

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF HINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE LINCOLN HALL ON TUESDAY 06 DECEMBER 2022. THE MEETING COMMENCED AT 7.30pm.

**Present**

Cllr Eldridge, Chairperson  
Cllr Amey, Vicechair  
Cllr Dunnett, Cllr Roberts  
Clerk, Alison Doe

There were 3 members of the public present including County Cllr Dewsbury.

1. **Apologies for absence**  
Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Christien, Cllr Foord, Cllr Overton, Cllr Sta Ana, Cllr Thompson and District Cllr Bendle. There had been no contact from Cllr Stabler.
2. **Public participation session, (members of the public may make a statement or ask a question of not more than three minutes duration)**
  - 2.1 A member of the public representing the Hingham Playing Field Association/Sports and Social Club advised that they were intending to find a way in which more of the clubs and organisations in Hingham could work together and co-ordinate events in the Town, in particular the celebrations for the King's Coronation and Easter, the HPFA/Sports and Social Club would start by speaking to the primary school in the new year.
  - 2.2 Cllr Dunnett advised that a local resident had on several occasions contacted her regarding the parkin on Dereham Road and asking what can be done to prevent it. Cllr Dunnett confirmed that she had advised of the work that the Town Council were doing with regard to the Norfolk County Council feasibility study and the neighbourhood plan to try to establish if a solution can be implemented.
3. **Declarations of interests with regard to items on the agenda and to consider requests for dispensations**  
There were no declarations of interest with regard to items on the agenda.
4. **To agree a Chairman to preside over any agenda items of this meeting, if both the Chairman and Vice Chair are unable to preside due to (agenda item 1) Apologies for absence and /or (agenda item 3) Declarations of interests**  
Cllr Eldridge advised he would Chair all agenda items.
5. **To consider any applications for co-option on to the Town Council**  
There were no application for co-option on to the Town Council. The Clerk advised that she had received an enquiry regarding co-option from a resident.
6. **To agree the accuracy of the Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 01 November 2022**  
The minutes were agreed as correct and signed by the Chairman.
7. **Matters arising from the Minutes of the Town Council meeting 01 November 2022 (and other updates contained in a written Clerks report circulated prior to the meeting – see Appendix A)**  
The Clerk advised that she had emailed representatives of Lifeways and South Norfolk Council regarding Moon Court, and both had confirmed that dialogue is on going to try to secure an agreement which will see the facility brought into use.
8. **Working Party Reports**  
There were no working party reports.

## 9. Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group report

A written report was forwarded to all Cllrs prior to the meeting, the report is as follows:

### Work since last update

- A meeting of the steering group took place on 29 November 2022 (**minutes of previous meetings will be on the NP website when available – see minutes for further details of points raised/discussions undertaken, further to the points listed below**)
- Work on the designation of Local Green Spaces and Non-designated Heritage Assets continues.
- The steering group started to identify Important Views of landscapes/features in and around the parish.
- The steering group have completed the first draft of the policies to be included in the Neighbourhood Plan, the consultant will work on this prior to the next meeting.
- AECOM are continuing to work on the design code. A first draft was forwarded to the steering group on 17 November, however the steering group were concerned that the document was too lengthy with too much generic material included and that an idea of “good design” specific to Hingham had not been achieved. Some members of the steering group, the consultants and AECOM met via Zoom on 1 December to discuss these issues and forge a way forward. A new draft design code will be written by AECOM.
- The AECOM study on car parking issues is being undertaken, the officer has been liaising with Norfolk County Council officers who are currently tasked with the feasibility study. A workshop for the steering group and town councillors took place on 08 November. Timescales for completion of the study as yet unknown.
- A zoom meeting with AECOM has taken place regarding the 4 sites submitted through the call for sites. This was a general discussion of what the Neighbourhood Plan wanted to achieve through the call for sites (to potentially find land for car parking or community uses) and to discuss how the submissions fit in with the land and housing allocations set in the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan. When the independent assessments have been completed the sites will be discussed in detail by the steering group.
- Placecheck remains available and open for comments:

<https://placecheck.info/app/maps/hingham>

### Work ahead (over the next month or so)

- AECOM to continue work on the design code and parking study.
- Steering group to continue work on green spaces, ensuring the list is complete and assessing sites against the National Planning Policy Framework criteria.
- Continue to establish a list of non-designate heritage assets.
- Steering group to continue to work with the consultant to re draft the policies for the Hingham Neighbourhood Plan where necessary.
- Next Steering Group meeting 10 January 2022.

