



## WISBECH TOWN COUNCIL

19 December 2016 – 7.30 pm

### MINUTES OF MEETING

**Present:** Councillor Tibbs, Chairman (and Town Mayor); Councillors Balsevics, Brunton, Bucknor (from 7.50 pm), Mrs Bucknor (from 7.50 pm), Mrs Cox, Hill, Miss Hoy, Human, Lay, Mrs MacRae, McLaren, Oliver, Miss Oliver, Rackley, Schooling and Tierney.

**Apologies:** Councillor Hodgson.

**Public participation:** None requested.

#### **102/16 Remembrance**

Councillor Tierney reminded members that three years ago it had been agreed that Wisbech Town Council would use a minute of its December meeting each year to stand for one minute's silence to remember those who had died during the year. He made the point that members would be standing in silence for those whose names are well-known to many but also for those who, although not famous or well-known, are nonetheless sadly missed by those who knew and loved them.

Councillor Tierney had produced a list of those to be remembered, which he read to the council and consisted of the following:

Ronnie Corbett (comedian), Victoria Wood (comedian), David Gest (reality TV star), Paul Daniels (magician), Frank Kelly (actor), Gareth Thomas (actor), Ed Stewart (TV entertainer), Andrew Sachs (actor) Caroline Aherne (comedian, actress and script writer), Anton Yelchin (actor), Denise Robertson (writer and TV broadcaster), Gene Wilder (actor), Alan Rickman (actor), Robert Vaughn (actor), Colonel Abrams (pop singer), Merle Haggard (singer), Andy Newman (musician), Keith Emerson (musician), Sir George Martin (record producer), Maurice White (singer), Glenn Frey (singer), Natalie Cole (singer), Billy Paul (singer), Marni Nixon (singer), Pete Burns (singer and reality TV star), Bobby Vee (singer) Leonard Cohen (singer and song writer), Jim Deligatti (the creator of the Big Mac), Valerie Gaunt (Hammer Horror movies actress), Joe Alasky (the voice of Bugs Bunny), Dan Haggerty (actor), Sylvia Anderson (co-creator of the Thunderbirds and voice of Lady Penelope), Kenny Baker (actor), John Mansfield (died the oldest man in Britain aged 108 years), Henry Heimlich (inventor of the manoeuvre that was named after him), Harper Lee (author), Tony Warren (the creator of Coronation Street), Margaret Forster (author), Pierre Boulez (composer), Brad Fuller (composer), Steve Dillon (comic book artist), Sir Terry Wogan (radio DJ and TV presenter), Muhammad Ali (boxer), David Bowie (singer, song writer and musician), Prince (singer, song writer and musician), Jo Cox (Member of Parliament), Nancy Reagan (wife of former President of the USA).

Councillor Tierney commented that the council would also be standing in silence for those local people who had passed away during the year, including those whose family members or friends had asked the council to mention, as follows: Ann Carlisle (former Mayor of Wisbech and former Chairman of Fenland District Council), Miss Eileen Plater MBE (Chairman of Friends of Wisbech Hospitals for over 30 years), Gerald Salter (former Mayor of Wisbech), Mrs Jane Hill (Mayoress of Wisbech for the municipal year 2014/15 and much-loved friend of many in this chamber and this town), Norman Jacobs MBE (owner of entertainment businesses in Wisbech over many decades), 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).



All of those present at the meeting stood in silence for all of those people who had passed away during the year, remembering that each and every individual who is no longer with us, whether they died through natural causes or otherwise, is a loss to us all.

### **103/16 Vacancy in the membership of Wisbech Town Council**

Further to minute 87/16, the Clerk reported that, as a result of the by-election held on 8 December 2016 to fill the vacancy in the Waterlees Village Ward of Wisbech Town Council, William Rackley had been elected to membership of Wisbech Town Council.

Members decided that the information reported by the Clerk be noted and they welcomed Councillor Rackley to his first meeting of Wisbech Town Council.

