



## WISBECH TOWN COUNCIL

15 and 22 May 2023

### MINUTES OF MEETING

#### **Monday 15 May 2023 (12 noon)**

**Present:** Councillors Edwards, Foice-Beard, Human, Imafidon, Ketteringham, Meekins, Monger, Oliver, Pehlivanova, Rafique, Sagoo, Tanfield, Tierney and Wallwork.

**Apologies:** Councillors Hoy, Patrick, Read and Roy,

Members and guests were seated in the Council Chamber to await the Mayoral party, which entered at 12 noon.

The outgoing Mayor, Councillor Wallwork, opened the meeting.

#### **1/23 Election of Chairman of the Town Council (to be known as Town Mayor) for the municipal year 2023/24**

Members decided, on the proposal of Councillor Oliver, seconded by Councillor Tierney, and there being no other nominations, that Councillor Human be elected as Chairman of Wisbech Town Council and Mayor of Wisbech for the municipal year 2023/24 and that he paid an annual allowance of £3,100 in relation to the performance of that role.

The Chairman/Mayor read and signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office in relation to that position. In addition, he swore his allegiance to His Majesty King Charles the Third, his heirs and successors.

Following his election as Chairman/Mayor, Councillor Human gave a short speech. He began his speech by thanking the outgoing Mayor, Councillor Wallwork, for the exceptional way in which she had represented and supported the people of Wisbech during her Mayoral Year.

Councillor Human commented that he feels both honoured and very privileged to have been elected as the Mayor of Wisbech, "Capital of the Fens" for the municipal year 2023/24. He expressed his thanks to councillors for their support and his wife, Janet, for agreeing to be the Mayor's Consort.

The comment was made by the Mayor that he takes very seriously the responsibility of that role and the trust that had been placed in him by councillors and that he commits to serving the people of Wisbech to the best of his abilities, with enthusiasm, compassion, and devotion.

The Mayor informed members that the money that would be raised during his Mayoral Year would be used to support the following organisations:

- Alan Hudson Day Treatment Centre
- TS Falcon Wisbech Sea Cadets
- Army Cadets
- Wisbech Air Cadets 272 Squadron
- Girls Venture Corps.



## **2/23 Outgoing Mayor**

Councillor Tierney paid tribute to the outgoing Mayor, Councillor Wallwork, before inviting her to give a speech about her Mayoral Year (2022/23).

Councillor Tierney expressed the opinion that Councillor Wallwork had performed very effectively the role of Town Mayor during the municipal year 2022/23 and that her husband, David, had performed the role of Mayor's Consort in the same manner.

Councillor Tierney went on commend Councillor Wallwork for her hard work and dedication during her Mayoral year; she had been a great ambassador for Wisbech, not only in the town but everywhere that she visited whilst performing her civic duties.

The outgoing Mayor, Councillor Wallwork, commented that today she hands-over the Mayorship and does so feeling very happy with her Mayoral Year. She made the point that she had set out to be Wisbech first, resident focused; her aim had been to highlight both the great things and people in the town, as well as "shining a light" on the businesses. She had set out to give it her all.

Councillor Wallwork mentioned that she had been given three very important pieces of advice when embarking upon her Mayoral Year, which had kept her in good stead; the advice being:

1. Don't worry about not knowing what to do at events because the best kept secret is.... no one actually knows what's supposed to be happening. So Just smile and it will all work out.
2. Always remember that you are borrowing the role for a year; it's not yours to keep; it's not about you; it's about the town and what you can do for it. How you treat people while you have the title is what will be remembered and the legacy, as such, you leave behind.
3. Something that she had read in the Mayor's handbook. It makes a comment that although the Mayor is invited to numerous events, each event is the highlight of the year for the person who had organised it; so respect that fact when attending. To you it may be 2 hours, some chatting and cake; to the hosts it's taken months of planning and preparation, it might be the biggest event of their year so be present, be there and enjoy your time there and make them the centre of those 2 hours.