The Chairman offered his thanks to the Steering Group for their hard work.

## 10. Reports from representatives on external bodies/ attendees of external meetings/training

- 10.1 The Clerk advised that she had received an email from the Hingham Playing Field Association secretary, advising that the HPFA have been in touch with various people (including the school), regarding trying to coordinate groups and events in the town so that all support each other and events don't clash. A coffee and cake morning early in the New Year at the Sports Hall will be held to try and promote this. It is hoped that there will be an Easter Egg event on 8th April, and any money raised will be divided between the Sports Hall and the school. The Sports Hall would specifically use the money to upgrade and improve the play equipment at the Sports Hall and the

Welcomme space. It is hoped that an event can be held to mark the King's coronation. The Senior Citizens tea party will be held at the end of December.

- 10.2 Cllr Roberts advised that he attended the Town and Parish Council Forum hosted (online) by South Norfolk Council. It was reported that if the proposed devolution deal between the government and Norfolk County Council goes ahead, a Mayor of Norfolk will be elected by the public. There was an update on the introduction of voter identification for elections.

South Norfolk Council are providing support for residents via funding for Warm Spaces within communities and the help hub. The Electric Vehicle charging point pilot scheme is underway. There was also an update from the Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance.

It was noted that the next forum is scheduled for January 18<sup>th</sup> 2023.  
Cllr Roberts was thanked for attending the forum.

#### 11. General Correspondence (information/circulars etc)

- 11.1 South Norfolk Council - Town & Parish Council Forum
- 11.2 Civic Voice welcomes a new National Lottery Community Fund report on how to boost 'Pride of Place.'
- 11.3 South Norfolk Council - Elections Act 2022
- 11.4 Norfolk County Council - Norfolk Fire Service take the lead in adopting electric emergency response cars
- 11.5 Norfolk ALC - Exciting New Services from Norfolk ALC, Payroll, Internal Audit, Managed Websites
- 11.6 Notification of external auditor appointment for the 2022-23 financial year for the 5 year period until 2026-27
- 11.7 South Norfolk Council - Parish Precept for Financial Year 2023/24  
(Please note the Parish Precept requirement will be agreed by Hingham Town Council at their January meeting, scheduled for 3 January 2023)
- 11.8 Norfolk County Council - Rural Road Improvements Initiative

#### 12. Correspondence (not for public inspection) as addressed directly to Hingham Town Council (from residents etc. and may contain personal information)

None.

#### 13. To discuss and agree any required responses/actions in relation to any item(s) of correspondence

The Clerk to send an expression of interest to Norfolk ALC regarding the Managed Website scheme.

#### 14. District Councillor's report

District Cllr Bendle was not present at the meeting but had emailed to send Christmas best wishes and confirm that SNC Officers are still in discussions with the owners of Moon Court. It will be considered alongside other available options for additional necessary temporary housing at the best value for residents.

#### 15. County Councillor's report

County Cllr Dewsbury outlined the written report she had sent prior to the meeting, as follows:

##### **Winter Capacity Plan**

The proportion of people needing care when they leave hospital has increased by 67% since 'pre COVID' levels so more than 3,000 extra hours of homecare are being commissioned this winter to help support the increasing demand on Adult Social Care.

Norfolk County Council is also continuing to recruit to its Norfolk First Response Service which also supports people recuperating at home.

**Support available**

NCC is aware that many local people are worried about the increasing cost of living. A range of information and support can be found at [www.norfolk.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/costofliving)

This includes the Norfolk Assistance Scheme to help with the cost of food, energy, water, etc. There are also vouchers for free school meals. NCC have also provided funding for the Community Foundation to provide Nourishing Norfolk food hubs.

**Trusted Traders**

Having run a directory service for over 12 years Norfolk Trusted Trader has launched a new website to boost consumer confidence when searching for businesses to do work for them. Traders interested in joining the scheme will get a 50% membership discount if they join before the end of February.

**Multiply**

NCC is co-ordinating a new project called Multiply. This is funded by a Government Grant of £4.7 million and aimed at helping people improve their numeracy in many ways to support their lives, (eg. Dealing with bills/cost of living, planning/buying/cooking family meals, parents wanting to help their children with maths homework, etc). A Multiply Champion has been appointed for each district to help local organisations/businesses set up events across each area for groups or even just individuals.

