

ABINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the County Hall Museum Management Committee at 7pm on 1 March 2011 in the Old Abbey House.

Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer	Chair
Cllr Martin Smith	Vice Chair
Cllr Margaret Crick	
Cllr Patrick Lonergan	
Cllr Helen Pighills	
Chair Finance and General Purposes Committee/ Leader	(ex-officio)
Mr Peter Clare	(co-opted) – Museum Friends
In Attendance	
Mr Nigel Warner	Town Clerk
Mrs Sandra Hill	Deputy Town Clerk
Dr Lauren Gilmour	Curator
Mrs Jane Bowen	Interpretation, Media & Display Officer
Mrs Adela Thomas	Audience Development Officer
Ms Carol Anderson	Oxfordshire County Council – Museum Service

47 **Apologies for Absence**

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

48 **Declarations of Interests**

Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer and Cllr Patrick Lonergan declared personal interests as Members of the Vale of White Horse District Council who provide grant aid towards the Museum.

49 **Minutes**

Resolved to sign as a correct record the minutes of the Museum Management Committee held on 10 January 2011.

50 **Matters Arising**

The Chair reported that the Museum Project Board due to take place on 24 January 2011 had, for business reasons, been postponed until February 2011. Unfortunately this had caused some confusion.

Resolved that dates for future Museum Project Board meetings would be placed on the County Hall Museum Management Committee agenda.

51 **Financial Report**

The Town Clerk spoke to his previously circulated report highlighting that the County Hall Improvement & Access Project had now proceeded to the building phase. The notes from the Museum Advisory Board Meeting, held on 10 January 2011, had been appended with County Hall Museum Management minutes of 10 January 2011.

He further explained that it was too early to report on budget variations. A number of savings had been identified, but there would also be some extra costs which would be drawn from the approved contingency budget.

Resolved to receive the financial report of the Town Clerk on the County Hall Museum Access and Redevelopment Project.

52 **County Hall Museum Improvement & Access Project**

(a) Report from Curator and Team.

It was suggested that the Audience Development Officer make contact with the Vale Youth Forum and the South Abingdon Children's Centre.

The Chair thanked Peter Gale who has organised the voluntary work programme.

It was also suggested that a sign should be placed on the hoardings advertising the Monday museum object enquiries service, and that the Community Shop should be booked to promote the enquiries service, museum fundraising and to raise the museum's profile. **Resolved** that Lauren Gilmour would talk with Heather Brown with a view to booking the community shop.

The Chair explained that the County Hall Museum Timeline from 1678-2012 would be displayed on the hoardings. A draft panel was shown to the Committee.

Resolved to receive and note the report of the Curator and her team in relation to the County Hall Museum Improvement & Access Project.

(b) Update on the latest developments regarding the hoarding, scaffolding and other related issues.

The Town Clerk verbally reported on the developments regarding the hoarding and scaffolding. Leadbitter's site manager consulted businesses two weeks before work was due commence. A number of retailers had voiced their concerns regarding the view of their premises being obscured behind the hoardings, and the subsequent affect this would have on their trade. Ridge & Partners (project managers) and Leadbitter (builders) were working together to ease the situation and have made adjustments to the site, which had resulted in reducing the building works delivery area. The Town Council had commissioned Margaret and Gwyn Jones to paint a mural on the western side hoardings. Leadbitter had agreed to place flower containers, by the tree, to enhance the area on the north side. The hoardings would also contain advertisements for the shops affected by the building work, and more tables have been allowed outside Throwing Buns. The building work is two weeks behind schedule, but it was anticipated that this time would be made up and that there would be no change to the completion date. Procedures were in place to deal with any complaints or concerns.

The Chair highlighted that the legal responsibility for the building is now the duty of Leadbitter Builders.

7 **Proposal for Future Museum Education Programme and Activities**

The Audience Development Officer spoke to her previously distributed report highlighting that extensive research has been carried out within Oxfordshire on

charging for extra facilitated sessions in their museums. The proposed charges are in line with other museums in the County.

Resolved that the County Hall Museum would charge for facilitated workshops and activities. The suggested charges are as follows:

School Visits

- Specialist workshops led by Museum staff - £3 per child or £60 minimum group charge
- Use of basement as a lunch space - £5
- Use of the Guildhall as a lunch space - £10

Family Activities

- Drop-In craft activity - £1 per child
- Gallery trail with small prize – offered at key time eg Easter £1.50
- Specialist pre-booked workshops/talks led by specialist staff eg artists £5 ranging to £10

Workshops/Programmes aimed at other audiences

- Specialist staff led talks and workshops £5 ranging to £20

The Town Clerk stated that in the past the Museum had only made standard-rated or non-business supplies. He stated that the value-added tax status (VAT) of each supply outlined above would need to be established. He believed that most of the proposed charges were standard-rated, although the Museum Services Manager stated that some may be VAT-able at the zero rate. The Town Clerk stated that where supplies were property-based and at the County Hall, e.g. use of basement as a lunch space, these were exempt supplies for VAT purposes, unless the Council opted to tax. It was important for the reasons of recovery of input tax that the option to tax was made and the Committee **resolved** accordingly. With regard to the Guildhall, this decision would need to be made in relation to the VAT-status of that building.

Members considered that where VAT was chargeable then the various charges should be made VAT inclusive and **resolved** accordingly.

Abingdon Museum Friends

The Treasurer of the Museum Friends spoke to his previously distributed report highlighting funds raised to date. The Chair relayed that the English Heritage Monitoring Officer is impressed by the work of the Abingdon County Hall Museum Friends' Appeal Committee.

The Museum Friends AGM would be taking place on Thursday 3 March 2011 at which Jane Bowen, Interpretation, Media & Display Officer, would be outlining plans for the exhibition spaces.

Resolved to receive and note the report of the Museum Friends.

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

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 10 January 2011 Meeting
- Museum Operational Plan