The comment was made by Councillor Wallwork that she had loved every second of her Mayoral Year; to have been elected to the role of Mayor of her home town had been a privilege, to represent and advocate for Wisbech had been an honour and having been able to do all of that with her husband, David, at her side had been perfection.

Councillor Wallwork mentioned some of the activities and events that had made her Mayoral Year a memorable one, including the Remembrance parade, the visits to schools, cadet forces and community groups, attending events, promoting the town, fundraising. She commented that she could "hand on heart" say that she is very proud of her Mayoral Year and of the money that the town had raised with her.

The comment was made by Councillor Wallwork that she had no regrets in relation to her Mayoral Year, just a feeling of pride in her town and a deep appreciation and love for her husband, David, who had stood with her during her Mayoral Year and had never once faltered in his dedication to Wisbech.

Councillor Wallwork expressed her thanks to everyone at today's meeting who had who helped and supported her in one way or another. She thanked the Council's officers, past Mayors, the chairmen of committees, civic dignities, fellow councillors and her husband. The comment was made by Councillor Wallwork that she is looking forward to supporting the new Mayor and getting her evenings and weekends back!



Following the speech from Councillor Wallwork, she and her husband, David, were invited by the Mayor to be presented with a Past Mayor's badge and a Past Consort's badge respectively.

**3/23 Election of Vice-Chairman of the Town Council (to be known as Deputy Town Mayor) for the municipal year 2023/24**

Members decided, on the proposal of Councillor Edwards, seconded by Councillor Ketteringham, and there being no other nominations, that Councillor Imafidon be elected as Vice-Chairman of Wisbech Town Council and Deputy Mayor of Wisbech for the municipal year 2023/24 and that he be entitled to claim the travelling allowance agreed by council.

**4/23 Adjournment of the meeting until 7.30 pm on 22 May 2023**

Members decided, unanimously, that the Annual Meeting of Wisbech Town Council be adjourned (at 12.30 pm) until 7.30 pm on Monday, 22 May 2023.

**Monday 22 May 2023 (7.30 pm)**

**Present:** Councillor Human, Chairman (and Town Mayor); Councillors Edwards, Foice-Beard, Hoy, Imafidon, Ketteringham, Meekins, Monger, Oliver, Pehlivanova, Rafique, Read, Roy, Sagoo, Tanfield, Tierney and Wallwork.

**Apologies:** Councillor Patrick.

**Public Participation:** None requested.

**5/23 Declarations of Acceptance of Office**

The Clerk informed members that, in accordance with Section 83 of the Local Government Act 1972, persons who are elected as a Town or Parish Councillor as a result of "all out" local council elections must make a Declarations of Acceptance of Office (DAO) before or at the first meeting of the council following the election or before or at a later meeting if the council agrees. In cases where a DAO is not made by the deadline, a vacancy in the membership of the council occurs.

However, all the members of Wisbech Town Council had, prior to this evening's meeting, made their Declaration of Acceptance of Office and, therefore, there is no need for Council to agree an extension of time for DAOs to be made.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted.

**6/23 Appointment of Leader of the Council**

Members considered the appointment of a Leader of the Council for the term of the Council (until May 2027).

Members decided, on the proposal of Councillor Tierney, seconded by Councillor Meekins, that Councillor Hoy be appointed as Leader of Wisbech Town Council for the period of the council.



## **7/23 Signatories to the council's bank accounts**

Members considered authorising a number of councillors to act in the capacity as signatories to Wisbech Town Council's bank accounts.

Members decided, on the proposal of Councillor Oliver, seconded by Councillor Tierney, that the Chairman of the Town Council (Town Mayor), Vice-Chairman of the Council (Deputy Mayor), Leader of the Council and the Chairmen of the Council's Committees be authorised as bank account signatories, with at least one of the signatories to a cheque (or to authorise BACS payments) being the Chairman of the Council (Town Mayor), Vice-Chairman of the Council (Deputy Mayor), Leader of the Council or the Chairman of the Resources Committee.