**History begins at Home**

Norfolk Records Office is running another History Begins at Home project next year. The project provides a conversation starting question sheet each month and is aimed at reducing loneliness and encouraging intergenerational conversations about memories of events during people's lifetimes. People can join the project on Twitter (@BeginsHistory) and Facebook (@historybeginsathome).

**Festive events**

Many of the museums are putting on a variety of Christmas entertainment for all ages leading up to Christmas.

**Tree planting**

So far over 20,000 saplings have been requested from DEFRA funded Jubilee Trees for Norfolk Scheme. A map is being created showing where all the trees are being planted. Next year 55,000 tree and hedge plants will be planted on County Farms land as part of the Hedge Restoration, also funded by a grant. The Jubilee Trees for Norfolk offer closes on January 4th.

**16. Planning Decisions**

- 16.1 2022/1992 - T4 - Cherry tree - reduce limb over road by 1-1.5m to leave approx 5-6m  
The Green The Fairland Hingham Norfolk. No objections
- 16.2 2022/1988 - Pollard of Lime tree at approx. 6m at the primary unions  
Church Of St Andrew Attleborough Road Hingham Norfolk. Approval with Conditions
- 16.3 2022/1982 - Alterations to garage to form studio bedroom  
18 Bond Street Hingham Norfolk NR9 4HA. Approval with Conditions
- 16.4 2022/1927 - T1 Beech tree - Crown lift to give ground clearance of approximately 3.8m to 4m metres and reduce branches approximately 2m to 2.5m away from building and remove any other branches  
3 Hardingham Street Hingham Norfolk NR9 4JB. Approval with Conditions
- 16.5 2022/1864 - Turn the front garden into a driveway with hardcore and shingle with new dropped kerb  
35 Norwich Road Hingham Norfolk NR9 4LS. Approval with Conditions
- 16.6 2022/1757 - Single storey rear extension  
19 Watton Road Hingham Norfolk NR9 4HD. Approval with Conditions

**17. Planning Applications (as notified by SNC for consultation)**

17.1 2022/2193 - Utility room and internal alteration comprising removal of part kitchen wall (retrospective)  
Dovecote House 4-6 Dereham Road Hingham Norfolk NR9 4HU  
The Council agreed to recommend approval.

17.2 2022/2079 and 2022/2080 - Demolition of a single storey rear extension, garden outbuilding and a north/south pitched link roof part way into garden and alterations to rear extension fenestration and doorway. New rear extension, new garden pavilions and garden wall to north and east of rear garden together with a new north/south link roof and installation of roof mounted low profile PV units. Widen vehicle access at south garden wall  
6 Chapel Street Hingham Norfolk NR9 4JH  
The Council agreed to recommend approval.

17.3 2022/2073 - Remove conservatory, erection of garden room to rear. Raise garage roof and add extension at first floor level with associated alterations  
12 St Andrews Close Hingham Norfolk NR9 4JT  
The Council agreed to recommend approval.

17.4 2022/2252 - Replace two windows and one door to the rear  
27 Baxter Road Hingham Norfolk NR9 4HY  
The Council agreed to recommend approval.

17.5 2022/2274 - Change of use of two holiday units to two dwellings (Retrospective)  
Outbuilding To The Rear Of Dovecote House Hingham  
The Council agreed to recommend approval.

17.6 2022/2295 - Proposed detached bungalow and garage including access (Revised)  
Land South Of 31 Hall Moor Road Hingham Norfolk  
It was noted that this application notification had only been received late that afternoon and some Cllrs had not had opportunity to view the details. Cllrs agreed to send comment to the Clerk.

**18. Information regarding other planning applications** where the Town Council is not a consultee, (for information only)

18.1 2022/2235 - T1 - Remove Lawsons Cypress tree in the front garden, T2 - Coppice 2x Ash trees on the boundary, T3 Remove dead Walnut tree in the front garden  
Walnut Tree House Hall Lane Hingham Norfolk NR9 4JX

18.2 2022/2121 - T1 Ash - Fell to stump T2 Ash - Fell to stump  
2 Mill Corner Hingham Norfolk NR9 4LG

18.3 2022/2174 - T1 Maple - Fell T2 Hornbeam - Fell  
6 St Andrews Close Hingham Norfolk NR9 4JT

