



WISBECH TOWN COUNCIL

22 August 2016 – 7.30 pm

MINUTES OF MEETING

Present: Councillor Tibbs, Chairman (and Town Mayor); Councillors Balsevics, Brunton, Bucknor, Mrs Bucknor, Mrs Cox, Hodgson, Miss Hoy, Human, Lay, Mrs MacRae, Oliver and Miss Oliver and Schooling.

Apologies: Councillors Hill, Mrs Lay and Tierney.

Public participation: None requested.

47/16 Cambridgeshire Constabulary

PCSO Dave Russ attended the meeting to provide members with information on recent incidents of crime and disorder in Wisbech.

PCSO Russ informed the council that the Constabulary's patrols to combat illegal/inconsiderate parking continue and that approximately 200 penalty notices are issued each month in response to such parking in the central area of Wisbech. He mentioned that the priority of the local policing team remains street drinking but the number of incidents this year is lower than the number last year.

The PCSO reported that the last one in the current series of town community forums had taken place earlier today and following analysis of the information collected from these events, the 'Key Community Concern' for the next six months would be determined; the Town Council would be notified, via the Clerk, of the 'Key Community Concern' during the week following the last event.

PCSO Russ made reference to a murder which had been committed in Churchill Road in recent months and informed the council that the person who had committed the offence had now been sentenced to life in prison. He mentioned that the Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner, who visits Wisbech on a regular basis, had given a commitment to protecting front-line policing. Changes to officers' shift patterns, with the aim of delivering improved coverage, would be implemented prior to Christmas 2016.

Councillor Mrs Cox expressed the opinion that the length of time that a caller is required to wait for a response when calling the 101 Telephone number is unacceptable; the speed of response should be much quicker. She enquired of PCSO Russ as to whether there are any plans to improve the performance of this service. In response, PCSO Russ stated that he would raise this matter with the Police and Crime Commissioner when he visits Wisbech later this week.

The Clerk reminded members that the Police and Crime Commissioner is scheduled to attend 24 October 2016 meeting of Wisbech Town Council.

In response to a question from Councillor Lay, PCSO Russ informed the council of what would be the minimum levels of police officer staffing in Wisbech, both in terms of PCSOs and Reactive officers.

Members decided that the information reported by PCSO Russ be noted.



48/16 Fenland District Council

(1) Information

The Clerk reported that he had been sent, by e-mail, information in respect of CCTV performance, Section 106 Planning Obligations details and the council's Environment newsletter and that he had forwarded, last week, the e-mail and attachments to all members of the council.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

(2) Council Tax Support Grant

The Clerk read to members a letter that he had received from the Chief Accountant at Fenland District Council (FDC), stating that, as part of its Comprehensive Review, FDC had considered the future distribution and allocation of Council Tax Support Grant.

As a result of FDC's considerations, it had been decided (at a meeting of the council's Cabinet on 21 July 2016) that continuation of the Council Tax Support Grant (CTSG) payments to Town and Parish Councils would be phased out over the next three financial year and that, consequently, CTSG payments would be made to Wisbech Town Council as follows:

- 2017/18: £24,566.00
- 2018/19: £12,283.00
- 2019/20 and beyond: £0.00.

The Clerk reminded members that the Council Tax Support Grant payment made to Wisbech Town Council for the current financial year had been £39,309.00.

In his letter to Wisbech Town Council, the Chief Accountant at Fenland District Council makes the point that the Cabinet at FDC is aware that Town and Parish Councils are not subject to the referendum rules by which District Councils' ability to raise income, through increases in Council Tax, are constrained; Town and Parish Councils would, if they so wish, be able to increase their Parish Precept to compensate for the reductions and loss of CTSG.

Members decided that the situation in relation to the future of payments by Fenland District Council of Council Tax Support Grant be noted and taken into account when setting Wisbech Town Council's budget and Precept for future financial years.

49/16 Cambridgeshire County Council

(1) Community Highways Volunteering Scheme

The Clerk informed members that officers of the Highways Service at Cambridgeshire County Council has recently completed some work with County Councillors, who have been very keen to explore ways to enable community volunteers to carry out work on the public highway.

