



WISBECH TOWN COUNCIL

19 August 2019 – 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, Tibbs, Tierney, Topgood and Mrs Wallwork.

Apologies: Councillors Rackley and Wing.

Public participation: None requested.

55/19 Wisbech Community Development Trust

Members received a presentation from Mrs C Stevens, Manager of the Oasis Community Centre, on the use of the Centre and plans for its future development.

Mrs Stevens informed the council that the Oasis Community Centre, which is at the “heart” of the Waterlees ward, is owned and managed by the Wisbech Community Development Trust (a registered charity).

Mrs Stevens explained the types of activity which take place at the Oasis Community Centre, including:

- rooms for hire
- various community events (including family Fun Days)
- various classes and learning events (including Click Therapy and confidence-building courses)
- offering support to local residents (including “signposting” to various agencies)
- monthly litter picks
- participation in Waterlees in Bloom
- partnership working to address community issues; Mrs Stevens mentioned some of the partner organisations and groups.

The council was informed by Mrs Stevens that the Oasis Community Centre faces a number of challenges, such as:

- a lack of suitable facilities for some of the local groups (for example, the building is not suitable for use as the venue for certain sporting activities); the Trust is, however, working on an expansion plan, which, if delivered, would include a sports hall and a community café
- because of the levels of deprivation in the Waterlees ward, local residents needing more support than people living elsewhere in Wisbech
- a lack of funding
- local residents having no means of accessing projects and programmes which are taking place outside of the Waterlees ward.

The council was informed by Mrs Stevens of some of the projects which are being delivered within the Waterlees ward with the aim of improving residents’ lives; the projects include the new community farm, which is supported by Wisbech Town Council, and a regular Job Club, provided by Clarion Futures. In addition, she mentioned the work being undertaken to produce a Waterlees Community Plan and to recruit Community Champions as part of that project. Mrs Stevens informed the council of some of the activities which had commenced and successes which had been achieved as a result of work on the Community Plan to date. Mrs Stevens shared with the council some of the findings



from the consultation work which had been undertaken to inform the plan; consultees had expressed what they like about the ward (including the community spirit and the community facilities) and their concerns (including lack of policing in the ward).

Another theme from the Community Plan is the community's desire for a multi-purpose sports hall, a community café and a youth area; all of these aspects had been included in the Wisbech Community Development Trust's plan for expansion of the Oasis Community Centre. Mrs Stevens showed councillors some indicative drawings/plans of how the proposed extension could look.

The council was informed by Mrs Stevens of what is being planned for the future; in summary:

- extension of the Oasis Community Centre
- upskilling local people and raising their aspirations, through the delivery of partnership projects
- completion of the Waterlees Community Plan and sharing the findings with partners and the community
- engaging with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Police and Crime Commissioner via the next meeting of the Waterlees Community Forum.

Mrs Stevens responded to members' questions.

Councillor Mrs Wallwork commented that she admires the efforts of the Wisbech Community Development Trust and the staff of the Oasis Community Centre in seeking to raise the local community's aspirations; the approach being taken is holistic and solution-focussed.

Councillor Human congratulated Mrs Stevens on what is being achieved on the Waterlees ward and gave his thanks for her dedication to seeking to improve the lives its residents.

Councillor Lynn expressed his support for the proposed expansion of the Oasis Community Centre and commented that he welcomes particularly the inclusion of a youth area.

Councillor Tierney requested it be noted that he is the representative of Cambridgeshire County Council on the Wisbech Community Development Trust.

Members decided that the information presented, the comments made by members and the responses to their questions be noted.

56/19 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. Work surrounding the burglary series in Wisbech, identifying and dealing with offenders.
Providing re-assurance to victims and a proactive response to new leads.
2. Tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) in Wisbech town centre, progression of ASB legislation to tackle those that are the most prolific with a view reducing demand for police action.

