



## **WISBECH TOWN COUNCIL**

### **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**8 JULY 2019 – 7.30 pm**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING**

**Present:** Councillor Oliver, Chairman; Councillors Miss Hoy, Lynn, Tierney and Mrs Wallwork.

**Apologies:** Councillors Hill and Tibbs.

**Public Participation:** None requested.

The minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 8 April 2019 were confirmed and signed.

#### **R1/19 Election of Chairman**

On the proposal of Councillor Lynn, seconded by Councillor Tierney, it was decided that Councillor Oliver be elected as Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee for the municipal year 2019/20.

#### **R2/19 Election of Vice-Chairman**

On the proposal of Councillor Miss Hoy, seconded by Councillor Lynn, it was decided that Councillor Tibbs be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee for the municipal year 2019/20.

#### **R3/19 Audit of Accounts 2018/19**

The Clerk read to members the report from the council's Internal Auditor, resulting from her inspection of the council's accounts for 2018/19, which had been forwarded, by the Clerk, to the External Auditor with this council's Annual Governance and Accountability Return and Accounting Statements (approved by the council at minute 15/19) for that financial year. A copy of the report from the council's Internal Auditor had been circulated to members, by the Clerk, in advance of the meeting.

The Internal Auditor comments that it is very satisfying for her to be able to report that the Town Council now shows ample evidence that it is setting budgets to precept for sufficient income to maintain all of its major projects and generating sufficient reserves before embarking upon new ones, thereby becoming the proactive Council it should be.

The only recommendation made by the Internal Auditor is that, as a way of providing evidence that the council had complied with point (2) in Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement of the Annual Return is that when this committee agrees the council's accounts on a quarterly basis, the Chairman signs, at the meeting, a copy of the report which had been presented to the committee by the Clerk and that the copy be retained by the council.

Members decided that the content of the report from the council's Internal Auditor be noted and that the recommendation within that report, as mentioned above, be implemented with immediate effect.



## **R4/19 Wisbech Town Council's Accounts 2019/20**

The Clerk reported to members on the council's financial position as at the end of quarter one of the financial year 2019/20; he gave explanations as to variations between the estimated income and expenditure for the first quarter of 2019/20 and the actual financial position as at 30 June 2019.

As at 30 June 2019, the council had received approximately 45% of the estimated annual income and had incurred approximately 24% of its estimated annual expenditure.

The Clerk responded to members' questions.

Members decided that

- (1) the information reported by the Clerk be noted;
- (2) the accounts for the first quarter of the financial year 2019/20 be approved and that, in accordance with minute R3/19, a copy of the report presented by the Clerk be signed by the Chairman.

## **R5/19 Grant applications**

Members considered the grant applications which had been submitted to Wisbech Town Council since 8 April 2019 meeting of this committee, at which allocation of the grant funding for the financial year 2019/20 had taken place (minute R17/18 refers).

The Clerk reminded members that the total budget for the council for 2019/20 includes a sum of £6,000 (i.e. increased from the £5,250 figure which had been the allocation in each of the financial years 2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19) for small grants and £35,000 (which had been £37,000 in the financial years 2017/18 and 2018/19) for special grants.

Members were informed by the Clerk that since 8 April 2019 meeting of this committee, the council has received seven further "formal" applications for funding from the small grants "pot", as set out below.

	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Purpose of grant</b>	<b>Amount requested</b>
1.	Rosmini Centre, Wisbech	Contribution towards the cost of purchasing (Thomas the Tank Engine) books, to be handed-out to children from the Rosmini Centre's (Thomas the Tank Engine themed) float in the 2019 Rose Fair Parade; to support the Wisbech Reads project.	£300 (out of a total project cost of £600)
2.	Groundworks East	Contribution towards the cost of delivering a Wisbech Food Day event on 14 September 2019 at the Queen Mary Centre; the aim of the event is developing community integration through a	£300 (out of a total project cost of £1,000)



		shared love of food. This is an event being delivered by a partnership of Groundworks, Wisbech Town Council, Fenland District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, Queen Mary Centre, Age UK and others.	
3.	Wisbech Society and Preservation Trust Ltd	Contribution towards the cost of producing and distributing a Heritage Open Days 2019 map featuring the places and organisations which are participating locally in this national event.	£500 (out of a total project cost of £1,000)
4.	Rima's Ladies and Families	Contribution towards of the cost of running family sessions aimed at developing communities and developing integration.	£200 (out of a total project cost of £500)
5.	St Peter's C of E School	Contribution towards the cost of running a summer play scheme.	£300 (out of a total project cost of £600)
6.	Wisbech and District Stroke Club and Society	Contribution towards the annual costs of providing activities and support and advice for people who have suffered a stroke; costs include venue hire, insurance, the services of a Keep Fit Instructor (to assist rehabilitation) and days out.	£1,000 (no project costs specified in the application)
7.	Cambs Army Cadet Force number 1 (Hereward Company)	Contribution towards the cost of purchasing teaching aids and equipment to support the development and learning of cadets; costs include the purchase of interactive whiteboards, large screen televisions, gazebos, expeditions and using the services of "specialist" teachers for certain activities.	£1,000 (no project costs specified in the application)
	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£3,600</b>

With regard to small grant application number 2, the Clerk reminded members that he had given this committee a "heads up" at minute R17/18 that such an application was likely to be submitted; to help



build upon the success of a similar event which had taken place on 27 October 2018 and had been awarded grant aid of £200 (at minute R9/18) by Wisbech Town Council.

