison between the contractor and the Town Clerk in terms of progress monitoring.



A “test” switch-on of most of the Christmas lighting scheme was undertaken by the contractor earlier today. There will be one further test before the whole scheme “goes live” on 1 December 2024.

Correspondence

The Clerk had no items of correspondence to bring to Council’s attention at this time.

66/24 Date of next meeting

Members noted that the next meeting of Wisbech Town Council is scheduled for 20 January 2025, to commence at 7.30 pm, at the Town Hall in Wisbech.

Meeting finished at 8.10 pm.

Signed

Date

DRAFT



Terms of Reference of Committees

(Minute 57/24 refers)

RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Finance and Governance

Ensuring the proper administration of the council's financial affairs, in accordance with relevant legislation.

Monitoring the council's approved budget throughout the year and approving any virement of expenditure within overall approved budget.

Recommending the budget and annual precept to Wisbech Town Council.

Responsible for risk assessments and insurance of the council's property and activities.

Responsible for health and safety risk assessments.

Determining the council's systems of internal control and internal audit and ensuring that action is taken to address any issues raised through the annual internal and external audit processes.

Appointing annually the internal auditor.

Tendering and purchasing arrangements.

Developing and monitoring the council's Risk Management Strategy.

Allocating the council's annual financial support budgets.

Managing the council's Asset Register.

Staffing

Agreeing the council's staffing structure and making recommendations to Council where necessary.

Reviewing, as necessary, the terms and conditions of employment of staff.

Ensuring that the Council is meeting all its obligations as an employer, including the delivery of appropriate training and development opportunities.

Reviewing and implementing policies and practices in relation to staffing issues.



Communications

Implementing and overseeing the council's Communications Strategy.

Ensuring that the activities and services of Wisbech Town Council are publicised through using appropriate media, to create a greater public understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the Town Council.

Overseeing the communications activities of the Council.

Community Events and Festivals

Determining and delivering annually a programme of community events and festivals on behalf of Wisbech Town Council, in accordance with the budget fixed by the Council. The operational arrangements for delivery of the annual programme of community events and festivals shall be undertaken by a working party.

Seeking funding opportunities which would enable the Council to expand its community events and festivals "offer" to the community.

Supporting other organisations and bodies to deliver community events and festivals which are provided for the benefit of the town and its inhabitants.

General

Any other matter not specifically within the remit of any other committee of the council (except for matters where decisions can only be made by the full Council).

PLANNING AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Discharging the functions of the Council in terms of planning and development management, including:

- commenting upon applications for planning permission for both development control (to Fenland District Council) and minerals extraction and waste disposal (Cambridgeshire County Council) (the same applies when consulted by King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council or Norfolk County Council)
- commenting upon the compliance or otherwise with planning conditions in respect of planning permissions granted
- commenting upon development plan proposals by Fenland District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council (the same applies when consulted by King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council or Norfolk County Council)
- considering (as consultee) planning policy and strategy documents
- commenting upon the condition of listed buildings and the conservation areas in the town



- considering, as necessary, planning appeals matters

Responding to consultations of proposals for street naming within the town

Responding to consultations in respect of highways and other infrastructure schemes for the town.

ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SPACES COMMITTEE

Allotments

Discharging the functions of the Council relating to allotments, including:

- producing plans, for delivery by officers, in relation to the maintenance, development and enhancement of the council's allotments
- determining the charge for allotments let by the council
- overseeing the letting and determination of tenancies
- approving terms and conditions for the letting of tenancies
- acquiring and disposing of land for allotments (subject to reference to the Resources Committee and/or Council where necessary)
- recommending the budget for allotments, via the Resources Committee, to the Council.

Public Toilets

Overseeing the operation, management, maintenance and development of the public toilets which are owned and operated by Wisbech Town Council (this does not include the toilets at the Horsefair Shopping Centre which are leased by the Town Council).

Producing plans, for delivery by officers, in relation to the maintenance, development and enhancement of these public toilets.

Recommending the annual budget for these assets, via the Resources Committee, to the Council.

Car Park at Somers Road

Overseeing the operation, management, maintenance and development of the car parking area leased from Cambridgeshire County Council by Wisbech Town Council.

Producing plans, for delivery by officers, in relation to the maintenance, development and enhancement of this car park.



Recommending the annual budget for this asset, via the Resources Committee, to the Council.

