



WISBECH TOWN COUNCIL

2 March 2020 – 7.30pm

MINUTES OF MEETING

Present: Councillor Hill, Chairman (and Town Mayor); Councillors Balsevics, Miss Hoy, Human, Ketteringham, Lynn, Maul, Meekins, Oliver, Patrick, Mrs Pehlivanova, Prest, Rackley, Tibbs, Tierney, Topgood, Mrs Wallwork and Wing.

Apologies: None (all members were present).

154/19 Public participation – Proposed incinerator for Wisbech

Members received a representation from a parishioner, who commented that, assuming that the proposal to formulate a working party is agreed by the council, he would like to make a couple of suggestions as to who should serve upon the working party.

The parishioner commented that he had heard that Councillor Prest is likely to be appointed as Chairman of the working party and the parishioner expressed the opinion that, as this councillor has strong views on environmental issues, this would be a perfect choice. In addition, given the Town, District and County electoral wards in which the proposed incinerator is to be sited and Councillor Tierney's proven "track record" in campaigning, it would seem logical for him to be a member of the working party.

The comment was made by the parishioner that, although many people had bemoaned the fact that there is more than one group campaigning against the proposed incinerator, and the proposed working party makes another, in his opinion, Wisbech Town Council should join the existing WisWin (Wisbech Without Incineration) group in the fight against an incinerator in the town. The parishioner commented that, from what he had seen, the WisWin campaign is up and running, with letters being sent to schools, businesses and Members of Parliament; also, that group had arranged rallies and is planning more protests in the future; furthermore, numerous posters had already been displayed in vehicles, homes and businesses and many more are being distributed.

The parishioner made the point that comments had been made that personal and political feelings should not be brought into this important issue, as it could hamper the outcome. He made a plea for all interested parties to work together to oppose the proposed incinerator for Wisbech.

Another parishioner commented that she had seen mention made in a local newspaper that people who wish to oppose the incinerator should write letters to relevant people and Government departments; however, no contact information had been published.

Members decided that the comments of the two parishioners be noted and that they be taken into account when discussing, at minute 156/19, this council's opposition to the proposed incinerator.

155/19 Wisbech Town Football Club

Further to minute 147/19, members considered supporting the fundraising activity which is being undertaken by the football club to meet the cost of repairing the damage, caused recently by Storm Ciara, to the stadium at Wisbech Town football ground.

Councillor Rackley informed members that he had spoken with the Chairman of Wisbech Town Football Club, to gain an understanding of the club's financial situation; it would appear that the club would benefit from financial support from Wisbech Town Council. He commented that Wisbech Town Football Club, which is 100 years old, is an asset to the town and he expressed the opinion that it



should receive support from the council when needed. Councillor Rackley proposed that Wisbech Town Football Club be awarded £2,000 by the Town Council.

Councillor Patrick mentioned his belief that the club's insurers would be meeting the cost of repairing the damage suffered by the spectator stand; in addition, he understands that approximately £3,000 had been raised by Wisbech Town Football Club through crowd-funding activity. He acknowledges that the club may be experiencing "hard times" but that situation is common to other businesses in the town.

Councillor Tierney commented that he understands Councillor Patrick's opinions on this matter but he does not see Wisbech Town Football Club in the same way as a "normal" commercial enterprise. He expressed the opinion that Wisbech Town Football Club is a "flagship" for the town and should be recognised by the council as such. He commented that, although the club would receive money from its insurers, the club is looking to build a supporter stand that is bigger and better than the one which had been damaged. He made a plea for this council to help the club and its supporters.

Councillor Meekins indicated his concurrence with the opinions of Councillor Patrick; he expressed the opinion that Wisbech Town Football Club is a commercial venture. He informed members of his understanding that the club had been seeking to generate £20,000 and that, so far, he believes that it had secured £15,000 from its insurers and £3,000 as a result of its crowd-funding activity. Councillor Meekins commented that he would be happy support the Town Council awarding £300 or £400 to the club but not as much as £2,000.

