



WISBECH TOWN COUNCIL

18 October 2021 – 7.30 pm

MINUTES OF MEETING

Present: Councillor Lynn, Chairman (and Town Mayor); Councillors Balsevics, Hoy, Imafidon, Ketteringham, Pehlivanova, Tierney and Wallwork.

Apologies: Councillors Hill, Human, Maul, Meekins, Oliver, Patrick, Prest, Rackley, Tibbs and Topgood.

Public Participation: None requested.

60/21 Ferry Project

Members received a presentation from Keith Smith, Director of the Ferry Project, on the work that the Ferry Project undertook during the Covid-19 “lockdowns” and its future plans in the light of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

Before delivering his presentation Mr Smith paid tribute to Mike Forrest, who had been the Chairman of the Ferry Project until his death earlier this year. The council was informed that a celebration of Mike Forrest’s life would be taking place at the Queen Mary Centre on 27 November 2021.

Mr Smith informed the council that the Ferry Project began in 1999 and its aim had been to help address the issues of homelessness in Wisbech. He mentioned that when the first “lockdown” happened in March 2020, most of the services delivered by the Ferry Project were affected immediately; namely:

- the Queen Mary Centre closed
- the night shelter closed
- the café at Octavia View closed
- the work experience activities stopped
- the way that the homeless hostel operated changed – clients were required to stay in their rooms; food was delivered to clients’ rooms; clients were supported via telephone; the communal aspect of the hostel needed to cease; approximately 50% of staff worked from home.

As part of the Government’s “Everyone In” programme, arrangements were made to enable the hostel to increase its provision of beds from 24 to 30.

The council was informed by Mr Smith that there have been some positive changes to the Ferry Project as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Ferry Project had supported 42 people through the provision of food parcels to homeless people and vulnerable families. The number of beds at the hostel has been increased. Hundreds of people had been provided with clothing which had been donated. Anglian Water had provided the Ferry Project with a van to support the work of the donations hub.

As a result of needing to close the night shelter, 18 people ceased to have accommodation with immediate effect. Homeless people were accommodated in local hotels and the Ferry Project donated food to the hotels. Mr Smith made the point that many of those who had been forced to reside in a hotel (as part of the Everyone In) programme) had found it difficult because of their resultant isolation etc. He mentioned that around 30% of such persons nationally had not coped well with residing in a hotel and, as a result, their condition (whatever that is; often a mental health issue) had become worse.



The company Barhale had donated 6 Bunkabins (a type of portacabin for residential use); these had been “kitted-out” by Anglian Water and were located in the car parking area of The Octavia View building.

Although the Queen Mary Centre had been closed for its usual community activities, it was used for Lateral Flow testing, a homelessness hub (to help people who had any housing-related issues) and for blood donations.

Mr Smith informed the council that the Ferry Project had provided six types of support; those being:

1. a homelessness hub
2. support to clients living in hotels
3. Clarkson House hostel
4. floating support to clients living in move-on accommodation
5. floating support to the Fenland Young Parents project
6. floating support to homeless families.

The homelessness hub had been accessed by 206 people (155 men and 51 women); 66.5% of those are British; the remainder are Eastern European; all had been found accommodation (either short-term or long-term).

Mr Smith gave a case study of a person (with mental health issues) who had become homeless , who had used alcohol and drugs to survive and had stayed occasionally at the Ferry Project but had been asked to leave on a number of occasions because of behavioural issues; however, over a period of time she had developed trust with staff at the Ferry Project and, as a result, she has been residing at the Ferry Project for around the last 18 months and a dramatic change in her behaviour had been witnessed. He made the point that people have different needs; some simply need transit accommodation and others require long-term support.

The achievements of the Ferry Project in 2020/21 had been:

- 300+ homeless people supported
- 100+ unemployed people supported
- 78% of people moved-on to stable accommodation
- 21 clients found employment
- 23 clients moved into education
- over £80,000 of donated items used to help homeless, vulnerable, people
- no Covid-19 transmission.

The council was then informed by Mr Smith of the Ferry Project’s future plans. To set the context, he mentioned that the Ferry Project had been part of the Luminus Housing Association since 2004; in 2018 it had become part of Places for People; very recently the Ferry Project had become an independent charity.