## **8/23 Fenland District Council**

### **(1) Information**

The Clerk reminded members that he had forwarded to them the details of the Cost of Living events that are being "hosted" by Fenland District Council in Wisbech on 3 July 2023 (at the Oasis Centre) and 21 July (at the Queen Mary Centre).

The Clerk mentioned that, usually, Wisbech Town Council (WTC), receives from Fenland District Council, in the "run-up" to each meeting of WTC, information in respect of CCTV performance and the District Council's monthly Environment newsletter; however, this has not happened this month. Members were informed by the Clerk that if/when this information is received from Fenland District Council he would forward it, upon receipt, to members.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted.

### **(2) Anti-social behaviour at Tillery Field, Wisbech**

Councillor Wallwork, in her capacity as a member of Fenland District Council, informed members that there had been issues of anti-social behaviour (public nuisance, alcohol consumption, human waste etc) at Tillery Field, which she had reported to the Neighbourhood Policing Team and the Community Safety Partnership; as a result, there would be an increase in the number and frequency of police patrols in that area and other measures being undertaken.

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

### **(3) Land off Cricketer's Way, Wisbech**

Councillor Tierney, in his capacity as a member of Fenland District Council, informed members that the fence at the bottom of the Cricketer's Way needs repair and that the adjoining land, which is overgrown, needs tidying. He enquired as to whether any member is aware of the ownership of the fence and land. In response, Councillor Oliver stated that the owner is Fenland District Council (FDC). Councillor Tierney undertook to pursue the matter with FDC.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

### **(4) 24 High Street, Wisbech**

Councillor Hoy, in her capacity as a member of Fenland District Council, informed members that the scheme of re-development of 24 High Street is scheduled to commence, with creation of a builder's compound, on 5 June 2023. She mentioned that the works to deliver the scheme had been planned in such a way as to avoid the closure of High Street.



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

**(5) Wisbech Park**

Councillor Hoy, in her capacity as a member of Fenland District Council, informed members that the project to construct a new pavilion in Wisbech Park is scheduled to commence, with creation of a builder's compound, on 5 June 2023. She mentioned that she has concerns as to how the construction works could impact upon Wisbech Park as the venue for the WisBEACH Rock Festival and that she and Councillor Oliver had met with relevant officers at Fenland District Council in that regard.

Members were also informed by Councillor Hoy that new play equipment would be installed soon at Wisbech Park.

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

**9/23 Cambridgeshire County Council**

**(1) Motoring in Cambridgeshire**

Councillor Tierney, in his capacity as a member of Cambridgeshire County Council, informed members that the controlling group at Cambridgeshire County Council is committed to "removing" 50% of the cars from Cambridgeshire's roads. Congestion charging is to be introduced in parts of Cambridge, and the ambition of the controlling group is to extend such an arrangement across the rest of the County – "demonising" motorists.

The point was made by Councillor Tierney that communities do not support the County Council's policy of "attacking" motorists, especially in areas such as Fenland where the population relies upon cars to make almost every journey. He expressed the opinion that members of the public should be allowed the freedom to choose their methods of transport.

Members decided that the information reported, and the views expressed by Councillor Tierney be noted.

**(2) Local Highway Improvement (LHI) schemes 2023/24**

Further to minute 77/22 (4), the Clerk informed members that the meeting of the Local Highway Authority's member panel which would be assessing the complex LHI projects for the Fenland area would be meeting tomorrow. In the case of Wisbech Town Council, the application for North Brink, Wisbech (i.e., to close the two-way section of North Brink, Wisbech (Town Bridge end) and create a continuous one-way system along the full length of North Brink to the traffic lights at the junction of Chapel Road and North Brink) would be considered at that panel meeting.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted.

**10/23 Cambridgeshire Constabulary**

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

The Clerk read to members a report which had been produced by Inspector Morris in relation to the outcomes following six months of delivering Operation Luscombe.