Members were reminded by the Clerk that the group listed at 3 above had received funding (of £500) from this council's small grants budget 2018/19 for the same type of project in 2018.

At minute R17/18 this committee had considered an application from the Cambridgeshire Shrievally Trust (The Bobby Scheme) for financial support towards the cost of delivering a crime reduction programme which supports particularly vulnerable members of society who are either victims of burglary, domestic abuse and other crimes, or are concerned about home and personal safety. No particular sum was requested by the applicant but the point was made in the application that the average cost of supporting each person is £200. The committee decided, at minute R17/18, that the application be deferred and that the applicant be invited to make a presentation to a meeting of Wisbech Town Council, as a result of which this committee would make a decision on the level of funding to be awarded. This presentation will be made to 15 July 2019 meeting of Wisbech Town Council; the earliest date that a representative of the applicant would be available to attend a Town Council meeting.

The Clerk reminded members that the council's guidance to applicants for grant funding states that Wisbech Town Council will look at the following issues when assessing funding requests: contribution to social, environmental, economic wellbeing, community involvement and activities, social inclusion, any previous funding, purpose of the organisation and the nature of the assistance requested.

Members were informed by the Clerk that, in addition to these seven "formal" applications, the council has received a "general" request from MAGPAS Air Ambulance, asking the council to consider providing financial support for "the lifesaving service delivered across Cambridgeshire by the air ambulance service in 2019". In support of this request for financial support, MAGPAS has stated that the air ambulance was called-out to 811 incidents across Cambridgeshire in 2018. This committee had considered a similar request from MAGPAS last year (minute R5/18 refers) but had been unable, because of the level of budget availability and the commitments that it had made from that budget, to provide financial support to MAGPAS in the financial year 2018/19.

With regard to special grants, the Clerk reminded members that this committee had allocated, at its meeting on 8 April 2019 (minute R17/18 refers), £33,500 of the £35,000 in the financial year 2018/19; this means that £1,500 remains available in that budget.

The Clerk reminded members that this committee had, at minute R17/18, requested him to ask the Angles Theatre, when making payment of the approved special grants funding (of £1,000) for the financial year 2019/20, whether the level of financial support provided by Wisbech Town Council (which had been at the same level for a number of years) remains sufficient.

The response from the Manager of the Angles Theatre in relation to the question asked by the Clerk, on behalf of this committee, is:

*"We are always very grateful for any funding that comes our way. As you know, the grant from the Town Council is the only public funding we receive and the rest is through private donations and self-generating funds.*

*To put in context, the £1,000 grant from the Town Council will pay 80% of the electricity bill for April. If the council would be minded to consider increasing the level of grant, I would be more than happy to come and pitch it to councillors or happy to facilitate a visit to the theatre for those who may not be as accustomed to what we achieve here.*



Again, on behalf of the trustees, I would like to thank Wisbech Town Council and its staff for the continued support that we receive”.

Members decided that

- (1) the details of the additional small grant applications submitted to Wisbech Town Council for the financial year 2019/20 be noted;
- (2) the situation with regard to the presentation by a representative of the Bobby Scheme to 15 July 2019 meeting of Wisbech Town Council be noted and that the council would consider, in the light of that presentation, awarding grant funding to the Bobby Scheme;
- (3) small grant application numbers 2 (£300), 3 (£500) and 4 (£200) be approved in full;
- (4) the following small grant applications be not supported, for the reasons shown:
  - number 1 – those members who had attended the Rose Fair parade on 6 July had not seen books being handed-out to children; also this council already provides financial support (both through an allocation from the special grants budget and in-kind (free-of-charge use of Wisbech Castle) for the annual Wisbech Reads Festival
  - number 5 – the project relates to the pupils of only one school in Wisbech. Approval of this application could set a precedent for every primary/junior school in Wisbech to submit grant applications for similar types of projects; this would commit a significant proportion of the council’s small grants budget, thereby reducing the number of other projects that could benefit from such funding
  - number 7 – the activities of the applicant organisation are delivered across a much wider area than Wisbech;
- (5) with regard to grant application number 6, the Clerk would seek additional information from the applicant (including the total number of persons who are supported by the society and the proportion of those who live in Wisbech and also whether the rehabilitation exercises sessions are, or could be, made available to persons who would benefit from such support but who had not suffered a stroke);
- (6) no financial support be provided to MAGPAS Air Ambulance in the current financial year;
- (7) the current situation regarding the expenditure on the special grants budget be noted;
- (8) the response from the Manager of the Angles Theatre in relation to the question asked by the Clerk, on behalf of this committee, in relation to the level of grant awarded to the theatre, be noted and that the manager’s offer to facilitate a visit by Wisbech Town Council to the theatre, be accepted.

Councillors Oliver and Tierney, although not having any declarable interest in small grant application number 7, wished it to be recorded that they hold the positions of Chairman of the Wisbech Girls Venture Corps and Chairman of the Wisbech Army Cadets respectively)

**Meeting finished at 8.15 pm**

Signed.....

Dated.....