**19. To discuss the Parish Partnership funding bid and agree any actions**

The Clerk had prepared a bid for Norfolk County Council Parish Partnership funding based on discussions at previous meetings, the document was forwarded to all Cllrs prior to the meeting. The project funding being applied for, is for improved speed and "Welcome" signage. If this bid is successful, the scheme would provide a consistent approach to speed signage at the entrance points to the town and provide signage that would appear more attractive whilst being more visible to drivers. In addition to this, the application stresses that the Town Council would like to

take the opportunity to create a “Welcome to Hingham” branded sign to further enhance the scheme, to add emphasis that Hingham is a community and a destination rather than a “drive through” on the B1108. If funding is awarded it is on a 50/50 basis. The estimated cost of the whole project is £38,880, therefore funding has been applied for to the sum of £19,440 which is below the upper bid limit of £25,000. Norfolk County Council will notify the Town Council in March/April 2023, if the bid is successful or not.

**20. To consider renewal of membership to SLCC for the Clerk**

It was agreed to renew the Clerk’s membership to SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks)

**21. To discuss the provision of notice boards and consider a proposal to purchase new notice boards**

It was noted that the Sports and Social Club had requested that a community notice board be installed in the centre of the town. It was discussed that the Town Council notice boards need to be replaced and repositioned somewhere where they were more accessible, especially the one in the Market Place, and as yet a suitable place was not obvious. A community notice board would need to be separate from a Town Council one so there was no association with any inappropriate content which may be posted. Concern was raised as to who would police and monitor such a notice board and too many notice boards would give a cluttered street appearance.

It was suggested that a grant could be provided from the Town Council should the Hingham Playing Field Association wish to install notice boards at the Sports field (and Welcomme space), and that current use of advertising on social media and the parish magazine seems to be working well with events being well supported.

## FINANCE

**22. Proposal to invite tenders for an internal auditor for (2022/23) financial year-end audit**

Agreed, an advert is to be placed in the parish magazine and the previous internal auditor will be contacted and invited to tender.

**23. To consider the purchase of a new laptop for the Clerk**

The Clerk advised that the laptop purchased in 2019 is now failing to hold charge and the charging port is not working well. The laptop has had issues with updates where it opens up as if having performed a factory reset. It was agreed that a new laptop should be purchased.

**24. Receive the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting of 15 November 2022 (See appendix B), (discuss and agree any actions)**

A copy of the Finance Committee draft minutes were forwarded to all Cllrs prior to the meeting. No points were raised. The Clerk confirmed that the minutes would be agreed at the next meeting of the Finance Committee.

**25. To consider the proposal by the Finance Committee to open a new (savings) bank account (as per minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting)**

At the Finance Committee meeting of 15 November 2022, the committee had considered several options for opening a new savings account to better protect the Town Council reserve funds. Cllr Roberts had provided some information on the preferred option of using Charity Bank. It was agreed by the Town Council that an account should be opened as recommended by the Finance Committee.

**26. To consider the proposal by the Finance Committee to adopt an Investment Strategy (as per the minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting)**

Cllr Roberts had drafted an Investment Strategy which the Finance Committee had considered and amended at their meeting. A copy of the strategy was forwarded to all Cllrs prior to their meeting and the Finance Committee made the recommendation for the strategy to be adopted. This was agreed.

27. Noting that the 2023/24 budget will be finalised at the meeting of 03 January 2023, consider the suggestions/recommendation made by the Finance Committee regarding the (draft) 2023/24 budget (as per the Finance Committee meeting)

A copy of the draft budget (as discussed and agreed by the Finance Committee) was forwarded to all Cllrs prior to the meeting. The Clerk advised that the Finance Committee had considered the draft budget line by line. It was explained that appropriate increases in the budget figures (expected expenditure) had been made to account for the known increases for goods and services (such as toilet sundries, electricity costs and staffing costs). Following the recommendations of the Internal Auditor and with a view to avoiding accruing an increase in reserves and avoiding an increase in the parish precept requirement, some expenditure budget figures were set to zero as it is unknown if works will be required to be carried out (for example, maintenance to the cemetery memorials) and it was noted that the financial reserves or budget contingency figure could be used for unquantifiable expenditure. The budget will again be considered at the Council meeting in January when the final 2023/24 budget will be agreed.

28. To agree and approve the accounts for payment (as below)

The accounts for payment were approved as below and the cheques were signed.

