

Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held at 7pm on Wednesday 10 November 2010 in the Committee Room, Old Abbey House.

Present

Cllr Lesley Legge	Chair of Committee/ Leader
Cllr Alastair Fear	Chair of Amenities & Recreation
Cllr Jim Halliday	
Cllr Patrick Lonergan	
Cllr Angela Lawrence	
Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer	Chair CH Museum Mgt Cttee
Cllr Alison Rooke	

In Attendance

Mr Nigel Warner	Town Clerk
Mrs Sandra Hill	Deputy Town Clerk
Mr Steve Rich	Projects & Technical Manager

83 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from the Mayor of Abingdon, Cllr Duncan Brown and Cllr Tim Oates.

Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer joined the meeting at 7.03pm

84 **Declarations of interest**

Cllrs Halliday, Lonergan, Mayhew-Archer and Rooke declared personal interests in any matters relating to the Vale of White Horse District Council as they are Members of that Authority. These interests were declared to be personal and prejudicial in relation to the confidential item in relation to the open air swimming pool, as this facility is owned and operated by the District Council.

Cllr Rooke also declared a personal interest in agenda item 21 – Community Strategies Consultation.

Cllr Jim Halliday declared a personal & prejudicial interest in the confidential minutes of the Allotments Working Party dated 2 November 2010 as a relation of his is an allotment holder.

85 **Minutes**

Resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 29 September 2010 (reconvened confidential session from 28 September) as a correct record and agree that the Chair should sign them.

Resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting 12 October 2010 as a correct record and agree that the Chair should sign them, subject to the following amendment:

73 Matters Arising

Choose Abingdon Partnership Board – 1st paragraph last sentence – should read: **Membership was unchanged.**

Resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2010 (reconvened confidential session) as a correct record and agree that the Chair should sign them.

86 **Matters Arising**

73 Matters Arising – 12 October – Choose Abingdon Partnership Board

Resolved that Cllr Halliday would distribute his brief report on the Choose Abingdon Partnership Board AGM, to all Councillors.

87 **Annual Governance Report and Audit Action Plan**

Resolved that delegation be given to the Town Clerk in liaison with the Chair and Vice Chair of Finance & General Purposes to liaise with the Audit Commission regarding the Annual Governance Report.

88 **Statements and Questions from the Public**

There were no statement and questions from the public.

89 **Matters referred**

There were no matters referred.

90 **Best Value Sub-Committee**

Resolved that in future blank questionnaires should be included with the Minutes for cross referencing purposes.

Cllr Angela Lawrence joined the meeting at 7.10pm and declared a personal interest in all matters relating to the Vale of White Horse District Council as she is a Member of that Authority.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that Chairing Skills for Members training has been provisionally booked with South East Employers for Saturday 2 July 2011 in the Old Abbey House.

Resolved that if Members have training needs then these should be directed to the Deputy Town Clerk.

Resolved to receive the minutes of the Best Value Sub Committee meeting which took place on 13 October 2010, and to consider any recommendations contained therein. It was further **resolved** that a blank questionnaire should be attached to the minutes of 13 October 2010 and distributed to all Members.

91 **Grants Sub-Committee Meeting**

Apologies were received from the Chair of the Grants Sub-Committee.

Resolved to receive the minutes of the Grants Sub-Committee meeting which took place on 2 November 2010, and to consider any recommendations contained therein, subject to the following amendment:

Carnegie Forum – purposes for which the grant is sought should contain a detailed explanation, and should read as:

To fund costs for the hire of the Guildhall in order to facilitate the final day of judging - which will be attended by Abingdon's three state and three independent schools. The schools concerned cannot use their premises due to exams taking place, and the large number of pupils taking part in the project.

It was further **resolved** detailed explanation should be utilised for future meetings of the Grants Sub-Committee.

92 **Christmas Extravaganza Working Party**

Resolved that posters advertising the event should be placed on the advertising boards within the town centre bus stops.

Resolved to receive the minutes of the Christmas Extravaganza Working Party meeting held on 29 September 2010, and approve any recommendations contained therein.

Resolved to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 2010 and approve any recommendations contained therein – subject to the following amendments:

12 Apologies – should read as Peter **Wiblin**

17 Date of Next Meeting - should read as Thursday 18 **November** 2010.

93 **Cycling and Pedestrian Working Party**

Resolved to receive the minutes of the Cycling and Pedestrian Working Party held on 8 September 2010, and approve any recommendations contained therein.

94 **Town Crier Editorial Working Party**

The Chair of the Town Crier Editorial Working Party outlined that the next edition of the Town Crier would be a report on the year containing articles such as finance, activities, projects, PCSO, Choose Abingdon etc.

Resolved to receive the minutes of the meeting of the Town Crier Editorial Working Party which took place on 19 October 2010, and approve any recommendations contained therein.

95 **Twinning Forum**

Quasimodo 2012

The Chair reported that a meeting with Pierre Silliere of Argentan would be taking place on 11 November 2010 to talk further about Abingdon's representation at the annual Quasimodo Fair in 2012.

