



## WISBECH TOWN COUNCIL

15 April 2019 – 7.30 pm

### MINUTES OF MEETING

**Present:** Councillor Human, Chairman (and Town Mayor); Councillors Balsevics, Miss Cobb, Mrs Cox, Hill, Hodgson, Miss Hoy, Lynn, Mrs MacRae, Maul, Oliver, Miss Oliver, Rackley, Tibbs, Tierney and Wing.

**Apologies:** Councillor Prest.

**Public Participation:** None requested.

#### **151/18 Alister Hopkins**

The Mayor referred to the recent death of Alister Hopkins, who had served as the council's Beadle/Mace Bearer between April 2003 and September 2014.

At the invitation of the Mayor, Councillor Mrs Cox paid tribute to Mr Hopkins. Councillor Mrs Cox expressed the opinion that the death of Mr Hopkins had resulted in a great loss not only to the council but also to the people of Wisbech. She commented that Mr Hopkins was always a charismatic character, with "a twinkle in his eye"; he had been a good, knowledgeable servant of Wisbech Town Council and would be missed by many people.

The Mayor reminded members that Mr Hopkins' funeral would be taking place at the Fenland Crematorium tomorrow afternoon and expressed his sympathy for the Hopkins family at this difficult time.

Members stood in silence for one minute in memory of Mr Hopkins.

#### **152/18 Cambridgeshire Constabulary**

Although no officer of Cambridgeshire Constabulary attended the meeting, the Constabulary had provided to the Clerk, via e-mail, the new Fenland Neighbourhood Policing Team Monthly Review report (minute 4/18 refers) on recent incidents of crime and disorder and other matters in Wisbech and the northern villages in Fenland. The Clerk summarised briefly the report.

The report mentions that the Neighbourhood Policing Team's priorities over the last month had been:

1. maintaining engagements with homeless persons and street drinkers, ensuring that community centres and encampments are visited
2. positive and robust engagement with youths in the town. Use of wider anti-social behaviour (ASB) powers for intervention.

The report mentions that the youth-related ASB in town is still ongoing; however, the neighbourhood policing team had seen a reduction in the number of calls for service. The team had continued with evidence gathering around the ASB perpetrators and interventions and also with high visibility patrols. CCTV had been reviewed again for further opportunities now that additional perpetrators had been identified and officers are continuing their work with other agencies to address the issues.



Mention is made within the report that a home visit had been undertaken by police officers to two of the youths who had been issued previously with an Anti-Social Behaviour Contract (ABC) for the youth-related ASB in town. A marked improvement in their behaviour had been witnessed.

Patrols had been carried out by the Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) in relation to attacks on the homeless community. Positive engagements with the homeless community and reassurance visits to the night shelter had been completed.

The month of March had seen the arrival of the Fair in town. The Impact Team had been brought into Wisbech with patrols in town on the evenings of the 8th and 9th. A dispersal was also put in place for the weekend of the 8th/9th/10th, but the Constabulary is pleased to report that this was not utilised, and no issues reported.

There has been an increase in reports of ASB in the area of John F Kennedy Court. Working with the Housing Association to resolve this, the Neighbourhood Policing Team has been carrying out high visibility patrols.

Other matters include:

- intervening to ensure that a vulnerable person was not having her house “cuckooed” by drug dealers
- giving support to a vulnerable person who the local team believes is being exploited by drug dealers because of the person’s vulnerability
- giving support to a high risk domestic abuse victim on the release of her ex-partner from prison
- a youth who went missing frequently, placing considerable strain on policing resources, has been moved from his placement out of our area to a more suitable placement
- the NPT had arrested a motorist for driving whilst under the influence of alcohol
- the NPT had made an arrest in relation to a fail to appear warrant, as well as possession of class B drugs; this resulted in a charge and remand
- 4 youths had been interviewed about a range of separate offences and these await interventions from the youth offending service.

The report from the Constabulary also mentions that there are some emerging matters which the NPT would be investigating during April. Mention is made in the report that Chapel Road car park has always been a congregation point for young adults with their cars. Some incidents of dangerous driving had been brought to the attention of the local Policing Sergeant and, as a result, he would be working with Fenland District Council and CCTV service regarding this issue.

Councillor Tierney mentioned that he had received reports from parishioners that youth-related anti-social behaviour is being experienced in the streets around Wisbech Park and he asked that the local policing team undertakes patrols of that area.

Councillor Wing asked that the local policing team continues its efforts to tackle the anti-social behaviour which is taking place in the immediate vicinity of John F Kennedy Court (to which reference is made in the latest Fenland Neighbourhood Policing Monthly Review report).

Members decided that the content of the report from the Constabulary and the comments made and issues raised by members be noted and that the Clerk would refer to the local Policing Inspector the issues raised by Councillors Tierney and Wing.



