

**WALLINGFORD TOWN COUNCIL**

MINUTES

of the

Finance and Properties Committee Meeting held in the Council Offices,  
Wallingford on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2019

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P R E S E N T

The Mayor, Councillor Upcraft

Councillors Norton, Stead, Whelan and Wilder

The Chairman, Councillor Colin Dolton

The Town Clerk, Mrs Paula Lopez  
The Responsible Finance Officer, Michelle Taylor

**504. APOLOGIES**

Apologies received from Councillors Beatty, Lloyd and Titchener

**505. ADMISSION OF THE PUBLIC**

It was Proposed by Councillor Dolton, Seconded by Councillor Whelan and

**RESOLVED:**

**THAT** in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as amended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the Meeting during consideration of the following items on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public's interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted: -

**Agenda Items - Aged Debtors, 8c Castle Street, 1b St Martins Street.**

**506. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

A Councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in our Council's Standing Orders code of Conduct (Item 13) in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under code of conduct and his right to participate and vote on the matter (guidelines are available at the meeting and all Councillors have received a copy prior to the meeting)

**507. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION –NOTIFIED AND IMPROMPTU (Total 15 Minutes)**

There were no members of the public present at the meeting

**508. MINUTES**

To sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Finance and Properties Meeting held on the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2018 as set out on pages 159 - 161 of the Minute Book, copy previously circulated to members.

**This item was deferred as the incorrect set of minutes was sent out.**

**509. GRANT APPLICATIONS**

To consider any grant applications. Summary of previously awarded grants attached.

**The summary was noted however no grant applications had been received.**

**510. RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORTS**

**a) Bill Schedules for September, October, November and December 2018.**

Members had some clarifying questions for the Responsible Finance Officer and any suggested alternations are shown on the bills schedules. It was Proposed by Councillor Norton, Seconded by The Mayor and

**RESOLVED**

**THAT the schedule of bills paid in September, October, November and December 2018 be received and the action of The Responsible Finance Officer in paying same is confirmed.**

**b) Quarter 3 Accounts – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018**

Members had some clarifying questions for the Responsible Finance Officer, following which it was Proposed by Councillor Wilder, Seconded by Councillor Norton and

**RESOLVED**

**THAT that the Quarter 3 Accounts ending the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018, copy attached to the minute book be received and approved.**

**c) Regal Costs: Discussion regarding allocation of costs.**

Members had a lengthy discussion and It was Proposed by Councillor Upcraft, Seconded by Councillor Dolton and

**RESOLVED**

**THAT the Responsible Finance Officer ascertain whether if notice was given on the 30 day and 90 day investments if the money is not needed immediately if it can remain invested in the same account until such time as it is required. In the meantime, the Regal costs should be paid out of reserves. The reserves can then be topped up with investment money.**

The Responsible Finance Officer was thanked for producing clear accounts.

**Regal** – The architects design needs to be taken forward, however Members expressed their concern over the need for a 'joined up plan', a business plan and Councillor Norton asked for it to be minuted that she did not believe that there was room for two community buildings, that is the new Regal and a community building on the Bull Croft. Councillor Dolton added that this effectively could be three with the Town Hall.

### **511. TELEPHONE CONTRACT**

The Town Clerk reported that the 5-year contract with Mainstream was up for renewal and that the Responsible Finance Officer was obtaining quotations from BT, Connect 2 and Get Support in order to find the best deal. Whilst this is happening the Council may incur slightly higher costs from the current supplier in the short term. Members requested that a long-term contract was not entered into.

### **512. INSURANCE REVIEW/RENEWAL**

The Town Clerk reported that the Town Council would be renewing its contract with Zurich for a year with some minor amendments such as cover for emergency replacement of the Town Clerk. There has been no increase in the cost of the policy for the last 5 years, the cost of the renewed policy is to be confirmed but it is likely to increase by around 3%.

### **513. BULL CROFT LODGE**

The Town Clerk reported that the majority of the property repair work is being carried out by Gary Richards. In respect of the damp proofing the Town Clerk suggested that the Town Council accepts the less expensive quotation and that the gutters are also repaired. Members were in agreement with this proposal.

### **514. BULL CROFT RECREATION ROOMS**

a) **Tenants** - The Mayor reported that the Citizen's Advice Bureau and the Food Bank were to be asked to vacate the Recreation Rooms at the end of July 2019 and that they appear to have found alternative accommodation. The Town Clerk reported that she had received an email from the Bell Ringers requesting that they be allowed to remain until March 2020 and asking for a rent reduction if they insure the building. The Town Clerk stated that the Town Council was continuing to insure the building. Members instructed the Town Clerk to give notice to the Bell Ringers to vacate in October 2019 and not to give any reduction in rent.

Rainbow Pre-school have agreed to carry out the immediate required repairs and any future repairs, after which the Town Clerk will instruct the structural engineer to carry out the agreed periodic checks. The pre-school has requested that if they find alternative accommodation before the end of the lease in March 2020 that they be allowed to leave with 28 days' notice. Members were in agreement to the proposal.

