



**Minutes of the Sprowston Town Council meeting held Wednesday 20 December 2023
at the Council Chamber, Recreation Ground Road, Sprowston.**

Councillors (Cllrs.) Present: W F Couzens (Chair),
J Leggett (Vice-Chair)

B Baby	-	A L Parker
M A Booth	-	H W Tarlton
M G Callam	-	E H Tovell
J H Mallen	-	R H Tovell
J Vasco		

Officers: G Ranaweera (Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer)
E Elliot (Committee Officer)

Bidwells: Jason Menezes

Members of the Public: One member of the public was present

23/338. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY AND OTHER INTERESTS

Councillor	Minute No. and Heading	Nature of Interest
M G Callam	23/346 (1) - Grant Aid Request, Sprowston Community Garden	Trustee of the Methodist Church
	23/351 - Precept Budget Analysis and Projection 2024-25	Trustee of Sprowston Youth Engagement Project
W F Couzens	23/346 (2) - Grant Aid Request, Sprowston Senior Citizens Club	Trustee Sprowston Senior Citizens Club
J Leggett	23/351 - Precept Budget Analysis and Projection 2024-25	Trustee - Sprowston Youth Engagement project

23/339. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Written apologies for absence were received and accepted by the Council from Cllrs. D Coleman and K Vincent and verbal apologies were received from Cllr. S D Booth.

23/340. RESIDENTS' QUESTIONS

On the motion of Cllr. W F Couzens, seconded by Cllr. A L Parker, it was **RESOLVED**, that the meeting be adjourned to receive residents' and councillors' questions on

matters concerning the town. Residents and councillors were reminded that their questions should be addressed to the Chairman who would, assisted by the Town Clerk, reply.

Mr K Lashley, Treasurer of Sprowston Senior Citizens Club offered to answer questions relating to the grant application to replace lighting with energy efficient units at the Senior Citizens Club's premises on Wroxham Road.

As there were no questions the meeting was reconvened.

23/341. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Council's meeting held on 6 November 2023, having previously been circulated to all Councillors were subject to the following amendment

Minute 23/330 (2) **delete** £12,000 and **insert** £1,250.00

confirmed and signed by the Chair of the Council.

23/342. ACTION FROM MINUTES

(1) Police Update

Further to Minute 23/322, the Town Clerk reported:

- (1) Richard Pearson (Norfolk County Council Highway Engineer) was currently on annual leave. He would contact him on his return to discuss signage arrangements outside the parade of shops on Wroxham Road.
- (2) He had contacted Civil Parking Enforcement to request inclusion of Wroxham Road in their schedule.
- (3) PC Graham Gill was also pursuing refreshment of yellow lines on Wroxham Road and signage arrangements at the parade of shops with Richard Pearson.

(2) Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

Further to Minute 23/332, the Town Clerk had clarified benefits (25% Community Infrastructure Levy Receipts) associated with the existing Neighbourhood Plan remained in place until the plan was no longer valid.

23/343. REVIEW OF VIKING CENTRE TENDERS

Jason Menezes of Bidwells gave a presentation reiterating the Tender Analysis report.

He reported that having received and qualified responses to queries raised, Bidwells recommended Contractor A.

23/343. REVIEW OF VIKING CENTRE TENDERS (CONTINUED)

In answer to Councillors' questions Mr Menezes responded:

- He was surprised only three tenders had been received.
- £50,000 contingency was for unforeseen items such as digging deeper foundations if soft spots found.
- The tender is a fixed priced for 60 days.
- Contractor A had delivered many quality projects of a similar nature.

The Town Clerk confirmed that Council had opted to Tax and VAT could be claimed back on the build. However, the timing of payments would need to be managed carefully as VAT refunds will be used to pay some of the capital costs.

Cllr. J Leggett proposed, seconded by Cllr. M G Callam to select Contractor A. On being put to the vote the motion was carried.

23/344. CORRESPONDENCE

(1) Nationally Important Infrastructure Page - Broadland District Council

Council noted the new Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) Information Pages on Broadland and South Norfolk District Councils website.

(2) Norwich Western Link Project Update

Council noted the Norwich Western Link Project Update.

23/345. GRANT AID REQUESTS (UNDER S137)

(1) Sprowston Community Garden

RESOLVED to defer a decision for grant aid until more information was available with regard to question 9 on the Community Grant Scheme application form: "Does the project need any permission or consent to go ahead?"