### **153/18 Fenland District Council**

The Clerk reported that he 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.

### **154/18 Cambridgeshire County Council**

#### **Local Highway Improvements 2019/20**

Further to minutes 76/18 (2) and 130/18, the Clerk reported on the outcome of the Local Highway Improvements (LHI) 2019/20 bidding process.

The Clerk informed members that the district area assessment panels (comprising County Councillors representing electoral divisions within the district) had been asked to consider bids and make recommendations to the County Council's Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee on how the budget should be allocated in respect of the scheme bids submitted.

The assessment panels had operated a simple scoring system with a maximum of five points per scheme. Using this assessment system, the two schemes submitted by Wisbech Town Council ((1) for implementation of parking restrictions on Cherry Road (in the vicinity of Orchards Academy; (2) implementation of parking restrictions at the junction of Station Drive and Victoria Road) had scored 4.58 and 3.42 points out of a maximum of 5.0 respectively; the bids were ranked in first and seventh places out of the eighteen submitted throughout Fenland. The County Council had decided that the top seventeen ranking schemes in Fenland would be allocated funding. The total cost of the schemes submitted by Wisbech Town Council are estimated at £3,865 and £3,579 respectively; this council's contributions would be £1,000 for each of the two schemes.

With regard to the proposed scheme for Cherry Road, the Clerk sought members' views regarding an early draft scheme design which had been prepared by an engineer of the Local Highway Authority; a copy of the scheme drawings had been circulated to members, by the Clerk, in advance of the meeting.

Councillor Miss Cobb informed members that although the majority of local residents are happy with the proposed scheme for the introduction of parking restrictions on Cherry Road, there is an element of opposition; some people are concerned that the vehicle parking would be displaced to other nearby roads, causing problems in those areas. She also mentioned that the Orchards Academy had recently changed its entrance, which had alleviated some of the parking issues on Cherry Road.

Councillor Tierney commented that it is not unusual for such proposals to generate objections from local residents at the point at which scheme details emerge. He suggested that, subject to agreement by the Local Authority, the scheme for Cherry Road be put "on hold" for a period to allow for local consultation to be undertaken by Wisbech Town Council. Councillor Tierney (in his capacity as County Councillor for that electoral division) and Councillor Miss Cobb (as a current Town Councillor for the ward) would arrange a meeting, following the local elections scheduled for 2 May 2019, with local residents regarding this proposed scheme.

Members decided, unanimously, on the proposal of Councillor Miss Cobb, seconded by Councillor Tierney, that

- (1) the outcome of the 2019/20 LHI bidding process be noted;



- (2) the Clerk would contact the relevant officer at the Local Highway Authority, requesting that the Cherry Road scheme be put “on hold” for the time being so that Councillor Tierney (in his capacity as County Councillor for that electoral division) and Councillor Miss Cobb (as a current Town Councillor for the ward) could arrange a meeting, following the local elections scheduled for 2 May 2019, with local residents regarding this proposed scheme.

**155/18 Motion to Council: United Kingdom leaving the European Union (referred to as Brexit)**

Councillor Tierney proposed the following Motion to Council:

“Wisbech Town Council understands that a vote here at a parish-level council may be of little or no significance to Westminster legislators; nevertheless, this council has a responsibility to represent the views of the majority of its constituents and to be a voice for them when it can.

This council passed a Motion last year (minute 105/18 refers) to write to the Prime Minister and Brexit Secretary urging a full and proper Brexit rather than the deal that the Prime Minister was pushing, which this council felt did not satisfy the vote that the country gave in the Brexit referendum.

Wisbech Town Council feels that Parliament is making a mockery of the true “people’s vote” that had already been held and won by the Leave side. The members of this council feel that Parliament is seeking to frustrate the Brexit process or to stop it entirely and Wisbech Town Council cannot sit idly by without speaking.

This council believes that taking “No Deal” off the table was a catastrophic error on the part of Parliament. This council believes that the United Kingdom should have left the European Union on 29 March 2019, as the law originally stated, and that every day that passes without the United Kingdom doing so is a day that Parliament sets itself further and further from the will of the people and the result of the largest democratic vote in this nation’s history.

Wisbech Town Council, therefore, proposes that the United Kingdom leaves the European Union, with “No Deal” under WTO arrangements, at the earliest opportunity, and certainly before the European Elections need to be held again.

The Town Council expects this to be the position of the Brexit Secretary, who is the town’s constituency MP, and it asks that Parliament and Government do what they pledged they would do and take the United Kingdom (UK) out of the European Union, cleanly and completely, so that the UK can begin its future as an independent participant in the wider community of the world”.

Councillor Tierney informed members that he had posted a version of this Motion on the Wisbech Discussion Forum, inviting comments from the town’s residents prior to the formal submission of a Motion to Council. He mentioned that hundreds of people had commented upon the draft Motion, 90% of whom had indicated their support for the action proposed by way of the Motion; a few people had made suggestions as to revisions to some of the wording of the Motion and Councillor Tierney had made every effort to take those into account in producing the version now before Wisbech Town Council.