### **104/16 A Dementia Friendly Community**

Members received a presentation from Ms Hilary Shepherd, Dementia Action Alliance Coordinator (Cambridgeshire) for the Alzheimer's Society, on developing communities which have an awareness about dementia and dismissing the stigma around the illness. She reminded members of the presentation which had been delivered by Mrs Lisa Lowe, Dementia Support Worker, to the council in August 2015 (minute 52/15 refers).

Ms Shepherd informed the council that

- there were 850,000 people with dementia in the UK in 2015 and this is expected to increase to more than 2 million by 2051
- the cost of supporting sufferers is around £30 billion per year
- two-thirds of people with dementia live in the community
- 51% of carers are in work
- the Equalities Act 2010 requires that persons who suffer from dementia should be treated no less favourably than those who do not.

Ms Shepherd mentioned that the Alzheimer's Society had developed a Dementia Action Alliance (DAA) in each of the five districts within Cambridgeshire; the DAA in Fenland had been launched in May 2016 (the associated webpage went live in March of that year). She informed the council of some of the agencies and bodies which are supporting this initiative and the types of activities which are being held to support the sufferers of dementia and their carers.

Wisbech is now being recognised as becoming as a Dementia Friendly Community; it is the first such town in Fenland and the second in Cambridgeshire (the other such town being St Ives). A Wisbech Dementia Friendly Community Steering Group – including representatives of the Oasis Centre, Ferry Project, Wisbech Lions, Wisbech Town Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, Fenland District Council, the Horsefair Shopping Centre, Cambridgeshire Constabulary and a number of community groups – had been established to “drive forward” this project.

In terms of possible actions to help those who suffer from dementia, Ms Shepherd suggested that the council could

- join the Dementia Action Alliance and encourage others to do so
- encourage its employees and members to become ‘Dementia Friends’
- nominate a Dementia Champion
- invite feedback from people with dementia on the environment; mystery shoppers
- encourage its staff and members to volunteer
- encourage people to wear a Dementia Friends badge.



Ms Shepherd showed a film which demonstrated the difficulties experienced by sufferers of dementia when undertaking “everyday” tasks.

Ms Shepherd made the point that support and understanding is all that is needed by most of those who suffer from dementia. She informed the council that being a Dementia Friend is about turning commitment into action to transform radically the lives of people living with dementia and their carers.

Ms Shepherd responded to members’ questions.

Councillor Mrs Cox commented that she had been involved in the setting-up, via the Alzheimer’s Society, a number of years ago, a support group for sufferers of dementia and she raised an issue with regard to changes to the payment of Carers’ Allowance. In response, Mr Shepherd explained the most recent changes in funding arrangements applicable to this allowance and expressed the opinion that further changes are likely. She mentioned that respite care for carers had also diminished but they are able to access support through the Dementia Café and a Dementia Support Worker (who is based at Doddington Hospital).

In response to a question from Councillor Mrs MacRae as to how the Alzheimer’s Society is engaging with retailers, Ms Shepherd commented that although further work needs to be done in this regard, Dementia Friends sessions take place at the Tesco store and guidance documents for retailers are available.

Members decided that the information presented by Ms Shepherd be noted and that the council would continue to lend its support to this initiative.

### **105/16 The Ferry Project**

Members received a presentation from Keith Smith, Director of the Ferry Project, on the work of the Ferry Project over the last 12 months and initiatives and projects for the future.

Mr Smith informed members that accommodation at the night shelter has been increased from 12 to 14 beds; the homeless hostel operates on a 24 x 7 basis and the average length of stay is 16 weeks; Move-on accommodation is provided for those whose next step is finding their own accommodation. He added that the Ferry Project had supported more than 250 homeless people in 2016, with 80% of those moving-on successfully.