REF	PAYEE	DETAILS	AMOUNT	VAT	VAT
104349	NPOWER	STREET LIGHITNG ELECTRIC	£606.98	VAT	£101.16
104350	STAFF	WAGES	£1,732.85		
		BINBAGS	£4.98	VAT	£0.83
		TOTAL	£1,737.83		
104351	STAFF	WAGES	£1,507.16		
		SOFTWARE	£71.99		£12.00
		CHRISTMAS DEC CRAFT ITEMS	£133.53		£22.25
		TOTAL	£1,712.68		
DD	NEST	PENSION	£138.53		
104352	LINCOLN HALL	HALL HIRE/STORAGE HIRE	£400.00		
104353	HINGHAM CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP	ROOM HIRE FOR NP MEETINGS	£200.00		
104354	SOCIETY OF LOCAL COUNCIL CLERKS	MEMBERSHIP	£187.00		
104355	HINGHAM COMMUNITY CAR	CONTRIBUTION	£3,258.00		
104356	NORFOLK CITIZENS ADVICE	DONATION	£600.00		
104357	COZENS (UK) LIMITED	STREET LIGHT MAINTENANCE	£240.00	VAT	£40.00
104358	NORFOLK COPIERS LTD	METERED PRINTING	£44.60	VAT	£7.43
104359	EUROFFICE	TOILET PAPER	£63.06	VAT	£10.51
		<b>TOTAL FOR ALL PAYMENTS (TO DATE)</b>	<b>£9,188.68</b>		
		TOTAL VAT	£194.18		

29. 'Exclusion of the Press and Public under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to discuss the following matters:'

The following agenda items are commercially sensitive and refer to staff, the following agenda items are therefore confidential

It was agreed to ask the public to leave the meeting. The public left the meeting.

30. To receive the LGA wage agreement for 2022/23, discuss staff wages and agree any actions  
A copy of the LGA wage agreement for 2022/23 was forwarded to all Cllrs prior to the meeting. The Clerk advised that the LGA agreement had the effect on the current staff wages, as to an increase of £1.00 per hour, and that this was a more substantial increase of a combined incremental rise and the cost-of-living wage agreement rise awarded in previous years. It was agreed that staff wages should remain on the current spinal column scale points. The LGA agreement pay rise will be back dated to April 2022.
31. (If sufficient number of quotations have been received) To consider quotations for works to the Town Clock and agree any actions  
Three companies had responded to the request for an assessment of the clock and quotation to undertake works. The quotations provided were considered and the Council agreed on the appointment of a contractor to undertake works.
32. (If sufficient number of quotations have been received) To consider quotations for the resurfacing of the skate park and agree any actions  
Three companies had responded to the request for an assessment of the skate park and request for quotation to undertake works. The quotations provided were considered and the Council agreed on the appointment of a contractor to undertake works.
33. (If sufficient number of quotations have been received) To consider quotations for tree works and agree any actions  
Four companies had responded to the request for a quotation to undertake works as recommended by the tree survey. The quotations provided were considered and the Council agreed on the appointment of a contractor to undertake works.

The meeting ended at 9.30 pm

Signed ..... Chairperson 03 January 2023



## Appendix A – Clerks Update/Matters Arising

### Matters arising from the minutes of the Town Council Meeting of 01 November 2022

- MIN 13: Warm Spaces grant information provided to the Copper Lane Church who have made a successful application for funding.
- MIN 19: The street lighting contractor has been instructed to undertake the replacement of the churchyard pathway lighting.
- MIN 22: The Clerk has written to the Grass cutting contractor regarding extending the contract for a further 2 years. An amended price has been provided by the contractor for 2023/24.

