



WISBECH TOWN COUNCIL

RESOURCES COMMITTEE

17 APRIL 2023 – 7.30 pm

MINUTES OF MEETING

Present: Councillor Oliver, Chairman; Councillors Hoy, Human and Tierney.

Apologies: Councillors Hill, Tibbs and Wallwork.

Public Participation: None requested.

The minutes of the meeting of the Resources Committee held on 9 January 2023 were confirmed and signed.

R18/22 Wisbech Town Council's accounts 2022/23

The Clerk (and RFO) reported to members on the council's financial position as at the end of the fourth quarter (year-end) of the financial year 2022/23; he gave explanations as to variations between the estimated income and expenditure for that period and the actual financial position as at 31 March 2023.

As at 31 March 2023, the council had received 104% approximately of the estimated annual income and had incurred 98% approximately of its estimated annual expenditure based upon the figures set out in the council's revenue budget for the financial year 2022/23 (the quarter four accounts do, however, include the spending of circa £26,000 which had been provided, since production of the council's budget, by the Arts Council England to "expand" this year's WisBEACH Day).

Members were informed by the Clerk (and RFO) that, in addition, the council had received income (from external funders, totalling £350,000) and incurred expenditure (from the use of ear-marked reserves and general reserves, totalling £436,911) in respect of the Wisbech Market Place enhancement scheme. There had also been spending from the ear-marked reserves in relation to the procurement of additional Christmas lights (£8,910) and for the provision of specialist advice to support the council's anti-incinerator campaign (£12,365).

The Clerk (and RFO) responded to members' questions on the council's income and expenditure position as at the end of the financial year 2022/23. Members expressed their appreciation to the Clerk (and RFO) for the manner in which the council's finances had been managed during that year, which had enabled the council to implement all of its initiatives and projects for that financial year; most notably the enhancement of Wisbech Market Place.

Members were informed by the Clerk (and RFO) that the total amount of money in Wisbech Town Council's bank account at the end of the financial year 2022/23 was £365,826.19. That total consists of ear-marked reserves (i.e. money allocated by the council (or a third-party funder) to be used for a specific purpose) and general reserves (other money which was unspent as at the end of the financial year).

The Clerk (and RFO) reminded members of the council's ear-marked reserves at the beginning of the financial year 2022/23, agreed at minute R17/21 (totalling £245,568), and he informed them of the level of those reserves, because of expenditure during the financial year, as at the end of that financial year (totalling £196,903).



Members considered the recommendation from the Clerk (and RFO) in relation to ear-marked reserves as at the end of the financial year 2022/23 (to be carried forward into the financial year 2023/24 to fund specific activities/projects).

The Clerk (and RFO) reminded members that, according to the Practitioners' Guide to Local Council Governance, it is recommended that a local council should possess, as general reserves, a sum equating to three to twelve months of its gross annual expenditure. Based upon the council's estimated gross expenditure for the financial year 2023/24, the minimum recommended level of general reserves for this council would be around £116,000. However, at minute R17/21 this committee had acknowledged that, because of the need to fund the Market Place enhancement scheme, the council's general reserves would fall below that level during the financial year 2022/23.

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

- (1) the information reported by the Clerk (and RFO) be noted;
- (2) the council's accounts as at the end of the financial year 2022/23 be approved and that, in accordance with minute R3/19, a copy of the report presented by the Clerk (and RFO) be signed by the Chairman;
- (3) Wisbech Town Council's ear-marked reserves as at the end of the financial year 2022/23 (to be carried forward into the financial year 2023/24 to fund specific activities/projects), totalling £257,903, be:
 - £121,878 for works to Wisbech Castle (the current balance of the £150,000 loan which had been provided by Cambridgeshire County Council in 2018)
 - £11,090 for additional Christmas lighting (the current balance of the £20,000 allocated in the 2020/21 budget)
 - £17,635 for specialist advice in relation to the council's Anti-incinerator campaign (the current balance of the £30,000 allocated in the 2021/22 budget)
 - £10,000 as match funding towards the cost of a new pavilion at Wisbech Park (minute 25/20 refers)
 - £33,800 (received from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority) for the implementation of a new Shop Watch Radio Scheme
 - £10,000 towards the cost of the Wisbech Town Council elections in May 2023 (the unspent allocation in the 2022/23 budget)
 - £53,500 to meet the cost of the highway works associated with the Wisbech Market Place enhancement scheme (minute MR2/21 refers);
- (4) it be noted that, having agreed the council's ear-marked reserves as at the end of the financial year 2022/23 (set out at (3) above), the Town Council possessed general reserves of £107,923.19 as at the end of that financial year (those reserves had been £185,754.60 as at the end of the previous financial year).

