



## Wivenhoe Town Council

MINUTES of the Personnel and Finance Committee meeting held in the Council Chamber, 77 High Street on Tuesday 13th February 2024 at 7:00pm **CHAIR APPROVED**

Present: Cllr Guy (Chair), Cllr Burke, Cllr Multon, Cllr Widgery, J Beighton-Emms (TC), M Howard (Accountant) & E Buckley (RFO)

**02.13/01 Apologies for absence:** Cllr Wenaden, Cllr Hutchings and Cllr Hailes-Morley

**02.13/02 Minutes of the last meeting:** Approval of the minutes for the Personnel and Finance Committee meeting held on 10 January 2024 was proposed by Cllr Widgery and seconded by Cllr Burke with all in favour.

**02.13/03 Declarations of Interest:** None

**02.13/04 Personnel update on the office vacancy:** TC reported that nine applications have been received. A meeting has been scheduled for office staff to discuss next week. Interview questions to be produced and discussed with the Personnel committee prior to interviews. The committee discussed having a fair and consistent approach for all candidates. TC discussed members of the committee being present if required. The interview process was discussed. It was agreed that officers could hold the interviews and report back to the committee for further discussion.

**02.13/05 Investment plan:** MH discussed the capital investment plan (appendix A). The Estates committee is also working on the priorities for the Council. MH discussed the requirement of staff time and if this could be costed to help with the planning of future projects. A reserves policy was presented to the committee (appendix B). MH to wait for Estates before making amendments to the plan and policy. To update at the next meeting.

**02.13/06 To discuss and set the Councils fees and charges for 2024/25:** Discussions over the fees and charges report (appendix C) and the increase of maintenance and overhead expenditure. The committee was also keen to ensure value for money for the community. It is important to ensure the Council is accounting costs for staff time whilst deciding on the charges. Inflation does seem to be lowering at the start of this year, but it is important to ensure that enough is charged to cover the running costs for the Council and any future expenditure for updating facilities over the coming years.

**William Loveless Hall** – Cllr Burke proposed a 7.5% increase on charges, this was seconded by Cllr Multon with all in agreement. The storage charges for the hall have not been increased for many years. It was proposed by Cllr Widgery to double the increase for storage charges at the hall, this was seconded by Cllr Burke with all in agreement.

**Allotments** – Discussions about the cost for the new allotment site and funds being required in future. Cllr Burke proposed a 7.5% increase on allotment rents, this was seconded by Cllr Multon with all in agreement.

**Cemetery** – The cemetery charges are usually increased inline with the Sun Life cost of dying annual report. The committee needed reassurance that the current charges are valid and cover the cost of hiring machinery and staff time. RFO to check with MS and look at the rates and report back to the committee.

**Minibus** – Cllr Burke proposed to increase the minibus charges by 5%, this was seconded by Cllr Multon with all in agreement.

**Dinghy/Canoe Park** – It was proposed by Cllr Burke to increase the charges by 5%, seconded by Cllr Multon with all in agreement.

**Dog Bags and Caddy Liners** – It was proposed by Cllr Burke to increase the cost of the bags to £1.25, this was seconded by Cllr Multon with all in agreement.

**02.13/07 Budget update:** A surplus is currently expected at year end. Work needs to be completed to prepare the accounts for year end. An update on the skatepark, which is expected to be installed by Easter when the weather is more suitable for installation. Andy has been on a site visit to meet the contractor.

**02.13/08 Internal audit report:** The internal audit report was discussed. Many of the recommendations have now been completed. The RFO & TC are looking at the Privacy Policy for the Council. A resolution for the Mayor's bank account needs to be agreed. There was discussion about the funds being earmarked for the potential playpark project. Some of the Council's Councillors are in the process of taking over a trust. There were discussions about the benefits and disadvantages of having the funds transferred over to the trust. The committee would need to receive further professional advice and guidance on any liabilities for Council funds being paid to the trust, clarity is also required if stipulations could be put on funds to be earmarked for Council projects. The trust is still in the process of being transferred over.

**02.13/09 Date of next meeting:** Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024

**02.13/10 Exclusion of Press and Public:** In accordance with Paragraph 1 (2) of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the Council is invited to consider if the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items(s) owing to the confidential nature of the business.

Part A of the meeting was closed at 20:44

Appendix A – Capital investment plan

Appendix B – Reserves policy

Appendix C – Fees & charges 2024 report