As a result, a Community Highways Volunteering Information Pack has been produced, enabling volunteering to go ahead in a controlled and safe manner for all within communities. It is envisaged that Community Highways Volunteering would initially be limited to items mentioned in the information pack; however as experience and confidence increases, the work may well increase in variety.

Under this scheme, each parish is responsible for deciding what work it would like to be undertaken in its community. However, all work as part of this scheme must be carried out within the limits of the village or town. At no time should volunteers work near high speed roads;



they should only work within 20, 30 and 40mph limits. An initial consultation with the Local Highway Officer would be required with each parish representative prior to any work commencing to ensure that all health and safety information is understood.

This scheme applies only to footways, footpaths and bridleways. Volunteers on this scheme would not be insured or trained to work on the roads and should never place themselves in conflict with live traffic.

The four areas where the County Council would like help from volunteers are:

- Siding out (where grass is overgrowing the highway)
- Vegetation cutting back
- Sign cleaning
- Litter picking.

The Clerk undertook to forward to members the Community Highways Volunteering Information Pack.

Members decided that this new initiative be noted and would make the necessary contact with the Local Highway Officer for Wisbech (via local.highways@cambridgeshire.gov.uk) if they wish to become a Community Highways Volunteer.

(2) Meadowgate Lane, Wisbech

The Clerk informed members that Cambridgeshire County Council is about to begin work on the construction of a footway along a section of Meadowgate Lane, Wisbech where no footway currently exists (at an estimated cost of £50,000). The majority of the new footway would be 1.8 metres in width although there would be a few points at which it is narrower due to the amount of highway width available. Commencement of the construction work is scheduled for 22 August 2016 and is likely to take around four weeks to complete.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

(3) Local Highway Improvements 2016/17

Further to minute 23/16, the Clerk informed members that officers of the Local Highway Authority had developed a scheme for West Parade and are in the process of undertaking informal consultations, prior to the formal public consultation exercise.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

(4) Local Highway Improvements 2017/18

The Clerk reported that the County Council is inviting proposals from local communities which wish to submit a bid for funding from that council's 2017/18 Local Highway Improvement (LHI) scheme. Any community group, which includes local councils, is eligible to submit a bid.

Under the LHI scheme, applicants are able seek up to £10,000 from the County Council as a contribution to their scheme. The applicant is expected to provide a contribution towards each project of at least 10% of the scheme cost. Bids are restricted to one per applicant.

Projects could involve any highway measure or improvement that is considered to offer benefit to the local community; applicants are required to state within their applications how they feel that the proposal would provide that community benefit.



The Clerk informed members of the application process relating to this scheme and of the method of application evaluation/prioritisation that the County Council will operate.

Long-term maintenance of schemes would normally be the responsibility of the County Council, provided that the scheme is constructed to normal County Council standards.

The deadline for submission of applications is 30 November 2016.

The Clerk undertook to forward to members, in advance of the next meeting of Wisbech Town Council, the LHI Application Guidance Notes for 2017/18.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted and that they would consider at the next meeting of Wisbech Town Council the submission of an application for a LHI scheme for 2017/18.

50/16 Minutes of 25 July 2016

Members decided, on a proposal by Councillor Oliver, seconded by Councillor Human, that the minutes of the meeting of Wisbech Town Council held on 25 July 2016 be confirmed and signed.

51/16 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 of 25 July 2016
- (2) Planning and Community Infrastructure Committee of 8 August 2016.

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

52/16 Mayor's Report

The Mayor informed members of the civic events that he had attended and activities in which he had participated since the last meeting of Wisbech Town Council.

The Mayor informed members that he had attended a number of events since the last meeting of the council, including:

- Bat Night, held at Walsoken Church
- Wisbech Rock Festival; this had been an extremely successful event; providing an acoustic stage this year had proved to be a great addition to the festival; the Mayor paid tribute to the volunteers who had been involved in supporting and managing the event during the day, some of whom had been on-site between 6.30 am and 11.00 pm
- The Play Day held at The Spinney; this had been run very well
- Opening of the Annual Fun Day at Anglia Components; he commented that it had been a great privilege to open, as Mayor of Wisbech, an event run by his employer
- Prince's Trust event held at Wisbech Fire Station
- Arles Festival; this had been run well and attracted a good level of public attendance.