Mr Smith informed the council of plans to undertake repairs and re-development works to Octavia View to make it Covid-safe and to build, subject to obtaining planning permission, an additional wing of accommodation (10 rooms with en-suite facilities); it would be an investment of around £1m. He mentioned that the Ferry Project supports 10 properties which are owned by Clarion Housing and the Ferry Project intends, subject to obtaining planning permission, to provide 6 modular homes on land at Mill Close (using Rough Sleeper funding to be provided by Fenland District Council).

The council was informed by Mr Smith that now that the Government has removed the protection from eviction measures which had been introduced during the Covid-19 pandemic, private-sector



landlords have introduced high levels of rent deposits, a situation which is making it difficult to find accommodation for people who could move-on.

Mr Smith explained the future plans for the Queen Mary Centre (QMC). He mentioned that he is in the process of negotiating with Cambridgeshire County Council a new lease (from December 2022 onwards). He made the point that he is attempting to secure a lease for at least 25 years, as it is not possible to secure grants for major repair and improvement works to the building when only short-term leases are issued. He commented that the ambition is to continue to meet the town's needs for this community asset, as well as attempting to introduce an arts/culture/music/theatre offer for the town.

The council was informed by Mr Smith that prior to the first Covid-19 "lockdown" in March 2020, 72 groups used the QMC on a regular basis – 1,200 people per week entered the building; the current number of groups using the QMC is 36.

Mr Smith asked what Wisbech Town Council's priorities for the Ferry Project would be for 2022 and beyond. He commented that he would be happy to hear members' thoughts now or by e-mail later. Mr Smith expressed the opinion that it is very important for the Ferry Project to be aware of the needs of its "partners".

Mr Smith responded to members' questions.

Councillor Tierney expressed his thanks to Keith Smith and his team for the services which had been delivered by the Ferry Project during the Covid-19 pandemic, expressing the opinion that amazing work had been undertaken by all involved.

The opinion was expressed by Councillor Tierney that it is sad that it had taken a pandemic to generate a desire for "everyone in" in terms of seeking to address homelessness. He commented that he would be encouraging the local Member of Parliament to ask the Government to make funding available for a more permanent solution to tackle homelessness.

Councillor Tierney commended the Ferry Project for its approach to supporting homeless people; simply finding accommodation for a person is not enough; these people have other needs. He expressed the opinion that the Ferry Project is making a real difference to people's lives.

Councillor Wallwork asked when the six modular homes, proposed for Mill Close, would be in place. In response, Mr Smith explained that he is hopeful that the necessary planning permission would be granted in December of this year and that the homes would be ready for occupation by April of next year.

Mr Smith was asked by Councillor Wallwork whether the Ferry Project has space available to accommodate additional homeless people. In response, Mr Smith stated that most of the time there are 3 or 4 spaces available.

In response to a question from Councillor Wallwork as to what the Ferry Project does when it has no space available to accommodate a homeless person, Mr Smith commented that the Ferry Project would provide bedding for that person; he added that during periods of very low temperatures, the Ferry Project is allowed to increase its level of homelessness provision, in accordance with the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP).

Councillor Wallwork expressed the opinion that the Ferry Project needs to communicate to the public what it provides for the benefit of the town; it needs to "shout about" its successes.



Members decided that the information presented be noted and they indicated that Wisbech Town Council is appreciative of the valuable services provided by the Ferry Project.

61/21 Fenland Families and Baby Bank

Further to minute 47/21, members considered the information which had been provided subsequently by Rachel Green in respect of the Fenland Families and Baby Bank.

Rachel Green had, since the time of minute 47/21, been informed by the Clerk to Wisbech Town Council of the discussion which had taken place and the decision which had been reached at the last meeting of Wisbech Town Council; i.e. the unanimous decision being that

- (1) Wisbech Town Council is minded to provide funding to meet the cost of three months' rent of a shop unit in Wisbech for the Fenland Families and Baby Bank;
- (2) such funding would only be allocated once the council had received financial projections of income and expenditure and the Fenland Families and Baby Bank had become a Community Interest Company;
- (3) the Fenland Families and Baby Bank be offered the assistance of Councillors Maul, Meekins and Wallwork to assist in the production of a fully costed business plan;
- (4) this matter be discussed further at the next meeting of Wisbech Town Council if sufficient progress has been made.

In response, Rachel Green had indicated to the Clerk that she would be very pleased to receive the councillors' assistance (as described at (3) above).

Members were informed by the Clerk that Councillor Meekins had contacted Rachel Green, repeating his offer of providing help with preparing basic income and expenditure accounts for the Fenland Families and Baby Bank.

