



## WISBECH TOWN COUNCIL

24 February 2025 – 7.30 pm

### MINUTES OF MEETING

**Present:** Councillor Imafidon, Chairman; Councillors Edwards, Foice-Beard, Hoy, Human, Ketteringham, Meekins, Monger, Patrick, Rafique, Read, Roy, Sagoo, Tanfield and Tierney.

**Apologies:** Councillors Oliver and Wallwork.

**Public participation:** None requested.

#### **79/24 Fenland District Council**

##### **(1) Information**

The Clerk reported that the District Council's Environment newsletter for the month of January 2025 had been circulated, by e-mail, to all members of the council on 12 February 2025.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

##### **(2) District Council meetings**

Councillor Tierney, in his capacity as a member of Fenland District Council, informed members that there had been a meeting of Fenland District Council (FDC) earlier today, at which the council had agreed, for the eighth successive financial year, not to increase its element of the Council Tax for the financial year 2025/26.

Mention was also made by Councillor Tierney of the Fenland Inspire initiative which had been agreed at a meeting of Fenland District Council's Cabinet earlier today. Although projects would be delivered across the whole district by way of that initiative, he outlined some of those which are proposed for Wisbech. Councillor Tierney suggested that members read the report which had been presented to today's meeting of the Cabinet or watch the recording of the meeting on You Tube to gain a greater understanding of what is being proposed. The point was made by Councillor Tierney that this initiative is being "driven" by the impending local government re-organisation (whereby new Unitary Authorities would replace the existing District and County Councils within Cambridgeshire).

Members decided that the information reported by Councillor Tierney be noted.

#### **80/24 Cambridgeshire County Council**

##### **(1) Local Highways Officer**

Councillor Hoy, in her capacity as a member of Cambridgeshire County Council, informed members that the Local Highway Officer for Wisbech and surrounding villages, who had been in post for only a few months and had been extremely effective, had now left that role. Councillor Hoy mentioned that she had enquired of a manager within that team as to when a replacement would be appointed but had received an unhelpful response in terms of a timescale.

The view was expressed by Councillor Hoy that it is essential that the post be filled as a matter of priority, to meet the needs of the community in respect of having safe carriageways and footways.



Members mentioned a couple of highway defects within the town, which the Clerk undertook to refer to the Local Highway Authority.

Members decided that the information reported by Councillor Hoy be noted and the Clerk would write to the Chief Executive at Cambridgeshire Council, expressing Wisbech Town Council's disappointment regarding the apparent lack of importance to the filling of the Local Highway Officer role and requesting the County Council to take action, as a matter of priority, to recruit a competent Local Highways Officer for Wisbech.

## **(2) Speed camera**

Councillor Hoy, in her capacity as a member of Cambridgeshire County Council, informed members that she had requested, at the recent Budget 2025/26 meeting of Cambridgeshire County Council, the provision of a speed camera on Churchill Road, Wisbech; however, the response to the request had been that it could not be approved at that meeting, as a particular process for applying for such infrastructure needs to be followed. She commented that she is awaiting to hear the outcome of that process.

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

## **(3) Council Tax 2025/26**

Councillor Tierney, in his capacity as a member of Cambridgeshire County Council, informed members that the County Council had decided, at its meeting on 11 February 2025, to increase its element of the Council Tax for the financial year 2025/26 by the maximum amount allowable without the need for a referendum; that being 4.99%; not like Wisbech Town and Fenland District Councils, which are making no increases. He expressed the opinion that the increase to be levied by the County Council, which had not been supported by the County Councillors who represent the electoral divisions within Fenland, would have a detrimental financial impact upon the residents of Wisbech.

The opinion was expressed by Councillor Tierney that if, as a result of the elections on 1 May 2025, the political control of the County Council is gained by the Conservative group, the aim will be to keep future Council Tax increases to as low a level as possible.

Members decided that the information reported and comments made by Councillor Tierney be noted.