### Other Updates/Outstanding Issues

- Town Christmas tree in place in the Market Place and adorned by decorations made by children of Hingham Primary School.
- The resident who has proposed to plant a Oak tree on the Market Place green has agreed to source an alternative species and will be in touch in due course.
- Tree work required as a result of the tree survey, relevant applications to South Norfolk Council have been granted.
- SNC and lifeways are now in correspondence regarding the Moon Court facility, following the November Town Council meeting, the Clerk has contacted both parties who advise conversations are ongoing, but no agreement has been reached.
- Letter to the Chief Constable and the Police Crime Commissioner regarding parking drafted photographs need to be added prior to sending.
- Quotations seeking letter being for improving/upgrading the footway lighting on Norwich Road and Watton Road ready to send.
- Market Place Bus Shelter renovations, the contractor the new year for the work to be undertaken.
- Fairland Oak Tree stumps, advice has been sought regarding hollowing the stumps out, a suggestion has been made that a stump grinder will be required (cost approximately £500-600 per stump).
- Feasibility study for Fairland Cross roads and various parking, road and pedestrian safety issues in the Market Place and Fairland – survey equipment has been in place in the Market Place, it is assumed this is to facility the study although no formal notification has been received from Norfolk County Council. NCC stated that “hopefully” there will be a draft issues in the new year
- Report on poor state of directional road signs, to be forwarded to NCC.
- The pack of free trees have been received, planting required (winter)
- Applications for Assets of Community Value to be finalised, plans and ownership details are required.
- Parish Archives, the collection of the materials to be arranged. The Clerk has spoken to the family of the past Archivist.
- Parking, Please do not park on the grass signs are in situ on the Fairland (one small green)
- Trees for planting (Fairland and Market Place permanent Christmas Trees) have been sourced, they are small so will need protecting when planted.
- Notice boards for the toilets to be purchased.
- Both wooden notice boards (Market Place and Fairland) are now becoming difficult to open and lock, they become damp and condensated. The clerk advises considering the purchase of a new purpose built free standing notice board if there is a suitable location in the Market Place. A new notice board for the Fairland is also recommended. To be added to a future agenda.

- Street Lighting, the contractor has been asked to undertake the renumbering of the footway lights which has been started. A condition report is awaited on all of the Council's footway lighting, (priority can then be assessed depending on the condition/safety of the light columns, for obtaining quotations for changing lights to LED). With regards to possible solutions to replacing the Tally Alley light, the contractor suggested the use of illuminated bollards, ownership of the alleyway needs to be established.
- Communications Policy, including social media policy is being worked upon. Cllrs are reminded not to comment on public social media pages making reference to themselves as Councillors, in a way that could give inaccurate information or be misleading or misconstrued as the Council having discussed and agreed something, when this is not the case. Staff/Cllr communication/relationship protocol to be drafted.
- The Clerk has been working on an overall Cemetery Fees Policy containing all points relevant to the fee structure including frequency and method of fees reviews. This is to be finalised and brought back to a future Town Council meeting with a review of the cemetery fees and cemetery terms and conditions.
- Extension of Cemetery Driveway and turning circle, the Clerk has spent some time in the cemetery looking at the area that would be required to extend the driveway. The area is very extensive and the clerk is concerned about the application of such a large area of tarmac , (environmental and cost). There may be other more appropriate solutions, including a shorter tarmac extension followed by "matting" under the grass surface (and possibly a tarmac path for better pedestrian/disability access), and leaving the existing grass as a driveway over the old cemetery area. Advice is needed from a funeral director with regard to vehicles used. The use of the driveway (as in frequency) for funerals is minimal therefore the grass should not become too worn from being driven on, this requires a lot of further thought to ensure the Council have a cost effective but long term solution for the future use of the cemetery .
- 2 steel liners for the Market Place bins to be ordered (liners available at a reasonable price are a slightly different size to the existing ones (by mm's) liners of the same size have not yet been found.
- Commemorative Plaque for the Fairland Bus shelter, to be ordered

Report prepared 05 December 2022 does not include Matters Arising when the item is on the forthcoming meeting's agenda

Crime Figures – latest September 2022

<https://www.police.uk/pu/your-area/norfolk-constabulary/wymondham/?tab=CrimeMap>

on or near:

The Fields: Violent and sexual offences 1

Lincoln Avenue: Violent and sexual offences 2

Lincoln Close: Violent and sexual offences 1

Oak Lane: Violent and sexual offences 1

Deopham Road: Violent and sexual 1

**Appendix B – Draft Minutes from the meeting of the Finance Committee**

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD IN THE LINCOLN HALL ON TUESDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2022. THE MEETING COMMENCED AT 7.30pm.

**Finance Committee Membership**

Cllr Amey, Cllr Dunnett, Cllr Eldridge, Cllr Roberts and Cllr Thompson

**Present**

Cllr Amey – acted as Chairperson

Cllr Thompson, Cllr Dunnett, Cllr Roberts

Clerk – Alison Doe

There were no members of the public present.

**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Eldridge and County Cllrs Dewsbury.

**2. Declarations of interests with regard to items on the agenda and to consider requests for dispensations**

There were no declarations of interests with regard to items on the agenda.

**3. Public participation**

There were no members of the public present, and no issues raised.

**4. Accuracy of the Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting of 19 July 2022**

The minutes of the meeting of 19 July 2022 were agreed as correct and signed by Cllr Amey, acting as Chairperson.

