

ABINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held at 7pm on 15 March 2011 in the Old Abbey House.

Present

Cllr Jim Halliday	Vice Chair of Finance & General Purposes
Cllr Alastair Fear	Chair of Amenities & Recreation
Cllr Patrick Lonergan	
Cllr Angela Lawrence	
Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer	Chair of Museum Mgt Ctte
Cllr Alison Rooke	
Cllr Tim Oates	Chair of Planning & Highways

SECTION I (Open to the Public Including the Press)

Part A

148 Apologies

Apologies were received from the Mayor of Abingdon, Cllr Duncan Brown and the Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, Cllr Lesley Legge.

149 Declarations of interest

Cllr Alastair Fear declared a personal interest in Abingdon Amateur Boxing Club, Ryder Cheshire Volunteers Oxfordshire, Abingdon Freewheeling, Abingdon Traditional Morris Dancers and Flood Alleviation Fund.

Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the Vale of White Horse District Council as she is a Member of that Authority, also the Flood Alleviation Fund and the Abingdon Traditional Morris Dancers.

Cllr Alison Rooke declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the Vale of White Horse District Council as she is a Member of that Authority, also the Flood Alleviation Fund and the Abingdon Traditional Morris Dancers.

Cllr Angela Lawrence declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the Vale of White Horse District Council as she is a Member of that Authority, also the Oxfordshire Community & Voluntary Action Group and the Flood Alleviation Fund. She declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the Abingdon Traditional Morris Dancers as she is a friend of the named applicant.

Cllr Jim Halliday declared a personal interests in any matters relating to the Vale of White Horse District Council as he is a Member of that Authority, also the Flood Alleviation Fund, the Abingdon Traditional Morris Dancers and St Edmunds Boys' and Girls' Football Club.

Cllr Patrick Lonergan declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the Vale of White Horse District Council as he is a Member of that Authority, also the Flood Alleviation Fund and the Oxfordshire Community & Voluntary Action..

Cllr Tim Oates declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the Flood Alleviation Fund as he is a member of the Ock Valley Flood Group.

150 **Minutes**

Resolved to sign as a correct record the attached minutes of the meetings of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 15 February 2011.

151 **Matters Arising**

Town Crier

Cllrs Alastair Fear and Angela Lawrence relayed their concerns over the changes in their submitted article on Dog Bins for the Spring Town Crier. Cllr Patrick Lonergan stated that around 50% of residents on the Peachcroft Farm Estate did not receive the Winter edition of the Town Crier.

War Memorial

It was reported that Oxfordshire County Council have placed an Oxfordshire County Council sign on the fencing around the War Memorial site stating that they are undertaking highways work. There is also a sign regarding Hickman Brothers, the contractors, but no indication of the role of Abingdon Town Council.

Resolved that the Abingdon Town Council banner should be placed on the fencing around the War Memorial.

New Depot

It was stated that some Members were not aware of the New Depot Open Day on Friday 15 April 2011.

152 **Statements and Questions from the Public**

There were no statements and questions from the public.

Part B: Matters referred and minutes of sub-committees, working parties and other bodies

153 **Matters referred**

154 **Best Value Sub-Committee**

Members discussed various points within the Minutes, highlighting

- that Member training was essential;
- shorter minutes would have to be filed with the corresponding reports;
- that Members attending training/seminars should produce a short report;
- guidelines are needed on what is appropriate for the Open and Confidential agendas;
- that it should be remembered that whilst reports to committees offer guidance and often a recommended course of action, ultimately the Committee Members make the final decision ;
- structure of reports needs to be addressed;
- need to look at the committee membership which involves outside representatives to identify whether 'outside' representation is necessary.

It was proposed, seconded and **resolved** that all Members attending courses, seminars, training, conferences etc must produce a short report which should then be distributed to all Councillors.

Resolved to receive the minutes of the meeting of the Best Value Sub-Committee which took place on 1 February and 2 March 2011, and any recommendations contained therein.

155 **Grants Sub-Committee**

Resolved to receive the minutes of the meeting of the Grants Sub-Committee on 8 March 2011, and that grants should be awarded to:

Cllr Alastair Fear declared a personal interest in Abingdon Amateur Boxing Club and Abingdon Freewheeling.

Cllr Jim Halliday declared a personal interest in St Edmunds Boys' and Girls' Football Club.

General Grants:

Abingdon Freewheeling £200, Abingdon Music Festival Association £400, John Mason School £500, Abingdon Amateur Boxing Club £2,500 (which would be released when the Boxing Club places contracts for the building work) and St Edmunds Boys' and Girls' Football Club £100.

Cllrs Angela Lawrence and Patrick Lonergan declared personal interests in the Oxfordshire Community & Voluntary Action

Cllr Alastair Fear declared a personal interest in the Ryder Cheshire Volunteers Oxfordshire

Vulnerable Elderly and Young People Grants:

Abingdon Chinese Elderly Group and Bilingual Surgery £800, Oxfordshire Association for the Blind £800, The Archway Foundation £800 (with a note suggesting that they should consider applying again in 2011-2012), Ryder Cheshire Volunteers Oxfordshire £500, Oxfordshire Community & Voluntary Action £250

Cllrs Alastair Fear, Jim Halliday, Julie Mayhew-Archer, Tim Oates and Alison Rooke declared personal interests in the Abingdon Traditional Morris Dancers..

Cllr Angela Lawrence declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the Abingdon Traditional Morris Dancers as she is a friend with the named applicant. She left the room at 7.50pm whilst this item was being discussed, returning at 7.51pm.