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



53/16 Leader of the Council's report

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Oliver, informed members that he had two matters which he wished to draw to the attention of the council, as follows:

(1) Wisbech Rock Festival

The Leader of the Council expressed his appreciation to all of those - members and officers of the council and volunteers – who had played a part in the organisation and delivery of this year's Wisbech Rock Festival (minute 45/16 refers). He expressed the opinion that this year's event had been extremely successful and had accorded with the council's ambition to make it bigger and better each year; the provision of an acoustic stage this year, for the first time, had been a great addition to the event.

Councillor Lay suggested that, to widen the appeal of this festival, it should be a general music festival as opposed to a Rock Festival. Councillor Bucknor stated that he shares the view of Councillor Lay and suggested that the council's Community Events and Festivals Committee may wish to give thought to re-naming the event in future years. Councillor Mrs Bucknor questioned whether such a large percentage of the council's Community Events and Festivals Budget should be spent on a festival with such a narrow focus.

Members decided that the comments of the Leader and those of other members be noted.

(2) Minor Injuries and Outpatient Services

The Leader of the Council reminded members of the public consultation event being held by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group (CPCCG) at the Rosmini Centre on 25 August 2016 (between 6.30 pm and 8.00 pm) in relation to the CPCCG's review of Minor Injuries and Outpatient Services and he encouraged members to attend this meeting and to express their views.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor informed members of her opinion regarding the importance of retaining minor injuries and outpatient services in Wisbech. She read to members a letter which she had drafted, opposing any proposal to withdraw such services from Wisbech; she asked council to write to the CPCCG expressing its concern regarding such a possibility and offered her draft letter as one from Wisbech Town Council.

In her letter, Mrs Bucknor makes the point that Wisbech is a fast-growing town which currently has 44,000 patients registered at its three clinics and mentions the Wisbech Garden Town proposal, which could provide an additional 12,000 homes in Wisbech. She mentions also that areas of Wisbech are the most deprived in Cambridgeshire and in the top 6% for child deprivation in the UK. In addition, she refers to the difficulty and cost in being able to access health services in places other than Wisbech.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor also makes the comment in her letter that for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group to consider closure of the town's only local minor Injuries unit, in an area already acknowledged as seriously deprived, is "thinking the unthinkable".

In response to a question from Councillor Mrs Cox, Councillor Mrs Bucknor commented that the local Member of Parliament had stated that he is strongly opposed to any plans by the CPCCG to withdraw minor injuries and outpatient services in Wisbech.

Members decided, unanimously, that a letter, based upon the draft version produced by Councillor Mrs Bucknor, be sent to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical



Commissioning Group (CPCCG), informing the CPCCG that Wisbech Town Council opposes any proposal to consider closure of the Wisbech Minor Injuries Unit at North Cambs Hospital, Wisbech, as it believes strongly that such a course of action would have a serious detrimental effect upon the town's residents.

54/15 Reports from representatives on outside bodies

Further to minute 43/15, Councillor Hodgson informed members that he had been pleased by the level of attendance at the Arles Festival, which had been held at Wisbech Market Place yesterday. He expressed his thanks to the Mayor of Wisbech for being present for the duration of the event. Councillor Hodgson is, however, disappointed at how few members of Wisbech Town Council attended the event.

Members decided that comments of Councillor Hodgson be noted.

55/16 Wisbech Community-Led Local Development

Further to minute 19/16, members considered contributing towards the costs of undertaking the management and administration required for the five years of the Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) programme.

The Clerk had circulated to members, in advance of the meeting, a letter from Cambridgeshire ACRE which provided a reminder of the purpose of the CLLD programme (summarised at minute 19/16), the level of funding available for the delivery of projects in Wisbech, the progress to date in submitting the necessary applications/bids and the funding required by Cambridgeshire ACRE as the Accountable Body for the programme's implementation if the Stage 2 bid is successful.

