



## WISBECH TOWN COUNCIL

24 October 2016 – 7.30 pm

### MINUTES OF MEETING

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

**Apologies:** Councillors Brunton, Hill, Human and Mrs Lay.

**Public participation:** None requested.

#### **74/16 James Crowden, CVO and Ann Carlisle**

The Mayor referred to the recent deaths of James Crowden CVO (who had been Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire from 1992 until 2002 and granted the Freedom of the Town of Wisbech in 2001) and Ann Carlisle (who had been a member of Wisbech Town Council between May 1976 and May 1987 (being Town Mayor for the municipal year 1981/82) and between May 1997 and May 2007).

Members stood for a minute's silence in memory of Mr Crowden and Miss Carlisle.

#### **75/16 Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner**

Members received a presentation from Jason Ablewhite, the Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), who reflected upon his first five months in the role of PCC.

Mr Ablewhite expressed the opinion that Wisbech and the remainder of Fenland had not received sufficient attention/resource from the Constabulary in recent years and stated that it is his intention to address that situation; he commented that during his short time in post he had paid more visits to Fenland than to any other district in Cambridgeshire.

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) commented that this role had proved to be a real "eye opener"; his public-sector career until being elected to the role of PCC had been in local government. He commented that witnessing front-line policing is not always comfortable; the Constabulary deals with many disturbing issues.

The PCC informed the council that the Cambridgeshire Police service is a £130 million business; there are 2,500 employees. His time is divided between public engagement and strategic management of the Police Force.

Mr Ablewhite made the point that the Constabulary faces many challenges and the general public have no understanding of the wide-ranging demands upon Police officers, such as dealing with persons who are suffering from mental health crisis. He explained that there is no formal process for handing-over such persons to mental health services; consequently, around fifty hours per day across the Cambridgeshire Force are spent by officers "sitting" with sufferers. He mentioned that there is a continuing increase in the number of child sexual exploitation cases across the County, as well as issues of people-trafficking and prostitution. It is also a priority of the Constabulary to try to prevent re-offending.

The PCC expressed the opinion that it is important to "drive out" poverty as one means of seeking to reduce levels of crime. He commented that as well as the operational aspects of the Constabulary, he is responsible for strategic matters - there is now more visible policing, in response to public



concerns, and this having an impact upon car parking within Wisbech town centre; local officers are issuing around 200 penalty notices each month.

Mr Ablewhite made the point that Cambridgeshire Constabulary is facing difficult times; it needs to achieve financial savings of £7 million over the next four financial years. To this end, seven police forces are undertaking procurement on a collaborative basis. He mentioned that, despite the financial situation being faced by Cambridgeshire Constabulary, there are still 150 Police Officers and PCSOs in the Cambridgeshire Force; it is important for the PCC for the public to see a police presence.

The Police and Crime Commissioner responded to members' questions.

In response to a question from Councillor Mrs Bucknor with regard to the future of the current Police Station in Wisbech, the PCC stated that he is investigating opportunities for shared use of the site occupied by Wisbech Fire Station. He commented that there is the possibility that PCC powers could be extended to include responsibilities for Fire Services; on that basis, shared accommodation by Police and Fire Services would seem logical. He made the point that irrespective of its location in the town, Wisbech would retain a Police Station; the potential plans for such an arrangement are at an advanced stage.

Councillor Miss Hoy mentioned that there had been rumours at the County Council regarding the possibility that PCC powers could be extended to include responsibilities for Fire Services and stated that she would like the opportunity to discuss the situation with the PCC; he agreed to meet with Councillor Miss Hoy in that regard.

Councillor Lay commented that he regularly raises the problems of inconsiderate and illegal parking within Wisbech town centre and he is aware of the resource difficulties being experienced by the Constabulary which impacts upon its ability to address the situation. He commented that he had asked Fenland District Council (FDC) to consider implementing Civil Parking Enforcement across the district. He enquired as to whether the PCC and he could pursue this jointly with FDC.

In response to Councillor Lay's enquiry, Mr Ablewhite commented that the benefit of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) is that any parking fines collected under that arrangement would be retained by the enforcing authority, whereas any fines collected by the Constabulary are received by the Treasury. It is feasible that CPE could be self-funding.

Mr Ablewhite informed the council that he had accompanied Police Officers on patrol in Wisbech earlier today and had spoken with the operators of a number of local businesses; they had commented to him that they had noticed a reduction in the amount of inconsiderate and illegal parking within the town as a result of activity by the Police.