Within the report there is mention of the fact that there had been a considerable amount of police activity towards tackling the burglary series in Wisbech over the past month, with last minute changes to duties to enable officers to be proactive towards the crime trends involved in the burglaries. These had both been in high visibility and in plain clothes and had included officers from



other parts of the County being “drafted-in” to assist local officers. A number of offenders had been located and arrested. All of the arrests had led to positive outcomes within the investigation. The police are satisfied that those arrested are those involved in the crimes. The crime figures for the past two weeks in relation to dwelling burglaries are minimal.

The report mentions that, with regard to youth anti-social behaviour (ASB), there had been a number of interventions with youths, whereby there are a number of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts in place, some parenting contracts had been agreed and would be implemented soon. The team is working on a Criminal Behaviour Order, for presentation to court in the forthcoming weeks, in relation to whom the local policing team believes is main offender when it comes to youth ASB. The aim is that in implementing this order, a considerable amount of ASB could be prevented.

The local Police Sergeant makes the point in the report that the team had been working tirelessly throughout this period and had demonstrated what can be achieved when working together. The Sergeant encourages everyone to report to the police any matters of crime and disorder of which they may be aware, so that appropriate action could be taken.

Councillor Miss Hoy encouraged members of the public not only to report incidents of crime and disorder but to take photographs and video footage as evidence of the activity that they had witnessed.

Councillor Tierney expressed his thanks to the police for the high-visibility patrols which had been undertaken recently; action is being taken to address inconsiderate and illegal parking and street drinking. He expressed the opinion that an on-street police presence does act as a means of crime prevention and he hopes that the town could see more of such an approach to policing. He added that he had forwarded to the police some video footage of a “person of interest” in relation to a burglary but had received no response.

Members decided that the situation be noted and that the comments made and issues raised by Councillor Tierney be referred by the Clerk to the local Policing Inspector.

57/19 Fenland District Council

(1) Information

The Clerk reported that information in respect of CCTV performance, Section 106 Planning Obligations details and the council’s Environment newsletter, had been forwarded, last week by e-mail, to all members of the council.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

(2) Wisbech Cumulative Impact Assessment Policy (in respect of licensing)

Members considered the invitation from Fenland District Council (FDC) to submit comments and views to FDC, as the Licensing Authority, in relation to the review of its Wisbech Cumulative Impact Assessment Policy. The purpose of the review is to enable the Licensing Authority to determine whether the policy – which relates to applications for new Premises Licences and variations of existing ones - is still relevant to the present day situation in Wisbech town centre.

The Clerk had circulated to members, in advance of the meeting, a copy of the documentation (including a map of the geographical area to which the policy applies) which had been provided by the Licensing Authority.



The period during which responses to the consultation may be submitted to the Licensing Authority is 5 August to 13 September 2019.

Councillor Tierney commented that he is always disappointed when a policy is put in place to address an issue but fails to do so. He expressed the opinion that such is the case with the Wisbech Cumulative Impact Policy; although the intention of the policy is laudable, it is not effective. He made the point that reducing the number of premises which are allowed to sell alcohol does not reduce the supply; all that it does is “protect” existing licensed premises, even if they are not run well, from potential competition.

Councillor Tierney mentioned that this policy allows the Licensing Authority to refuse applications for new premises licences and for variations of existing licences and that in cases where applicants had lodged an appeal against a refusal of a licensing application by the Licensing Authority, those appeals have been successful. He expressed the opinion that continuation of this policy would cause no harm, as it is so weak. He expressed the opinion that the issue which this policy seeks to address is a national one and, consequently, it requires a national (rather than local) solution.

Councillor Maul commented that the policy may have made a difference to the number of licensed premises in Wisbech but the real issue is, in his opinion, the need for the Licensing Authority to ensure compliance with the law by the existing licensed premises (to prevent them selling alcohol after their licensed hours and to persons who are already intoxicated at the time of alcohol purchase).

Councillor Miss Hoy commented that she agrees with the comments which had been made by Councillor Maul. This policy has no impact upon the existing licensed premises in the town; it simply prevents new ones. She expressed the opinion that, although the Cumulative Impact Policy had been in force for a number of years, the street drinking situation is worsening. The presumption of the policy is to refuse applications for additional outlets for the sale of alcohol; such an approach prevents potentially good businesses from opening in the town but “protects” existing ones which may be run poorly.