Mr Smith explained that during 2016 the Ferry Project had

- supported more than 1,000 unemployed people, with 119 of those securing employment via the Job Café and the Building Better Opportunities project funded by the Lottery; 540 others are now “job ready”
- supported 60 community groups by providing accommodation at the Queen Mary Centre for their respective activities
- worked with many agencies/organisations/bodies including Anglian Water, Citizens Advice Rural Cambs, Centre 33, Cambridgeshire County Council, Fenland Volunteer Bureau, Fenland MIND, Little Miracles, People and Animals
- secured contract work with a number of agencies, with a total value in excess of £1 million, to deliver various services over the next three years.

In terms of plans for the future, the Ferry Project, proposes

- (1) additional activities (at the Queen Mary Centre) which assist unemployed persons
- (2) developing opportunities for volunteering (a 13 weeks course)



- (3) examining the feasibility of creating a Wisbech Music Hub, using the Sports Hall at the Queen Mary Centre.

Mr Smith made the point that all of the employment-related activity run by the Ferry Project is supported by Job Centre Plus.

With regard to (3) above, Mr Smith commented that, as a result of dialogue with the community, it had become apparent that there is currently no central location in Wisbech for music lessons. The Wisbech Music Hub would not only seek to address that situation but performances of music could be held in the main hall at the Queen Mary Centre. He mentioned that the Ferry Project had begun the process of trialling that use.

Mr Smith informed members that a group comprising local stakeholders had been established – the Clerk to Wisbech Town Council is a member of the group – to develop a business plan for the Wisbech Music Hub project.

Mr Smith stated that the Ferry Project is happy to work in partnership in terms of the delivery of community activity and is looking to work with the Dementia Friendly Alliance. He added that staff of the Ferry Project are encouraged to become involved in the community.

Mr Smith responded to members' questions.

Councillor Miss Hoy enquired of Mr Smith as to the current situation with the lease of the Queen Mary Centre by the Ferry Project from the County Council. In response, Mr Smith stated that the original lease, issued approximately 3 ½ years ago, was for a period of 5 years and the County Council's Assets and Investments Committee had agreed, in recent months, to extend the lease until 31 December 2022; he is awaiting signing of the lease.

Mr Smith commented that since grant of the existing lease, the Ferry Project had generated sufficient income to be able to spend £25,000 on works to the Queen Mary Centre and it had also generated a small trading surplus. He mentioned that the heating system at the Queen Mary Centre is no longer operational and fundraising for replacement of the system is underway; £9,000 has been raised so far and a further £15,000 is required. Under the terms of the lease held by the Ferry Project, the County Council is not responsible for funding significant repair works.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked Mr Smith to expand upon the Ferry Project's support for homeless people. In response, Mr Smith stated that the night shelter provides 14 beds; it costs around £60,000 per annum to run and the Ferry Project needs to raise that funding (there is no charge to its users). The night shelter provides overnight accommodation only. The hostel, which provides "full-time" accommodation, has 24 beds and can be accessed by homeless people who are in receipt of benefits (as such, they are able to pay rent). The current occupancy rate is split 50:50 between local people and those from Eastern Europe; the usual length of stay is 16 weeks. The Move-on accommodation is provided for those who require less support (they pay their own bills, cook their own meals etc); occupants generally stay for about a year and then move-on to independent living.

In response to a question from Councillor Tierney, Mr Smith provided information in relation to the manner in which the Ferry Project operates its Severe Weather Emergency accommodation.

Councillor Tierney referred to information, in relation to evictions from accommodation operated by the Ferry Project, which he had requested of Mr Smith when he had given a presentation to 26 October 2015 meeting of this council (minute 82/15 refers) and commented that the information promised had not been forthcoming. In response, Mr Smith apologised for the oversight and undertook to provide the information to Councillor Tierney, via e-mail, as a matter of priority.



Councillor Human asked Mr Smith whether those persons who leave the night shelter are given advice or guidance as to how they could spend their time during the day. In response, Mr Smith stated that those persons are encouraged to engage in various activities and to use their time in a constructive manner.

Members decided that the information presented by Mr Smith be noted.