Members were reminded that, in response to concerns raised by the community, Operation Luscombe had been launched in September 2022 to tackle the effects of anti-social behaviour (ASB), street drinking and begging within Wisbech town centre. As part of the initiative, an intervention hub, in partnership with a number of agencies (including Police, Wisbech Town Council, Fenland District Council, drug and alcohol support services, employment services, housing and mental health services, probation, the Department for Work and Pensions, and an outreach support team) had been created.

The partnership set about reducing the harm caused by this behaviour to residents, businesses and visitors within the town.

A 4-stage approach, as explained below, had been adopted and anyone found committing ASB, caught begging, or street drinking within the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) were adopted on the programme:

- Stage 1: An invitation to the hub – failure to attend escalated to Stage 2
- Stage 2: Issued with a Community Protection Warning (CPW) – a breach of this escalated to Stage 3
- Stage 3: A Community Protection Notice (CPN) – any breach of this is an arrestable offence and is escalated to Stage 4
- Stage 4: An application through the courts for a Criminal Behaviour Order to be put in place.

Inspector Morris mentions in his report that since the implementation of the hub, 45 people had been adopted onto the programme. At a recent 6-months review meeting the findings were as follows:

- 38 people had ceased their behaviour at Stage 1
- 4 people had ceased their behaviour at Stage 2
- 1 person had ceased their behaviour at Stage 3
- 2 people now have Criminal Behaviour Orders.

Inspector Morris makes the point that Operation Luscombe had been able to help several individuals address their substance misuse, get people back into employment, and support those who had previously been homeless to obtain permanent accommodation.

Members were informed by the Clerk that this week Inspector Morris been successful in his promotion to Inspector to be substantive and had expressed his wish to remain in his current role as Neighbourhoods Inspector for Fenland for at least another 12 to 18 months, to provide stability and continuity to his team, partnerships and the community.

Councillor Monger expressed the opinion that positive outcomes are being achieved as a result of Operation Luscombe. He commented that he had not seen recently the “usual” beggar in the town.

Councillor Roy expressed the opinion that the councillors should engage with the community to assist in the establishment of Neighbourhood Watch groups in their respective electoral wards. In response to this comment, Councillor Tierney mentioned that the council had received a presentation from the Chairman of the Cambridgeshire Neighbourhood Watch Association around a year ago and, consequently, the council had agreed to help “spread the word” regarding the benefits of having effective Neighbourhood Watch schemes operating in Wisbech (minute 119/21 refers).

Councillor Wallwork spoke very highly of Operation Luscombe and its outcomes. She expressed the opinion that the police would receive more reports of anti-social behaviour and street drinking during the summer months, because of the warmer weather and additional day-light hours, and she



suggested that councillors should assist the police in managing the public's expectations of the ability of the police to tackle the associated increase in workload.

Members decided that the information provided be noted and that the Inspector be informed by the Clerk of Wisbech Town Council's appreciation of the Constabulary's efforts in this matter.

### **11/23 Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 27 March 2023**

Members decided, on the proposal of Councillor Tierney, seconded by Councillor Wallwork, that the minutes of the Town Council meeting of 27 March 2023 be confirmed and signed.

### **12/23 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 – 3 April 2023
- (2) Planning and Community Infrastructure Committee – 17 April 2023
- (3) Environment and Public Spaces Committee – 17 April 2023
- (4) Resources Committee – 17 April 2023
- (5) Planning and Community Infrastructure Committee – 2 May 2023.

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

### **13/23 Membership of Committees for 2023/24**

Members considered the appointment of members to the following committees of the council for the municipal year 2023/24:

- Resources Committee
- Planning and Community Infrastructure Committee
- Environment and Public Spaces Committee
- Wisbech Town Centre Committee
- Staffing and Communications Committee
- Community Events and Festivals Committee.

Councillor Monger alleged that by appointing a maximum of seven members to each of the council committees would have the effect of changing Standing Order 44 and that the council is not able to change Standing Orders without following the proper process.