The Clerk informed members that registration as a CIC (number 13680597) had been received by the Fenland Families and Baby Bank on 14 October 2021.

Members were informed by the Clerk that the Fenland Families and Baby Bank had secured the former Fenland Citizen premises and Rachel Green had collected the keys for the building today. It is understood that the first three months of occupation would be rent-free.

According to Rachel Green, most of the work required to make the building fit-for-purpose is cleaning and decorating. Electrics and plumbing are good order. The central heating boiler would need to be serviced.

The Fenland Families and Baby Bank hopes that it will be possible to open during the first week of November 2021 and have the official opening on 20 November 2021, which would mark the first anniversary of the Fenland Families and Baby Bank.

The Clerk outlined the Fenland Families and Baby Bank's proposed activities for the official opening (by the Mayor if available) of its new premises in Wisbech.

Rachel Green had informed the Clerk that the team is working very hard to raise funds to support this new venture. Both Morrison's supermarket and Clarion Housing had indicated that they wish to support the work of the Fenland Families and Baby Bank.



Members decided, unanimously, on the proposal of Councillor Wallwork, seconded by Councillor Hoy, that

- (1) the information reported by the Clerk be noted;
- (2) as indicated at minute 47/21 and given the fact that the Fenland Families and Baby Bank had become registered as a Community Interest Company, Wisbech Town Council would provide financial support equivalent to three months' rent of the building in Wisbech which is now being rented by the Fenland Families and Baby Bank.

62/21 Fenland District Council

(1) Information

The Clerk reported that information in respect of CCTV performance had been forwarded, earlier today by e-mail, to all members of the council. The District Council's Environment Newsletter had been forwarded similarly last week.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

(2) Gambling Act Policy

Members considered the submission of a response to Fenland District Council's consultation exercise in relation to a review of its Gambling Act Policy (Statement of Principles).

The Clerk had circulated to members, in advance of the meeting, a copy of the draft policy document.

Fenland District Council (FDC) states that the review of its Gambling Act Policy (Statement of Principles) is a requirement under Section 349 of the Gambling Act 2005. In preparing the statement, officers of FDC had given full regard to both the requirements of the Gambling Act itself and the revised guidelines issued by the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS), the Gambling Commission and, where relevant, District Council strategies (such as crime and disorder).

The Clerk reminded members that the objectives of the Gambling Act 2005 are:

- To prevent gambling from being a source of crime and disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime
- Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way
- Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling.

The Gambling Act Policy (Statement of Principles) would form the basis of any decision taken by Fenland District Council in respect of applications or enforcement under the Gambling Act 2005 by officers or any committee or sub-committee of the council involved in licensing decisions.

The consultation period will conclude on 8 November 2021. Once adopted by the council, the new policy would cover the period 2022 to 2025.



Members decided that Fenland District Council be informed that Wisbech Town Council has no comments to make in relation to the proposed Gambling Act Policy (Statement of Principles) for the period 2022 to 2025.

63/21 Cambridgeshire County Council

(1) Local Highway Improvement schemes 2022/23

Further to minute 49/21 (3), the Clerk informed members that, following his conversation with the member of the public who had raised this matter with Councillor Hoy and after he had visited the site in question, the Clerk had submitted an application for a Local Highway Improvement (LHI) scheme for 2022/23, for works to provide a safer route, particularly for those who have mobility issues, between the “two sides” of Wisbech Retail Park (for example, being able to “travel” between the Wickes store and the B&M store without needing to venture into “live traffic” at a busy mini-roundabout).

Members decided that the situation be noted.

(2) Fenland Accessibility Study – Stakeholder engagement

Members considered the draft Fenland Accessibility Report, which had been produced by the Local Highway Authority (LHA).

The LHA had produced this report as part of its work to develop the Fenland Transport Strategy (which would replace the Market Town Transport Strategies).

The LHA comments that the Councillors’ Steering Group had identified accessibility as being a major challenge in Fenland and makes the point that the Fenland Accessibility Report builds an evidence base and highlights accessibility issues across Fenland. This report would be a large part of the evidence base for the Fenland Transport Strategy.

Wisbech Town Council is being consulted at this time as part of a targeted engagement with key stakeholders. The public will be consulted as part of a wider future consultation on the whole of the Fenland Transport Strategy.