### **106/16 Cambridgeshire Constabulary**

PCSO Steve Staniforth, accompanied by PCSO Froment, attended the meeting to provide members with information on recent incidents of crime and disorder in Wisbech.

PCSO Staniforth informed the council of Operation Snowball, which had been run by local officers over the last three weeks with the aim of reducing the incidences of shoplifting in Wisbech. According to the PCSO, the level of shoplifting had reduced as a result of this initiative. He mentioned that the Constabulary locally is focussing its efforts on addressing inconsiderate and illegal parking and street drinking in Wisbech.

The PCSO mentioned that cycle theft had been an issue in Wisbech since the summer; as a result of ongoing investigations by the Constabulary, one person had been arrested; the number of cycle thefts has reduced as a result. As a further measure to seek to tackle cycle thefts, officers of the Constabulary had undertaken, on a number of occasions this year, the marking of cycles with the owner's postcode.

PCSO Staniforth informed members that there had been a further intake of PCSOs recently, which had resulted in an additional one for Wisbech.

PCSO Staniforth responded to members' questions.

Councillor Human expressed the opinion that the level of street drinking in the grounds of St Peter and St Paul's Church is now minimal and he congratulated the local officers for this achievement.

Councillor Tierney stated that he was very impressed with the Police Cadets who had attended the Wisbech Christmas Fayre.

Councillor McLaren made the point that Inspector Davis had kept his word with regard to increasing patrols at Walsoken (minute 89/16 refers).

Members decided that the information reported be noted.

### **107/16 Fenland District Council**

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.

### **108/16 Cambridgeshire County Council**

Further to minute 162/15 (1), the Clerk read to members an e-mail from Cambridgeshire County Council, informing Wisbech Town Council that the County Council had decided, at a meeting on 13 December 2016, to overturn the policy of switching-off street lighting across the County between 2.00 am and 6.00 am and dimming the level of illumination by 60% at all other times.



As a result of that decision, Balfour Beatty, the County Council's street lighting contractor, had restored the former settings of the 33,500 street lights which had been affected by the policy.

The County Council states that in areas where parish or town councils had been helping to fund overnight street lighting during the past eight months (as is the case in Wisbech), the County Council would fund all energy costings from 13 December 2016 from General Reserves. All outgoing invoices for part night lighting are currently on hold and will be adjusted as a result of the change in policy.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

### **109/16 Wisbech Castle**

Further to minute 78/16 (2), Councillor Miss Hoy updated members on this project.

Councillor Miss Hoy mentioned a meeting which had taken place recently involving Stephen Barclay MP and the Wisbech and Fenland Museum Management Committee regarding the possibility of establishing a Trust which would manage jointly the Wisbech and Fenland Museum and Wisbech Castle; this possibility had been rejected by the Wisbech and Fenland Museum Management Committee. The MP would, however, be investigating options for supporting the Wisbech Castle project.

Councillor Miss Hoy informed members that following the "brain storming" meeting which took place in the autumn, a draft business case had been produced and circulated to those organisations/bodies which could have a role to play in delivery of the activities included in the draft business case; these include the Ferry Project, Wisbech in Bloom, local schools and Wisbech Society). She added that further work to develop the business case would take place in January, to enable a final document to be submitted to Cambridgeshire County Council, for consideration at the February 2017 meeting of its Assets and Investments Committee.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor expressed the opinion that the community is concerned as to what is happening with this project; who would be "pulling together" the business case? She enquired as to whether the Town Council would be engaging the services of an appropriate consultant to submit applications for grant funding.

In response to the question from Councillor Mrs Bucknor, Councillor Miss Hoy stated that she would producing, with support from council officers and others, the final version of the business case and that options for accessing grant funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (various schemes) are being explored by her and the Clerk.

Members decided that the information reported by Councillor Miss Hoy be noted.

### **110/16 Minutes of 21 November 2016**

Members considered the minutes of the meeting of Wisbech Town Council held on 21 November 2016.

