



**WISBECH TOWN COUNCIL**  
**ASSETS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

**5 NOVEMBER 2018 – 7.30 pm**

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

**Present:** Councillor Balsevics, Chairman; Councillors Hill, Miss Hoy, Miss Oliver, Tibbs, Tierney and Wing.

**Apologies:** Councillor Human and Prest.

**In attendance:** Mrs S Farmer (Operations Manager and Deputy Clerk).

**Public participation:** None requested.

The minutes of the meeting of the Assets Management Committee held on 24 September 2018 were confirmed and signed.

**A11/18 Wisbech Town Hall**

Further to minute A6/18, the Clerk informed members that final works required to the Town Hall's central heating system, i.e. the installation of additional pumps and timers, had been undertaken on 18 and 19 September 2018. This means that the heating system at the Town Hall should now be able to operate with maximum effectiveness and efficiency (bearing in mind its age and the nature of the building).

The Clerk reminded members that they had been informed at minute A24/17 that the council's current telephone system consists of a single telephone line into the Town Hall, which is shared by three members of staff. Members had acknowledged the difficulty that this can cause as only one call can be made or received at any one time. Members, consequently, decided at minute A24/17 that the Clerk would undertake investigations into options (including cost) of increasing the capacity of the council's telephone system.

At minute A6/18 the Clerk had informed members that, in accordance with minute A24/17, the council's Operations Manager and he had met with representatives of three companies which provide telephony services; each company had subsequently provided a quotation. The Clerk had reported briefly at minute A6/18 on the quotations which had been received, making the point that the quotations are difficult to compare as each company had proposed a different product/solution (and cost).

At minute A6/18 members had agreed with the Clerk's suggestion that no decision be reached until the council's Operations Manager and he had been able to undertake further investigations/evaluation. At that minute Councillor Tierney commented that he possesses some knowledge of telephony systems and would be happy to assist officers in this matter. Also, Councillor Miss Hoy mentioned that, for the purpose of obtaining additional quotations, she would forward to the Clerk the contact details of the company which had installed a telephone system at her place of employment. This information had been provided to the Clerk by Councillor Miss Hoy; the council's Operations Manager has made contact with that company and is awaiting a response to her enquiry.



The Clerk informed members that, given recent levels of workload and other priorities since minute A6/18, this matter had not been pursued further; however, the additional investigations needed would be undertaken and conclusions reached by the time of the next meeting of this committee.

Members were reminded by the Clerk that this committee had considered, at minute A12/17, (further to minute 68/17 of the full council) what action to take in relation to issues which had been experienced in the flying of flags from the flagpoles at Wisbech Town Hall. At minute 68/17 it had been decided that

- (1) robust versions of the Union Flag and the St George's Flag be purchased;
- (2) all flags would be flown, at the appropriate times, from the primary flag pole at Wisbech Town Hall;
- (3) arrangements be made for the secondary flag pole, which is deemed not to be fit for purpose, to be removed from the Town Hall.

The Clerk reported that, since that time, the flags (at (1) above) had been purchased and flown at the appropriate times; the rope attached to the primary flag pole has perished; the secondary flag pole has, therefore, been used for flag flying because of the situation regarding the primary flag pole.

The Clerk made reference to recent criticism via a letter published in a local newspaper (once again), regarding the flying of flags at Wisbech Town Hall. Consequently, he invited members to give this matter further thought; for example, should the council now be looking to replace the existing flag poles with one or more which are fit for purpose?

Members decided that the situation regarding the repair and maintenance issues in respect of Wisbech Town Hall be noted and that the Clerk would obtain quotations for new flag poles (for a type which could be affixed to the Town Hall and for a type which could be installed at ground level) and ascertain the need for any permissions or consents from the Local Planning Authority and the Local Highway Authority in relation to affixing or installing flag poles on or in the vicinity of the Town Hall.

### **A12/18 Public toilets**

The Clerk mentioned that he had reminded members at minute A7/18 of the decisions which had been made at minutes A14/17, A20/17 and A4/18 in relation to the operation and maintenance of the public toilets owned and maintained by Wisbech Town Council. In addition, he had updated members at minute A7/18 on the current situation at that time, namely that

- it had been necessary for the council to utilise part of the Exchange Square toilets building for the storage of certain items of equipment (including road signs, traffic cones and crowd barriers); the building (in private ownership) which had been used by the council as a storage facility for this equipment is no longer available for that purpose
- with regard to the future use of the public toilets at Exchange Square, the possible availability soon of toilets at Wisbech Castle.

Members were reminded by the Clerk that repair works are required to the exterior door and one window to the Exchange Square toilets building (which is situated within a Conservation Area) and informed them that it is still proving very difficult to find tradespersons who are willing to provide a quotation for such works; it may be easier if that work were part of a larger "package" of repair/improvement works.



At minute A7/18 members had decided that, given the number of uncertainties at that time (e.g. possible re-opening of the toilets at the Horsefair Shopping Centre and availability of toilets at Wisbech Castle), the toilets at Exchange Square would remain closed for the time being; the indication from members being that this would be the situation for at least the remainder of the current financial year. In addition, members are yet to make decisions in relation to any future plans for the refurbishment of the two sets of public toilets owned by Wisbech Town Council.