Burgess Trust

The meeting discussed the lack of applicants over the last few years'. It was suggested that the Twinning Officer should address the Vale of White Horse District Council's Youth Forum as a way of promoting the merits of the Trust.

Resolved that this Committee should discuss ways in which the terms and conditions of the Trust could be changed in order to attract applicants, and that this meeting should take place after the Finance & General Purposes Budget Meeting on 7 December 2010.

Resolved to note the minutes of the Meeting of the Twinning Forum which took place on 19 October 2010, and approve any recommendations contained therein.

96 **Abingdon Joint Environmental Trust**

The Council is represented on the above body and minutes of the last meetings are enclosed so Members are kept up to date with developments.

Resolved to note the minutes of the meeting of 15 October 2010.

97 **Choose Abingdon Partnership Board**

The Council is represented on the above body and minutes of the last meetings are enclosed so Members are kept up to date with developments.

Resolved to note the attached financial summary, Chairman's report and Partnership Manager's report.

98 **Schedule of Accounts**

Resolved that the Schedule of Payments for September 2010 be approved.

99 **Financial and Performance Monitoring and General Report of the Town Clerk/ Responsible Financial Officer**

A Member raised a query regarding the County Hall Museum Improvement budget (cost centre 103). It was explained that the budget summary showed in the estimate column for 2010/11 the Council's revenue contribution to the project, i.e. the amount included in the precept, £117,000, whereas the out turn column included actual expenditure incurred during the year itself, which would be capitalised and funded from grant sources and the sums set aside by the Council for this project.

It was noted that the closure of the Museum at 31st October 2010 would result in savings against some, but not all, lines on the Museum's revenue budgets, as provision was made in the budget, on a prudential basis, for revenue costs to 31st March 2011, and then onwards into 2011/12. Conversely the shop income would not reach that shown in the estimate.

In relation to cost centre 301 (Town Crier, Website, Fun in the Park, Extravaganza and other community events) the Town Clerk stated that the increased expenditure was a result of more staff time being allocated to this cost centre than was included in the estimates, this however being matched by decreases elsewhere.

The Town Clerk explained that under the new accounting rules (Financial Regulations for Small Scale Enterprises) the costs of support staff were no longer apportioned to services in the final accounts but were included as one heading "Democratic, Management and Civic Costs." Members asked the Town Clerk to bring forward consideration during the budget cycle as to whether office-based costs should be consolidated under one heading, such as administration, rather than being allocated to services.

Resolved that the financial and performance monitoring and general report of the Town Clerk be noted.

100 **Market Place Events**

Resolved that draft programme be noted and that thanks should be relayed to the Market Place Co-ordinator for ensuring that the programme of events is already in place for 2011.

101 **Abingdon Visitor & Community Information Centre Consultation**

Report of the Deputy Town Clerk

Resolved that the report of the Deputy Town Clerk be noted.

102 **Michaelmas and Runaway Fairs**

Resolved that an article should be produced for the Town Crier outlining the planning and work required to ensure that the annual Michaelmas and Runaway Fair runs smoothly every year.

It was proposed, seconded and **resolved** that in future a financial charge should be made to W Wilson if Abingdon Town Council are required to distribute discount vouchers to schools.

Resolved that the report of the Project & Technical Manager be noted.

103 **Local Government Boundary Commission for England Review on County Councillors representing Oxfordshire County Council**

Members expressed concern that a reduction in the number of councillors could have an adverse impact upon the democratic process and the ability of Councillors to represent those in their division. In proceeding with the review the diverse needs of Oxfordshire's communities should to be taken into account. It was noted that at this stage the review was only concerned with number of Councillors serving on the County Council.

Resolved that the Town Clerk would respond on behalf of the Council taking into account the opinions expressed above, and the view of the Council that there should not be a reduction in the overall number of County Councillors. noting.

104 **Community Strategies – consultation on priorities 2011/12**

Resolved that

- (a) All Members should respond individually.
- (b) an email be sent to all Members highlighting that this is the recommendation of the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

105 **Dates of future meetings**

It was noted that it may be necessary to have a special meeting on Monday 6th December 2010 in relation to the County Hall Museum Improvement and Access Project, the work for which was currently out to tender. The need for such a meeting would be dependent on any issues which may result from the return of tenders. If it was necessary to meet that evening then this meeting would be preceded by a meeting of the County Hall Museum Management Committee, and followed by a meeting of the Town Council. The Town Clerk would liaise with the relevant Chairs of Committees and the Mayor regarding this matter.

Resolved that the dates for future meetings of this committee are noted.

106 **Publicity**

Resolved that publicity should be given to:

- Extravaganza sponsorship and that a photo call should include the Chamber of Commerce and the Choose Abingdon Partnership.
- Christmas Lights
- Guildhall
- County Hall Museum Improvement & Access Project

SECTION II (Excluding the public and the press)

107 **Exclusion of the public, including the press**

Resolved that in accordance with section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, as summarised below:

- Confidential Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on ;
- Matters arising and matters referred;

- War Memorial.