Councillor Maul mentioned that, through his business, he provides sponsorship and some advertising to Wisbech Town Football Club; the reason for that is because he has a passion for the local team. He expressed the opinion that the club should be seen as a community asset. Councillor Maul commented that the recent difficult situation experienced by the club has had the positive outcome of the public demonstrating its support for the club. He understands that the sum to be paid to the club by its insurers is £13,000.

Councillor Lynn expressed the opinion that Wisbech Town Football Club provides entertainment for the people of Wisbech and that there is a limited amount of entertainment available in the town for people to enjoy. He expressed the opinion that Wisbech Town Football Club is a community asset and, as such, should be supported by this council. He added that football is the national sport, which is represented well by Wisbech Town Football Club.

Members decided, on the proposal of Councillor Rackley, supported by Councillor Tierney, that Wisbech Town Council would provide financial support, in the sum of £2,000 (to be met from the 2019/20 Contribution to Reserves budget), to Wisbech Town Football Club.

(In accordance with Standing Order 10, a member requested a Recorded Vote on this decision.)

Members voted as follows:

- *In favour of the proposition: Councillors Balsevics, Hill, Miss Hoy, Human, Ketteringham, Lynn, Maul, Oliver, Mrs Pehlivanova, Prest, Rackley, Tibbs, Tierney, Topgood, Mrs Wallwork and Wing (16)*
- *Against the proposition: Councillor Patrick (1)*
- *Abstention from voting: Councillor Meekins (1).*

(Councillor Maul declared his non-pecuniary interest in this item of business, by virtue of him providing, through his business, sponsorship and some advertising to Wisbech Town Football Club)



156/19 Proposed incinerator for Wisbech

(1) Motion to Council

Councillor Tierney proposed that:

“This Council understands that there is a proposal to build an Incinerator Facility in Wisbech.

Incinerators are actually wasteful - they burn much of what is otherwise recyclable and their demand for fuel can sometimes result in a reduction in recycling due to their need to bid for more and more waste. This means that it becomes typical for incineration to lead to a reduction in recycling and discourages efforts to preserve resources and creates incentives to generate more waste.

Waste Incineration is not a renewable source of energy - incinerator companies are marketing “waste-to-energy” as a source of renewable energy. However, unlike other renewables, the fuel does not come from infinite natural processes. On the contrary, it is source from finite resources.

Burning waste produces toxic emissions - burning waste is hazardous for citizens’ health and the environment. Even the most advanced technologies cannot avoid the release of vast amounts of pollutants that contaminate air, soil and water, and end up entering the food chain. Incinerators are major emitters of carcinogenic pollutants as well tiny particles of dust that can lead to decreased lung function, irregular heartbeat, heart attacks, and premature death.

Burning waste creates fewer employment opportunities than recycling - incinerators offer relatively few jobs when compared to recycling. The large footprint of a huge Incinerator could clearly produce more jobs as regular manufacturing space. The idea that an Incinerator is a valuable job creator for local people is bluster.

The world is embracing Zero Waste, and Incineration is a backwards step - “waste-to-energy” is often described as a good way to extract energy from resources but, in fact, it works against the circular economy, producing toxic waste, air pollution and for those that are concerned about Climate Change - contributing to it.

Wisbech roads would be heavily affected - an incinerator of the size proposed would create hundreds of additional large lorry journeys daily, creating significant additional congestion and wear and tear on already busy roads.

Wisbech Rail would be under threat – the town’s long-held hope to re-open its rail line has been championed by the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, the local MP and all local councils. Millions of pounds have been invested to get to the current point. The proposed location of the Incinerator limits the potential options for a new rail station and cuts off part of the potential route that it could take.

In 2019 (minute 106/19 refers), Wisbech Town Council’s Motion to oppose the Incinerator project met with almost unanimous support. An original local campaign opposing the Incinerator has since been joined by a second campaign doing the same thing. Rallies, public meetings and large campaigns are in place.