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



### **156/18 Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 18 March 2019**

Members decided, on the proposal of Councillor Miss Oliver, seconded by Councillor Miss Cobb, that the minutes of the Town Council meeting of 18 March 2019 be confirmed and signed.

### **157/18 Minutes of committees**

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

- (1) Planning and Community Infrastructure Committee – 18 March 2019
- (2) Planning and Community Infrastructure Committee – 1 April 2019
- (3) Policy and Resources Committee – 8 April 2019.

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

### **158/18 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. He mentioned that he had attended 19 events since the last meeting of the council, not only in Wisbech but in several other towns.

The Mayor commented that the highlight event for him over the last month had been the official opening of phase 1 of the re-development of the North Cambs Hospital in Wisbech. The opening was undertaken by Stephen Barclay MP and the Mayor and Mayoress had enjoyed meeting the hospital's management team and the very enthusiastic staff. He expressed the opinion that the areas which been subject to re-development feel warm and bright and the finished result is a credit to the design team.

Members were informed by the Mayor that it had been necessary, because of other family commitments, to cancel the Mayor's at Home event which had been scheduled for 28 April 2019. He had originally intended to use that event to present Mayor's Charity monies to a number of local groups and organisations; instead, he would be visiting, before the end of his Mayoral term, each of those groups/organisations for that purpose.

The Mayor thanked councillors and staff for their support during his Mayoral year.

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

### **159/18 Leader of the Council's report**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Miss Hoy, reminded members that this would be the last meeting of the current Wisbech Town Council. She mentioned that, over the term of the current council, since May 2015, there had been a number of changes in the membership of Wisbech Town Council.

Members were informed by Councillor Miss Hoy that the 18 councillors elected four years ago were Stephen Brunton, Michael Bucknor, Virginia Bucknor, Carol Cox, Michael Hill, David Hodgson, Peter Human, Irene Kumalane, Alan Lay, Brenda Lay, Robert McLaren, Viv MacRae, David Oliver, Jess Oliver, Will Schooling, Garry Tibbs, Steve Tierney and herself. Since that time, the council had lost Stephen Brunton, Michael Bucknor, Virginia Bucknor Irene Kumalane, Alan Lay, Brenda Lay and Robert McLaren and gained, in their places (through a number of by-elections), Aigars Balsevics, Laura Cobb, Andrew Lynn, Andy Maul, Ben Prest, Billy Rackley and Phil Wing.



Councillor Miss Hoy commented that she would like to thank those councillors who had decided not to seek re-election for the role that they had played as a Town Councillor during their respective terms of office and for their service to the people of the town. She mentioned that Will Schooling and Laura Cobb are not seeking re-election and she expressed her thanks for their work; particularly Laura for her work in helping to secure the provision of a new skate park at Bath Road. Councillor Miss Hoy also thanked the past Mayors who would not be seeking re-election - Councillors Mrs Cox, Mrs MacRae and Hodgson - for their input into the work of Wisbech Town Council.

The Leader of the Council stated that she would like to take this opportunity to congratulate those who would be elected to Wisbech Town Council on 2 May 2019 unopposed and she also wishes luck to those in wards where polling would take place on 2 May 2019. She expressed her sadness that the “nasty season” had begun now that the elections process is underway; it is often said that Wisbech Town Councillors are nasty and unkind but her experience is the opposite of that. Councillor Miss Hoy commented that many of the “opposition” candidates for seats on the Town Council had, during the last fortnight alone, ridiculed her for her looks, her weight and her employment; all because she is standing as a Conservative.

Councillor Miss Hoy expressed the opinion that, it is good to see that, because of the number of uncontested elections and some seats being “under-contested”, Wisbech Town Council would remain under Conservative control after 2 May 2019. She commented that she is pleased about that situation, not because she wishes to lead a fanfare of Conservative policies and ideals but because a strong team on the council, with a majority of Conservative councillors, had achieved so much and she wishes for that to continue.

The Leader of the Council mentioned that during the last four years, Wisbech Town Council had made significant strides forward both as a service provider and a support organisation for the community.