## **81/24 Cambridgeshire Constabulary**

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

Councillor Tierney commented that a very problematic situation is being caused within the town by a new group of youths on bicycles; these young people are both intimidating members of the public and undertaking acts of vandalism and criminal damage within the town centre. He made the point that some businesses are being "attacked" (though damage to buildings, setting fires and throwing bricks and eggs) by these young people; he expressed the opinion that some of the "attacks" appear to be racially motivated.

The opinion was expressed by Councillor Tierney that businesses are being "hurt" by the actions of these young people. He mentioned that where incidents had been captured on CCTV, the footage had been shared with the Police. Councillor Tierney expressed the opinion that strong action is needed by the Police in tackling this situation.



Councillor Roy, who concurred with the comments of Councillor Tierney, expressed the opinion that the Police should take a zero-tolerance approach to this type of behaviour.

Members decided that councillors' comments be noted and that they be forwarded by the Clerk to the local Policing Inspector, with a request that the situation described above be addressed as a matter of extreme urgency.

#### **82/24 Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 20 January 2025**

Members decided, on the proposal of Councillor Edwards, seconded by Councillor Human, that the minutes of the Town Council meeting of 20 January 2025 be confirmed and signed.

#### **83/24 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 – 27 January 2025
- (2) Environment and Public Spaces Committee – 27 January 2025.

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

#### **84/24 Easter Tree proposal**

Members considered a proposal which had been submitted by the Wisbech Lithuanian community to the Town Mayor in respect of providing and decorating an Easter Tree in a public space in Wisbech.

The opinion of the Wisbech Lithuanian community is that this proposal, if implemented, could give the town a cozy and festive atmosphere; not only creating spring beauty but also encouraging community involvement and creativity.

The essence of the proposal would be to:

- decorate a tree with Easter symbols in a public space
- invite schools, community centres, local artists and residents to participate in creating decorations
- use eco-friendly and recyclable materials for the decorations, to the promotion of sustainability.

The view of the Wisbech Lithuanian community is that the proposal could have the following benefits for the town:

- ✓ a festive atmosphere would be created, to be enjoyed by residents and visitors
- ✓ it would encourage community spirit, creativity and active participation in the life of the town
- ✓ an opportunity to attract sponsors and local businesses which could contribute to the project
- ✓ the initiative could become an annual tradition, strengthening further the town's identity.

The Wisbech Lithuanian community has stated that it would be happy to participate in the organisation and co-ordination of this proposal.

Councillor Tierney asked the Mayor if had knowledge as to whether this is something that is common-practice in Lithuania or a new idea. The Mayor commented that he does not possess that knowledge.



Councillor Roy commented that he is happy to support such a proposal because of the importance of recognising the cultural diversity of the town.

The view was expressed by Councillor Tierney that if this proposal were to proceed, it would be important for the council to explain to the public the rationale for the initiative.

Councillor Human mentioned that he is happy to support the proposal if it would be delivered at no cost to the council.

Councillor Read commented that, in his experience, the Wisbech Lithuanian community is very active in Wisbech, it had had been very involved in last year's Rose Fair event, and he expressed the opinion that the council should, therefore, support this proposal.

Members indicated that they would be happy for the Lithuanian community to deliver such an initiative, possibly using one of the existing trees within the Market Place or procuring a separate tree which could be located temporarily at the Market Place.

Members decided, unanimously, that the proposal be supported in principle and the Wisbech Lithuanian community be invited to submit to the Town Clerk a detailed proposal for its provision of a decorated Easter Tree in Wisbech.

#### **85/24 Mayor's report**

The Mayor informed members of the activities and events that he had attended since the last meeting of the council.