At the invitation of the Chairman/Mayor, the Clerk responded to Councillor Monger's allegation. The Clerk confirmed that the current Standing Order 44 states that "Committees of Wisbech Town Council shall comprise a maximum of seven members..." (agreed at minute 12/19) and expressed the opinion that Councillor Monger must have been referring to an older version of the council's Standing Orders. The Clerk commented that he would be happy to meet with Councillor Monger to discuss the council's Standing Orders or any other governance documents.

Councillor Monger commented that Standing Order 82 states that "A copy of the council's Standing Orders shall be given to each member by the Town Clerk..." and made the point that he had not been provided with a hard copy of Standing Orders until he had requested one. At the invitation of the Chairman/Mayor, the Clerk responded to Councillor Monger's comment. He acknowledged that he had not provided hard copies automatically to each councillor upon their election but had provided each councillor with a link to the document on the council's website (to not only save the



costs of printing the documents but, in his experience, most councillors prefer to access documents electronically); however, he would be more than happy to provide printed material to councillors who so require.

Members decided, on the proposal of Councillor Hoy, seconded by Councillor Oliver, that the membership of the council's committees for the municipal year 2023/24 be as set out in appendix 1 to these minutes.

The Clerk drew members' attention to the fact that there remains one vacancy on the Planning and Community Infrastructure Committee, which is available for filling by an independent member of the council.

#### **14/23 Dates of meetings for 2023/24**

Members considered the setting of dates for meetings of the town council and its committees for the municipal year 2023/24. The Clerk had circulated to members, in advance of the meeting, a schedule of proposed dates.

Members decided, unanimously, on the proposal of Councillor Wallwork, seconded by Councillor Oliver, that the dates of the meetings of the town council and its committees for the municipal year 2023/24 be as proposed on the list which had been produced by the Clerk.

#### **15/23 Appointments to outside bodies**

Members considered the appointment of representatives of Wisbech Town Council to outside bodies for the term of council.

Members decided, unanimously, on the proposal of Councillor Tierney, seconded by Councillor Hoy, that the appointments to outside bodies be as set out in appendix 2 to these minutes.

#### **16/23 General Power of Competence**

Members considered adoption of the General Power of Competence.

The Clerk had circulated to members, in advance of the meeting, a briefing paper on the General Power of Competence; this included details of:

- a) the legislative background to the power - Sections 1 to 8 of the Localism Act 2011
- b) what the power allows councils to do - "anything that individuals generally may do"
- c) the risks and restrictions limiting use of the General Power of Competence – restrictions would include the duty to:
  - act with regard to crime and disorder
  - consider conserving biodiversity
  - provide allotments if there is a demand for such
  - act within relevant law and regulations, relating to issues such as: Health and Safety, company law (if it wishes to trade), employment legislation and the law relating to local council governance.
- d) how the General Power of Competence (GPC) relates to Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 – a council which adopts the GPC no longer needs to use Section 137 as a power for taking action for the benefit of its community
- e) the eligibility criteria for a council to adopt the General Power of Competence.

With regard to e) above, a council must resolve to use the power, record the decision in its minutes, and renew that resolution at the annual meeting following each ordinary election (every four years).





At the time of the resolution, the council must have both a qualified clerk (possessing, for example, the Certificate in Local Council Administration) and at least two-thirds of the members of the council must have been elected (and not co-opted) to the council.

The Clerk informed members that Wisbech Town Council had adopted the General Power of Competence (GPC), for the first time, at the Annual Meeting in May 2015 (minute 14/15 refers) (following the “all-out” elections held earlier that month) and that the council had adopted the power again in May 2019 (minute 16/19 refers) (following the “all-out” elections held earlier that month).

Members were informed by the Clerk that Wisbech Town Council continued to meet following the elections on 4 May 2023, the eligibility criteria (i.e., all eighteen members had been elected to the council and its Clerk possesses the Certificate in Local Council Administration) for GPC.