Wisbech Park Pavilion

Overseeing the functions of the Council relating to the operation, management and development of Wisbech Park Pavilion, including:

- ensuring Wisbech Town Council's compliance with the lease between Fenland District Council (as landlord) and Wisbech Town Council (as tenant)
- setting the terms and conditions for the rental of space (namely the café and the community room) at Wisbech Park Pavilion
- overseeing the letting and determination of agreements and contracts for rental of space at Wisbech Park Pavilion
- recommending the annual budget for Wisbech Park Pavilion, via the Resources Committee, to the Council.

Campaigning

Leading, on behalf of Wisbech Town Council, any campaigns or lobbying aimed at supporting or opposing a proposed initiative, project or course of action by another agency or organisation; for example, the Wisbech Anti-incinerator Campaign.

Establishing working parties and task and finish groups, as necessary/appropriate, to support the delivery of campaigns.

Recommending the annual budget for this activity, via the Resources Committee, to the Council.

WISBECH TOWN CENTRE COMMITTEE

Wisbech Market Place (and activity at that location)

Discharging the functions of the Council in relation to the operation, management and development of Wisbech Market Place and the council's Markets service/function, including:

- producing plans in relation to the operation, maintenance and enhancement of Wisbech Market Place; working/liaising with appropriate partners/stakeholders as necessary
- developing and submitting applications for funding necessary to achieve the enhancement of Wisbech Market Place
- producing plans in relation to the operation and development of the council's Markets service/function



- setting the terms and conditions for the rental of space at Wisbech Market Place, both in terms of market trading and attendance by sellers at the council's community events and festivals which take place on the Market Place
- determining the charges for the rental of space (pitch fees) at Wisbech Market Place
- overseeing the advertising and promotion of Wisbech Market Place, both as a trading area and a community space
- overseeing the issue of market licences
- recommending the annual budget for Wisbech Market Place and the council's Markets service, via the Resources Committee, to the Council.

Wisbech Castle

Overseeing the functions of the Council relating to the operation, management and development of Wisbech Castle, including:

- operating a Wisbech Castle Working Party, including the members of the Wisbech Town Centre Committee, selected non-councillor volunteers, experts and interested parties as well as council staff where necessary. The Working Party and council staff to be responsible for the day-to-day management and delivery of projects and schemes, answering in all respects to this committee
- working with the Wisbech Castle Working Party, producing plans in relation to the refurbishment, maintenance, development and enhancement of Wisbech Castle and other assets within its grounds
- developing and submitting applications for any funding necessary to achieve the refurbishment and development of Wisbech Castle and other assets within its grounds
- ensuring Wisbech Town Council's compliance with the lease between Wisbech Town Council and Cambridgeshire County Council (dated 2 February 2018)
- ensuring re-payment to Cambridgeshire County Council of the loan (£150,000) provided by that council for refurbishment of Wisbech Castle
- setting the terms and conditions for the rental of space at Wisbech Castle
- determining the charges for the uses of all buildings and facilities on-site
- overseeing the letting and determination of agreements and contracts for rental of space at Wisbech Castle
- in liaison with the Castle Working Party, approving advertising and promotion of Wisbech Castle and its associated land and buildings, as a community asset/venue



- recommending the annual budget for Wisbech Castle, via the Resources Committee, to the Council.

Town Hall/office

Overseeing the operation, management, maintenance and development of the Town Hall.

Recommending the annual budget for the Town Hall, via the Resources Committee, to the Council.

St Raphael Community Hall

Overseeing the functions of the Council relating to the operation, management and development of the St Raphael Community Hall, including:

- ensuring Wisbech Town Council's compliance with the lease between Fenland District Council (as landlord) and Wisbech Town Council (as tenant)
- setting the terms and conditions for the rental of the building (namely the café and the community room) at the St Raphael Community Hall
- overseeing the letting and determination of agreements and contracts for rental of space at the St Raphael Community Hall
- recommending the annual budget for the St Raphael Community Hall, via the Resources Committee, to the Council.

Town Centre Facilities

Overseeing the operation, management, maintenance and development of certain facilities, activities or services within Wisbech Town Centre, including:

- public toilets at the Horsefair Shopping Centre (operated by the Town Council) under via a lease with the owners of the shopping centre)
- footfall counters which operate within the Market Place area

Pursuing opportunities which could be beneficial to the vibrancy and vitality of Wisbech town centre and/or result in an increase in the tourism/heritage "offer" of the town.

Engaging in activities and initiatives aimed at supporting or assisting the local economy.

Recommending the annual budget for Town Centre Facilities (where the costs would fall upon Wisbech Town Council), via the Resources Committee, to the Council.