The events and activities which were attended by the Mayor include:

- The Fenland Gymnastics Academy; the academy has approximately 300 children registered and a similar number on a waiting list. The Mayor commented that the academy may lose its current venue as a result of the Compulsory Purchase Order process associated with land acquisition for the new incinerator for Wisbech. He asked that if any councillor is aware of an alternative venue which might be suitable to let him know
- Whitemoor Prison, March; the Mayor commented that he has mixed feelings about the significant amount of money that is spent on "housing" criminals
- celebration of the 104<sup>th</sup> Birthday of a resident of Orchard House Care Home
- the opening of the Mart Fair at King's Lynn
- the opening of the new offices of Chatteris Town Council
- an event at the Nene Valley Olive Academy, at which he had been accompanied by Councillor Tierney and had learned a lot
- a buffet, on Saturday, with local veterans

Members were informed by the Mayor that he had met a local boy, of 7 years of age (and his parents), who raises funds for the RNLI. The Mayor had also recently met George Rowlett, who "looks after" Ghost Passage and had been provided with a gift by the Masons.

The Mayor mentioned that, as a volunteer at one of the weekly sessions, at the Salvation Army premises, of providing hot food for vulnerable members of the community, he had cooked a meat-free meal for attendees.



The Mayor expressed his thanks to Fenland District Council for “saving” - through providing an alternative location – the Mart Fair in Wisbech.

Councillor Monger expressed his thanks to the Mayor for attending recently the Chris Greene Memorial Lunch and a poetry event at Octavia View.

Members decided that the comments of the Mayor be noted.

### **86/24 Leader of the Council’s report**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Hoy, informed members that, currently, she had nothing to which she wished to draw members’ attention – the matters that she would have mentioned had been “captured” by the Clerk in his report (at minute 87/24) - and, hence, she would not be giving a Leader of the Council’s report to this meeting.

Members decided that the situation be noted.

### **87/24 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**

Council officers continue to share other partners’ information and undertake “sign posting” to other services/organisations as appropriate, particularly at a time when life is more difficult for many people.

The council provides financial support to charitable organisations and community groups and its budget for the financial year 2024/25 includes a sum of £19,000 to provide financial support to projects which benefit the local community. Funding was allocated by the council’s Resources Committee on 15 April 2024 (minute R27/23 refers), 15 July 2024 (minute R7/24 refers), 30 September 2024 (minute R11/24 refers), 9 December 2024 (minute R17/24) and 13 January 2025 (minute R21/24 refers).

The Financial Support budget for the financial year 2025/26 is £12,000 and the Resources Committee will begin considering applications at its meeting on 14 April 2025.

#### **Wisbech Market Place**

The final element of the highway works associated with the Wisbech Market Place enhancement scheme is the installation of a new gateway at the Church Terrace entrance to the Market Place. However, the Local Highway Authority (LHA) is not able to undertake the work until such time as the security fencing to the front of the former “Cashino” building is removed; a matter which is in the hands of the developer of the site and CNC Building Control.

Further to minutes T21/24 and T30/24, the new Market Place Cleansing Contract – with an initial duration of two years - commenced on 10 February 2025.



## **Wisbech Market**

Following various changes during the last three years or so due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Wisbech Market has been operating “as normal” since 12 April 2021 but, in common with trading levels in most town centres, trading has not returned “pre-lockdown” levels.

Council officers continue to explore ways of attracting not only market traders for all days of the week but to encourage car booters on Thursdays and Sundays. This is important both in terms of generating income for the council and contributing towards the viability and vibrancy of the town centre.

Between June 2023 and June 2024 the council had operated a financial concession arrangement aimed at attracting more traders to Wisbech market (minutes T7/23, T12/23, T17/23 and T24/23 refer). At minute T6/24 the Wisbech Town Centre Committee decided that, given the lack of take-up of the concession arrangement, officers would not continue to devote time to promoting that arrangement.

No new traders have applied to trade at Wisbech Market in recent months and a social media post will be undertaken to try to encourage people to make such applications.

At 16 December 2024 meeting of the Wisbech Town Centre Committee it was decided (at minute T27/24) that consideration be given, at a future meeting of the committee, as a means of contributing towards the viability and vibrancy of the town centre, to arranging a programme of themed markets. Arrangements are underway for a Farmers Market to take place on 16 March 2025. There would also be a “Minis in the Market Place” event on 23 March 2025.