Councillor Tierney asked the PCC whether there is anything that could be done to encourage Fenland District Council (FDC) to take a more positive approach to the use of Public Space Protection Orders. In response, Mr Ablewhite stated that he would be happy to work collaboratively with FDC in this matter.

Councillor McLaren congratulated the PCC on the Constabulary's achievements with regard to inconsiderate and illegal parking in Wisbech town centre but commented that he would like to see action being taken on an occasional basis in other parts of the town, such as Lynn Road, Norwich Road and Walsoken. The PCC invited Councillor McLaren to e-mail to him the specific areas concerned.

Members decided that the information reported by the Police and Crime Commissioner and his responses to members' questions be noted.



## **76/16 Cambridgeshire Constabulary**

Although no officer of Cambridgeshire Constabulary attended the meeting, Sergeant Boughen had provided to the Clerk, via e-mail, a report on recent incidents of crime and disorder in Wisbech. The Clerk undertook to forward to members a copy of that e-mail/report.

In his report, Sergeant Boughen comments that, as councillors may have seen on social media activity, the local PCSOs continue to patrol and take enforcement action regarding the parking situation in town. This work and updates through social media would continue.

Sergeant Boughen makes the point that the Constabulary had been experiencing some difficulties with shoplifting, in particular one or two people repeat-offending; however, those repeat offenders had been arrested, charged and remanded for appearance at court the day following their arrest.

The Constabulary has also been focusing on cycle theft from within the town centre. Although there is still some work to do regarding crime prevention/reduction of offences, a suspect had been arrested and charged with five offences. The suspect is on bail to court but does have conditions attached to his bail.

Sergeant Boughen reminded the council, through his report, that one of the key community concerns raised at the most recent community forum (held in August) was speeding. The Sergeant comments that Speed Watch can have a very effective role to play in supporting activity to tackle the concerns. If members of the Council who are trained Speed Watch volunteers would like to play an active role, they are invited to contact Sergeants Alan Boughen and Robin Cawston or PCSOs Lisa Mann and Scott Clarke.

The report from Sergeant Boughen mentioned also that there would be additional patrols in Wisbech for Halloween.

Members decided that the information reported be noted.

## **77/16 Fenland District Council**

### **(1) Information**

The Clerk 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.

With regard to CCTV, one member mentioned that there are rumours circulating in the town regarding a serious offence against a person and enquired as to whether any such incident had been captured on CCTV. The member made the comment that it is her understanding that not all areas within Wisbech Park benefit from CCTV coverage because of the trees; she, therefore, enquired as to whether it would be possible to re-position cameras in such circumstances.

In response, Councillor Oliver commented that Fenland District Council is reviewing its CCTV systems (looking to move to operation by wireless technology); the re-positioning of cameras could be considered as part of that review. In addition, he undertook to discuss (tomorrow) with Fenland District Council's Community Safety Manager whether the alleged incident had been caught on CCTV and to respond thereafter to the member who had raised the issue.

Members decided that the situation be noted.



## **(2) Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places in Fenland**

Members considered responding to Fenland District Council's consultation exercise in relation to its review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations within the district; the review is necessary because of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's review of the electoral divisions for Cambridgeshire County Council.

Any changes to polling districts and polling places within Fenland would take effect from the County Council elections in May 2017 and the Town and Parish Council elections in May 2019.

The consultation period closes on 4 November 2016.

Members decided to note the consultation exercise and to make no comments to Fenland District Council in that regard

## **78/16 Cambridgeshire County Council**

### **(1) Enforcement Plan for Planning, Minerals and Waste Development**

The Clerk informed members of the consultation exercise being undertaken by the County Council in relation to an update of its Enforcement Plan for Planning, Minerals and Waste Development in Cambridgeshire.

The plan explains the County Council's approach to achieving planning compliance at mineral and waste management sites within Cambridgeshire, sets out what formal action can be taken and explains how decisions will be made.

The period of consultation operates between 24 October and 6 December 2016.

Members decided that the Clerk would forward to them the information which had been provided by the County Council and that if they feel that a response from this council is required, the matter be discussed at the next meeting of Wisbech Town Council.

### **(2) Wisbech Castle**

Further to minutes 61/16 and 71/16, Councillor Miss Hoy informed members that the County Council's Assets and Investment Committee had considered, at its meeting on 21 October 2016, the expressions of interest which had been submitted in relation to the acquisition of Wisbech Castle. As a result of such considerations, the committee had selected Wisbech Town Council as its preferred bidder and, consequently, had given the council a period of four months (from the date of the committee meeting) to produce, and submit to the County Council, a business for acquisition of Wisbech Castle. Councillor Miss Hoy mentioned also that she and the Clerk would be meeting tomorrow with representatives of the Heritage Lottery Fund to discuss the possibility of securing funding towards the costs of acquisition and renovation of Wisbech Castle.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

## **79/16 Minutes of 26 September 2016**

Members decided, on a proposal by Councillor Schooling, seconded by Councillor Oliver, that the minutes of the meeting of Wisbech Town Council held on 26 September 2016 be confirmed and signed.



