



## **WISBECH TOWN COUNCIL**

### **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**9 JULY 2018 – 7.35 pm**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING**

**Present:** Councillor Oliver, Chairman; Councillors Miss Hoy, Human, Maul, Miss Oliver, Tibbs and Tierney.

**Apologies:** Councillors Balsevics and Hill.

**Public Participation:** None requested.

The minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 9 April 2018 were confirmed and signed.

#### **R1/18 Election of Chairman**

On the proposal of Councillor Miss Hoy, seconded by Councillor Maul, it was decided that Councillor Oliver be elected as Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee for the municipal year 2018/19.

#### **R2/18 Election of Vice-Chairman**

On the proposal of Councillor Oliver, seconded by Councillor Maul, it was decided that Councillor Tibbs be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee for the municipal year 2018/19.

#### **R3/18 Audit of Accounts 2017/18**

The Clerk read to members the report from the council's Internal Auditor, resulting from her inspection of the council's accounts for 2017/18, 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 15/18) for that financial year.

In summary, the Internal Auditor comments upon the level of general reserves held by the council and some of its decisions in relation to budget-setting and financial planning. She had commented in her report that she is pleased to see that the council had taken on board the advice of the Clerk, her and the External Auditor in relation to budget planning and the council's level of general reserves (minute R11/17 refers).

Councillor Tierney commented that he is pleased that the council's Internal Auditor had acknowledged in her report the action that the council had taken to address the issues which had been raised by both the Internal Auditor and the External Auditor when examining the council's 2016/17 accounts (minute R11/17 refers).

Members decided that the content of the report from the council's Internal Auditor be noted.



## **R4/18 Wisbech Town Council's Accounts 2018/19**

The Clerk reported to members on the council's financial position as at the end of quarter one of the financial year 2018/19; he gave explanations as to variations between the estimated income and expenditure for the first quarter of 2018/19 and the actual financial position as at 30 June 2018.

As at 30 June 2018, the council had received approximately 60% of the estimated annual income and incurred approximately 29% of its estimated annual expenditure. The unusually high percentage of income received in the first quarter of the financial year 2018/19 is due to receipt from Cambridgeshire County Council of £50,000, an initial payment from the £150,000 loan agreed for the purpose of undertaking works to Wisbech Castle. The Clerk mentioned also that the remaining £100,000 of the loan had been received very recently and would feature in the quarter two accounts for 2018/19.

Members were informed by the Clerk that officers are considering the production of specific accounts in respect of Wisbech Castle, particularly given the need to demonstrate to both the County Council and this council's Internal Auditor how the loan monies are being spent, as well as the council being able to ascertain the costs (as a result of income and expenditure) of operating Wisbech Castle as a community asset/venue.

With regard to the loan from Cambridgeshire County Council, which is not likely to be spent fully in the short-term, members are of the opinion that the Wisbech Castle Management Committee may wish to request this committee to consider, at some time in the future, investment options for any unspent elements of that funding.

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 2018/19 be approved.

## **R5/18 Grant applications**

Members considered the grant applications which had been submitted to Wisbech Town Council since 9 April 2018 meeting of this committee, at which allocation of the grant funding for the financial year 2018/19 had taken place (minute R22/17 refers).

The Clerk reminded members that the total budget for the council for 2018/19 includes a sum of £5,250 (i.e. the same level as in 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18) for small grants and £37,000 (the same level as for the financial year 2017/18) for special grants. He mentioned that this committee had allocated, at minute R22/17, £4,175 of the 2018/19 budget for small grants; this means that £1,075 is still potentially available for allocation in the current financial year; this figure would, however, reduce to £145 if the committee decided to now approve the application (submitted by the Wisbech Family History Group, for £930 in relation to the cost of purchasing or replacing equipment used to educate and inform visitors to local events and for displaying family history information) which had been deferred at part (4) of minute R22/17.

The Clerk reminded members that the reason for deferral (at part (4) of minute R22/17) of the application from the Wisbech Family History Group was so that he could obtain further information from the applicant in terms of how the organisation operates and the arrangements that it would put in place for use and security of the IT equipment that it would purchase using grant aid from the



council. He had provided the committee, in advance of the meeting, a copy of the response that he had received from the Treasurer of the Wisbech Family History Group.