## **Allotments**

The council continues to receive enquiries in relation to plots at the council’s allotment sites.

Because of the impact that the cost-of-living crisis is having upon people’s lives, new tenants had been extremely grateful for the opportunity to rent allotments from the council, to enable them to grow their own fruit and vegetables.

There have been reports of horsetail (mare’s tail) weed on Waterlees Road and Dowgate Road allotments sites. It is understood that roots of established horsetail plants can grow to 2 metres in depth and spread rapidly. This is likely to dissuade potential tenants from taking on these plots. This matter was considered by the Environment and Public Spaces Committee on 27 January 2025, and it was decided that a rent-free period of one year be allowed in relation to renting any plot that is affected by the horsetail (mare’s tail) weed, to enable new tenants to tackle the situation to prevent further spread (minute E8/24 refers).

The annual tenancy “renewals” process was undertaken last autumn, and new plots had been marked-out at Mile Tree Lane and Southwell Road allotment sites. Viewings are being undertaken, with the aim of letting the plots at these sites. Following completion of this, the vacant plots at Halfpenny Lane, Dowgate Road and Waterlees Road would be re-let. Re-letting of plots at Southwell Road, Waterlees Road, Cox’s Lane and Halfpenny Lane are almost complete. There remain some plots at Southwell Road, Mile Tree Lane and at Waterlees Road; some of the plots at the latter site are affected by the horsetail weed. Many plots are extremely overgrown, which is putting-off people from renting them, particularly with no bonfires allowed, as clearing these is a big job. Viewings of vacant plots at the Dowgate Road allotment site will commence next week.





Some badly kept plots are proving difficult to “sell” to applicants and it is probable that the council would have some permanent vacancies unless it arranges for those plots to be cleared and levelled. There is no budget for that in the current financial year; however, with the rents doubling for 2025/26 (estimated income increasing from £7,000 in 2024/25 to £14,000 in 2025/26), it should be possible to fund such works. Members of the Environment and Public Spaces Committee acknowledged at their meeting on 27 January 2025 (at minute E8/24) that it may be necessary for the council to incur expenditure in clearing some of the overgrown plots.

Works to fill the potholes on the access road to the Dowgate Road allotment site have been completed from the main road to the council’s storage containers. The rest of the roadway still needs to be done. Cox’s Lane has had its final topcoat of plainings laid.

The Environment and Public Spaces Committee had decided at minute E3/24 that allotment rents be increased (from £0.06 per square metre) to £0.12 per square metre per annum with effect from October 2025. The necessary notice of the increase had been given to existing tenants at the time of the “renewals” process.

On the basis of the increase in rents with effect from October 2025, the council’s budget for the financial year 2025/26 shows estimated income increasing from £7,000 in the financial year 2024/25 to £14,000 in 2025/26 and a spending allocation increasing from £2,000 in 2024/25 to £5,000 in 2025/26).

At minute E3/24 (on 29 July 2024) the Environment and Public Spaces Committee had decided that the lighting of bonfires at allotment sites be no longer allowed. Although the banning of bonfires had generally been accepted by most tenants, officers had received written representations, opposing this change of policy, from some tenants.

At its meeting on 27 January 2025 (at minute E8/24), that committee had been invited by the Town Clerk to review the decision in the light of the representations received (a schedule of those representations had been circulated to members in advance of the committee meeting).

In the light of members’ consideration of the representations received, the committee decided that the ban on the lighting of bonfires at allotment sites (agreed at minute E3/24 and included as Rule 37 of the “You and your allotment” document) be withdrawn and that tenants of all allotment plots be permitted to burn waste material arising from the cultivation of that plot during the last two weeks of March and the first two weeks of November each year; such burning may take place between the hours of 9.00 am and 5.00 pm. The burning of such waste materials shall not take place on the ground in the open air but in an incinerator bin or equivalent container.