Many environmental groups are opposed to incineration due to the issues already mentioned.



The company is hoping to avoid the planning process. The incinerator proposal is of such a large size that it bypasses the usual planning route through local councils and, instead, will be decided directly at Government level. This means that local people and local councils have very limited opportunities to make their views known.

It is important that local people see that Wisbech Town Council as an organisation understands the strength of public opinion against the proposed incinerator and that it is willing to continue to stand up and be counted in the campaign to try to prevent it ever happening.

Wisbech Town Council states that it

1. does not support the construction of an incinerator in Wisbech;
2. will write to the Secretary of State to make clear its opposition to these plans.
3. will take any and all legal avenues and processes available to the council to continue to fight on behalf of the residents of Wisbech, the surrounding villages, and Fenland as a whole, and to challenge this unwelcome scheme every step of the way”.

Councillor Tierney informed members that a similar Motion had been supported last month by Fenland District Council and that a Motion, along the same lines, would be submitted to a future meeting of Cambridgeshire County Council.

Councillor Meekins made reference to Councillor Tierney’s comment that Wisbech Town Council’s previous Motion to oppose the incinerator project had met with almost unanimous support and commented that he had abstained from voting on that Motion because of the lack of information that had existed at that time; as much more information is now available, he had supported the Motion at Fenland District Council and is happy to support the one being considered by the Town Council this evening. He suggested that other members do likewise.

Councillor Patrick commented that he had seconded the Motion which had been submitted to Fenland District Council and he too is happy to support the one being considered by the Town Council this evening. He expressed the opinion that little action had been taken by this council to oppose the proposed incinerator since the time of the previous Motion being adopted by the Town Council; he commented that WisWin had been campaigning for some time and suggested that the council should give that group credit for what it had done.

Councillor Tierney stated that he could understand why certain councillors had abstained from voting on the previous Motion regarding this issue. He made the point that he commends the WisWin group for its actions, which are much appreciated.

Councillor Tierney commented that it is not correct to say that nothing has been done by this council in relation to this issue since adoption of the previous Motion. He suggested that no-one should pretend that there is much that could have been done to date, except trying to increase the public’s awareness of the proposal and to seek to encourage people to support a campaign of opposition. He made the point that this is not a political issue and he hopes that everyone who wishes to oppose this proposal is would work together towards a common aim.

Councillor Patrick mentioned that WisWin is in the process of inviting members of the public to sign a petition which would be forwarded to the local Member of Parliament.

Councillor Miss Hoy commented that no-one is criticising the WisWin group and she expressed the opinion that it is not helpful for Councillor Patrick to say that nothing had been done by the Town Council to oppose the proposed incinerator; for example, the request from the applicant company, MVV, to give a presentation to a meeting of Wisbech Town Council had been rejected. She expressed the opinion that unhelpful comments had been made by some



individuals on social media regarding the Town Council's involvement in this issue. She made a plea for everyone who wishes to oppose this proposal to work together.

Members decided, unanimously, on the proposal of Councillor Tierney, seconded by Councillor Tibbs, that the Motion be adopted.

(2) Campaign of opposition

Further to minute 147/19 and in the light of the decision at (1) above, members considered embarking upon a campaign of opposition to the proposed incinerator for Wisbech and the formation of a working party in that regard. The Clerk circulated a proposed Terms of Reference for a Wisbech Anti-incinerator Working Party.

Councillor Miss Hoy expressed the opinion that the people of Wisbech expect their local council to provide leadership in addressing issues such as this. She acknowledges that the campaign which is already being run by WisWin is very helpful and she is hopeful that it proves possible for that campaign to be allied to the one now being proposed by this council. Councillor Miss Hoy emphasised the need for clear, factual information to be made available to the public (perhaps in a Q and A format).

