

Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Tuesday 8 June 2010 in the Old Abbey House.

Present:

Cllrs Alastair Fear	Chair of Amenities & Recreation
Cllr Jim Halliday	
Cllr Patrick Lonergan	Chair of Best Value Sub Committee
Cllr Angela Lawrence	
Cllr Lesley Legge	
Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer	Chair County Hall Museum Management
Cllr Alison Rooke	
Cllr Tim Oates	Chair of Planning & Highways

In Attendance:

Mr Nigel Warner	Town Clerk
Mrs Sandra Hill	Deputy Town Clerk
Mr Steve Rich	Projects & Technical Manager
Cllr Margaret Crick (for item 8 only)	

1 **Election of Chair**

It was proposed by Cllr Angela Lawrence, seconded by Cllr Patrick Lonergan and **resolved** unanimously that Cllr Lesley Legge be elected Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee for the Council Year 2010 / 11.

It was noted under the Town Council's Standing Orders the Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee also acts as Leader of the Town Council

2 **Election of Vice Chair**

It was proposed by Cllr Patrick Lonergan, seconded by Cllr Alastair Fear and **resolved** unanimously that Cllr Jim Halliday be elected Vice Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee for the Council Year 2010/11

3 **Apologies**

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

4 **Declarations of Interest**

Cllrs Jim Halliday, Angela Lawrence, Patrick Lonergan, Alison Rooke and Julie Mayhew-Archer declared personal interests in any matters involving the Vale of White Horse District Council as they were Members of that Council

Cllr Alastair Fear declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Trinity Church as he is a member of that church. Also JET as he is currently applying for a grant from the Trust.

Cllr Angela Lawrence declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the Vale of White Horse Foyer as the Vale of White Horse District Council's representative on The Foyer's Management Board. Also, JET as she is an Executive Member of the White Horse District Council which grant aids the Trust.

Cllr Lesley Legge declared a personal and prejudicial interest Abingdon Music Centre as she is a close friend of Jim Hines. Also in Stowford House as she gave a reference in support of their application for funding this project.

Cllr Patrick Lonergan declared a personal interest in Abingdon Music Centre as an acquaintance of Jim Hines.

Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer declared personal interests in Abingdon Music Centre as an acquaintance of Jim Hines, plus Abingdon Green Gym as an acquaintance of Eleanor Dangerfield.

Cllr Tim Oates declared a personal interest in Abingdon Green Gym as an acquaintance of Eleanor Dangerfield.

5 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 20 April 2010 be signed as a true and correct record.

6 **Matters Arising**

Fisheries Management Sub Committee – the Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that the Water Keeper's CRB check is currently being processed by the Criminal Records Services; the current time for processing was around seven weeks, and that the fisheries booking letter had been redesigned to incorporate an acceptance of the booking agreement, which would be signed by both the person booking the waters, and a representative from the Town Council.

York Stone – the Projects and Technical Manager reported that surplus supplies of the York Stone would be purchased when supplies are ordered for the County Hall precinct project.

7 **Statements and Questions from the Public**

Dr Les Clyne addressed the Council to enquire whether they would consider adopting a policy of freezing the council tax at its current rate for the next two years ie 2011/2012 and 2012/2013.

The Chair explained the reason for the increases which covered the Council's main priorities for the coming year and the foreseeable future. The budget process for 2011/2012 would begin in the Autumn; therefore it would not be prudent to make assumptions regarding the outcome. The Council would continue to strive to find efficiency savings to enable it to run its services effectively without increasing the working budget, and fully understands the economic demands of the current climate. A letter outlining the Council's full response would be sent to Dr Clyne.

8 **Grants Sub-Committee Meeting**

The Committee received and considered the verbal report of the Grants Sub-Committee which took place on 8 June 2010, and the recommendations contained therein.

Vice Chairman of the Grants Sub-Committee, Cllr Margaret Crick was in attendance for this part of the meeting and presented the recommendations of the Sub-Committee.

Cllr Alastair Fear declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Trinity Church as he is a member of that church. Also JET as he is currently applying for a grant from the Trust.

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Cllr Tim Oates declared a personal interest in Abingdon Green Gym as an acquaintance of Eleanor Dangerfield.

7.20 pm Cllrs Legge, Fear and Lawrence left the meeting whilst items in which they had declared an interest were being discussed – see above and 4, Declarations of Interest.

Resolved that a grant of £500 should be awarded to Stowford House this was recommended by the Grants Sub-Committee at its March 2010 meeting, but not brought forward and reported as a recommendation to the Finance & General Purposes Meeting, which took place on 23 March 2010.