Such burning activities are allowed for the burning of materials from the tenant’s allotment plot only; nothing must be brought onto the plot from elsewhere for burning.

When burning materials on an allotment plot, the tenant must

- burn only dry material
- never burn household waste, rubber tyres or anything containing foam, paint or plastic
- never use any substances (such as meths or petrol) to light or encourage the fire
- not leave any burning activity unattended or allowed to smoulder
- not cause a nuisance to neighbouring residents or other plot holders
- ensure that all burning has been extinguished before leaving his/her plot.



## **Community events and festivals**

The Steering Committee for the Wisbech Christmas Fayre - which includes representatives from Wisbech Town Council, Fenland District Council, The Horsefair Shopping Centre, the Library Service, Wisbech Lions, Wisbech Rotary Club, Wisbech and Fenland Museum etc – would be meeting on 4 March 2025 to commence the planning of this year's event (on Sunday 14 December).

The Wisbech Unsung Heroes Awards ceremony, which had taken place on 25 January 2025, had been a successful event.

A community events and festivals programme for the financial year 2025/26 had been agreed by the Resources Committee on 13 January 2025 (minute R24/24 refers).

Arrangements are being made jointly by the Town Council and the Wisbech Branch of the Royal British Legion for an event in Wisbech Park on 8 May 2025 to commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day. It is anticipated there will be music and other activity from 5.00 pm onwards, concluding with beacon lighting at 9.30 pm. Also, the Town Council will be flying an 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VE Day flag at the Town Hall from 9.00 am that morning.

Planning for this year's Rose Fair is well underway. A Traffic Management Company, TMO, has been appointed to undertake the road closures, except for the Road Closure application process, which is being undertaken in-house. Applications for the Rose Queen and parade participants are coming in well and more advertising will be carried out over forthcoming weeks to attract more applicants.

The Community Events and Festivals Working party will be meeting on 17 March 2025 to begin planning this year's WisBeach Rock Festival.

## **Town Hall/office**

Maintenance work to the Town Hall is undertaken as necessary.

At its meeting on 23 September 2024 the Wisbech Town Centre Committee decided that the council would obtain quotations for re-decoration works to the ceilings of the Council Chamber and the Mayor's Parlour and the re-decoration of the walls and ceiling of the stairway between the ground floor and the first floor of the Town Hall (minute T17/24 refers).

Council officers have been seeking since October 2024 to obtain quotations from local contractors for this work. Three quotations have now been obtained. Once the Town Clerk has obtained clarification from two of the contractors in relation to their quotations, the acceptance of a quotation will be considered by the Wisbech Town Centre Committee.

The main roof of the Town Hall suffered some storm damage in December 2024 and the Clerk (and RFO) arranged for the situation to be inspected a local roofing contractor. At minute T28/24 the Wisbech Town Centre Committee decided that the Clerk (and RFO) be authorised to arrange any necessary roofing repair work deemed necessary, provided that he considers the cost to be reasonable and that sufficient budgetary provision exists.

A quotation for repair works to the roof of the Town Hall was subsequently accepted by the Clerk (and RFO) and the repair work was undertaken on 12 February 2025. Whilst undertaking that work, the contractor identified repair works necessary to the roof of the Gents toilet. The Clerk (and RFO) has invited the contractor to submit a quotation for that work.





## **Toilets**

The toilets at the Horsefair Shopping Centre, which have been open under the management of Wisbech Town Council and operated on behalf of the council by a contractor since 11 July 2022, continue to operate successfully.

Repair and maintenance works are undertaken as necessary, with minor works undertaken by the contractor which operates the toilets for Wisbech Town Council. There are currently no works outstanding.

At minute T15/24 the Wisbech Town Centre Committee decided that the contact between Wisbech Town Council and Hibernian Property Management Limited in relation to the daily operation and supervision of the toilets at the Horsefair Shopping Centre be extended to cover the remaining period of the lease between Wisbech Town Council and New River Retail; that being midnight on 6 June 2027. The new contract, which came into effect on 11 January 2025, has been issued.