**5. Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting of 19 July 2022**

No matters arising were raised.

**6. To discuss the draft investment strategy and agree any actions**

As agreed at the previous meeting, Cllr Roberts had prepared a draft investment strategy, which was noted as a recommendation made by the Internal Auditor. Cllr Roberts forwarded the draft investment strategy to the members of the Finance Committee prior to the meeting, and advised at the meeting that it had been written taking into account the content of investment strategies adopted by other parish and town councils, which he advised varied in length and contents.

The Committee discussed the draft strategy and agreed to include wording which would show the intent of the Council to choose, wherever possible, ethical companies/banks in which to place their investments.

It was agreed to put the investment strategy forward to the Full Council for consideration with the recommendation of adoption.

**7. To discuss additional banking arrangements and agree any actions**

The Clerk advised that she had asked other Clerks (via a Clerks forum) for their recommendations for ethical banking and that the most frequent recommendation was for Unity Trust, for which there is a monthly fee of £6.00. The Committee did not support using

a paid for banking service if there was an equally suitable alternative without having to pay a fee.

Cllr Roberts had undertaken research into what was offered by several other banks and each was given consideration regarding its suitability. Banks that were not ethical, were not covered by the FSCS, did not offer an appropriate account were discounted.

It was agreed that on the information provided Charity Bank was the best option, although it had a 40 day notice period for withdrawals, it was noted that the account would be used in addition to the present Barclays current account and any withdrawals needed from the reserves held in the new bank account could be planned with 40 days' notice. Charity Bank uses investments to support charities and social enterprises. The second choice was Starling Bank.

Cllr Roberts will recheck the details to ensure that the accounts available from Charity Bank and Starling are suitable. It was agreed to make the recommendation to the Council to open a savings account with Charity Bank (if suitability is definite).

It was noted that moving £85,000 into a new account separate from Barclays would still leave an amount of reserves held within Barclays bank that would exceed the amount covered by the FSCS. It was agreed that the situation should be reviewed in a year following the completion of expected projects that will use some of the current reserves.

#### **8. To discuss CIL receipts and expenditure**

The Clerk confirmed receipts of CIL money in April (£463.67) and October (£3716.90) 2022. Overall, since CIL was introduced in 2015 £75059.01 had been received of which £48,965.00 had been spent on infrastructure projects, leaving £26,094.01 remaining. The Clerk advised that CIL money unspent after 5 years can be claimed back by South Norfolk Council and had discussed this with the CIL officer who was happy that there were planned projects (such as the resurfacing/repairs at the skatepark which would use CIL money that was over 5 years old. The Clerk confirmed that of the £26,094.01 held £14,669.26 was at the 5 year and over point.

The Finance Committee were reminded that CIL money is received through the planning process if it is payable on building projects/development (not all development generates CIL as some projects are exempt), and it is prescribed that CIL money received must be spent on infrastructure projects.

It was noted that when (if) the Hingham Neighbourhood Plan is adopted then the percentage of CIL money received by the Town Council will increase from 15% to 25% (of total CIL paid by the "developer").

#### **9. To undertake the Budget Monitoring (April-September 2022)**

The Clerk had prepared a spreadsheet showing amounts received and spent in £'s and also as a percentage of the allocated budget for each item. The Committee discussed the figures provided.

With regards to income, it was noted that there was some cemetery income (cheques) which were due to be paid into the bank.

It was also noted that the interest rates had increased and that the expected figure when setting the budget for 2022.23 was low due to the previous year's low interest rates and the 2021.22 expected income from interest not being achieved.

With regards to expenditure, it was noted that some items were significantly over budget. With regard to the toilets, the Clerk advised that the budget figure for cleaning supplies and sundries was set too low as it was set looking at expenditure for the previous 2

years when the toilets had not been fully operational (they had been closed for some of the time) due to Covid and the fire.

It was noted that the electricity costs had increased substantially, due to the toilets being on a deemed contract and the increase in energy prices, although not all charges had been made by EDF due to the issues with the new meter installation and EDF failing to write to the correct address with regard to price increases, the deemed contract will now end as Utility Aid has undertaken an energy audit and sourced better a deal with a new supplier. It was also noted that the cost of toilet paper has increased.

The Clerk explained that the expenditure on stationary stamps etc. was over budget as the budget figure was unrealistically low (due to postage stamps not being claimed for) the Clerk is now ensuring that the cost of postage stamps purchased is reclaimed.