This council is being invited to submit any comments and thoughts and any questions in relation to the draft Fenland Accessibility Report. The deadline for the LHA’s receipt of responses from key stakeholders is 5 November 2021.

Councillor Hoy made the point that the accessibility work undertaken shows that many facilities are inaccessible to people who live in Wisbech. She commented that it is worth noting that although access to hospital A and E services is difficult for people living in the north of the district, it is even more difficult for those who live in the southern parts of Fenland.

Members decided that Wisbech Town Council has no formal comments to make in respect of the consultation exercise.

(3) New secondary school for Wisbech

Further to minute 66/20 (3), Councillor Hoy, in her capacity as a member of Cambridgeshire County Council, informed members that the new joint administration at the County Council had “pulled the plug” on an additional secondary school for Wisbech. The County Council is, however, still proceeding with the provision of a new SEMH (social, emotional and mental health needs) school.



Councillor Hoy expressed the opinion that the situation is very disappointing; the new administration is saying that there is not a need for additional pupil places in Wisbech. This also means, in her opinion, that £25m has potentially been lost to the people of the town. She informed members that she had asked at the County Council what had changed to suggest that additional secondary school places are no longer needed in Wisbech and that, in response, excuses such as Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic had been given.

Councillor Hoy expressed the hope that the Department for Education would provide the funding necessary to provide an additional secondary school in Wisbech. She mentioned that she would be making the request at a meeting at the County Council tomorrow that the funding which had been allocated by the County Council for an additional secondary school in Wisbech be reinstated in the council's capital programme.

Councillor Tierney, in his capacity as a member of Cambridgeshire County Council, mentioned that Councillor Hoy had "taken-on" those County Councillors who had been involved in this decision-making. He made the point that that the previous administration at the County Council had not acted in this way in relation to service provision in the south of the County.

Members were informed by Councillor Tierney of his opinion that this decision has the effect of potentially "stealing" £25m from the people of Wisbech; a town which has some of the poorest children in the County. He expressed the opinion that the motive for this decision is clearly political in nature.

64/21 Cambridgeshire Constabulary

Members took the opportunity to consider any matters relating to crime and disorder in Wisbech, for reference to Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

Councillor Lynn mentioned that the local Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) had been posting on Facebook the details of its successes. He expressed the opinion that this is a very positive situation and he expressed his appreciation of the work being undertaken by the NPT.

Members were informed by Councillor Lynn that the Police and Crime Commissioner had renewed the funding for the Fenland Community Safety Partnership (CSP). He mentioned that the expectation had been that the funding would reduce for the current financial year from £26,000 to nil; however, it has been increased to £40,000.

Councillor Lynn mentioned that Neighbourhood Policing Team would see an increase in officer numbers and that the community would see a greater police presence. He commented that the public consumption of alcohol and youth-related anti-social behaviour are still matters in Wisbech which need to be tackled by the police.

Councillor Tierney commented that he is pleased to hear what the Police and Crime Commissioner is saying with regard to policing but the pledges need to result in action. He mentioned that many people in Wisbech feel intimidated by certain groups of youngsters but those people do not report matters to the police as they feel it to be a waste of time.

The point was made by Councillor Tierney that the police do not appear to be interested in receiving filmed evidence of incidents. Not a situation which is unique to Wisbech but youngsters do not seem to feel that there could be consequences of their actions.

Councillor Lynn expressed the hope that the Police and Crime Commissioner is sincere in what he is saying about dealing with the types of issues which are being faced by the people of Wisbech.



Councillor Wallwork made the point that the police do respond to incidents which could result in an immediate threat to the safety of a person. She mentioned that the Constabulary is trying to encourage members of the public to use the on-line reporting systems; however, not everyone is able to report incidents in such a way; hence, the police should not try to direct people to report in that manner.

Councillor Lynn informed members that Councillor Tierney and he had had raised continually with the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) the inadequacies of the 101 telephone number. He commented that the PCC had acknowledged that the service is not fit-for-purpose and that, consequently, he would be investing in additional call-handling capacity. Councillor Lynn expressed the opinion that all people who report an incident to the police ought to receive feedback on the action that would be or has been taken.

Members decided that the information reported be noted.

65/21 Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 20 September 2021

Members decided, unanimously, on the proposal of Councillor Ketteringham, seconded by Councillor Tierney, that the minutes of the Town Council meeting of 20 September 2021 be confirmed and signed.

