



WISBECH TOWN COUNCIL

21 November 2016 – 7.30 pm

MINUTES OF MEETING

Present: Councillor Tibbs, Chairman (and Town Mayor); Councillors Balsevics, Bucknor, Mrs Bucknor, Mrs Cox, Hodgson (until 8.35 pm), Miss Hoy, Human, Lay, Mrs MacRae, Oliver, Miss Oliver and Tierney.

Apologies: Councillors Brunton, Hill and Schooling

Public participation: None requested.

87/16 Vacancy in the membership of Wisbech Town Council

The Clerk reported that there is currently a vacancy in the membership of Wisbech Town Council. This occurred on 24 October 2016 as a result of Mrs Brenda Lay ceasing to be a member of the council as a consequence of failing, throughout a period of six consecutive months, to attend any meeting of the authority (Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 refers).

As a result of Fenland District Council (FDC), as the Elections Authority, being informed by the Clerk of the vacancy in the Waterlees Village Ward of Wisbech Town Council, notice of that vacancy was given by FDC on 28 October 2016. The notice gave the opportunity for ten local government electors for the Waterlees Village Ward to give notice to the Returning Officer for the vacancy to be filled by election. On 2 November 2016 the Returning Officer received the required number of signatures from qualifying electors in the ward for the vacancy to be filled by election. At the close of nominations on 11 November 2016, two valid nominations had been received by FDC.

The Clerk informed members that the election to fill this vacancy would take place on Thursday 8 December 2016 and that the estimated cost to Wisbech Town Council of this election is £6,750.

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

88/16 On Track Education Services Ltd

Members received a presentation from Miss Eilis-Mae Durcan, a pupil at On Track Educational Services Ltd, on the work of this non-profit organisation which delivers alternative education provision for teenagers and young adults who, for various reasons and circumstances, are unable to attend a mainstream school.

Miss Durcan informed the council that the school opened in 2006 and has teachers who are not only qualified to teach traditional subjects, such as English, Mathematics and Science, but are also trained to deal with other educational needs such as Thrive, Autism training and Boxhall Nurture Setting; she explained these particular methods of addressing pupil behaviours.

On Track Education allows pupils to study for Functional Skills examinations, GCSEs and BTECs. Pupils are also able to gain Unit Awards, which are certification for specific areas studied in a subject. Pupils also attend off-site activities which encourage confidence, team working and social development skills.

Miss Durcan explained how she had benefitted from attending On Track Education instead of being in mainstream education. She explained the types of activities in which pupils can participate and the trips/visits which had taken place so far this year. She expressed the opinion that this particular



form of education had helped her develop as a responsible young person; this would not have been the case if she had attended a mainstream school.

On Track Education supports a number of charities, including Send My Friend to School and Children in Need. As one means of raising funds for both Send My Friend to School and Children in Need, pupils are planning to record a song on CD, which would be sold with the proceeds going to these charities. The song is a rap about children missing out on education for reasons are which are not their fault. The song lyrics, which will be sung to the tune of Stand By Me (written by Ben E King), will be written by one of the pupils; others will sing on the CD and be involved in producing the song and CD cover design. Miss Durcan expressed the hope that Wisbech Town Council would be able to provide grant funding for this project.

Miss Durcan responded to members' questions.

The Mayor congratulated Miss Durcan on here excellent presentation.

Councillor Tierney commented that it had been his pleasure to present awards at the school earlier this year; he added that great things are being achieved by On Track Education Services Ltd.

In response to a question from Councillor Miss Hoy as to the level of funding needed and the timescale for the CD project, Miss Durcan commented that the total cost of the project would be £350.00 and that pupils would like to deliver the project as soon as funding is in place. Councillor Miss Hoy suggested that this matter be considered at the next meeting of Wisbech Town Council.

The Mayor stated that he would be happy to provide the sum of £350.00 from the Mayor's Charity Fund to meet the cost of this project and that he would, in liaison with the Clerk, make the necessary arrangements for the funding to be made available.

Members decided that the information reported be noted and that the offer of the Mayor be welcomed.

89/16 Cambridgeshire Constabulary

Inspector Will Davis attended the meeting to provide members with information on recent incidents of crime and disorder in Wisbech.

Inspector Davis informed the council that he is in the process of attending meetings of the Town and Parish Councils in Fenland, to explain to those councils both the Constabulary's priorities generally and local issues specifically. He mentioned his belief that street drinking and other alcohol issues would be of particular interest to Wisbech Town Council.