### **80/16 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 – 26 September 2016
- (2) Planning and Community Infrastructure Committee – 10 October 2016.

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

### **81/16 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 it had been a busy month and he had attended a number of events since the last meeting of the council, including:

- an event held at St Augustine's Day Centre to celebrate the Queen's 90th Birthday; he commented that he had been required to participate in dancing at the event; the Deputy Mayor had also attended the event
- Wisbech in Bloom and Wisbech Town Council Allotments Awards Ceremony; it is pleasing to see what is being achieved in the town
- 272 Air Cadets Dining-in event
- Justice Service for the High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire
- opening of the Bridge Fair at Peterborough
- licensing of the Reverend Canon Matthew Bradbury as Priest in Charge of the Parish, held at St Peter and St Paul's Church, Wisbech
- Open Day at Orchard House.

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

### **82/16 Leader of the Council's report**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Oliver, informed members that the main issues which he had intended to draw to the council's attention had already been covered by way of other agenda items (such as the update given by Councillor Miss Hoy in relation to Wisbech Castle).

Councillor Oliver mentioned two forthcoming events - the Halloween Spooktakular on 29 October and the Christmas Lights switch-on on 29 November 2016 - and made a plea for as many members of the council as possible to volunteer to assist at these events; he made the point that the council's events are becoming bigger each year and, consequently, the need for stewards and "helpers" increases.

Councillor Oliver mentioned also that he would be attending a meeting later this week in relation to progress being achieved in delivery of the Wisbech 2020 Vision project.

Members decided that the comments of the Leader be noted.



### **83/15 Reports from representatives on outside bodies**

Councillor Mrs Cox informed members of the difficulties being faced by the Wisbech and Fenland Museum in terms of seeking to obtain funding to secure its continued operation beyond the current financial year.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that she too has concerns regarding the future of the museum and enquired of Councillor Mrs Cox as to the level of funding required by the museum, as she and Councillor Bucknor have some ideas with regard to fundraising.

Councillor Oliver reminded members of the meeting which had taken place recently between Town Councillors and representatives of the Wisbech and Fenland Museum, as a result of which the council's Policy and Resources Committee would be considering the award of additional financial support from Wisbech Town Council.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

### **84/16 Correspondence**

#### **Minor Injury and Outpatient Services**

Further to minute 53/16, the Clerk read to members the response that he had received from the Chief Officer of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group (CPCCG) regarding the concerns expressed by this council's regarding the future of the Major Injury and Outpatient Services at the North Cambs Hospital.

In her letter, the Chief Officer at the CPCCG states her understanding of the issues raised by the council in relation to population growth and proposed expansions in Wisbech, as well as the points made about deprivation and the provision of transport in the town. She gives an assurance that no decisions have been made about the future of Minor Injury Units or Outpatient Services in East Cambridgeshire and Fenland.

The Chief Officer at the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group comments that the CPCCG is reviewing a number of options for the way in which it might deliver services locally and that the review is still at an early stage. She states that if, following conclusion of the review any significant changes are considered necessary, a formal public consultation would take place.

Members decided that the content of the letter from the Chief Officer of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group be noted.

### **85/16 Noticeboard/Information update**

#### **Spooktacular event**

The Clerk reminded members of this year's Spooktacular event, which would take place at the Horsefair Shopping Centre and Wisbech Market Place between 1.00 pm and 5.00 pm on Saturday 29 October 2016.

The event, which has been organised by the Manager of the Horsefair Shopping Centre with support from the staff of Wisbech Town Council, would include:

- Trick or Treating (in which around 60 shops and businesses within Wisbech town centre would be participating)



- Halloween-themed fancy dress competition for adults and children (to be judged by the Mayor at 4.00 pm)
- a fairground ride
- Spider Mountain climbing activity
- balloon modelling
- performance by ghoulish dancers
- a DIY haunted house
- a number of other attractions.

Posters for the event had been circulated widely around Wisbech and publicity for the event had also been given via social media.

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

**86/16 Date of next meeting**

Members were reminded that the next meeting of Wisbech Town Council is scheduled for 21 November 2016, to commence at 7.30 pm, at the offices of Wisbech Town Council.

**Meeting finished at 8.30 pm.**

Signed .....

Date .....