From “feedback” received from the council’s contractor, it is clear that most members of the public are very appreciative that the council had taken action to secure the re-opening of these toilets.

## **Wisbech Castle**

Repair and maintenance work to Wisbech Castle is undertaken as necessary. On 16 December 2024 the Wisbech Town Centre Committee accepted a quotation from a local contractor in relation to undertaking repair and maintenance work to guttering, addressing an area of internal damp, unblocking drains, and pruning trees (minute T24/24 refers).

Later this evening, the Wisbech Town Centre Committee will be considering a quotation for other maintenance and improvement works within the grounds of Wisbech Castle.

Wisbech Castle continues to be an extremely popular venue for paranormal investigations and almost every weekend this year has a booking for such an event. Enquiries continue to be received regularly. There are now only around 15 Saturday dates available for paranormal events in 2025. Trevor Ketteringham remains a stalwart in undertaking the caretaking of Wisbech Castle and he receives many compliments.

The only wedding at Wisbech Castle in 2024 had taken place on 2 November. The council continues to receive a small number of enquiries and there is a booking for a wedding in March 2025 and another in July 2025.

Councillor Tierney took the opportunity to mention that an Easter Open Day would take place at Wisbech Castle on 20 April 2025 and he expressed the hope that the representative of the local press in attendance at this meeting of Wisbech Town Council would help to publicise the event.

## **Land at Somers Road, Wisbech**

The Town Clerk is still seeking to secure renewal of the lease (with Cambridgeshire County Council) for the area of land, off Somers Road, adjacent to the Queen Mary Centre, which is leased by Wisbech Town Council for the purpose of increasing the amount of car parking provision in the town. The Town Council’s solicitors had received from the County Council’s solicitors a final version of the lease and had sent to Fenland District Council the licence element (see below) for signature.

In accordance with this committee’s decision at minute E10/22, this site has been in use since 5 June 2023 by Fenland District Council’s contractor (the original period of use had been agreed for a



period of 77 weeks (i.e., until 25 November 2024)) as the works compound in association with the re-development of 24 High Street, Wisbech. That arrangement is covered by way of a licence agreement between Wisbech Town Council (as lessee of the land) and Fenland District Council (as the client for the re-development scheme) and will be referenced in the new lease between Cambridgeshire County Council and Wisbech Town Council.

The contractor which is using the land off Somers Road as a works compound will, before “handing-back” the land to Wisbech Town Council, ensure that it is in no worse condition than it had been at the beginning of that use.

There has been “slippage” on the programme of re-development works at 24 High Street, which means that this land will be needed as a works compound for a period longer than the 77 weeks originally proposed; likely to be continuing until April 2025, as opposed to concluding in November 2024.

Fenland District Council (FDC) had paid to Wisbech Town Council (WTC) a sum of £5,000 for its contractor to use this site for the period 5 June 2023 to 25 November 2024. That equates to a sum of £64.93 per week. FDC has committed to pay to WTC a sum of £65 per week/£260 a month for the overrun period (from 25 November 2024 onwards).

### **New pavilion at Wisbech Park**

The council’s Resources Committee had decided at minute R13/23 that Wisbech Town Council would take-on the operation and management of the new pavilion at Wisbech Park. The formal handover of the pavilion, from the construction contractors to Fenland District Council, and the “opening” of the building by Councillor Meekins, in his capacity as Chairman of Fenland District Council, had taken place on 22 January 2024.

The Town Clerk is still awaiting a formal lease between Fenland District Council (as landlord) and Wisbech Town Council (as tenant) in respect of this building; hence, the Town Council is still operating under a Tenancy at Will.

At minute E6/23 the Environment and Public Spaces Committee fixed the hire/rental fees at £20 per hour for the community room and £325 per month for the office.

The community room at the pavilion is receiving bookings; there are currently bookings for every Wednesday and Thursday evenings by local groups. It has also been used for ad hoc meetings and a small number of parties.