R19/22 Grants and financial support 2023/24

Members considered the grant applications which had been submitted to Wisbech Town Council, for funding from the council's 2023/24 budget for small grants, as well as allocation of the council's special grants for that financial year.



The Clerk (and RFO) reminded members that Wisbech Town Council's budget for the financial year 2023/24 (agreed at minute 98/21) includes a sum of £5,000 (reduced from the figure of £7,000 which had been the allocation for the financial year 2022/23) for small grants and £34,000 (reduced from the figure of £36,000 which had been the allocation for the financial year 2022/23) for special grants.

In addition to the small grants and special grants budgets, the overall Council budget for 2023/24 includes a community support budget of £5,000 (reduced from the figure of £10,000 which had been the allocation for the financial year 2022/23).

The Clerk presented to members a summary of the small grant applications received by the council for consideration for the 2023/24 financial year, as set out below:

	Organisation	Purpose of grant	Amount requested
1.	Wisbech Rose Fair Committee	Contribution towards the cost of delivering a cultural festival across Wisbech during the period 1 to 15 July 2023 inclusive.	£1,500 (total project cost of £6,500)
2.	20Twenty Productions CIC, on behalf of Wisbech Reads	Contribution towards the cost of delivering the 2023 Wisbech Reads literary festival (cost includes providing each attending child with a book written by an author who will be participating in this year's festival (546 books at £4.28 each).	£1,000 (total project cost of £5,522)
3.	Wisbech PHAB Club	The cost of MIDAS training for 4 volunteer bus drivers, to enable those volunteers to drive FACT minibuses to take club members to activities and on day trips.	£600 (total cost of the project)
4.	All Saints Church, Walsoken	The cost of delivering an event, open to all residents of Wisbech, on 7 May 2023 to celebrate/commemorate the Coronation of King Charles III (cost includes providing food and non-alcoholic drinks to attendees).	£400 (total cost of the project)
5.	Rochford Walk Neighbours group	Contribution towards the cost an event to celebrate/commemorate the Coronation of King Charles III (cost includes providing food and non-alcoholic drinks to attendees).	£100 (total project cost estimated at £150)



6.	Feed Fenland	Contribution towards general running costs (including publicity) and purchasing equipment associated with providing food to homeless and vulnerable people in Wisbech.	£750 (total project cost not specified)
7.	Wisbech Girls Venture Corps Cadets	Contribution towards the cost of running a camping activity.	£500 (total project cost estimated at £1,000)
	TOTAL		£4,850

The Clerk (and RFO) reminded members that the council's guidance to applicants for grant funding states that Wisbech Town Council will look at the following issues when assessing funding requests: contribution to social, environmental, economic wellbeing, community involvement and activities, social inclusion, any previous funding, purpose of the organisation and the nature of the assistance requested.

To assist members in allocating the special grants budget for the financial year 2023/24, the Clerk (and RFO) reminded them that

- when considering the allocation of special grants for the financial year 2021/22, this committee had decided that the grant aid awarded to the Wisbech and Fenland Museum would not automatically continue beyond the term of the Service Level Agreement (which concluded at the end of the financial year 2022/23); the committee had agreed that it would review the situation - in the light of the museum's financial situation, its achievements during the period of its receipt of such funding from the council and the plans and ambitions for the museum beyond the financial year 2022/23 - prior to allocating grants for the financial year 2023/24.

The Clerk (and RFO) had informed the Board of Directors at the Wisbech and Fenland Museum of that situation and, in response, the Directors had produced a Three Year Funding Strategy for the Wisbech and Fenland Museum; that document had been forwarded by the Clerk (and RFO) to the members of the Resources Committee on 25 October 2022 and then again in readiness for today's meeting.

- in a letter dated 13 December 2022, Citizens' Advice Rural Cambs had asked Wisbech Town Council to consider allocating additional special grant funding to enable it to provide an additional full day a week of support to Wisbech residents. That letter had been shared with the Resources Committee – at the time of setting a draft Budget 2023/24 (for recommendation to Council) - at its meeting on 9 January 2023 and then again in readiness for today's meeting.

Councillor Hoy reminded members that, at minute R11/22, this committee had allocated a total of £3,000, from the community support budget for 2022/23, to support the Salvation Army in Wisbech in providing hot meals to homeless and vulnerable people; this consisted of direct funding of £2,000 to assist in meeting the cost of food provision and £1,000 towards the cost of procuring and installing additional CCTV cameras at the Salvation Army premises, to be used in association with the distribution of the hot meals.

In addition, The Leader of Fenland District Council had provided £840 (paid to Wisbech Town Council) as a further contribution towards the cost of installing a CCTV camera in the Salvation Army building in Wisbech.