Inspector Davis informed the council that the five themes of the Constabulary's Mission are to:

1. Safeguard the Vulnerable
2. Attack Criminality
3. Prevent Crime
4. Provide Value for Money
5. Reassure the Public.

The Constabulary's priorities for 2016/2017 are:

1. Child Abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation
2. Counter Terrorism
3. Domestic Abuse
4. Dwelling Burglary



5. Serious Sexual Offences
6. Emergency Response.

Inspector Davis explained the Constabulary structure with Fenland; divided into the three key areas of Response Policing, Neighbourhood Policing and Investigations.

In terms of workload for the Fenland Policing Division, Inspector Davis informed the council that the average number of

- incidents per month is 2,049
- incidents per day is 67
- crimes per year is 6,057
- crimes per month is 472
- crimes per day is 16.

The Inspector mentioned that 53.4% of all incidents in Fenland take place in Wisbech and 54% of the crimes take place in Wisbech. In addition, he provided statistics in relation to incidents of anti-social behaviour for the periods April 2014 to March 2015 and April 2015 to March 2016. The figures show a decrease of 27% in 2015/16.

Inspector Davis explained the current activities for the team of officers which is dealing with matters of exploitation and he commented that a new issue for Fenland is to tackle the issue of people being forced into becoming sex workers. He expressed the opinion that it is necessary for the Constabulary to focus upon what is important for people locally and, consequently, he is looking at more effective ways of engaging with communities; the Neighbourhood Forums which had been used as a means of setting community priorities are not considered by Inspector Davis to be an effective means by which to engage with communities, as they attract very few members of the public. The Inspector is, consequently, proposing to use different methods of engagement (including Survey Monkey and a police (and FDC officer) presence at local supermarkets).

The Inspector commented that the nature of crime is changing; a significant number of offences are now committed on-line. In terms of addressing crime and disorder, the Constabulary is placing a greater emphasis on partnership working.

Inspector Davis informed the council of the activities of the PCSOs within Fenland, which includes the visit by a PCSO at a primary school each day of the week and forums in secondary schools on a monthly basis; at the forum meetings, each school is able to agree a community priority for police attention. In addition, the Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) engages with the multi-agency Problem Solving Group, as a means of addressing community concerns. Also, officers of the NPT produce reports to Town and Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Watch groups. There is also engagement with the fourteen children's homes in Fenland (because of this number of children's homes, the Police are regularly dealing with incidents of "missing from home").

Inspector Davis responded to members' questions.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor expressed her concern with regard to the use of Survey Monkey as a means of obtaining community concerns; particularly for the Waterlees Village ward, given the low level of information technology ownership and use in that part of Wisbech. She expressed the hope for continued PCSO attendance at the quarterly meetings of the Waterlees Village Community Forum. In response, Inspector Davis stated that the current level of PCSO support for the Waterlees Village ward would continue.

Councillor Tierney commented that he had noticed a change in pattern of street drinking in Wisbech and enquired as to how the matter is being tackled by the Constabulary. In response, Inspector Davis informed the council that the Constabulary works in partnership with Fenland District Council



to address the issue and, additionally, his officers seek to reassure the public that Wisbech is a safe place to be; it is easy for the fear of crime to bear no relation to the actual level of crime in the town.

Inspector Davis mentioned the submission of an application to Government for the operation of a project aimed at tackling alcohol issues in Fenland. Councillor Oliver added to the Inspector's explanation of the project and commented that although approval of the application would not provide funding, it would provide training and other relevant resources.

Members decided that the information reported be noted.

90/16 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.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

(2) Wisbech Bus Service Project

Members received a presentation from Mrs B Pedlar, Wisbech Bus Service Co-ordinator at Fenland District Council, on a proposal to provide a new bus route for Wisbech, through re-allocation of funding which had been provided by Tesco, under a Section 106 Planning Obligation, to operate a bus service between the Tesco store and the town centre (known as the Tesco 66 Service).

Mrs Pedlar informed members that, due to low passenger numbers, the Tesco 66 Service was withdrawn by the operator (Stagecoach) in May 2016 and that instead of simply re-tendering for the same service, which would be likely to have the same result, the Wisbech Bus Service project, which aims to a locally-led design for a new service which would attract a sufficient number of users to it viable in the long-term, had been devised; it is considered that this approach would make more effective use of the (Section 106 Planning Obligation) funding available.