She reminded members that Wisbech Town Council had:

- continued to provide public toilets in the town and has allocated funding towards a scheme of refurbishment, which she hopes the new council would help deliver
- introduced, very early in the term of this council, a new committee structure, as a means of ensuring that the council’s assets, operational activities and resources (human and financial) are managed as efficiently and effectively as possible
- developed its Markets offer – there is now trading on Wisbech Market Place every day of the week (as opposed to the two days per week when operated by the District Council); the level of the trading on Saturdays is now at the highest level it has ever been; this all adds to the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre. The car boot sales which now take place, despite the critics, has led to an increase in footfall, particularly on a Sunday, resulting in shops taking-on extra staff
- developed and improved its allotments sites, to make them both better and more secure for tenants. Occupancy levels continue to increase
- introduced a new Cleansing Contract for the Market Place and the public toilets owned and managed by the Town Council, following a competitive tendering exercise, which is not only providing an enhanced service over the previous contract but at a more competitive rate
- begun the process of delivering an enhancement scheme for Wisbech Market Place; the scheme which the council is endeavouring to implement (subject to further liaison with the Local Planning Authority) is based upon comments received from members of the public as part of a consultation exercise



- in response to a request from members of the public, invested monies in improving the Christmas lighting in the town
- made bigger and better its programme of community events and festivals, including the introduction of both WisBEACH Day and the Unsung Heroes Awards. The Rock Festival is now attended by thousands of people each year
- taken on the “ownership” of Wisbech Castle, to undertake restoration of the building and develop it into a community venue and significant progress has already been made
- taken on the “ownership” of an area of land to the rear of the Queen Mary Centre, so that it could remain available as a free public car park for the town
- provided grant funding to community and charitable organisations to support them; this has included increased financial provision for the Wisbech and Fenland Museum and the Wisbech in Bloom team. Furthermore, the council had conferred the Honorary Freedom of the Town of Wisbech upon deserving groups and individuals within the town
- facilitated the community Farm project, being delivered by People and Animals UK CIC, through making available approximately 7 acres of allotments land at Lynn Road for that purpose
- begun working jointly with Fenland District Council on proposals to improve the level of recreational equipment in Wisbech, including provision of the new skate park at Bath Road, as well as new equipment for the spider park at Walsoken and the play area at Burcroft Road. Going forward, Wisbech Town Council hopes to collaborate even further with providing disabled play equipment and new seating going into Wisbech Park, plus further enhancement of the play facilities at the spider park and Burcroft Road.
- supported many community projects and initiatives; these include Wisbech Travel Choices, Wisbech 2020 Vision, Wisbech Reads, the Community Led Local Development project, the Creative People and Places project and the initiative to achieve renovation of the dilapidated buildings on Wisbech High Street
- “signed-up” to helping to make Wisbech a Dementia Friendly Community
- submitted, in each of the four years of the current council term, applications under the County Council’s Local Highway Improvements scheme, to help make the highway infrastructure in the town safer for local people. Some of these schemes had been introducing traffic calming on South Brink and the stopping of traffic at the bottom of West Parade
- funded the installation of additional dog waste and litter bins, in response to requests from residents, as well as continuing to fund the much-needed provision of CCTV services in Wisbech town centre.

Councillor Miss Hoy, the Leader of the Council, made the point that the list above is not exhaustive and there are many more matters in which Wisbech Town Council has played a part over the last four years. She commented that it had not always been possible to achieve a successful outcome; for example, despite the council’s unanimous support to keep open the Hudson Indoor Bowls Club, sadly Freedom Leisure did not continue to provide that facility at the Hudson Leisure Centre. Also, this council did not receive a response from the Prime Minister in relation to this council’s Motion in respect of Brexit (minute 105/18 refers).

The Leader of the Council commented that Wisbech Town Council had, over the last four years, always tried to represent the people of Wisbech and their views as best as it is able.



Councillor Miss Hoy expressed the opinion that none of this council's achievements over the last four years would have been possible without its dedicated and committed staff; this applies particularly to Terry Jordan, the Town Clerk, who is always keen to help to see how the council can make its ideas become a reality. She commented that she would like to pass on to staff the council's thanks for their commitment to Wisbech Town Council and the town.

Councillor Miss Hoy stated that she had been proud to lead the Conservative Group on the council, a group of councillors who are unpaid and do what they do for the love of this great town. She thanked all councillors and expressed the hope that she would see them again after the May 2019 elections.

Members decided that the comments of the Leader of the Council be noted.

**160/18 Correspondence**

**Rose Fair Museum Square Entertainment Group**

The Clerk read to members an e-mail from the Creative Director of 20Twenty Productions, on behalf of the Rose Fair Museum Square Entertainment Group, (RFMSEG) expressing the RFMSEG's appreciation of the funding (of £1,000) which had been awarded by the council (minute R17/18 refers) to meet the full cost of providing musical and other street entertainment during the Rose Fair 2019.

Members decided that the content of the e-mail be noted.

**161/18 Notice board/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.

**162/18 Date of next meeting**

Members were reminded that the next meeting of Wisbech Town Council is scheduled for 10 May 2019 (for Mayor Making) at 12 noon; to re-convene on 13 May 2019 (to transact the remaining business) at 7.30 pm, at the offices of Wisbech Town Council.

**Meeting finished at 8.00 pm.**

Signed .....

Date .....