66/21 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 – 20 September 2021
- (2) Planning and Community Infrastructure Committee – 12 October 2021
- (3) Resources Committee – 12 October 2021.

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

67/21 Mayor's report

The Mayor informed members that since the last meeting of the council it had been a very busy and varied time.

Members were informed by the Mayor that he had

- visited the Alan Hudson Day Centre; he had enjoyed a tour of the centre and had received information regarding the services that it provides and the activities that it operates. He expressed the opinion that the centre has an excellent team of staff and that it is an asset to Wisbech
- participated in a sponsored walk in Wisbech, organised by Orchard House Care Home, to raise money to assist those who are living with Dementia
- attended civic events at Fakenham, Stamford and Rushden
- attended a fund-raising film-showing at the Luxe Cinema, organised by Wisbech Lions; this event had been attended also by the Deputy Mayor and Councillor Ketteringham.

The Mayor mentioned that he is looking forward to the Halloween Spoktaclar event which would be taking place in the town centre on Sunday 31 October.



At the invitation of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor informed members that she had, since the last meeting:

- attended a visit by the Board of Clarion Housing to the Wisbech Community Farm (as part of a visit to Fenland)
- attended a fund-raising film-showing at the Luxe Cinema, organised by Wisbech Lions
- visited, accompanied by Councillor Hoy, Elm Road Primary School, Wisbech.

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

68/21 Leader of the Council's report

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Hoy, mentioned the council's Halloween event which is scheduled for 31 October 2021 and would operate between 1.00 pm and 4.00 pm. She invited members to assist with the setting-up and breaking-down of the equipment which would be used; for example gazebos; setting-up would commence at 9.00 am.

Members decided that the information reported by the Leader of the Council be noted.

69/21 Clerk's report

The Clerk reported to members on: updates in relation to council projects/initiatives; correspondence received which would be of interest to councillors; advance notice of events/activities etc:

Projects and service delivery

Community Support

The Clerk continues to work with other agencies locally, via the Fenland Diverse Communities Forum, to develop "messages" to encourage people to access Covid-19 vaccinations and to undertake Covid-19 tests.

Officers continue to share other partners' information and undertake "sign posting" to other services/organisations as appropriate.

Wisbech Market

Following various changes during the last year or so due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Wisbech Market has been operating "as normal" since 12 April this year and trading levels at Wisbech Market now are generally at the "pre-lockdown" levels. The council had "lost" some traders but had "gained" a similar number of others.

Officers are gauging interest in the possibility of holding "twilight markets" as well as daytime markets in an effort to improve the evening economy of the town centre and to make outdoor shopping more accessible by the community; for example, making it easier for those who may find it difficult to access daytime market trading because work shift patterns.

Christmas "twilight" trading is also being offered on 19 and 23 December for reasons similar to those above and to generate a festive shopping atmosphere – shopping under the town's Christmas lights.

The council is organising a Spooktacular Family Fun Day on Sunday 31 October 2021, to operate between 1.00 pm and 4.00 pm. Planning is almost complete and, as an additional event this year



which should attract footfall back into the town centre, the council is able to access monies from the Welcome Back Fund (administered by Fenland District Council) to meet the cost of the event.

Market Place enhancements

The council now has secured a total of £350,000 of funding towards the cost of delivering a scheme of enhancement to Wisbech Market Place. The necessary funding agreements between Wisbech Town Council and Cambridgeshire County Council (for £150,000) and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (for £200,000) are in place.

At 5 July 2021 meeting of the Wisbech Market Place Management Committee, members decided that one of the tenders received for the delivery of this scheme be accepted, subject to the agreement reached between the Clerk, in liaison with the Leader of the Council and the Chairman of the Wisbech Market Place Management Committee, and the contractor as to the final details and cost of the works.

A meeting with the successful tenderer (attended by the Leader of the Council, the Chairman of the Wisbech Market Place Management Committee, the Town Clerk and the Design Engineer engaged by the Council) took place on 11 August 2021. Several matters were discussed in relation to delivery of the scheme (including lead-in times for acquisition of construction materials etc). There will be further such meetings.

A virtual meeting was held - attended by the Leader of the Council, the Chairman of the Wisbech Market Place Management Committee, the Town Clerk and the Design Engineer engaged by the Council - on 1 October 2021 to discuss some of the matters which had arisen from the meeting with the contractor on 11 August 2021. The Design Engineer is in the process of arranging a further meeting with the contractor to enable consideration (and selection) of surfacing materials etc.

