



WISBECH TOWN COUNCIL
POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

12 JUNE 2017 – 8.05 pm

MINUTES OF MEETING

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

Apologies: Councillor Balsevics, Mrs Bucknor and Hill.

Public Participation: None requested.

The minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 10 April 2017 were confirmed and signed.

R1/17 Election of Chairman

On the proposal of Councillor Miss Hoy, seconded by Councillor Tibbs, it was decided that Councillor Oliver be elected as Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee for the municipal year 2017/18.

R2/17 Election of Vice-Chairman

On the proposal of Councillor Miss Hoy, seconded by Councillor Tierney, it was decided that Councillor Tibbs be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee for the municipal year 2017/18.

R3/17 Grant applications

Members considered the grant applications which had been submitted to Wisbech Town Council since 10 April 2017 meeting of this committee, at which allocation of the grant funding for the financial year 2017/18 had taken place (minute R16/16 refers).

The Clerk reminded members that Wisbech Town Council's budget for 2017/18 (agreed at minute 125/16) included a sum of £5,250 (i.e. the same level as in 2015/16 and 2016/17) for small grants and £37,000 (an increase by £15,000 of the level in 2016/17) for special grants. The increase in the allocation for special grants was to provide additional funding to the Wisbech and Fenland Museum.

At minute R16/16 this committee allocated £3,002.80 of its 2017/18 budget for small grants; this means that £2,247.20 was still available for allocation in the current financial year.

The Clerk reminded members that this committee decided, at part (7) of its decision at minute R16/16, to invite the Wisbech Arles Twining Club to submit a small grants application for funding in respect of 2017's Arles Festival event (in 2016 the event was funded from an allocation of £1,000 within Wisbech Town Council's Community Events and Festivals budget for 2016/17).

Members were informed by the Clerk that since 10 April 2017 meeting of this committee, the council has received two further applications for funding from the small grants "pot", as set out below.



	Organisation	Purpose of grant	Amount requested
1.	Wisbech Arles Twining Club	Contribution towards the cost of running this event on 16 July 2017	£750 (out of a total project cost of £1,240)
2.	The Brinks Festival	Contribution towards the cost of holding a Brinks Colour Run	£1,000 (out of a total project cost of £3,848)
	TOTAL		£1,750

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.

Copies of both application forms received by the council had been circulated to members of this committee in advance of the meeting.

At minute R16/16 refers this committee allocated £36,700 of the £37,000 for special grants in the financial year 2017/18; this leaves an unallocated balance of £300.

The Clerk presented to members an application for financial assistance which had been received by Wisbech Town Council from St Peter and St Paul's Church PCC towards the cost of repair works to the surface of the car park that both serves the Church Hall and provides a pedestrian route between the public car park (owned by Fenland District Council) and the church gardens.

The PCC is asking Wisbech Town Council to consider meeting 50% of the cost of the works, which are estimated at £6,457.82 (i.e. £5,381.52 plus VAT). Consequently, the level of financial assistance being sought from Wisbech Town Council is £3,228.00.

A copy of the letter of application had been circulated by the Clerk to members of this committee in advance of the meeting.

The Clerk commented that the only "financial assistance" budgets operated by Wisbech Town Council are the annual small grants and special grants budgets and that approval (in full) of the small grants applications detailed above would result in the "financial assistance" monies available for the remainder of the financial year 2017/18 totalling £797.20 (made up of £497.20 balance on the small grants budget and £300 on the special grants budget).

Councillor Tierney expressed the opinion that it is not the responsibility of Wisbech Town Council to fund repair works to this car park, which is in private ownership; if the works were to be funded by the public sector, it would be more appropriate for such funding to be provided by either Cambridgeshire County Council or Fenland District Council. He stated that he does not support this application, which, if supported by Wisbech Town Council, would set a dangerous precedent for the funding of other similar schemes.

Councillor Oliver expressed the opinion that it would be appropriate for income generated by the Rose Fair to be used to fund repair works to this car park.



Councillor Miss Hoy commented that the council has no funding available to support requests of this nature; at the time of setting the council's Budget and Precept for 2017/18, the council was unaware of this matter.

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

- (1) the details of the two small grant application submitted to Wisbech Town Council for the financial year 2017/18 be noted;
- (2) small grant application number 1 be approved in full;
- (3) with regard to small grant application number 2, a sum of £500 be paid to the applicant and a further £500 be set-aside by the council to underwrite any losses, of up to £500, on the event (the committee is hopeful that if the target for the number of participants is achieved by the applicant, there may be no requirement to underwrite any losses);
- (4) the application from St Peter and St Paul's Church PCC for financial assistance towards the cost of repair works to the surface of the car park adjacent to the Church Hall be not supported, on the basis that
 - the spending of public money on a car park which is in private ownership would not be appropriate
 - even if it were appropriate to spend public money on land in private ownership, Wisbech Town Council is not the public authority which should be called upon to provide that funding
 - even if were appropriate for Wisbech Town Council to provide funding for these works, it does not possess financial resources in the current financial year to be able to support this project.

(Although possessing no pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in this application, Councillors Miss Hoy and Tierney wished it be recorded that they had been approached by the author of the letter which had been sent on behalf of the PCC)

Meeting finished at 8.25 pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....