

WHITTLESEY TOWN COUNCIL - Finance & Policy Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 14th March 2022 at 6.30pm at Peel House, 8 Queen Street, Whittlesey, PE7 1AY

Present: Cllr Boden, Mrs Mayor, Mockett, Wick, , Nawaz, Miscandlon, Dorling, Mason.

Officer in Attendance: Mrs Sue Piergianni – Town Clerk & RFO

FP17/2022 - To receive apologies from absent Members.

Cllr Davies (Work)

FP18/2022 -To receive members' declarations of disclosable pecuniary, non-disclosable pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests in relation to any agenda items.

Cllr Mason declared an interest in FP22/2022, Items 4 & 6.

Cllr Miscandlon & Dorling declared an interest in FP22/2022 item 4.

Cllr Wicks declared an interest in FP23/2022 item 2.

FP19/2022 – Public Forum – 15 minutes –

One member of the public was present.

FP20/202 - To confirm and sign the Minutes from the Finance & Policy Committee on Monday 14th February 2022.

Cllr Wicks advised the attendance at the meeting on 14th February 2022 did not list him as in attendance, but he was present.

Ratified: The minutes were approved and signed as a true record with consideration taken to the note above

FP21/2022 - Financials.

1. Bank Reconciliation to 28th February 2022 – Members received the bank reconciliation.
2. Year to date Figures - Members received the year-to-date figures but were concerned about the rising costs of the electricity. Members suggested reading the meter for the solar panels on the first of each month to gauge how much benefit they are to the Council. This will commence on 1st April 2022. Cllr Boden also advised members that the Clerk will be carrying out the checks on the year-to-date figures to ensure all figures are in the correct cost centres.
3. Payment List for approval – Vouchers 291 to 319 to the value of £15,661.69 were proposed by Cllr Miscandlon, seconded by Cllr Dorling with a unanimous vote in favour.

FP22/2022 – Agenda Items for Discussion

1. Equality & Diversity Policy – Deferred from February F & P – Members approved the policy with a couple of amendments, 'use of the word Manager' and also the inclusion of Staff and Councillors', this was proposed by Cllr Miscandlon, seconded by Cllr Dorling with a unanimous vote in favour.
2. CAPALC Affiliation – This item will be discussed at Full Council.
3. Paperless Meetings – The committee discussed this at length and proposed it be recommended to Full Council that where possible all meetings become paperless. However, should Cllrs require paper copies, they must request these from the Clerk in a timely manner.
4. Future Funding for the Heritage Centre – Cllr Dorling gave the following brief update but due to the detail that was required, the Chairman suggested a separate meeting to discuss this. The Clerk will send out a Doodle Poll.

Why do we need a destination attraction in Whittlesey?

The Heritage Centre is not designed to house the original Must Farm artefacts – such an establishment would be beyond our needs. However, an attraction that tells the story of the Fens, Prehistoric, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman and from the dark ages up to modern times need to be presented. So does the progression from Palaeolithic and Neolithic occupation to modern concern for the environment.

The Brickyards story, agriculture, modern ecologically sound solutions, and the Nature Reserve are all attractions that can generate interest and revenue.

The project is likely to cost £1m to deliver, we should consider the use of Public Works Loans if other sources of capital do not materialise because the project is too good an opportunity to let slip. The resulting assets will belong to Whittlesey.

If a shortfall in cash flow is identified, the community should support it by a modest increase in the small proportion of rates that are designed to provide better facilities for the community. The list of topics that the project could support and attract interest is endless – it requires imagination and effort.

5. Grant Policy - The Committee discussed this and agreed that the policy is amended and has a timescale whereby the recipient of the funding must feed back to the Council on how the funds were used. The Clerk will follow amend accordingly.
6. Clarification to Full Council on What WTC may and may not fund under GPC. Cllr Dorling advised members that GPC does not allow the council to fund Church repairs. However, Cllr Boden advised that the legislation Cllr Dorling is referring to is section 8 of the 1894 Local Government Act which is not a restrictive Act but is a permissive Act. The Localism Act 2011 permits under the General Power of Competence anything to be done by a local council which can be legally done by an individual, subject only to the inability to do anything which has been forbidden by legislation to be done by a local council. That is where the permissive nature of s8 of the 1894 Act is relevant, as this permitted additional powers to be exercised rather than introducing any restrictions.

Thus, the General Power of Competence can be used to fund Church repairs, even though s8 of the 1894 Act didn't extend local councils' powers to do so. Cllr Dorling advised that in NALC'S view the primary legislation has not been overwritten. Cllr Boden pointed out that the 2011 Localism Act is also primary legislation.


7. WTC position on local promotion – Cllr Dorling advised banners had been approved and put out around the town, however the ones on Queen Street, had been removed. The Clerk advised she had requested this as Highways have always classed banners at this junction and the Dog and Doublet as a safety issue. Cllr Dorling advised the banners have now been put back up.

FP23/2022 - Donation Requests.

1. Read to Succeed Campaign – £500.00 was proposed by Cllr Miscandlon, seconded by Cllr Mockett with a unanimous vote in favour.
2. Coates Fete deferred from Full Council 17th February 2022 – Cllr Mockett proposed £150.00 as this was the apparent shortfall, he did confirm that he supported the villages, but could not support the amount requested on this grant application due to the lack of clarity. There was no seconder for this proposal. Cllr Miscandlon proposed £375.00, seconded by Cllr Mrs Mayor; with 2 in favour, one against, 2 abstentions.

FP24/2022– Date of Next Meeting – Monday 19th April 2022

Meeting Closed 19:35


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Cllr Boden
Chairman
Finance & Policy Committee