Members decided, unanimously, on a proposal by Councillor Tierney, seconded by Councillor Oliver, that the General Power of Competence be adopted (again) by Wisbech Town Council.

### **17/23 Leader of the Council’s report**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Hoy, informed members that she had met earlier today with the Town Clerk to “catch-up” regarding matters currently affecting the council (such as issues relating to use of the Market Place and budgetary pressures) and to begin looking at potential priorities for the forthcoming municipal year. These meetings would be a regular occurrence.

Councillor Hoy informed members that officers at Fenland District Council have concerns about youngsters playing football at the splash pad in Wisbech Park and that, consequently, certain councillors would be engaging with those young people on 4 June 2023 to ascertain their wishes in terms of activities and facilities.

Members were informed by the Leader of the Council of her opinion that it is good that the recent Town Council elections had resulted in a council with a diverse membership. She expressed her hope that all councillors would be able to work together, to deliver positive benefits to the local community.

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

### **18/23 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 may be getting more difficult for many people. To this end, the Town Clerk attends various meetings, including those of the Wisbech and Villages Charities Network and the Cambridgeshire Financial Capability Forum.

Other “sign posting” and information-sharing (including publicity for cost-of-living events) takes place within the membership of the Love Wisbech partnership, as well as the groups mentioned above.



Councillor Read expressed the opinion that it would be beneficial to the public if the “What’s on” section of Wisbech Town Council’s website were to include a greater number of events. At the invitation of the Chairman/Mayor, the Clerk responded to Councillor Read’s comment. The Clerk explained that events are added to the “What’s on” section of the website if the council receives direct notification of a community event; council officers do not have the capacity to “trawl” for events. He commented that he would be happy to receive from members any ideas at any time in relation to possible enhancement of the website’s content.

### **Market Place enhancements**

All the works to deliver the Market Place enhancement scheme are, following installation of one bollard and making-good the surfacing around the two new bollards) on 8 February 2023, are complete.

At minute T23/22 the Wisbech Town Centre Committee considered the two quotations received from the three contractors invited to tender for repair/replacement of the electricity installation/supply at the Market Place and accepted the lower of the two received. Work to install new electrical sockets, pumps and meters is underway and will be followed shortly by replacement of the main circuit board.

Quotations are being sought for undertaking a “deep clean” of the surface of the Market Place after the electrical works have been completed.

### **Wisbech Market**

Following various changes during the last couple of years 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 had not returned “pre-lockdown” levels.

The level of trading had remained constant over recent months.

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.

At minute T24/22 the Town Clerk had informed the Wisbech Town Centre Committee that he had produced a draft revised Market Trader Information Pack, which had been circulated to the working party that had been set-up to review/revise the contents of that document.

At its meeting on 6 March 2023 the committee decided (at minute T24/22) that the Town Clerk be delegated the authority to produce a revised Market Trader Information Pack that accords with the outcome of the working party’s review. The working party met on 20 March 2023, as a result of which the Town Clerk produced a revised Market Trader Information Pack. The revised document had been sent to all traders with the invitation to renew licences.

### **Allotments**

The council continues to receive enquiries in relation to plots at the council’s allotment sites. All the “habitable” plots at the council’s allotment sites (at Cox’s Lane, Dowgate Road, Waterlees Road, Lynn Road, Southwell Road, Halfpenny Lane and Mile Tree Lane) are now full, with one recent vacancy being filled from the waiting list. The waiting lists for each site contain up to 7 people. It is hoped that in the warmer months, marking out of new plots at Halfpenny Lane and bringing some of the Mile Tree Lane plots back into use will take place.



Maintenance work to the access road to the Halfpenny Lane site has now been undertaken. Fly tipping waste and the empty rough sleepers' tents and associated detritus have been removed from that site.

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.