Regarding the "pedestrianisation" of the Market Place area, the Town Clerk has now signed a Pedestrianisation Agreement between Cambridgeshire County Council and Wisbech Town Council.

Allotments

The council's allotments remain popular; the council continues to attract additional tenants.

Maintenance works are required to the access roads at both the Waterlees and Cox's Lane sites. Quotations for undertaking remedial works have been accepted and a works start date is awaited.

The council has received several applications in recent weeks and officers are in the process of allocating new tenancies, as well as renewing existing tenancies (the new allotment tenancy year begins in October).

Communications

The Town Council's social media continues to create a high-level presence across Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

Community events and festivals

The planning for this year's Wisbech Christmas Fayre (which will take place on Sunday 12 December 2021) is well underway. The arrangements are made by a steering group (Chaired by the Town Clerk) which includes representatives from Wisbech Town Council, Fenland District Council, The Horsefair Shopping Centre, the Library Service, Wisbech Lions, Wisbech Rotary Club etc. The steering group has, so far, met on 8 June, 10 August and 21 September 2021 to undertake planning for this year's event. The group is seeking to deliver a public, town centre event but may add some



associated on-line activity this year (the on-line activity which had taken place in 2020 “in place” of an outdoor event had been well-received).

Planning for this year’s Remembrance Sunday event (on 14 November) is underway. Two meetings of “interested parties” have already taken place and a final “sign-off” meeting is scheduled for 27 October 2021.

A summary of how this year’s event will operate is as follows:

- Civic party leaves the Council Chamber at 10.30 am and processes to the Market Place
- Civic party observes the “troops” at the Market Place
- Parade leaves the Market Place, followed by the Civic party, at 10.45 am and proceeds (via Market Street) to the War Memorial
- Service at the War Memorial begins at 10.50 am
- Two minutes silence observed at 11.00 am; followed by the laying of wreaths
- March-off from War Memorial at approximately 11.30 am
- Service (brief with limited number of attendees) at St and St Paul’s Church.

Planning is underway in relation to this year’s Christmas Lights switch-on event (on 28 November). It will follow the usual format of a programme of entertainment etc in the Market Place, concluding with the town’s Christmas lights being switched-on.

Councillor Hoy and the Town Clerk have been involved in discussions with officers of Fenland District Council regarding accessing Welcome Back Fund monies (from the Government) to deliver activities, projects and events aimed at encouraging people to visit the town centre. An update had been given to last week’s meeting of the Resources Committee (minute R8/21 refers).

Christmas lights

Councillor Oliver and the Town Clerk have been working with the council’s Christmas lighting installation contractor regarding the installation works this year and they have also been looking at ways of improving the availability of sources of electricity to support the Christmas lighting on High Street (in liaison with the County Council’s Street Lighting Team); Work is also underway to procure some additional/replacement lighting displays for High Street and extending the lighting scheme to include Market Street and Wisbech Castle.

Town Hall/office

Since the Covid-19 lockdown, members of the public have generally not been allowed access to the building. Methods of contact have been by telephone, e-mail or post. This continues operate very well, with no apparent reduction in service to the public. Members of the public who do need to access the building are encouraged to wear a face covering.

Public toilets

A quotation for replacement of the guttering to the toilet block at Exchange Square has been accepted and a works start-date is awaited from the contractor.

It had been necessary to close the public toilets at Wisbech Park for a few days last week, as the water supply had been turned-off by Anglian Water so that the company could repair a leak in the pipework within the park. The toilets are now open again.



The council is still not in a position to achieve re-opening of the toilets at the Horsefair Shopping Centre, despite the Clerk's best efforts over a period of several months.

Wisbech Castle

Although Wisbech Castle has not re-established regular opening hours, several pre-booked events (including paranormal evenings, escape room events, weddings etc) are taking place.

It is hoped that if the number of volunteers can be increased, Wisbech Castle will be able to be open to the public more often.

Despite the limited volunteer manpower available currently, internal and external work is still ongoing.

Correspondence

The Clerk had no items of correspondence to bring to Council's attention at this time.

70/21 Date of next meeting

Members noted that the next meeting of Wisbech Town Council is scheduled for 15 November 2021, to commence at 7.30 pm, at the offices of Wisbech Town Council.

Meeting finished at 8.55 pm.

Signed

Date