Mrs Pedlar explained the research and consultation (including a dialogue with Tesco) which had been undertaken in relation to this project. She explained that she had examined a number of potential route options to include more of the town and additional destinations within Wisbech (such as doctors' surgeries, the Queen Mary Centre, Hudson Leisure Centre and the North Cambs Hospital) and places of employment. Now that a draft route has been produced, she is seeking views of the community on that proposal.

Members were informed by Mrs Pedlar of the consultation exercise being undertaken and the next steps in the project, which includes engaging with local bus operators. She made the point that it is important to get bus operators "on board" with the project so that they would submit a tender for the new route. It is proposed that the initial contract would operate for a period of one year, during which time performance of the service would be assessed and revised thereafter if necessary. It is hoped that after the initial twelve months of operation, the service would prove to have long-term sustainability.

Mrs Pedlar responded to members' questions.

Members decided that the information presented be noted and that the proposal to provide this new bus service for Wisbech be supported.



91/16 Cambridgeshire County Council

(1) Street lighting

Councillor Mrs Macrae expressed the opinion that the street lighting operated by the County Council in Wisbech is dimmer now than it had been in previous years and enquired as whether the Clerk could ascertain from officers at Cambridgeshire County Council whether her opinion is correct.

Councillor Bucknor commented that Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) had stated that the new street lighting which it would be installing across the County would provide an improved level of lighting; this, however, appears to him not to be the case. He shares the opinion of Councillor Mrs MacRae and he too would like information from CCC as to the current situation with regard to levels of illumination from its street lighting.

Mr I Trafford, who was in attendance at the meeting for the item of business covered by minute 91/16 (2), offered to refer to officers of the County Council's Street Lighting Team the issues which had been raised by members, with a request that a response be provided to the Clerk for reporting back to Wisbech Town Council.

Members decided that the comments of Councillors Bucknor and Mrs MacRae be noted and that the offer of Mr Trafford, to refer to officers of the County Council's Street Lighting Team the issues which had been raised by members, be accepted.

(2) Fenland Secondary (Education) Review

Further to minute 36/14, members received a presentation from Mr I Trafford, Area Education Officer at Cambridgeshire County Council, on the phase two consultation in respect of the Fenland Secondary (Education) Review. He made the point that this phase of the review is to:

- draw attention to the rising number of primary-aged pupils and the resultant pressure to provide secondary school places in the district
- outline conclusions of the County Council's review of secondary school provision in Fenland
- seek support for a proposal to provide a new secondary school in Wisbech
- obtain views on possible locations for the new secondary school.

Mr Trafford reminded members that a review of secondary education provision in Fenland is being undertaken in response to:

- demographic change (the population of the district has increased by 13.1% since 2001)
- rising pupil numbers in primary schools
- levels of housing development (the Fenland Local Plan provides for an additional 11,000 homes in the district by 2031).
- a consequent need to provide education for an additional 2,250 children of secondary school age; 15 forms of entry would be required.

Mr Trafford explained to members the Wisbech Year 7 Pupil forecast data, which shows that the number of secondary school age pupils currently living in Wisbech exceeds the number of places at the Thomas Clarkson Academy; a number of pupils living in Wisbech are attending schools in other nearby towns; however, those schools are very close to reaching capacity.

In response to phase one of this review, Mr Trafford informed members that the County Council had: analysed the current secondary education provision across Fenland; undertaken



consultation with key stakeholders; undertaken extensive work to identify a potential site for a new school in Wisbech; identified the College of West Anglia (land adjacent to Meadowgate School) as a potential site.

Mr Trafford detailed the outcome of the phase one review, which had resulted in County Councillors deciding that a new secondary school (with 600 places initially) be built in Wisbech; consequently, provision of £23 million had been made in the County Council's capital programme for the financial year 2019/20. He made the point that although the County Council is now looking at 11 potential sites in Wisbech for the new school, a very convincing argument would need to be presented to County Councillors for them not to select the College of West Anglia site. It is anticipated that a decision in relation to site selection would be made by mid-December 2016.

With regard to the latest round of consultation, Mr Trafford mentioned that in excess of 100 responses had been received by the County Council; 70% of respondents support the provision of a new secondary school in Wisbech; only 20% of respondents consider the College of West Anglia (CWA) site to be the most suitable location.

Mr Trafford responded to members' questions.