The Clerk proposed to members that, unless there is an indication from this committee to the contrary, he would include in the council's draft budget for 2019/20 – to be considered by the council's Policy and Resources Committee on 26 November 2018 – the same level of financial provision (but increased in line with the new Cleansing Contract) for cleansing of the toilets and continuation of the budget allocation (of £10,000) for improvements.

Members decided that the current situation be noted and that the proposal of the Clerk in terms of financial provision in the draft budget for the financial year 2019/20 in relation to the public toilets owned and maintained by this council be approved.

### **A13/18 Allotments**

At minute A8/18 members had been reminded by the Clerk of the committee's commitment to undertake two sets of works; one being to install fencing and a gate at the Dowgate Road allotments site (minute A15/17 refers) and the other being to repair the access road at that site (minute A5/18 refers). As had been anticipated at minute A8/18, both sets of works have now been undertaken. The council's Operations Manager displayed photographs and showed video film footage of both sets of completed works.

The Clerk reminded members of a decision reached by this committee at minute A10/16 that boundary fencing (of approximately 70 metres in length) be erected, following dyke clearance works, at the Dowgate Road allotments site – to improve security of the site – during the financial year 2017/18. However, because of other spending requirements during the financial year 2017/18, the work was delayed until the financial year 2018/19. The Clerk informed members that, given the decisions made by this committee at minute A15/17 - to install a gate and fencing at the Dowgate Road allotments site - and minute A5/18 - to repair works to the access road at the Dowgate Road allotments site – as well as meeting the cost of other general maintenance works etc, there would be insufficient funding remaining within the financial year 2018/19 to meet the cost of installing the proposed boundary fencing.

In addition, some of the tenants of the Waterlees allotments site have suggested recently that improvements to existing boundary fencing at that site are required.

The Clerk suggested that given the situation described above, the council's new Assets Supervisor be asked to make an assessment "with a fresh pair of eyes" as to what maintenance, improvement and development works are essential or desirable at the council's allotments sites; this would be with a view to establishing an effective regime of routine maintenance and specific projects for improvement and development works which are achievable within the current (and anticipated) level of budgetary provision.

Members decided that the situation in general be noted and that the Clerk's suggestion, outlined above, in terms of assessing the need for future maintenance, improvement and development works to the council's allotments sites be approved.



### **A14/18 Land at Somers Road, Wisbech**

The Clerk informed members that the area of land which is leased by Wisbech Town Council from Cambridgeshire County Council (for the period 18 January 2018 to 30 December 2022) for use as a public car park continues to be used successfully. He added that, following the repair works undertaken by Wisbech Town Council during March of this year (and the subsequent defect which was repaired under “warranty” by the contractor (drawn to members’ attention at minute A28/17)), there are no longer any issues with relation to the surfacing of the car park. It will, however, be necessary for some work to be undertaken to remove weed growth from the boundaries of the site; every effort will be made by officers to keep the associated costs to a minimum.

Members were informed by the Clerk that the “Private Car Park” signage which had been in place at the time of Wisbech Town Council taking-on the lease of the land was removed very shortly afterwards. To make it clear that this area of car parking is not part of the (adjoining) area operated by Fenland District Council etc, a sign has been ordered by officers of Wisbech Town Council (WTC), for installation at the entrance to the area of land now leased by WTC, which will bear the following wording:

*“This car park is operated by Wisbech Town Council (HEADING FOR SIGN)*

*Vehicles are left at the owner’s or driver’s risk and Wisbech Town Council shall not be held liable for any loss or damage to any vehicle, other property, contents or accessories left within this car park.*

*For all general enquiries, reporting of defects or emergency issues relating to this car park, please telephone 01945 461333 or e-mail: [info@wisbechtowncouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@wisbechtowncouncil.org.uk)”*

Members decided that the situation be noted.

### **A15/18 Cleansing Contract**

The Clerk reminded members that this committee had considered at minute A10/18 extension of the Cleansing Contract, which had an initial term of one year (1 October 2017 to 30 September 2018), with Total Solutions of Wisbech for the cleansing of Wisbech Market Place, the Town Hall and the public toilets owned and managed by this council.

At minute A10/18 this committee had stated its agreement in principle, from an operational perspective, to the council’s Cleansing Contract being extended for a further period of three years (until 30 September 2021) but that, because of the financial implications of such an arrangement (a proposed price increase of 3.2% for each year of the contract), the committee felt that the final decision on the matter should be made by the Policy and Resources Committee.

The recommendation of this committee (minute A10/18 refers) was considered by the Policy and Resources Committee at minute R6/18. The details of the information presented by the Clerk to the Policy and Resources Committee and members’ deliberations are set out at that minute. That committee decided, unanimously, that

- (1) the current Cleansing Contract be extended for a further period of three years (to 30 September 2021), on the same terms and conditions as the current contract, with a price increase of 3.2% for the contract period 1 October 2018 to 30 September 2019;
- (2) the level of price increase for the contract years 2019/20 and 2020/21 be considered by the Policy and Resources Committee at this point of the year in 2019 (for the contract year 2019/20) and 2020 (for the contract year 2020/21).



The Clerk informed members that the necessary documentation between Wisbech Town Council and Total Solutions in relation to a Cleansing Contract effective for three years from 1 October 2018 is in place.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

**Meeting finished at 7.55 pm**

Signed.....

Dated.....