



Wivenhoe Town Council

MINUTES of the Finance and Personnel Committee meeting held in the Council Chamber, 77 High Street on Monday 31 March at 7:00pm **Chair Approved**

Present: Cllr Guy (Chair), Cllr Burke, Cllr Hailes- Morley, Cllr Luxford-Vaughan, Cllr Widgery, Cllr Andrew, J Beighton-Emms (Town Clerk) & E Buckley (RFO)

03.31/01 Apologies for absence: Cllr Boughton apologies received and accepted.

03.31/02 Declarations of Interest: None.

03.31/03 Minutes of the previous meeting: The approval of the minutes for the committee meeting held on 24 February 2025 were proposed by Cllr Burke and seconded by Cllr Andrew, with all who attended in agreement as an accurate record of proceedings.

03.31/04 Personnel Update: Town Clerk reported to the committee that from 1 April 2025 all staff on the NJC pay-scale will increase one scale point (except EB and JBE will increase two), as previously agreed by FTC. National minimum wage will also increase on 1 April 2025. The new contract issued by NALC, needs to be issued to staff this year, it was agreed that a separate finance and personnel meeting will be held to discuss the contract in greater depth. Town Clerk to arrange this meeting.

03.31/05 To report on the 2024/2025 budget year end: The RFO reported on the budget report up to 31.03.2025 (Appendix A), there are still some items to be added and year end adjustments to make. It is currently showing an underspend of £32k, but the following items are still to be entered into the system:

- £8,900 – Pension and HMRC for March 25
- Legal expenses - £3,500
- 83 High Street refurbishment - £6,755
- Newsletter - £1,156
- March Invoices - £3,000 estimate
- Income for the allotments - £4,800.

After these transactions, the predicted underspend will be £9,500 against the original budgeted surplus of £25,125.

The budget for repairs and renewals was £40,000 for the year. To date there is £4,300 remaining, but this does not include any expenses on the car park tree and extra expenditure on the skatepark project.

The RFO discussed with the committee the unbudgeted expenditure for the year and if this should be taken from earmarked reserves (EMR) or from the 2024/25 budget. The committee recommended that the expenditure should come from the yearly budget rather than taking from EMR if this was possible, the RFO to work on this for the year end figures. The cemetery wall expenditure will be taken from the EMR, as this was planned for over the past few years. The committee requested, if possible, that any underspend on the planning budget be moved to EMR, for future expenditure. The environment committee has also requested that any underspends are kept at EMR, as they have planned for a funding officer for the 2025/26 year.

03.31/06 Community Days and Community Fund: FTC requested from the committee further figures relating to the cost of the community days. Cllr Guy reported the figures below, which include staff time and loss of potential WLH income:

- 2023 - £1,113
- 2024 - £1,306

It was discussed that the community day held in the summer is currently provided free of charge for the local groups and is a great event that allows the groups to promote themselves and raise funds. There were discussions about the council hosting a similar event in the winter in future, but more thought would be required. It was also said that when budgets are more restricted these free hires should be restricted to enable the best use of the council's budget, for the whole community and the services the council can provide.

It was proposed by Cllr Guy to recommend FTC end the community days at the WLH, this was seconded by Cllr Luxford-Vaughan, with all in agreement.

The following community fund applications have been received and were discussed:

- Transition Town Wivenhoe – requested £350 for the cost of hiring a hall, whilst they make sleeping bags and shopping bags to donate to a local charity. The committee discussed how this benefits the town, but using the recycling which is collected for the project. It was proposed by Cllr Guy to approve a £200 fund, this was seconded by Cllr Hailes-Morley with all in agreement, except Cllr Widgery who abstained.
- Dr Davey and the Wivenhoe Café Gallery – requested £400 for an event to support mother's mental health. The committee discussed how this event could be more inclusive and not just for mothers and wanted to offer support for the event. Cllr Burke proposed a £240 fund; this was seconded by Cllr Luxford-Vaughan with all in agreement. Town Clerk to speak to Dr Davey about the committee's thoughts to make the event more inclusive.
- Millfields Cycling Bus – This group requested £350 towards hi vis jackets and any printing costs for the group. The committee discussed the idea and wanted to offer support, as it's good to promote healthy lifestyles and local traffic around the school, but there were some safety concerns from the members. Cllr Luxford-Vaughan proposed a £150 fund, this was seconded by Cllr Guy, with all in agreement except Cllr Widgery and Cllr Hailes- Morley abstaining due to safety concerns of the children outside the school.

03.31/07 Minibus: The RFO updated the committee on the minibus and some concerns from the volunteer drivers. The door lock on the bus has been fixed, but the condition of the minibus is getting older and there are concerns about the minibus being taken for use outside of the local neighbourhood. The grant that was applied for has been declined. There were discussions about the future of the minibus and how a smaller one may benefit the council, meaning less restrictions on driver requirements, but this would also bring problems to the groups as more trips would be needed, which would be timely and not beneficial to the groups which currently use the minibus. If a new minibus were to be purchased in the future, the donations would need to be reviewed, as the committee agreed that the donations should cover the costs of running the service.

Cllr Burke proposed for FTC approval that weekend use of the minibus is stopped, to restrict the milage on the bus and for it to be used for only local trips, this was seconded by Cllr Guy, with all in agreement.

03.31/08 Update on the spending on the High Street car park dispute: The RFO reported that to date the council has spent £14,356.20 on legal fees, security, hiring fencing and products needed for the area. Please see appendix B.

03.31/09 Update from the Personnel & Finance meeting held on 24 February 2025: No update.

03.31/10 Date of Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 7 May 2025 at 7pm, due to the bank holiday for Easter and FTC being later in April.

03.31/11 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 20:31

Expenses for car park tree					
Jan-25					
Supplier	Description	Cost Centre	Net	VAT	Gross
Arbtech	Bat survey on tree	Profesional Services	899	179.8	1078.8
Oakpark Security Systems Limited	166 Hours of security	Profesional Services	5810	1162	6972
Ellisons Solicitors	Profesional/Legal Advice	Legal	6027.5	1205.5	7233
Sibbons	Fencing Hire	Inv 37669	264	52.8	316.8
	Fencing Extra	Inv 37747	230	46	276
	Fencing Hire Feb		264	52.8	316.8
Amazon	Nets		31.35	0	31.35
Amazon	Camera		127.99	0	127.99
Sibbons	Cherry Picker				0
	Tree Licence				0
Sibbons	Works on Gate	Inv	120	24	144
Sibbons	Padlocks	Inv 65205	21.74	4.36	26.1
Sibbons	Signs	Inv 65173	28.52	5.7	34.22
Sibbons	Padlocks	Inv 65320	47.6	9.52	57.12
					0
Ellisons	Legal		4609.5	921.9	5531.4
					0
					0
					0
			18481.2	3664.38	22145.58
			14356.2		