



Wivenhoe Town Council

MINUTES of the Finance and Personnel Committee meeting held in the Council Chamber, 77 High Street on Monday 24 February at 7:00pm **CHAIR APPROVED**

Present: Cllr Guy (Chair), Cllr Burke, Cllr Hailes- Morley, Cllr Andrew & E Buckley (RFO)

02.24/01 Apologies for absence: Cllr Luxford-Vaughan apologies received and accepted. Cllr Widgery no apologies received.

02.24/02 Declarations of Interest: An interest was noted from Cllr Burke, in relation to the Over 60's Lunch group, who have submitted a community grant application.

02.24/03 Minutes of the previous meeting: The approval of the minutes for the Finance and Personnel Committee meeting held on 11 December 2024 were proposed by Cllr Burke and seconded by Cllr Hailes-Morley with all who attended in agreement. As per the minutes the RFO is to check with Cllr Boughton if he is still on the committee.

02.24/04 Personnel Update: It was reported that the temporary worker would be asked to work during the refurbishments for 83 High Street. No other personnel items to report. The committee was shown the update received from EALC for the NJC pay claim 2025/26, this was received with apprehension.

02.24/05 To report on the 2024/2025 budget: The RFO reported on the budget report upto 31.01.2025. It currently shows a projected surplus of £8k, compared to the budgeted surplus of £25,405.

These figures include:

- Election cost £5,500
- WLH grant cost - £6,000
- Cemetery wall repairs – £12,000
- Cemetery wall survey - £3,200
- Skatepark additional work - £6,000

The RFO discussed that at year end the committee would need to decide if any expenditure this year would be allocated against EMR. The cemetery wall repairs have EMR in the repairs and renewals. It is less likely that an election will be called in the last month of the year, so the £5,500 could also be excluded from this figure. After these transactions, this would change the total to £28,700 at 31.01.2025.

The RFO then reported that there was expenditure for the car park tree that so far has totaled £11,500. Further expenditure is expected for legal costs. There is further expenditure relating to the skatepark and speed sign grant funds of £3,500 need to be moved to EMR. The council also agreed expenditure up to £15k for 83 High Street renovations.

The RFO will report at the next committee meeting with updated figures, once the expenditure totals have been confirmed.

The committee discussed the fees and charges report for the 2025/26 year. A recommendation was for all the fees and charges to be increased by 5%, except the minibus weekend hire which is 10%. There were

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discussions about the charges for the WLH being split between resident/non-resident and class/commercial. The committee would like to refer to Estates for discussions about the non-resident rate being higher than class/commercial rate.

It was proposed by Cllr Burke to increase the following fees and charges on 1st April 2025:

- WLH hire charges 5%
- Storage charges in the WLH – lockers to increase to £4.50, cages to increase to £7 and fridge charge to increase to £10
- Cemetery charges 5%
- Cemetery search charge to stay at £30
- Minibus donations – 5% (except the weekend rate to increase by 10%)
- Dinghy & Canoe racks – 5%
- Caddy bags and dog bags to stay at £1.25 for this year

This was seconded by Cllr Hailes Morley, with all in agreement.

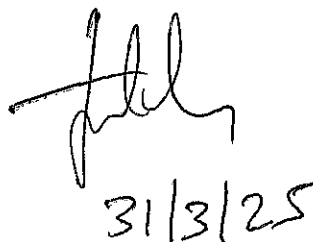
The RFO reported that the energy contract at 81a High Street was on a daily charge of £2 with SSE energy, this has not been changed since the tenant vacated. Two contracts have been sourced, and Octopus is the chosen energy supplier, for value for money and green credentials. This is a 12-month contract with a daily charge of 49.29p and rate of 25.92p. If the contract is terminated early a 25% exit fee is charged, the RFO reported that this would be equivalent to a month's cost of the current supplier. It was proposed by Cllr Guy to enter the 12-month contract with Octopus for 81a High Street and seconded by Cllr Andrews, with all in agreement.

02.24/06 To discuss the 2026/2027 budget and future plans: Cllr Guy reported to the committee that the Council needs to be thinking ahead about the land for the cemetery and allotments. Cllr Burke discussed that an agreement has not been reached but would ideally like to plan for the land in five years. This would help the Council to finance the expenditure on the projects. The water is being installed at the site, the boundaries would need fencing and roads and gates would need to be installed. Refer to Estate to obtain quotes for the fencing and gates. Thoughts need to be given to the allotment land and sizes of the plots. The three-year plan needs to be completed and with thought given of the Council's assets for rental.

02.24/07 Community Days and Community Fund: The community day was discussed and the benefit to the town and local group in raising awareness and funds for themselves. The community grant fund is currently £4,200 and so far, this year only £1,000 has been awarded. The figure for the grants awarded last year was £3,000. It was discussed that this budget should be reduced to £2,500 and the community fund policy updated to not include the general running costs for the groups applying. The remaining budget could be allocated against community events, which is currently £2,500 for 2025/26, to be referred to FTC.

The cost of the WLH Community Days has cost the Council just over £1k in loss of hire charges. It was discussed by the committee to stop these days from 1st April 2025. This will be taken to FTC for approval.

A Community Fund request has been submitted for £200 from Wivenhoe Over 60's Lunch club, this will be for the cost of the minibus charges and WLH hire. It was discussed that the over 60's group benefits the community and its users. It was proposed by Cllr Hailes-Morley and seconded by Cllr Andrews to award the £200 fund. Cllr Guy agreed, whilst Cllr Burke abstained due to her declaration of interest.



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02.24/08 Server Security: In December SYS3 contacted the Council and informed them that the server security is basic and due to the current cyber attacks that have been occurring, the security we have is no longer suitable. They have recommended an upgrade and installation of Heimdal security suite to the server for the charge of £19.95 per month. The committee discussed this and have also spoken to Cllr Aldis. It was proposed by Cllr Andrews and seconded by Cllr Burke to upgrade as per the recommendation of SYS3, with all in agreement.

02.24/09 Outstanding Sales Invoices: The RFO reported that an invoice for the total of £336.32 was outstanding for Munchkins. This charge is from 2023, there was a mix up on the accounts and late payment charges had been put on the Castle Water invoices for the Pavillion. The RFO had spoken to Munchkins and as the account was in the name of WTC, they did not want to pay for the interest charges. The RFO had previously been in contact with Castle Water and had tried to get the charges removed, after several attempts Castle Water confirmed this was not possible. The Castle Water account is now in Munchkins name. The committee agreed to the RFO crediting this invoice from Munchkins sales account.

02.24/10 Update from the Personnel and Finance meeting held on 11 December: The RFO reported that work had started on the transparency code to ensure the Council adheres to the code. Work needs to be completed on the asset and car park information and then it can be agreed by the Council.

02.24/11 Date of next meeting: The next meeting will be held on Monday 24 March 2025 at 7pm.

02.24/12 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.

The meeting was closed at 20:25

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