Councillor Mrs Cox asked whether, given the grant of planning permission for in excess of 100 new dwellings "just over the border", Norfolk County Council could be required to build a new secondary school which could meet the need for additional secondary school places. In response, Mr Trafford stated that Cambridgeshire County Council would be seeking funding, via a Section 106 Planning Obligation, for a financial contribution towards the cost of providing additional school places in Wisbech.

Councillor Miss Hoy commented that she does consider the College of West Anglia site to be suitable for a new school and is, therefore, pleased that other potential sites are being investigated by the County Council.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor expressed the opinion that, as the greatest number of children in Wisbech live in the Waterlees Village Ward, the most logical place for locating a new secondary school would be on the northern side of the town.

Councillor Mrs MacRae commented that she is very heartened to hear of proposals to build a new school.

Members decided that the information presented by Mr Trafford be noted and the proposal to provide an additional secondary school in Wisbech be welcomed.

(3) Bus shelters

Members considered the offer of Cambridgeshire County Council, as Local Highway Authority, to purchase and install a bus shelter at the Cromwell Road bus stop in front of the Tesco store if Wisbech Town Council would be willing to adopt the bus shelter following installation.

The Clerk informed members of the opportunity to sell advertising space on the bus shelter.

Members decided, on a proposal by Councillor Oliver, seconded by Councillor Mrs Bucknor, that

- (1) Wisbech Town Council would adopt a bus shelter installed by the County Council at the location proposed;



- (2) following installation of the bus shelter, the opportunities for using the bus shelter for advertising purposes be explored.

(4) Wisbech Access Strategy Steering Group

Members considered appointing two members to represent Wisbech Town Council on the Wisbech Access Strategy Steering Group.

The Clerk had circulated to members, in advance of the meeting, the terms of reference for this group, which had been established by Cambridgeshire County Council and would comprise two representatives each from that council, Fenland District Council and Wisbech Town Council.

In terms of membership so far, the Clerk informed members that the two representatives of Cambridgeshire County Council would be Councillors Miss Hoy and Lay and his understanding that the representatives of Fenland District Council are likely to be Councillors King and Tierney.

Members decided, on a proposal by Councillor Miss Hoy, seconded by Councillor Balsevics, that Wisbech Town Council be represented on the Wisbech Access Strategy Steering Group by Councillors Oliver and Tibbs.

92/16 Minutes of 24 October 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 24 October 2016 be confirmed and signed.

93/16 Minutes of committees

Members received, for information, the minutes of committee meetings held since the last meeting of the Town Council, as follows:

- (1) Community Events and Festivals Committee - 17 October 2016
- (2) Planning and Community Infrastructure Committee – 24 October 2016
- (3) Assets Management Committee - 1 November 2016
- (4) Planning and Community Infrastructure Committee – 7 November 2016.

The Clerk informed members that although reporting of the minutes of 7 November 2016 meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee had been included on the agenda for this meeting of the council, it had not been possible, due to workload demands, to produce those minutes in time for reporting to this meeting of the council. He stated that he would circulate the minutes to members within the next few days and report them formally to 19 December 2016 meeting of Wisbech Town Council.

In response to the Clerk's comment regarding current levels of workload, Councillor Mrs Bucknor enquired as to whether the council needed to consider providing an additional, temporary staffing resource. Councillor Oliver, Leader of the Council, stated that he and the Clerk are monitoring the workload situation and that any issues would be addressed in the appropriate manner.

Members decided that the contents of the minutes reported, including the decisions made by those committees, be noted and that the Clerk's proposal regarding circulation and reporting of the Policy and Resources Committee minutes be supported.



94/16 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:

- Fundraising event for Save the Children, held at St Peter and St Paul's Church Hall; fundraising was by way of donations and the sale of items
- Wisbech Art Club event
- The Halloween Spooktacular event, held across the town centre on 29 October; this was a great success and the Mayor was impressed by the efforts made by those who had participated in the children's and adult's fancy dress competitions; the event could not have happened without the volunteers (which included some of the members and officers of this council) who had managed/supervised the activities
- The Remembrance services which took place on 11 and 13 November 2016; each one had been a memorable occasion
- Eighth Birthday of Glenfield House Care Home.