At minute E7/24 the Environment and Public Spaces Committee decided that, given the absence of interest in renting the office and the fact that there is a lack of storage space in the building, that room should no longer be considered as an office for rental but as a storage space associated with the use of the community room.

The opening of the cafe at the pavilion had taken place on 26 March 2024, the operator of the café being Crazy Cow Catering Limited.

The Environment and Public Spaces Committee decided, at minute E7/24, at that the Tenancy at Will between Wisbech Town Council and Crazy Cow Catering Ltd be terminated. Crazy Cow Catering Ltd had ceased trading at the café, after being given notice, on 21 October 2024.



The Town Clerk had been authorised by the Environment and Public Spaces Committee at minute E7/24 to take the necessary action to secure a new operator for the café. He had subsequently invited bids/applications in that regard.

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Environment and Public Spaces Committee, the Leader of the Council and the Town Clerk had “interviewed” the bidders/applicants on 9 January 2024. Consequently, one of those bidders/applicants has been selected to operate the café and the necessary documentation had been issued by the Clerk. It is anticipated that the new operator, which will trade under the name of Wisbech Park Café, would re-open the café on 2 March 2025.

There have been several “teething troubles” with the building – following recent works to replace the drainage and flooring, and the toilet itself, in the changing places toilet facility, there are currently no outstanding issues. A “snagging sign-off” meeting, involving officers of Fenland District Council (FDC) and FDC’s contractor had taken place on 15 January 2025. All future repair and maintenance issues will be the responsibility of Fenland District Council (as landlord) or Wisbech Town Council (as tenant).

### **St Raphael community hall**

This building was handed-over by the District Council to the Town Council on 18 September 2024.

The lease between Fenland District Council and Wisbech Town Council in relation to this building came into force on 4 December 2024.

Councillor Foice-Beard and the Town Clerk continue to have discussions with officers of the County Council’s Early Years service in relation to a potential regular, ongoing hiring of the building.

A surveyor engaged by Cambridgeshire County Council inspected the building on 14 November 2024, to see what works would be required to enable it to meet the needs of the Early Years service. Councillor Foice-Beard and the Town Clerk had met on-line with representatives of the Early Years service on 2 January 2025 to obtain an update on the situation. A couple of weeks later the Town Council received a copy of the surveyor’s report; this has been shared with Fenland District Council, as the owner of the building.

Subject to sign-off by the Chairman of its Grants Panel, the County Council has in place the funding required to undertake the works needed for the building to be suitable for Early Years provision. The officer at the County Council who is leading on this project states that she hopes to be able to share with the Town Council next week a proposed timeline of next steps.

There is currently one regular user of the building; the Youths of Fenland CIC.

A fridge and a cooker have been purchased and installed. Tables and chairs have also been purchased.

The St Raphael community hall had been the venue for council’s Unsung Heroes Awards ceremony on 25 January 2025 and had worked very well in that regard.

### **Correspondence**

#### **Wisbech Community Diagnostic Centre**

The Town Clerk has received very recently a copy of a letter from Steve Barclay MP to the Chair of the Cambridgeshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) in relation to the MP’s concerns about the Wisbech



Community Diagnostic Centre. A copy of that letter had been circulated to members of the council, by the Town Clerk, in advance of this meeting.

Members decided that the content of the MP's letter be noted and that the Town Clerk would write to the Chair of the ICB, informing him that the Town Council concurs with the concerns which had been expressed by the MP and, consequently, it too is seeking responses to the 6 questions that had been asked by the MP. Wisbech Town Council also asks why the ICB appears to consider it acceptable for the people of Wisbech to be treated in such a way.

**88/24 Date of next meeting**

Members noted that the next meeting of Wisbech Town Council is scheduled for 7 April 2025, to commence at 7.30 pm, at the Town Hall in Wisbech.

**Meeting finished at 8.05 pm.**

Signed .....

Date .....