Members were informed by Councillor Hoy that the Salvation Army no longer intends to install a CCTV camera in its building; hence, the £1,840 (£1,000 plus £840) funding mentioned above is still available. She informed members that the Salvation Army building would benefit from a new oven (which would be used for cooking of the hot meals) and she proposed to this committee that the money still available be re-allocated to be used for that purpose.

Members decided

- (1) that the details of the small grant applications submitted to Wisbech Town Council, so far, for the financial year 2023/24 be noted;
- (2) that small grant application numbers 2 (£1,000), 3 (£600), 5 (£100) and 7 (£500) be approved in full;
- (3) that, with regard to small grant application number 1, they are supportive of the principle of the proposed “refreshed” Rose Fair but feel that, to be able to make an informed decision on the application, they need: more information as to what activities and events would be delivered by way of the Rose Fair (for example, a daily programme of “who” would be doing what); more detail in relation to costs and an explanation as to how any financial contribution from the Town Council would be spent; a guarantee that a walking parade would be a feature of this year’s Rose Fair; the Clerk (and RFO) would seek to obtain from the Wisbech Rose Fair Committee the information being sought by members;
- (4) that, with regard to small grant application number 6, they are supportive of the service that is being provided by Feed Fenland but feel that to be able to make an informed decision on the application, they need more information about Feed Fenland as an “organisation” and how it is operated/managed, they feel that they need to know: where the food preparation is undertaken (and that any food hygiene certification that may be necessary is in place); that there is compliance with all relevant guidance and legislation that would apply to this type of activity; that insurance cover that may be necessary is in place; the financial management arrangements; that any necessary risk assessments had been undertaken; that “staff” had been the subject of DBS checks if necessary. The Clerk (and RFO) would seek to obtain from the Feed Fenland the information being sought by members;
- (5) that no grant be awarded in relation to small grant application number 4 (given the council’s limited budget availability in the financial year 2023/24, the relatively small number of anticipated attendees at the event and that fact that Wisbech Town Council would also be holding a King Charles III Coronation event in the town on 7 May 2023 which is open to everyone at no charge;
- (6) that it be a condition of any grant funding awarded that recognition is given in any literature/publicity produced by the recipient organisation to the financial support that it had received from Wisbech Town Council; in addition, the recipient organisation shall provide to Wisbech Town Council, at the end of the specific grant-funded project or at the end of the financial year if the grant relates to the organisation’s running costs, a brief report on the manner in which the grant provided by Wisbech Town Council had been applied;
- (7) that allocations from the special grants budget for the financial year 2023/24, so far, be as set out in the table below:

	Organisation/body	Funding allocation (£)
1.	Angles Theatre	1,000
2.	Citizens’ Advice Rural Cambs	3,000



3.	Vivien Fire Engine Trust	500
4.	Wisbech in Bloom	5,000
5.	Waterlees in Bloom	500
6.	Wisbech Christmas Fayre	1,500
7.	Armed Forces Day	1,000
	TOTAL	12,500

- (8) that, in considering the allocation of special grant funding to the Wisbech and Fenland Museum, to enable this committee to make an informed decision on how Wisbech Town Council (WTC) could best support the Wisbech and Fenland Museum (W&FM), it would like to meet with the Board of Directors and a representative (possibly the Chairman) of the Friends of the Museum; the discussion to be around how WTC and W&FM could work together to seek to secure the future of the museum; the Clerk (and RFO) would invite the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Wisbech and Fenland Museum to suggest some possible dates and times for a meeting;
- (9) that the money which had been allocated (£1,000 from this council’s community support budget 2022/23 and £840 from the Fenland District Council’s Leaders Fund) to meet the cost of installing a CCTV camera in the Salvation Army building in Wisbech be re-allocated to be used for the purchase of a new oven;
- (10) to note that the remaining balances of the council’s “financial support” budgets for the financial year 2023/24 are:
- Small grants = £2,800
 - Special grants = £21,500
 - Community support = £5,000.

(Councillor Oliver declared his non-pecuniary interest in the small grant application submitted by the Wisbech Girls Venture Corps Cadets, by virtue of his membership of the group’s Civil Committee)

(Councillor Oliver declared his non-pecuniary interest in respect of the financial support awarded to the Armed Forces Day event, by virtue of him being a member of the Armed Forces Day organising committee)

R20/22 Recommendations from other committees

The Clerk (and RFO) informed members that a recommendation from the council’s Environment and Public Spaces Committee, in relation to funding the increased legal costs of seeking possession of the land at Somers Road (which is leased from Cambridgeshire County Council by Wisbech Town Council), had been anticipated; however, no such recommendation had been made. Consequently, there were no matters to be considered under this item of business.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

Meeting finished at 8.20 pm

Signed.....

Dated.....