Councillor Miss Hoy drew members' attention to the proposed Terms of Reference for the working party, which had been produced by the Clerk. She outlined some of the benefits of the council taking a lead on an anti-incinerator campaign; these include its links to the local Member of Parliament and to the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

Councillor Miss Hoy made the point that there is a need to achieve appropriate access to the Government, as a means of influencing the decision-making process in relation to this proposal. She expressed the opinion that it is important for everyone to be working together in terms of a campaign of opposition; this is not a political issue and other differences need to be "put to one side".

Members were informed by Councillor Miss Hoy of her proposal that Councillor Prest be Chairman of the working party; he would be a good leader of the anti-incinerator campaign. She commented that she would like to propose that Councillor Meekins be appointed as the Vice-Chairman of the working party. Councillor Miss Hoy mentioned that Mrs V Bucknor, who is taking a leading role in the campaign which is being run by the WisWin group, had been invited to join the working party but had declined the invitation. Councillor Miss Hoy mentioned her hope that another member of the WisWin group would agree to serve upon the working party.

With reference to a comment which had been made by a parishioner earlier in the meeting (at minute 154/19), Councillor Tierney commented that he does not propose to be a member of the working party as that may result in some people not wishing to serve upon the working party. He stated that he would, however, support fully the campaign of opposition to the proposed incinerator. He commented that he would be happy to serve upon the working party if Councillor Patrick would be prepared to do likewise.

Councillor Prest commented that people look to their elected representatives at times such as this and he is proud to see that the people of Wisbech are saying "no" to the proposed incinerator. He expressed the opinion that direct action is necessary if the campaign is to be successful and that Wisbech Town Council should take the lead.

Members decided, unanimously, on the proposal of Councillor Prest, seconded by Councillor Topgood, that

(1) a Wisbech Anti-incinerator Campaign Working Party be established;



- (2) the proposed Terms of Reference of the working party, as set out in the appendix to these minutes, be approved;
- (3) the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the working party be Councillors Prest and Meekins respectively.

(Councillor Patrick declared his non-pecuniary interest in this item of business, by virtue of his being a member of the WisWin Committee)

Meeting finished at 8.00 pm.

Signed

Date



PROPOSED INCINERATOR FOR WISBECH

(Minute 156/19 (2) refers)

The Wisbech Anti-incinerator Campaign Working Party

Terms of Reference

- Lead the campaign aimed at preventing the provision of an incinerator in Wisbech
- Work to achieve a co-ordinated, inclusive campaign across the town
- Undertake effective liaison with all other interested parties (whether they be individuals, groups, organisations or businesses) who/which share the same aim
- Work collaboratively with the Member of Parliament for North East Cambridgeshire in relation to this campaign
- Develop and operate appropriate publicity, using all relevant forms of media
- Engage with the community through all appropriate methods, including the holding of public meetings
- Identify the budget necessary to deliver the campaign and to seek the necessary funding through direct provision by the Town Council (as the lead organisation) and community fundraising.

Operational arrangements

- The working party shall comprise a number of members of Wisbech Town Council and representatives of the community
- The working party shall be chaired by a member of Wisbech Town Council (as the lead agency)
- The Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be appointed by the full Council
- All publicity/communications produced or sanctioned by the working party shall bear the Wisbech Town Council logo/crest
- All publicity/communications produced or sanctioned by the working party shall be “distributed” via the council’s media channels. Wisbech Town Council will use electronic (such as website and social media) and traditional means (such as posters, banners and newspaper editorial) of providing information to the community
- No information shall be published or distributed unless “signed-off” by both the Clerk to the Council and the Chairman of the working party
- Authorisation of the spending of the funding which is available to the working party (£1,000 initially from Wisbech Town Council) be delegated to the Clerk to Wisbech Town Council, in consultation with the Chairman of the working party
- Meetings of the working party shall be convened, at the frequency necessary to maximise the impact of the campaign, by the Clerk to Wisbech Town Council (or officer of the Council so designated by him).