### **Community events and festivals**

On 7 May 2023 an extremely successful event to celebrate the Coronation of the new King, "King Charles III Coronation street party" (an event similar to the one which had been delivered in relation to Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee) took place between 11.00 am and 3.00 pm). With good weather, the public came-out to enjoy the event; it is estimated that 2,000 people attended. Thanks should go out to the organisers and helpers in delivering an event which had been appreciated by the people of Wisbech, and beyond.

Planning for this year's WisBEACH Rock Festival, which will take place on Sunday 6 August, has begun; many of the performers and activities have been booked. Booking forms have been sent to stallholders who have attended this event in previous years. Bookings are being received. The production of publicity material will be undertaken very soon.

This year's Christmas Lights switch-on event – which is likely to follow the usual format of a programme of entertainment etc in the Market Place, concluding with the town's Christmas lights being switched-on – is scheduled for 26 November.

The planning for this year's Wisbech Christmas Fayre (which will take place on Sunday 10 December 2022) has commenced. The arrangements are, 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 will, once again, be running the Wisbech Unsung Heroes Awards, with support from the Fenland Citizen, and the aim is to recognise those townspeople who go the extra mile for their community.

Nominations will be sought towards the end of 2023. Those who are shortlisted will be invited to a presentation evening on 27 January 2024 at the Queen Mary Centre.

### **Town Hall/office**

Maintenance work to the Town Hall is undertaken as necessary. Arrangements have been made for a local roofing contractor to inspect the roof; to ascertain whether minor repair works may be required.

### **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 (under contract) by Herbie Hut Ltd, since 11 July 2022, continue to operate successfully.

At minute T22/22 the Wisbech Town Centre Committee received a summary provided by the council's contractor in respect of operational issues relating to the toilets. From that summary, the committee noted that the toilets are generally in good condition, minor repairs and maintenance



works are undertaken as necessary and 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**

Mr Ketteringham continues to perform the role of Volunteer Caretaker very effectively; with excellent communication and hard work.

The Open Day event at Wisbech Castle, which took place on 9 April - at which visitors had been able to access free guided tours of the house, gardens and vaults, with tea/coffee and cake available to purchase from the café – had been extremely successful.

It is hoped that it will be possible, subject to the availability of volunteers, to hold another Open Day during the summer of 2023.

A new central heating boiler has now been installed at Wisbech Castle and is operating effectively. During the installation work it was discovered that two of the radiators require replacement. A quotation for this work has been obtained and will be considered by the Wisbech Town Centre Committee later this evening. Other maintenance work, including works to toilets and other fittings, had been undertaken during recent weeks.

At minute T21/22 the Wisbech Town Centre Committee had agreed to enter into a tenancy arrangement for the Pump House to be used as a café. The agreement came into effect on 1 May 2023 and the tenant is in the process of undertaking improvements, including decoration, to the interior of the building.

### **Incinerator**

The Planning Inspectorate has commenced the formal process of examination of the planning application submitted by Medworth CHP Ltd for the construction of a Waste Combined Heat and Power Facility – which has been described also as a mega-incinerator – in Wisbech.

The Town Council has, since it first became aware of the proposal, been committed to OPPOSING the proposed incinerator at every opportunity.

To support the council with opposing this proposal, it had engaged an experienced and professional consultant, who had not only helped to prepare the council's submission to the Planning Inspectorate but would be representing, as appropriate, the Town Council as the application proceeds through the various stages of the Planning Inspectorate's examination process.

The examination process commenced on 21 February 2023, with a Preliminary Meeting of interested parties. The Preliminary Meeting on 21 February was followed by an Issue Specific Hearing the following day.

Further Issue Specific Hearings have been held on 12 and 13 April and 10, 11, 16, 17 and 18 May 2023.

The Examining Authority must complete the Examination of this application by 21 August 2023.

The council had made financial provision of £30,000 to meet the costs of acquiring technical expertise to "fight" the proposal to build an incinerator in Wisbech. Around 50% of that money has been spent on the production of the council's initial submission (of objection) to the Planning Inspectorate and the consultant's input into Issue Specific Hearing 1 (held on 22 February 2023) and Issue Specific Hearing 3 (held on 16 May 2023). It is anticipated that the remaining balance will be



sufficient to meet the anticipated costs of specialist consultancy advice and support through to conclusion of the Planning Inspectorate’s examination of this planning application.