Councillor Miss Hoy suggested that perhaps the policy should be focussed upon particular types of retail sales of alcohol; for example, “corner shop” style off-licensed premises. The sale of alcohol with a meal in a restaurant does not have the same implications as selling over the counter at a shop. She expressed the opinion that the policy is not working but that does not necessarily mean that it should be abandoned. However, it should be acknowledged that this policy is not the means by which to achieve a reduction in street drinking in Wisbech.

Members decided that the Clerk would produce, on behalf of Wisbech Town Council, a response, through summarising the comments set out above, in relation to Fenland District Council’s review of its Wisbech Cumulative Impact Assessment Policy.

(Councillor Balsevics declared his pecuniary interest in this item of business, by virtue of him being a licensee in Wisbech, and retired from the meeting for the duration of the discussion and voting thereon)

(3) Gambling Act Policy

Members considered the invitation from Fenland District Council (FDC) to submit comments and views to FDC, as the Licensing Authority, in relation to the review of its Gambling Act Policy (as is required under Section 349 of the Gambling Act 2005).



The Clerk had circulated to members, in advance of the meeting, a copy of the documentation (including a link to the draft policy on the District Council's website) which had been provided by the Licensing Authority.

The closing date for the District Council's receipt of responses to the consultation on the Gambling Act Policy is 6 September 2019.

Members were reminded by the Clerk that the objectives of the Gambling Act 2005 are:

- to prevent gambling from being a source of crime and disorder, being associated with crime and 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 and exploited by gambling.

Members indicated that, since the lowering significantly of the maximum jackpots that could be won on gambling machines, they have little concern with regard to licensed premises within towns. Their primary concern now relates to the easy access to on-line gambling activities.

It is acknowledged by members that most people enjoy the occasional "flutter", which causes no issues for the individual or their families, but are aware that gambling can become, for some people, an addiction which can have significant implications (economically and socially) for them and others.

Members decided that Fenland District Council be informed, by the Clerk, that Wisbech Town Council is of the opinion that its "Gambling Policy Statement of Principles" (Gambling Act 2005) looks at the real issues in relation to gambling and deals with them in a sensible manner.

(4) Play equipment provision in Fenland

Members considered the content of an e-mail, which had been circulated to them in advance of the meeting by the Clerk and read to them by him at the meeting, from the Leader of Fenland District Council (FDC) in relation to a review being undertaken by FDC in respect of play equipment provision in Fenland.

The e-mail from the Leader of Fenland District Council, Councillor Boden, states that following on from a Motion to the District Council meeting on 23 May 2019 that council's Cabinet had discussed on 18 July the equity of play equipment provision across the District. As a result of that discussion, the Cabinet had decided to have a brief pause, until September 2019, on the current programme for 2019/20 where there would be no impact upon procurement or current orders. That would allow the Cabinet to consider further information relating to play equipment in Fenland, including the location and condition of such equipment, at its 18 September 2019 meeting.

District Councillor Boden mentions his awareness that FDC officers had been in discussion with the Town Council regarding play equipment in Wisbech and the District Council had received some feedback from the Town Council regarding its initial preferences for how to spend Section 106 Planning Obligation monies in that regard. However, FDC would welcome confirmation of this and any other feedback that the Town Council may have to inform the District Council's discussion in September.



Councillor Miss Hoy informed members that this review, which had been implemented at the request of the Independent Alliance of councillors at the District Council, has shown so far that the provision of play equipment across Fenland is inequitable.

Councillor Patrick expressed the hope that Wisbech Town Council would support the provision of play equipment within the Kirkgate ward.

Councillor Prest mentioned that the Three Counties Running Club would like to see the provision of a running track at Wisbech Park, which he proposed to council.

Councillor Tierney commented that there is a need to provide sporting activity for residents of the Waterlees ward and expressed the opinion that Councillor Prest's proposal would help to meet that need.