It was noted that for some "maintenance" budget items expenditure were at zero percent, (the bus shelter and clock are due for largescale refurbishment which will be greater than the budget figure and this expenditure will be paid from the reserves). Other items of "maintenance/repair" have not been needed so far, although it was noted that tree works is required.

The invoice for the dog waste bin emptying is awaited.

It was noted that the budget income (receipts received) for April to September 2022 was £78,600.84 (92.87% of the budget figure) with an additional £17,653.67 having been received from ad hoc payments not included in the 2021/22 budget, including Neighbourhood Plan grant money (£10,450.00) and the insurance payment from the fire in the toilets (£2,210.00). The budget expenditure (payments) was noted as £35,477.31, (45.27% of the budget figure), with additional payments (not included in the budget) been made totalling £10,051.38, this included the repayment of Neighbourhood Grant money to Groundworks, Neighbourhood Plan consultation fees, repair to the fire damages toilets, the 2021.22 dog waste bin collection payment to SNC (invoiced late by SNC) and passing on the £300 Jubilee grant from SNC to the Hingham Playing Field Association.

#### 10. To undertake the preliminary budget setting for 2023/24

The Clerk had prepared a spreadsheet showing the budget figure for 2022/23, figures (and percentages) for money spent and received April to September 2022, and to date (November 2022), the figures for the totals spent and received for 2021/22, noting that the figures for the previous year 2020/21 were available (separately) but expenditure for that year was not a realistic comparison in terms of current costs of goods and services and the 2020/21 figures also reflected the Covid lockdowns where meetings were held remotely, the toilets were closed and spending was less than "normal".

The Clerk had prepared recommendations for the 2023/24 budget. The proposed budget figures were produced taking into consideration the healthy reserves held by the Council and the recommendation by the internal auditors that more consideration needs to be given to expenditure that can be quantified rather than estimated, and that the reserves should not be added to unnecessary due to not spending estimated budgets accrued. The Council had in meetings expressed concerns regarding the cost of living crises and the Clerk was mindful of this when preparing the proposed budget and advised that she had aimed to keep the budget figure requirement consistent with the current year so that an increase in precept was not required.

The Clerk had annotated the spread sheet against each budget item and suggested that where there was no definite quantifiable amount available for ad hoc repairs and maintenance (such as for street lighting and trees/ditches) the budget figure should be set at zero and any such expenditure should be made out of the reserves or paid from the

contingency in the budget, the Clerk advised that this would offset the increases required for electricity costs and staff costs, which were quantifiable. It was also noted that the Neighbourhood Plan grants would not cover the entire cost of making the plan, and that the Council had agreed to cover any shortfall in funding, this it was agreed should also come from reserves as the amount could not yet be fully quantified and it would be a one off not needed year on year as a budget requirement.

The Clerk advised that she had accounted for an increase in staff costs, using the pay award for 2022/23 which had recently been published, and accounting for one incremental rise in 2023/24 and an increase of 3% to account for a Local Government pay award for 2023/24. It was also noted that the budget for the staff pension must include the presumption that both members of staff may take up the pension scheme.

It was noted that a new contract would be required for street lighting maintenance and a new insurance policy would be required mid financial year (both are likely to increase in cost compared to current agreements).

It was noted that the reserves included ringfenced monies for CIL and the public toilets, and reserve money would be used for high-cost projects that were required, such as improvements to the cemetery turning circle, replacement street lighting and upgrading the town clock. It was noted that the funds for the project to renovate the bus shelter could come from the reserves and that parish partnership funding had been granted, for 50% of the quoted costs.

The draft budget figures were discussed line by line and amendments made where necessary. It was agreed to recommend the draft budget to the Council, noting the final budget setting would most likely take place in January when the precept requirement would also be agreed, and the tax base was known.

#### 11. To undertake the internal financial check

All receipt transactions and a random sample of payments transactions (July 2022 to October 2022) were cross referenced between the cashbook, bank statements, cheque book, minutes, and invoices. No errors were found.

It was noted that the cashbook balances (end Oct 2022) were as follows

ACCOUNT 1	£62,220.52
ACCOUNT 2	£213,991.54
ACCOUNT 3	£38,828.85
DORMANT ACCOUNT	£186.80
Total	£315,227.71

April to of end October 2022

Total Payments £53,779.37

Total Receipts £99,211.90 (includes Neighbourhood Plan Grants of £14,500)

The meeting ended at 9.30 pm