Resolved that the following Grants be approved

Name of Applicant	Reason for grant	Grant Awarded and notes
Abingdon Green Gym	First Aid Course, publicity and extra equipment.	£220 - original request of £200 was totalled incorrectly on the application form – should have read £220
St Edmunds Football Club	Presentation Day	£350 - the Club should be informed that the Town Council also contributes towards the maintenance of the football pitch.
Trinity Church	Replacement of church boilers and community facilities	£500 - matched funding with amount raised by the Church as at 29 March

		2010. <i>Grant agreed as the both the Church and Hall are used as community areas.</i>
Abingdon Music Centre	Purchase of music and music stands towards schools' project	£250

Grants for well established local organisations supporting vulnerable young and elderly people:

Resolved that £5,000 be granted to the Vale of White Horse Foyer for residents' activities and publicity. It was suggested that they be informed that cooperation would be appreciated when this year's Town's Christmas Lights are being installed.

9 **Cycling and Pedestrian Working Party**

Resolved that the Committee receive and note the minutes of the Cycling and Pedestrian Working Party which took place on 31 March 2010, and any recommendations contained therein.

10 **Environmental Impacts Working Party**

The Chair informed Members that the Environmental Awareness Day would be taking place on Saturday 12 June, and that volunteers for the Town Council stall are be needed between 11am and 1pm. Cllrs Rooke and Mayhew-Archer volunteered for 11am-12 noon.

Resolved that the Committee receive and note the minutes of the meeting of the Environmental Impacts Working Party which took place on 17 May 2010, and any recommendations contained therein.

11 **Town Crier Editorial Working Party**

The meeting were informed that a Member received a copy of the Summer Town Crier inside another newsletter. The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that the Town Crier should be delivered as a separate item and that this has happened before, and subsequently reported. This matter would once again be conveyed to Door to Door.

Resolved that the Committee receive and note the minutes of the meeting of the Town Crier Editorial Working Party which took place on 24 March 2010, and any recommendations contained therein.

12 **Choose Abingdon Partnership Board**

The meeting were informed that the Bath Street initiative was not minuted in the April 2010 minutes. Disappointment was expressed that the newsletter describing the Partnership's developments had been delayed. It was also suggested that data should be placed on the Oxfordshire Key, which is an Oxfordshire County Council database of clubs, societies, voluntary groups etc.

The Farmers' Market have been approached regarding a monthly Saturday Market, and have subsequently responded to say that they are not able to proceed with this initiative.

Resolved that the Committee note the minutes of the meeting of 22 March and 24 April 2010.

13 **Schedule of Accounts**

Resolved that the Schedule of Payments from 1 February 2010 to 30 April 2010 be approved.

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

The Town Clerk spoke to his report highlighting Treatment of Capital Expenditure (page 36-37) he further explained that any drawings from the capital receipts reserve could be matched by a contribution from revenue funds, for which the Council may precept, into an earmarked reserve for future capital expenditure. Members discussed these issues and **resolved** that the capital receipts be kept intact.

The Town Clerk's report from the Society of Local Council Clerks – Larger Councils Conference would be circulated soon.

Resolved that the Town Clerk's report be noted.

15 **Market Place**

Resolved that the Market Place Events Programme be noted.

16 **Update on Abingdon Calendar**

Resolved that the Deputy Town Clerk's report be noted.

17 **Major Projects 2010-11: War Memorial**

The Committee studied the artist's impression of the elevation of the re-development of the War Memorial and **recommended** that the two front flat benches should be removed, leaving two side benches and the trees.

The Projects & Technical Manager confirmed that neighbouring businesses would be consulted, and that the British Legion have, in principle, given their support. A meeting has been arranged with Mr Wilson (Michaelmas Fair) in July 2010, at which time he would be consulted. A meeting with Oxfordshire County Council regarding lighting around the area would be taking place soon.

Resolved that that the report of the Projects and Technical Manager be approved and that delegation be given to the Town Clerk, Chair of Finance & General Purposes and the Projects & Technical Manager to proceed with the Project.

18 **Abingdon Michaelmas and Runaway Fairs 2010**

The Projects & Technical Manager reported that a Fair Meeting has been arranged for 15 July 2010, and it is hoped that Thames Valley Police would be providing the same resources as the previous few years, which has successfully assisted in containing any anti-social behaviour.

Members highlighted that the new refuse contract was due to start on the first day of the fair, and that this should form part of the fair's planning process.

Resolved that the Projects & Technical Manager's report be noted.

19 **Abingdon Joint Environmental Trust**

Cllrs Fear and Lawrence declared personal and prejudicial interests and left the room at 8.20 pm – see 4, Declarations of Interest

The Town Clerk verbally reported that the District Council were happy for the JET to continue with the reduced annual grant of £5,000. Specialist support and administrative services have also been withdrawn, with a suggestion that the Town Council should take over these services. The work of the JET is essentially to award grants, and it was noted that is important for the Trust to meet soon as there are several outstanding applications waiting to be determined.

Resolved that the Town Clerk request that the Vale of White Horse District Council call a meeting to progress outstanding business for this year, and that a copy of the Constitution be available so that further discussion can take place on the future of the Joint Environmental Trust.