Councillor Oliver mentioned that members had supported previously the provision of play equipment at Burcroft Road/West Parade and he asked that they continue such support. Councillor Balsevics commented that he supports such provision.

Councillor Tibbs commented that he would like to see the provision of play equipment within the Kirkgate ward.

Councillor Tierney made the point that there is currently no play equipment provision within the Medworth ward.

In response to a question from Councillor Tibbs as to the progress of installing a new waste bin at old Lynn Road (minute 49/19 refers), Councillor Patrick commented that the relevant officer at Fenland District Council has the matter in hand.

Members decided, on the proposal of Councillor Lynn, seconded by Councillor Prest, that in terms of where Wisbech Town Council would like to see new play/leisure equipment provided in Wisbech is through (1) the installation of a running track at Wisbech Park; (2) the provision of play equipment at West Parade/Burcroft Road (as had been requested by the Town Council previously). In terms of the allocation of the total financial resource to be made available to Wisbech, members feel that the funding-split should be (1) 2/3; (2) 1/3.

(5) Green Dog Walkers scheme

Members considered a further invitation, by e-mail, from Fenland District Council (FDC) to join the District Council's Green Dog Walkers Campaign; details of which had been circulated to members, in advance of the meeting, by the Clerk.

The Clerk reminded members that council had considered this matter previously, at its meetings on 19 November and 17 December 2018, and of the decisions which had been reached on those occasions (minutes 86/18 (3) and 103/18 (3) refer).

The e-mail from FDC mentions that when Green Dog Walkers was launched in Whittlesey and Chatteris, those who completed a pledge received a dog tag to display on their dog's lead or collar and a roll of dog waste bags as a thank you to helping make the campaign a success.

Following in the footsteps of both Whittlesey and Chatteris, FDC had received interest from residents in the Waterlees area of Wisbech who would like to champion the scheme for Wisbech. The District Council is, therefore, asking Wisbech Town Council to support the scheme and promote it as necessary.



It is mentioned within the e-mail from FDC that both Whittlesey and Chatteris Town Councils had provided some initial financial support to the schemes in their towns. The dog tags cost £225 for 100 (engraved with the town name e.g. 'Whittlesey Green Dog Walkers') and 100 rolls of biodegradable dog poo bags were £40. FDC is enquiring as to whether this would be something that Wisbech Town Council would consider supporting financially.

The e-mail goes on to say that in the other areas where Green Dog Walkers has been launched, Fenland District Council had installed a dog bag dispenser, which community representatives replenish.

Councillor Human expressed commented that, although he has some doubts about the likely effectiveness of such a scheme, he is supportive of any measure which could help to tackle the issue of irresponsible dog ownership. Councillor Human's comments were supported by Councillor Tierney.

Councillor Topgood expressed the opinion that if the group of volunteers would be promoting the scheme across Wisbech, and not solely within the Waterlees ward, it ought to be supported by the Town Council; perhaps the council's Small Grants Budget could be utilised to provide the funding necessary to support this scheme.

Members decided that Wisbech Town Council would support the introduction of such a scheme in Wisbech – the council assumes that although the interested residents live on the Waterlees ward, their intention is to provide a scheme not just for that ward but for the whole town. Members indicated that they are prepared to provide some funding towards the cost of this initiative. In addition, as suggested when this matter had been discussed by the council last year (at minutes 86/18 (3) and 103/18 (3)), the opportunity exists for the "community group" which would be championing this scheme to apply for funding from the council's Small Grants Budget.

58/19 Cambridgeshire County Council

Further to minute 43/19 (2), the Clerk informed members that the two Local Highway Improvement schemes proposed by Wisbech Town Council for 2020/21 had been submitted to the Local Highway Authority (LHA) and that he would keep members informed of any correspondence received from the LHA with regard to those applications.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

59/19 Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 15 July 2019

Members decided, on the proposal of Councillor Oliver, seconded by Councillor Lynn, that the minutes of the Town Council meeting of 15 July 2019 be confirmed and signed.