**Land at Somers Road, Wisbech**

The Town Clerk is in the process of securing renewal of the lease (with Cambridgeshire County Council) for the area of land, off Somers Road, adjacent to the Queen Mary Centre, which is used by Wisbech Town Council for the purpose of increasing the amount of car parking provision in the town.

In addition, the Town Clerk has engaged the services of Pathfinder Legal (a partnership of local government legal professionals) to pursue the eviction from this land of the rough sleepers. Pathfinder Legal are in the process of gathering the necessary evidence, which will include witness statements from not only certain statutory agencies but nearby residents.

Furthermore, the Environment and Public Spaces Committee agreed at minute E10/22 that this site could be used (subject to agreement with Cambridgeshire County Council, as landowner), by Fenland District Council’s contractor as the works compound in association with the re-development of 24 High Street, Wisbech.

**Correspondence**

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

**19/23 Date of next meeting**

Members noted that (in accordance with minute 14/23) the next meeting of Wisbech Town Council is scheduled for 19 June 2023, to commence at 7.30 pm, at the Town Hall in Wisbech.

**Meeting finished at 8.30 pm.**

Signed .....

Date .....



**MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES 2023/24**

**(Minute 13/23 refers)**

**RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Councillor Hoy  
Councillor Human  
Councillor Imafidon  
Councillor Meekins  
Councillor Oliver  
Councillor Tierney  
Councillor Wallwork

**PLANNING AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE**

Councillor Edwards  
Councillor Ketteringham  
Councillor Meekins  
Councillor Oliver  
Councillor Rafique  
Councillor Sagoo  
1 vacancy – for an Independent Councillor

**ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SPACES COMMITTEE**

Councillor Foice-Beard  
Councillor Hoy  
Councillor Human  
Councillor Imafidon  
Councillor Meekins  
Councillor Oliver  
Councillor Sagoo

**WISBECH TOWN CENTRE COMMITTEE**

Councillor Foice-Beard  
Councillor Hoy  
Councillor Oliver  
Councillor Rafique  
Councillor Sagoo  
Councillor Tierney  
Councillor Wallwork

**STAFFING AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

Councillor Edwards  
Councillor Human  
Councillor Imafidon  
Councillor Ketteringham  
Councillor Pehlivanova



Councillor Rafique  
Councillor Tierney

**COMMUNITY EVENTS AND FESTIVALS COMMITTEE**

Councillor Foice-Beard  
Councillor Hoy  
Councillor Human  
Councillor Ketteringham  
Councillor Rafique  
Councillor Sagoo  
Councillor Wallwork



**APPENDIX 2**

**APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

**(Minute 15/23 refers)**

| <b>Organisation</b>   | <b>Representative until May 2027</b>              |
|---|---|
| Fenland CCTV Partner Liaison Group                                    | Councillors Edwards and Oliver and the Town Clerk |
| Wisbech and Fenland Museum Trustee Company Ltd                        | Councillor Foice-Beard                            |
| Wisbech Chamber of Commerce   | Mayor (ex-officio)                                |
| Wisbech Charities   | Mayor (ex-officio)                                |
| Wisbech Children's Charities  | Mayor (ex-officio)                                |
| Wisbech Christmas Fayre Steering Group                                | Councillor Oliver and the Town Clerk              |
| Wisbech in Bloom  | Councillor Tanfield                               |
| Wisbech Old People's Welfare Association                              | Mayor (as President)                              |
| Wisbech Tourism Development Group                                     | Mayor (ex-officio)                                |
| Wisbech Access Strategy Steering Group                                | Councillors Foice-Beard and Oliver                |
| Armed Forces Covenant: Armed Forces Champion for Wisbech Town Council | Councillor Meekins                                |