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

95/16 Leader of the Council's report

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Oliver, expressed the opinion that the Halloween Spooktacular which took place on 29 October 2016 had been an excellent event, which had attracted between 500 and 600 children, as well as hundreds of adults, to Wisbech town centre. He made the point that this event is becoming bigger and better every year and, consequently, there is a need to introduce additional safety measures (such as road closures) in the future; he stated that he would be asking the Community Events and Festivals Committee to consider the matter.

Councillor Oliver reminded members of the Christmas Lights switch-on event taking place on 27 November 2016 (operating between 3.00 pm and 6.00 pm) and made a plea for as many members of the council as possible to volunteer to assist at this event (from at least 2.00 pm onwards); he made the point that the council's events are becoming bigger each year and, consequently, the need for stewards and "helpers" increases.

The Leader of the Council informed members that he had attended, since the last meeting of Wisbech Town Council, a workshop in relation to the Wisbech 2020 Vision. It is clear that the focus of the vision/strategy is becoming less about infrastructure and more about health and well-being, education, employment etc. He undertook to keep members apprised of developments in this regard.

Members decided that the comments of the Leader be noted.

96/15 Disability access and the way forward

Councillor Oliver informed members that he had intended to invite a discussion on accessibility issues relating to Wisbech Town Hall; however, because of the council's receipt, today, of a grievance/complaint alleging that the council is not meeting its obligations in this regard, his opinion is that it would not be appropriate for the council to discuss this matter until it had been able to examine the legal and other implications with regard to the grievance/complaint. He, therefore, proposed that this item of business and the one covered by minute 97/15 (which also related to accessibility issues related to Wisbech Town Hall) be deferred at this time.



Members decided, on a proposal by Councillor Oliver, seconded by Councillor Miss Hoy, that, in the light of the grievance/complaint received by Wisbech Town Council, this matter be deferred at this time to enable the legal and other implications to be examined.

97/15 Wisbech Town Hall

Members decided, on a proposal by Councillor Oliver, seconded by Councillor Miss Hoy, that, in the light of the grievance/complaint received by Wisbech Town Council (minute 96/15 above refers), this matter be deferred at this time to enable the legal and other implications to be examined.

98/15 Reports from representatives on outside bodies

Councillor Tierney, Fenland District Council's representative on the Wisbech Community Development Trust, which manages the Oasis Centre, informed members that he had attended recently the Trust's AGM; through attendance at that meeting, he is aware that the Oasis Centre may be facing financial uncertainty in the future and that, with the aim of addressing that situation, two committees had been formed; one to examine opportunities for generating additional income and the other to seek to identify reductions in expenditure and efficiency savings.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

99/16 Correspondence

The Clerk informed members that there are currently no such items in need of reporting to council.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

100/16 Noticeboard/Information update

(1) Christmas Lights Extravaganza

The Clerk reminded members of this year's Christmas Lights Extravaganza, which would take place on Wisbech Market Place between 3.00 pm and 6.00 pm on Sunday 27 November 2016.

The event, which had been organised by Wisbech Town Council's Community Events and Festivals Working Party, would include:

- a programme of live entertainment
- Santa Claus, proving sweets to children
- a Post Box for letters to Santa
- free mince pies (donated by local supermarkets)
- fairground rides
- an ice rink
- food and drink stalls, including the sale of mulled wine
- a prize draw (with prizes donated by local businesses)
- a number of other attractions
- switch-on of the town's Christmas lights by the Town Mayor at 5.00 pm).

Posters for the event have been circulated widely around Wisbech and publicity for the event has also been given via social media, local newspapers and the display of banners around the town.



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

(2) Christmas Fayre 2016

The Clerk reminded members of the Wisbech Christmas Fayre, which would operate across the town centre between 10.00 am and 3.00 pm on Sunday 11 December 2016.

The event, which has been organised by a steering group (comprising officer representatives of Fenland District Council and Wisbech Town Council, the Manager of the Horsefair Shopping Centre, Wisbech Lions and other representatives of the community), would include:

- Santa Claus
- Reindeers
- birds of prey
- a programme of live entertainment
- fairground rides
- rides on a steam train
- an ice rink
- stalls selling food, drink and Christmas gifts
- a number of other attractions

Posters for the event have been circulated widely around Wisbech and publicity for the event has also been given via social media, local newspapers and the display of banners around the town.

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

101/16 Date of next meeting

Members were reminded that the next meeting of Wisbech Town Council is scheduled for 19 December 2016, to commence at 7.30 pm, at the offices of Wisbech Town Council.

Meeting finished at 9.10 pm.

Signed

Date