**The Town Clerk was instructed to ask the lawyers to prepare the appropriate paperwork for the above proposals.**

**The Town Clerk gave Members an update regarding the pre-school's unpaid water bill. Following a discussion, the Town Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer was instructed to chase payment and to advise the pre-school to approach the other tenants directly if they wished to recover a proportion of the costs from them.**

b) **Demolition of the Recreation Rooms** – The Town Clerk reported that she was in the process of obtaining pre-application advice for the demolition of the building from Historic England and the planning and conservation officers at the District Council.

### **515. WALLINGFORD CASTLE MOTTE**

The Town Clerk summarised the report from Historic England in that the Castle Motte had been listed 'At Risk' by them, which hopefully will assist with grant applications. Evidence of knotweed should be checked for on the motte but the Town Council does have

maintenance programme in force (office to check when they last attended). Historic England stated that all shrubbery vegetation should be removed from the motte. Members discussed and wondered if it would be possible to keep the big trees as these were part of the landscape and removing them might cause damage. A path was discussed. **The Town Clerk was instructed to obtain costings via landscape architects.**

Councillor Dolton suggested that the Town Hall Working Party could incorporate the Castle Motte and it was Proposed by Councillor Wilder, Seconded by Councillor Whelan and **RECOMMENDED:**

**THAT the Town Hall Working Party includes in its focus historical monuments thereby including Castle Gardens Motte.**

#### **516. WALL SURROUNDING THE PARK'S DEPOT**

The Town Clerk gave an overview of the structural report received for the boundary wall at the park's depot. Some repairs are necessary and the Town Clerk was asked to obtain costs. The castle yard parking area was also briefly discussed.

#### **517. THE TOWN HALL**

The Town Clerk appraised Members in respect of the pre-application advice that has been received from the District Council's Planning and Conservation Officers. The report had been encouraging but had not mentioned how anything could be funded.

The Town Clerk stated that OCVA were holding a session with representatives regarding the Big Lottery Grant on the 17<sup>th</sup> April and that it would be good if at least two Councillors could attend. The Mayor and Councillor Dolton agreed to attend. Councillor Norton is attending a similar session in February on behalf Wallingford Wigod Way Family Centre.

#### **518. 8A CASTLE STREET VENTILATION**

Members had all received a copy of Richard Oxley's email and report. The Town Clerk stated there were, as Members could see, various options that could be implemented to try to improve the ventilation but the cheapest would be a Velux window. Members discussed why this problem had occurred and it was thought that the increase in employees since taking out the lease by the tenant and the fact that they now had to use the mezzanine floor was the reason. Members also asked if the increase in staff within the premises could be a hazard in the event of fire however the tenant will have their own fire risk assessments in place. **Members concluded that The Town Clerk obtain quotations for a Velux window and that the tenants be asked to pay for this.**

#### **519. TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES – 9 ST MARTIN'S STREET**

**a) Water Leak** – The Town Clerk reported that a leak had been discovered in the Town Council offices which would appear to be in the vicinity of a radiator. However, it was unclear whether this was the connection to the radiator or from pipes leading to it which are bedded in concrete (potentially it could be costly). A quotation to investigate amounting to £180 has been received and this work has been authorised.

**b) General state of building** – The Town Clerk raised her concerns regarding the general state of the building. Members noted the comments.

#### **520. GENERAL PROPERTY UPDATE**

The Town Clerk gave an overview of the Town Council's properties:

**Town Hall** – Legionnaires report – Town Hall water tank being cleaned in March 2019. Stair lift has been inspected and has passed however should it break down then spare parts could be a problem.

**War Memorial** – work is complete and the grant has been received.

**Flint House** – A water leak in the cellar has been discovered – investigations taking place.

**8b Castle Street** – The tiles over the bread oven near the garage need replacing.

**Lamp Post on Market Place** – The Third Party's Insurance Company has paid out but the replacement of the post is on hold.

**Castle Garden Ruins** – The Structural engineer's report is awaited.

**Castle Garden Pond** – This is currently being revamped by the parks department.

**10 St Martin's Street** – This tenancy is working well.

**Boathouse** – The Boathouse's licence to Henley Charter and the lease is of concern and the Boathouse has been instructed not to allow Henley Charter to use the space until this issue is sorted.

**Private residents' access on to the Bull Croft** – Ivy has started to grow over a resident's gate – the resident had complained, stating that they had permission. Permitted development permission had been given by the District Council but the land owners permission had not been sought (Bull Croft Trust). The parks department has removed the ivy pending further investigations. The Town Clerk stated that this could cause a precedent with rights of easement and suggested that legal advice was sought. The access gates on the Kinecroft were also discussed and **Members asked the Town Clerk to ascertain the Town Council/Trust's legal position.**

#### **521. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Adoption of Telephone Boxes; Community building on the parks yard; Draft Income and Strategy and Income Policy; Spreading Treasury Stock; Grants as required; External Audit Recommendations

**CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES ON PAGE 220**