60/19 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 – 15 July 2019
- (2) Wisbech Market Place Management Committee – 30 July 2019
- (3) Planning and Community Infrastructure Committee – 5 August 2019
- (4) Assets Management Committee – 5 August 2019.

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



61/19 Mayor's Report

The Mayor informed members that he had attended 11 events since the Council meeting of 17 June 2019; some before his accident (on 4 July) and some since his discharge from hospital; one of the notable events for him had been attendance at the Army Cadets Summer Camp at Thetford.

The Mayor thanked the Deputy Mayor for attending events in his stead, including various during associated with the Rose Fair, during the period of the Mayor's time in hospital and convalescence following his operation. The Mayor thanked also Councillors Ketteringham and Topgood for performing the role of Beadle at a couple of events recently.

Councillor Tierney commented that is good to see the Mayor "back in action" so quickly and looking so healthy. Other members concurred with the comment made by Councillor Tierney.

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

62/19 Water provision in Wisbech town centre

Further to minute 44/19, Councillor Meekins informed members of the progress being achieved with this initiative.

Members were informed by Councillor Meekins that

- (1) all of the registration documentation necessary to introduce a National Refill Scheme in Wisbech had been submitted and accepted and that the scheme would be launched, with the support of the Mayor, at Wisbech Market Place on 5 September 2019;
- (2) he had forwarded to the Leader of the Council, today, his initial findings in relation to the possibility/feasibility of introducing water points at Wisbech Market Place, for consideration at the next meeting of the Wisbech Market Place Management Committee.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

63/19 Leader of the Council's report

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Miss Hoy, informed members that the council's committees continue to work hard, both in terms of ensuring delivery of the council's current projects and also looking to the future; she mentioned that each of the council's Committee Chairman would be providing an update at the next meeting of the council on the work of those committees.

Councillor Miss hoy commented that she understands from the Clerk that the new staffing structure, which had been agreed by the Staffing Committee (at minute S3/19) and came into effect on 1 June 2019, continues to operate successfully; the arrangements would be reviewed formally following three months of operation. She mentioned that the Chairman of the council's Staffing Committee, the Clerk and her are liaising closely on any issues that may arise during the three months period.

The Leader of the Council stated that she was pleased to be able to report that, following the last meeting of the Wisbech Market Place Management Committee (on 30 July), the Clerk had met (in accordance with minute M7/19) with the relevant Highways Engineer at Cambridgeshire County Council to make clear the town council's proposals for traffic management changes in the Market Place area. As a result of the meeting, the officer would be re-drawing the plan which had been presented to the committee on 30 July. She is also pleased that progress is being made in terms of the works to achieve an efficient, effective and safe electrical supply for Wisbech Market Place (minute M6/19 refers).



Councillor Miss Hoy commented that, once again, this year's Wisbech Rock Festival, which took place on Sunday 4 August, had been a tremendous success. She expressed the opinion that it had been fantastic to see Wisbech Park filled with people enjoying the musical entertainment and the other activities. Councillor Miss Hoy made the point that the Town Council's events are only possible because of the work of those who volunteer – whether it be councillors, council staff or members of the local community – in the planning beforehand and attendance on the day. It had been a long day for the volunteers – in some cases, around 17 hours – but the success of the event had made it all worthwhile. She commented that she would like to pay particular thanks to Town Council staff, who are not contractually-obliged to assist at the council's events, and the Oliver family and to the two children (whose parents are Town Councillors) who had assisted at the Rock Festival. It is good that under 16s had been able to help; they were there for around 12 hours.

Members were informed by Councillor Miss Hoy that the next event upon which the council's Community Events and Festivals Working Party would be focusing its attention is the Christmas lights switch-on (on 24 November on the Market Place). Some initial planning had begun and she would update members as further progress is achieved.

Councillor Miss Hoy reminded members that she had mentioned at the last meeting of the Town Council that the Clerk would be meeting later that week with representatives of the Wisbech Branch of the Royal British Legion to have initial discussions regarding the arrangements for this year's Remembrance Day event (on 10 November). That meeting took place as planned and another would be taking place next week; the intention is to "refresh" the arrangements in a way which will "modernise" the event, whilst, at the same time, maintain the act of remembering those who had given their lives for this country.

