



## Watlington Parish Council

Parish Clerk: Kristina Tynan  
Watlington Parish Council  
1 Old School Place  
Watlington  
OXON OX49 5QH

Tel: 01491 613867 Email: WPC@watlington-oxon-pc.gov.uk

### Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance Committee held on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 7pm in the Parish Office

**Present:**

**Councillors:** Steve Bolingbroke (SB) -Chair  
Karyn Buck (KB) – Vice-Chair  
Nicky Smallbone (NS)  
Tim Horton (TH)  
Ian Hill (IH)

**In Attendance:** Andy Aherne – Chair of Ops

**Officer:** Kristina Tynan (KT)

01/25 Apologies for absence  
There were none, all present.

02/25 Approval of Minutes from 5/11/2024 to be agreed as a correct record. These were accepted by Council on 10/12/2024.  
**Resolved:** That these minutes be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

03/25 Matters Arising  
**Toilets in the Recreation Ground** (Minute 57/25.9 refers) – KT reported that we have not yet received the signed letter on this from SODC but that Andrew Higson MRICS Strategic Property Team had sent an email on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December confirming that 'As discussed we are happy for the monies in the service charge account to be used to install new public conveniences in the recreation ground' KT will chase up for the formal letter again stating that the Finance Committee are extremely disappointed not to have received this to date.

**Unallocated OCC CIL Funds** (Minute 57/24.10 refer) – SB reported that these can only be applied for if the project is "shovel ready". TH said that maybe the Chalk Pit work could apply to this. SB stated that he would need to contact Julia Hawkins at OCC.

04/25 Declarations of Interest  
There were none notified.

05/25 Financial Issues  
**1. Update on implementation of financial controls**  
NS stated that dual Authorisation for payments is now complete and works well. IH is another signatory, and she will show him how to authorise payment. SB said that it has taken a while to do this but that there is now a robust system in place and thanked the Clerk, NS and IH for their work on ~~this~~this.

**2. Business Case for a Gym from James Herridge Leng**  
JHL has submitted a business case and SB had asked for clarifications on a number of ~~points~~JHL points. ~~He was~~was invited to this meeting but did not respond and has not submitted a revised business case.

**Recommendation to Full Council:** That Full Council decide whether they wish to continue with this CIL Project or not.

### 3. Approval of ArtSpine related expenditure

**Resolved:** That £2K be spent on doing the plans for the landscaping design needed to enable landowner and planning permissions as approved by Full Council.

### 4. Review of Management Accounts – These were emailed out to Members.

The accounts are up to 31/12/25. SB said that we are on track to stay in budget. There are a few things that are done annually in March. He reconciles that bank accounts at the end of each month. Regarding reserves, he has added a new column to show known commitments.

### 5. Town Hall Finance – Governance and Finance

TH had sent out a paper on this. There was much discussion and TH stated that he estimates at the year end the Town Hall will have £19K.

KB said that according to the Charity Commission, WPC is the sole named trustee and as such was liable for any costs. If that is the case, the Full Council should be receiving more regular and complete reports. TH will clarify the legal status of the charity, who its trustees are and where liabilities lie.

SB asked about the Sinking Fund for the Town Hall and TH said that this was £10K at present. SB queried this and said that there should be more eg in case the roof needs to be replaced, for example. TH referred to the Sworn King report of 2012 which gives a replacement programme for 75 years. He said that £2K pa is put into the Sinking Fund but that this has been used when works from the SK report have been done. The Trust is looking to upgrade the SK report. SB said that in his view the Sinking Fund should continue to grow and should not be dipped into. The Trust should also have a Reserves Policy or Strategy for the future.

KB requested that TH quantified the time/cost the office gives to administer the Town Hall

Formatted: Font: (Default) Calibri, 11 pt

TH will reflect on this with the Town Hall Committee and develop a plan for the sinking fund and reserves.