Twinning Grant:

Abingdon Traditional Morris Dancers up to £500 (which would be reimbursed on the production of receipts).

156 **Member Representation on the South Abingdon Community-Led Plan**

Resolved that Cllr Alastair Fear would be Abingdon Town Council's representative on the South Abingdon Community-Led Plan Group until the Annual Meeting of the Council, and that he should feedback on the Group's development. Several typographical and drafting errors in the Constitution were identified – Cllr Fear undertook to mention these at the next meeting of the Group.

Resolved to note the attached South Abingdon Community- Led Plan Constitution and the minutes of the 28 February 2011.

Part C: Financial

157 **Payments schedule, financial and performance monitoring and general Report of the Town Clerk/ Responsible Financial Officer**

Resolved that the future financial reports should include quarterly reserves transfers.

Resolved to receive the report of the Town Clerk/ Responsible Finance Officer in relation to the above, and the recommendations contained therein and to approve the schedule of accounts from 1 January 2011 to 28 February 2011.

158 **Flood Alleviation Fund**

Cllr Tim Oates declared a personal and prejudicial interest as he is a member of the Ock Valley Flood Group. He left the room at 7.56 pm whilst this item was being discussed, returning at 8.05pm.

Cllrs Alastair Fear, Jim Halliday, Angela Lawrence, Patrick Lonergan, Julie Mayhew-Archer and Alison Rooke declared personal interests in the Flood Alleviation Fund.

It was proposed, seconded and **resolved** that the Ock Valley Flood Group be awarded grant aid of £5,000 from the Flood Alleviation Fund. The grant would be released on production of receipts or purchase orders. It was further **resolved** that the Fund's balance of £5,000 should be assigned to the 2011-2012 earmarked reserves.

Part D: Town Council services

159 **Draft Calendar of Meeting for 2011-2012**

Resolved that key meeting dates should be distributed to all May 2011 election candidates.

RECOMMENDED to agree the draft calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2011-2012.

160 **Joint Environmental Trust (JET)**

Resolved that the Working Party would prepare the revised JET Constitution for presentation at the Town Council meeting on 30 March 2011.

Resolved to note the report outlining the decision of the Vale of White Horse District Council Executive Committee on the future arrangements for the JET, subject to clarification as to which local District Councillors should be consulted before the awards are made.

161 **PCSO Neighbourhood Report**

Resolved to note the PCSO February Neighbourhood newsletter as previously circulated.

162 **Action For Market Town Membership & Seminar**

Resolved that the Choose Abingdon Partnership be requested to apply for Membership to the Action for Market Towns and to consider attending the seminar on 4 April 2011.

Part E: Consultations

163 **Have Your Say on Children & Young Families**

Resolved that Cllr Alastair Fear would produce a draft response which would be presented to Full Council on 30 March 2011.

164 **Local Government Boundary Commission – Electoral Review of Oxfordshire**

Resolved that Cllr Jim Halliday would produce a draft response which would be presented to Full Council on 30 March 2011.

165 **Revised Household Waste Recycling Centre Strategy for Oxfordshire**

Resolved that Cllr Jim Halliday would produce a draft response which would be presented to Full Council on 30 March 2011.

Councillor Patrick Lonergan left the meeting at 8.29 pm

166 **Council Seniority**

The report outlining a slightly modified method for calculating Council seniority was discussed and several changes suggested. It was **RECOMMENDED** that the revised scheme (reproduced in full below) be adopted by Council.

- a. To introduce this method for all newly elected Councillors with effect from 1 May 2011 onwards
- b. Do not alter seniority of any current councillors
- c. On 1 May 2011, divide the current seniority list into two parts – a) Part A of former Mayors, b) Part B
- d. After each election/by-election to determine the relative seniority of all newly elected Councillors by applying the following steps in the order shown :
 - i. Councillors re-elected – no action required as already on seniority list
 - ii. Former Mayors who have been elected again – place at the bottom of Part A – if more than one person being added then rank in order of date of their Mayoral year (earliest first)
 - iii. Former Councillors who have been elected again – place at the bottom of Part B – if more than one being added then rank according to the total length of their previous service as a Town councillor – in the event of 2 or more having equal years of service then rank them according to the formulae in step iv) below using the results of the election just held.
 - iv. Councillors elected for the first time – rank according to their share of the vote as calculated by the formulae agreed at the Full Council Meeting held on 12th April 1995 : ie (number of votes for

winning candidate) divided by (Total number of votes cast divided by the number of seats) and then place them at the bottom of Part B.

- e. When a mayoral year ends – the former Mayor, if still a serving councillor, is added to the end of Part A.
- f. To note that this seniority list is only used to determine the processional order at formal events (Councillors to be ordered as listed in Part A and then as listed in Part B), and that Part B will act as a guide to the Mayoral succession.

167 **Publicity**

The Committee is requested to consider any items for which it wishes press releases etc to be made.

Resolved that all press releases should be checked by the Town Clerk.

The following were suggested:

Planting of saplings, by the Air Cadets, at the Ock Valley Walk.

Adult Play Equipment.

War Memorial.

New Depot.

SECTION II (Excluding the public and the press)

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

The Chair **resolved** to move:

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 15 February 2011
- Matters arising and matters referred
- County Hall Museum Operational Plan
- Staffing Matters
- New Telephone System
- Outdoor Heated Swimming Pool
- Council Seniority – the discussion is minuted at item 166 above
- Hot Food Vendor
- Trading on the Market Place
- Bun Throwing
- Freeman's badges