Councillor Lay commented that he had expected to read in minute 96/16 a reference to the "altercation" between the Mayor and he when he had attempted to speak on the item of business covered by minute 96/16 and he stated that he would like appropriate wording adding to minute 96/16 in that regard.

Councillor Lay went on to allege that the Mayor had threatened him when he had tried to speak, at the last meeting of the council, on the matter covered by minute 96/16. Councillor Tierney invited Councillor Lay to apologise to the Mayor for that comment but he refused to do so.



Members decided, on a proposal by Councillor Oliver, seconded by Councillor Schooling, that the minutes of the meeting of Wisbech Town Council held on 21 November 2016 be confirmed and signed, subject to addition of the following wording to that minute: "The Mayor asked members not to speak on this matter because of the possible legal consequences of so doing".

### **111/16 Minutes of committees**

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

- (1) Policy and Resources Committee – 7 November 2016
- (2) Planning and Community Infrastructure Committee – 21 November 2016
- (3) Planning and Community Infrastructure Committee – 5 December 2016.

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

### **112/16 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 the last month had been extremely busy for him, in the "run up" to Christmas, having attended numerous of events since the last meeting of the council, including:

- the Christmas Lights Extravaganza (minute 100/16 (1) refers); once again, this had been an extremely successful event, attracting thousands of people to the town centre, and he expressed his appreciation to those members and officers of the council who had played a role in the arrangement and delivery of the event. He also expressed his thanks to the staff of Tin Fish Creative for the contribution that the company had played in arranging the entertainment programme, publicity/promotion etc for the event
- the Wisbech Christmas Fayre (minute 100 (2) refers); the town was so busy because of the entertainment, stalls and members of the public that it had taken him four hours to go around see everything and talk with people. He commented that holding this event on a Sunday, instead of a Monday, which had been the case until 2015, had played a significant part in the event's success
- numerous carol concerts, including the one hosted by the Chairman of Fenland District Council
- judging the Best Dressed Dog competition at the Horsefair Shopping Centre
- numerous Christmas parties
- visits to hospitals and residential care homes.

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

### **113/16 Leader of the Council's report**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Oliver, informed members that

- further to minute 93/16, he continues to discuss with the Clerk the situation with regard to staffing and service delivery; the Clerk currently has no concerns in this regard
- he wished to express his thanks to those members and staff of the council who had participated in the planning and delivery of the Christmas Lights Extravaganza (27 November 2016). He expressed the opinion that this event, which had been well attended by members of the council, had been extremely successful



- he considers that the Town Council had organised some exceptional community events and festivals in 2016; all had operated very successfully and had attracted large numbers of attendees. He expressed his thanks to all of those – councillors, Town Council staff, volunteers and sponsors – who had played a part in delivering these activities for the community. Councillor Oliver anticipates that the programme for 2017, which would be set by the Community Events and Festivals Committee, would continue the trend of bigger and better each year.

Members decided that the comments of the Leader be noted.

**114/15 Reports from representatives on outside bodies**

No member of the council had attended the meeting of an outside body during the period since the last meeting of the council.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

**11516 Correspondence**

**Wisbech Lions Club**

The Clerk read to members a letter from the Secretary/Treasurer of the Wisbech Lions Club, expressing the club's appreciation of the donation of £150.00 from Wisbech Town Council in recognition of the club's participation (through providing a Santa and handing sweets to children) at this year's Christmas lights Extravaganza.

The Secretary/Treasurer of the Wisbech Lions Club states, in his letter, that the money donated by the council would be used to defray some of the cost of refurbishing Santa's sleigh.

Members decided that the content of the letter be noted.

**116/16 Noticeboard/Information update**

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

Members decided that the situation be noted.

**117/16 Date of next meeting**

Members were reminded that the next meeting of Wisbech Town Council is scheduled for 23 January 2017, to commence at 7.30 pm, at the offices of Wisbech Town Council.

**Meeting finished at 8.45 pm.**

Signed .....

Date .....