Cllrs Fear and Lawrence returned to the meeting at 8.30pm

20 **Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) – Review of Working Patterns at Abingdon and Didcot Fire Stations**

Resolved that the letter regarding the results of the recent public consultation be noted.

21 **Community Safety**

Resolved that the May 2010 Neighbourhood Updates for Inner Abingdon and the Spring Vale Community Update be noted.

*Cllr Alison Rooke vacated the meeting at 8.35 pm
Cllr Angela Lawrence vacated the meeting at 8.37 pm*

22 **Exclusion of the Public, Including the Press**

The Chair moved and it was

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 20 April 2010;
- Matters arising and matters referred from County Hall Museum Management Committee;
- Guildhall Working Party;
- Staffing matters;
- Works depot;
- Property matters;
- Police Community Support Officers (PCSO).

23 **Matters referred from County Hall Museum Management Committee**

The Committee received and considered the confidential report of the Town Clerk in relation to the above. Whilst the report contained confidential information the following minutes are recorded in the open record.

Recommended

1. That the Council proceed to the building and activity stage of the Abingdon County Hall Improvement and Access Project in accordance with the HLF letters dated 17 and 19 March 2010, together with the attachments and other documents referred to in those letters.
2. The Council note and approve the project management structure, which is detailed in the annex to these minutes.
3. That authority be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Leader and the Vice Chairman of F&GP to review and amend the structure and membership of the Project Board so that it meets the needs of the Project going forward,

Resolved

4. That the form of building and all associated tenders be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Leader and the Vice Chairman of F&GP.
5. That authority be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Leader and the Vice Chairman of F&GP to accept tenders, and enter into contracts in relation to the County Hall Museum Improvement and Access Project provided that such tenders are:
 - in accordance with the approved plans for the development;
 - those references are taken up and received to ensure that contractors have completed similar projects to the satisfactions of their clients, and that they are financially sound.
 - that tenders are within the agreed budget, taking into account, as necessary; any approved contingency and inflation elements.

6. That all Members should be invited to all Project Board Meetings, as observers, if they wish to attend.
7. That materials should be of a high and sound quality, and selected to reduce long term maintenance/replacement costs.
8. That authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader, the Vice Chairman of F&GP and the Curator to approve amendments to any aspects of the approved plans provided that such amendments are, in his opinion, not material to the overall objectives and finances of the project and that the amendments are approved by the planning authority.
9. That authority be delegated to the Council's Project Team being Chair of the County Hall Museum Management Committee, the Curator and the Town Clerk, to agree such details, which do not constitute amendments to the approved plans, but are additional details which emerge as the project develops from RIBA stage E onwards.

Annex to the Minutes

Abingdon County Hall Museum - Project Management Structure -

Abingdon County Hall Museum is a service of the Town Council, and its operation is delegated to the County Hall Museum Management Committee, which is a committee of the Town Council and made up of Abingdon Town Councillors, a Member co-opted from the Abingdon Museum Friends and a Member co-opted from the District Council, which provides grant aid towards the operation of the Museum. Meetings are also attended by the Museum Services Manager of Oxfordshire County Council (which provides curatorial and support services to the Museum), as well as the Curator, Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk.

The objectives and the budget of the Improvement and Access Project have been approved by the Town Council (through the County Hall Museum Management Committee). The Council takes the key decisions in relation to the project for example, approving the plans to be submitted to the local planning authority and approving the cost plans.

The Council has delegated authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Museum Curator and the Chair of the County Hall Museum Management Committee to implement the Project. This group of people is known as the Project Team; the Team meets regularly and is in frequent contact. The Town Clerk exercises his delegation within the bounds of agreed policy, plans and budget. It is only where there are material changes to the Project in terms of finances, policy, plans or objectives that the Town Clerk refers back to the Council for a decision. This occurred in August 2009 when the plans for the development were amended by the replacement of the tower lift with a platform lift.

The Town Clerk employs a professional team on behalf of the Town Council. The team is led by the Project Manager, who reports directly to the Town Clerk and the Project Team. The professional team consists of the quantity surveyor, architect, mechanical and electrical engineers, structural engineer and CDM co-ordinator.

Before the development stage commenced the Council recognised that there would be considerable value in appointing a Project Board with the terms of reference being to advise the Town Clerk and his team on all aspects of the project, to receive regular updates on the project and to monitor its progress. The Board Members have a wide breadth of experience to bring to this task and the members include the County Council Museum Services Manager, an Architect, a former local Museum Administrator and engineer, a senior engineer who formerly worked in local government, the former County Archaeologist, the District Council's Conservation Officer (observer), the County Council's Head of Property and the Leader of the Town Council. The Board meets regularly and has proved to be very helpful in advising the team. The minutes of the Board are considered by the County Hall Museum Management Committee and copied to all Members of the Council, which assists in keeping the Council informed as the responsible body.

The structure and operation of the Board will need to be reviewed as the needs of the project change going forward into the building and activity stage.