Members were reminded by Councillor Miss Hoy that she had mentioned at the last meeting of Wisbech Town Council that she had attended, as Leader of Wisbech Town Council, a meeting of the Wisbech 2020 Core Vision Group (CVG) and had considered the latest version of the Wisbech 2020 Vision draft action plan. She had mentioned to council that the draft plan would be referred, for "sign-off", to appropriate meetings of Wisbech Town Council, Fenland District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council and that this is likely to happen in September or October of this year. She expressed the opinion that through her involvement in the meeting of the Core Vision Group and the Clerk's participation in the meetings of the Wisbech 2020 Steering Group, a more prioritised and outcome-focussed action plan is emerging.

Councillor Miss Hoy commented that she is pleased that a number of members were able to attend the pre-opening celebration (arranged for Wisbech Town Council only) in relation to the new Wisbech Community Farm on 16 July; the day before the official opening on 17 July. The official opening had been very successful, with more than 100 people in attendance. It attracted had attracted good coverage in the local press, through which recognition had been given to the support which had been provided to the project by Wisbech Town Council. She expressed the opinion that the Town Council should be proud to be a supporter of this project, which would, as it develops, change people's lives.

Members were informed by Councillor Miss Hoy that before the next meeting of Wisbech Town Council, on 23 September, the Statute Fair would arrive in town. The fair operators would arrive on Sunday 15 September and leave on Sunday 22nd. The Fair would operate between Wednesday 18th and Saturday 21st. As usual, members of Wisbech Town Council would process from the Town Hall to Chapel Road car park for the opening of the Fair by the Mayor at 6.00 pm on the Wednesday. Further details would be provided by the Clerk in due course.

The Leader of the Council reminded members that Wisbech Town Council is supporting the Wisbech International Food Day event, which would take place at the Queen Mary Centre between 12 noon and 4.00 pm on 14 September 2019; the council's support is through grant aid (allocated by



the Policy and Resources Committee) and in-kind (through the Clerk being a member of the organising group). The event, the aim of which is to develop community integration through a shared love of food, is being delivered by a partnership of Groundworks East, Wisbech Town Council, Fenland District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, Queen Mary Centre, Age UK and others. The organisers would be pleased to see members of Wisbech Town Council at the event.

Members were informed by Councillor Miss Hoy that, as a result of councillors’ agreement at the last meeting of the council that Wisbech Town Council would participate in the Heritage Open Days event 2019 (minute 52/19 (2) refers), the Council Chamber at Wisbech Town Hall would be open for public visitors between 10.00 am and 4.00 pm on Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 September. Although the council has one volunteer for those days/hours, any others who could help “share the load” would be welcome. She asked that any members who would be willing and able to help “man the fort”, make contact with the Clerk.

In addition, Councillor Miss Hoy commented that there is something that she would like to let the council know – something which she had intended to mention at minute 56/19 – that she had reported to Inspector Lombardo an incident of inconsiderate parking at Museum Square; she commented that there are some people who leave cars and vans in that location all day, actually on the square itself; it looks awful in such a scenic part of the town.

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

64/19 Correspondence

Wisbech Street Pride

Further to minute A6/19, the Clerk read to members an e-mail from a member of the Wisbech Street Pride group, confirming that a number of members of the group, together with other community volunteers, had, on Sunday 11 August 2019, undertaken the removal/treatment of the weed growth at the area of land at Somers Road which is leased by Wisbech Town Council for use as a public car park.

The Clerk mentioned the names, as listed in the e-mail, of those who had undertaken this work.

Members decided that the content of the e-mail be noted and that their gratitude for the work which had been undertaken be recorded.

65/19 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.

66/19 Date of next meeting

Members were reminded that the next meeting of Wisbech Town Council is scheduled for 23 September 2019 at 7.30 pm, at the offices of Wisbech Town Council.

Meeting finished at 8.45 pm.

Signed

Date