Cambridgeshire ACRE has costed the management and administration required for the five years of the programme, which totals £178,197.00 (i.e. £35,639.40 for each of the five years). All of this funding must be provided by the councils which are delivering services in Fenland. This means that the total cost of £178,197.00 must be shared by Cambridgeshire County Council (£107,000.00), Fenland District Council (£53,500.00) and Wisbech Town Council (£17,697.00). On that basis, funding of £3,539.40 would be required of Wisbech Town Council for each of the five years of the programme.

In response to a question as to how Wisbech Town Council would be able to find £3,539.40 each year for five years, the Clerk reminded members that Wisbech Town Council had included in its budget for 2016/17 the sum of £17,453.00 to meet the cost of keeping the County Council street lights in Wisbech illuminated between 12 midnight and 6.00 am; however, as a result of the County Council's decision to reduce the "switch-off" to the period of 2.00 am to 6.00 am, the cost which would fall upon Wisbech Town Council would reduce to £11,222.30 (minute 162/15 (1) refers). Part of the "surplus" budget allocation could be used as Wisbech Town Council's contribution towards the costs of Cambridgeshire ACRE undertaking the management and administration required for the five years of the CLLD programme.

In response to a question as to the future of this programme given the outcome of the European Referendum, the Clerk explained his understanding that the UK Government had given a commitment that it would ensure continued funding to EU programmes in cases where they had commenced but not concluded at the time of the UK's cessation of membership of the European Union.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor expressed the opinion that if Wisbech Town Council were not to provide the necessary funding towards the management and administration costs required for the five years of the CLLD programme, there would be no chance of accessing funding from the EU for delivery of this programme in Wisbech.



Members decided, on a proposal by Councillor Mrs Bucknor, seconded by Councillor Bucknor, that Wisbech town Council provides funding, at the level set out in the letter from the Chief Executive of Cambridgeshire ACRE (i.e. £3,539.40 per annum), towards the costs of undertaking the management and administration required for the five years of the CLLD programme; such funding from this council would be subject to the provision of the necessary funding support from the other local authority partners to the project (those being Fenland District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council).

56/16 Correspondence

(1) The Queen's 90th Birthday

The Clerk read to members a letter, addressed to the Mayor, from the Chief Clerk to The Queen, expressing thanks from the Queen to Wisbech Town Council and residents of Wisbech for the thoughtful messages that had been sent (within a birthday card) on the occasion of Her Majesty's 90th Birthday.

Members decided that the content of the letter be noted.

(2) Wisbech and Fenland Museum

The Clerk reported a request from the Management Committee of the Wisbech and Fenland Museum for a letter of support for its application to the Heritage Lottery Fund's Resilient Heritage Programme.

Members indicated that they value the Wisbech and Fenland Museum and wish to work with the museum's management committee to enable the museum to continue to be able to play a key role in the cultural, social and economic development of Wisbech.

Members are aware that this museum is likely to be seeing, in future financial years, a reduction in the level of grant funding that it receives from Fenland District Council and are keen to see if Wisbech Town Council is able to assist the museum's management committee in addressing the consequent challenges faced by the museum.

Members decided, unanimously, on a proposal by Councillor Oliver, seconded by Councillor Mrs Cox, that Wisbech Town Council would send to the Heritage Lottery Fund a letter of support for the application submitted by the Wisbech and Fenland Museum to the Heritage Lottery Fund's Resilient Heritage Programme.

(3) North Level Internal Drainage Board

The Clerk read to members an invitation from the North Level Internal Drainage Board (IDB) to send two representatives of Wisbech Town Council to participate in the IDB's annual inspection tour scheduled for 5 October 2016.

In response to three members of the council expressing their interest in participating in the IDB's annual inspection tour, the Clerk made the point that the same level of interest had been expressed last year and the IDB had allowed Wisbech Town Council to send three representatives. He expressed the opinion that the IDB would be likely to make the same allowance this year.

Members decided that the invitation be noted and that the requests of Councillors Bucknor, Lay and Schooling to participate in this inspection tour be approved.



57/16 Noticeboard/Information update

The Clerk reported that there are currently no such items for reporting to the council.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

58/16 Date of next meeting

Members were reminded that the next meeting of Wisbech Town Council is scheduled for 26 September 2016, to commence at 7.30 pm, at the Town Hall in Wisbech.

Meeting finished at 8.15 pm.

Signed

Date