Members were informed by the Clerk that since 9 April 2018 meeting of this committee, the council has received two 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.	Alan Hudson Day Treatment Centre, North Cambs Hospital  (The Centre became an Arthur Rank Hospice Charity Service serving Wisbech and the Fens in 2015, which has the aims of “relieving the sickness and suffering of people who living with a life-limiting illness and to support their families and carers)	Contribution towards the cost of purchasing a bariatric recliner chair for patients who are receiving vital intravenous therapies, such as cancer treatments and blood transfusions	£500 (out of a total project cost of £1,362)
2.	Cambridgeshire Search and Rescue (CamSAR)  (CamSAR, using volunteers, supports the emergency services (primarily the Police) in searching for vulnerable missing persons)	Contribution towards the cost of purchasing a HPMFP M277 Laserjet Pro colour printer (which would be placed in CamSAR’s support vehicle and used for producing better and faster mapping for search teams, to enable searches to commence more quickly)	£300 (out of a total project cost of £399)
	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£800</b>

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 two “formal” applications for small grants, the council had received a “general” (standard letter) 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 2018”. In support of this request for financial support, MAGPAS had stated that the air ambulance was called-out to 547 incidents, treating 381 patients, in 2017.

With regard to special grants, the Clerk reminded members that this committee had allocated, at its meeting on 9 April 2018 (minute R22/17 refers), £32,000 of the £37,000 in the financial year 2018/19.



However, at minute R22/17 this committee had decided that, with regard to the special grant of £5,000 which had been paid annually to WisARD to meet premises-related costs associated with operation of the Wisbech Information Centre, officers would ascertain from WisARD whether it would be prepared for the grant to be paid in monthly instalments until such time as the council is in a position to offer alternative accommodation for the Information Centre at Wisbech Castle.

Members were informed by the Clerk that, in accordance with that decision, officers had obtained the agreement of WisARD to such a payment arrangement and, consequently, payments had been made on a monthly basis to WisARD since April of this year. If it were to prove necessary to meet all of the twelve-monthly instalments for the financial year 2018/19, the special grants budget of £37,000 (on the basis of other allocations of £32,000 and £5,000 to WisARD) would be spent in full; the level of spend of that allocation of £5,000 would be dependent upon the date at which the council is able to offer to WisARD alternative accommodation for the Information Centre at Wisbech Castle.

In response to a question from Councillor Miss Hoy as to progress with discussion by WisARD of its stance in terms of re-locating the activities of the Information Centre (to enable the council to both prepare for accommodation of the Information Centre at Wisbech Castle and to cease the current grant funding), Councillor Oliver, in his capacity as a Director of WisARD, undertook to request the Secretary of WisARD to arrange a meeting of the Directors for the purpose of such a discussion; he would subsequently report back on the outcome of the discussion.

Members decided, on the proposal of Councillor Tibbs, seconded by Councillor Human, that

- (1) the details of the additional small grant applications submitted to Wisbech Town Council for the financial year 2018/19, as well as the response received from the applicant in relation to the application which had been deferred at part (4) of minute R22/17, be noted;
- (2) small grant application numbers 1 (£500) and 2 (£300) be approved in full;
- (3) with regard to the small grant application which had been deferred at part (4) of minute R22/17, the applicant be awarded the balance (following approval of small grant application numbers 1 and 2 above) of this year's small grants budget; that sum being £275;
- (4) given the decisions reached at parts (2) and (3) of this minute, it is not possible to provide financial support to MAGPAS Air Ambulance in the current financial year;
- (5) the current situation regarding the expenditure on the special grants budget be noted;
- (6) the offer of Councillor Oliver, to request the Secretary of WisARD to arrange a meeting of its Directors, for the purpose of deciding its stance regarding the possible re-location of the Information Centre to Wisbech Castle (and to report back thereon), be accepted.

(Councillor Oliver declared his non-pecuniary interest in the part of this item of business which related to the provision of grant funding of WisARD, by virtue of his being a Director of WisARD)

**Meeting finished at 8.10 pm**

Signed.....

Dated.....