KB said that she is aware that the Trust donates to local charities and this should be made more of as would give the Town Hall more a feeling of being part of the community and said that it would be useful to know the quantifications of what the Trust have given to community groups.

### 6. Small Grants

KB said that the Community Ball date has had to be changed due to a clash with another event in Watlington. However after discussion they would now like the two events, The Red Kite Community Event and the Summer Ball together on the 28<sup>th</sup> June, bringing the aims of both groups together and suggested community engagement day. She will be sending a proposal on this to the next Full Council meeting.

### 7. Visit Watlington Grant Application

A grant application had been received from Visit Watlington. After discussion it was agreed not to recommend awarding a grant on the following basis:

1. There was no evidence that the main beneficiaries of ~~the Visit~~ Visit Watlington site (that is pubs, cafes and retailers) are investing in the project. WPC would consider match fund contributions from the businesses but agreed that it would not be a good use of public money to support an advertising campaign that local businesses do not wish to contribute to and therefore not seem to value it.

2. That £4.5k a year is a large amount of money in the context of our annual budget and would be the second largest grant we make to an external organisation.

3. WPC did ask if Visit Watlington could host the visitor information system we are building for ~~the ArtSpine~~ArtSpine. That was not offered in the proposal.

It was noted that it was not transparent as to what the money would be used for.

Formatted: Indent: Left: 0 cm, Space Before: Auto, After: Auto

#### 06/25 Other Issues

##### 1. Policy list review and any additional policies

KT had sent out a list of NALC recommended policies and the paper shows what policies WPC currently have. The office is revising these and also putting them on the same template for uniformity. The Health and Safety Policy is being looked at by Operations and they will report back on this. KB said she was happy to help with this process and will arrange a meeting with KT shortly to discuss this.

##### 2. Watlington Club

NS and KT had met with Angie Paterson, Chair of the Watlington Club. She is currently working on getting the Front Room and Georgian Room back into use. NS said that Age Concern will be moving out of their current venue and will use the Front Room moving forward. They will be giving some money so that their requirements can be addressed. She has asked if WPC could help by our Caretaker doing checks to ensure things are working eg smoke alarms etc. If there is a problem, he would need to report to Griffiths and Partners who would arrange any work needed. There is no cleaning needed. It was noted that our Caretaker is no longer dealing with the Pavilion. KT to check he would be happy to do this.

**Recommendation to Council:** That our caretaker spends a maximum of 1 hour per week checking over the Watlington Club for a 3-month trial period.

SB brought up that he felt our Caretaker should be doing things further afield than just in the main town area. KT reported that the area has been previously agreed and that SODC are responsible for streets outside of this. However they do not do a regular clean unless the Parish Council was to request them to do so.

SB asked that Operations consider this. AA said that he investigated having a street cleaning vehicle to speed the process up and these cost new in the region of £180K. It was noted that with parked cars etc a machine would not be able to access the roadside.

#### 07/25 Correspondence – All correspondence was attached to the agenda.

1. Moore – Audit 2024 – 25 – **Noted.**
2. Susie Ingram - Funding for Community Choir – **She had missed the grant deadline. KT had suggested to her that she contact the Doris Field Trust. It was also noted that SODC have Performing Arts Grants available.**
3. SODC – CIL application for Pavilion – **Unsuccessful due to not addressing Climate Change.**
4. SOHA – No outstanding payments for the West Room – **This was noted and will be removed from our debtors list.**
5. SODC – Art Spine Grant Application for a Film – has been approved and terms of the offer need to be accepted. **This was agreed**

#### 08/25 Any Other Business

**Recreation Toilet Project** – AA reported that as Redlime is at the Pavilion they will be doing ~~the connection~~the connection trenches for drainage and sewerage etc for the toilets to be connected to mains drainage at a good cost as they are already on site with the equipment needed. The project has

already been agreed by Full Council and the costs will be taken out of the Public Conveniences Sinking Fund.

09/25 Date of next scheduled meeting 2025: 25<sup>th</sup> March 2025

**THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.40PM**