(2) Sprowston Senior Citizens Club

RESOLVED that a grant of £600.00 be made to Sprowston Senior Citizens Club towards replacing lighting with more energy efficient units in accordance with the Council's powers under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

23/346. STREET LIGHT REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME

The Town Clerk explained predicted 2024/2025 energy costs for Council's current street lighting stock was £99,000.00. If lanterns were changed to LEDs the projected energy costs would be less than £25,000.

The LED lanterns being proposed by Suffolk County Council were self-fault reporting, leading to less downtime, more robust and reliable.

23/346. STREET LIGHT REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME (CONTINUED)

Individual lanterns were fully controllable and could be scheduled to switch off at any time or, alternatively, dimmed as required.

Council carefully considered the street lighting proposal and associated costs.

In answer to Councillors' questions the Town Clerk replied:

- (1) Council may wish to consult residents before any changes were made to lighting times.
- (2) The estimated life span of LED lanterns is 20 to 30 years depending on operational hours. Energy cost savings would pay for the replacement programme within about 3.5 years.
- (3) Invoicing is annually.
- (4) A small amount of Community Levy Receipts is still to be received, which if not required for the Viking project could be put towards the streetlight replacement programme.
- (5) Costs do not include replacement of lighting columns. These will be funded separately as needed. Currently there are no unsafe columns. He suggested Council replace all lanterns with LEDs to take advantage of significant savings on energy costs prior to replacing the columns.
- (6) He would check if rectifiers were included in the quotation.

Cllr. M G Callam proposed, seconded by Cllr. B Baby to progress with the street lighting replacement programme at a cost of £288,074.36 plus VAT.

23/347. MEETING ADJOURNMENT

On the motion of Cllr. W F Couzens, seconded by Cllr. M G Callam it was **RESOLVED** to adjourn the meeting for a short break.

The meeting was reconvened.

23/348. PLANNING

The Town Clerk reported that observations had been requested by the District Council's Head of Planning on applications received since the last meeting.

Having considered the application and the accompanying plans the Council

RESOLVED

to raise no objection to planning application 2023/3656 - proposed roof conversion and single storey extension with single storey garden building at 68, School Lane, Sprowston.

- (1) Sports Fees

23/348. PLANNING (CONTINUED)

RESOLVED that effective 1 April 2024 the proposed schedule of sports hire fees be implemented.

23/349. REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES FOR 2024-25

(2) Cemetery and Memorial Fees

RESOLVED that effective 1 April 2024 the proposed schedule of cemetery and memorial fees be implemented subject to the following amendment:

Part 2, Item 1 delete £1,038.00 and insert £950.00

(3) Venue Hire Fees

RESOLVED that effective 1 April 2024 the proposed schedule of venue hire fees be implemented.

(4) Allotment Rents and Water Charges

RESOLVED that effective 1 October 2024 the proposed allotment rents and water charges be implemented.

23/350. PRECEPT BUDGET ANALYSIS AND PROJECTION 2024-25

Council carefully considered five scenarios presented in the precept setting budget analysis report.

Responding to Councillors' questions the Town Clerk advised:

- (1) He was confident the Skatepark is fully funded and supported by S106 Agreement.
- (2) Figures in scenario B1, B2 and C assume Council elects to implement the streetlight replacement programme and includes projected energy cost savings. However, additional savings could be made if Council chooses to switch lights off at night or dim them.
- (3) If agreed the street light replacement programme should be implemented during May - June. As invoicing is annual Council would still benefit from lower energy costs.
- (4) Each scenario also presents its impact on the Band D Tax Rate.
- (5) The next issue of Sprowston Matters will explain the budget increase and expenditure, highlighting where the precept is spent. An article on the Council Tax Assistance Scheme can be included together with a general explanation on how Council Tax is formulated.
- (6) Additional new housing has been factored into the figures.

Cllr. M A Booth proposed, seconded by Cllr. M G Callam scenario B2.

23/350. PRECEPT BUDGET ANALYSIS AND PROJECTION 2024-25 (CONTINUED)

Cllr. E H Tovell proposed, seconded by Cllr. B Baby scenario B1.

On being put to the Vote Scenario B1 was lost.

On being put to the vote Scenario B2 was carried.

23/351. PRECEPT 2024/25

RESOLVED to authorise the Town Clerk to submit, under Section 50 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, a precept requirement to Broadland District Council of £840,859.00 to meet the Council's funding requirement for 2024/25.

There being no other necessary business the Chair of the Council thanked Councillors for their participation and declared the meeting closed at 9.40pm.

24 January 2024

Chair