

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

Minutes of the Guildhall Committee held on Wednesday 5th September 2012 at 5.00pm in the Committee Room at the Old Abbey House, Abingdon-on-Thames

Present:

Cllr Iain Littlejohn	Chairman
Cllr Marilyn Badcock	Vice-Chairman
Cllr Lesley Legge	
Cllr Alison Rooke	
Cllr Sandy Lovatt	Chairman Finance and General Purposes Committee / Leader of the Council

In attendance:

Mr Peter Turvey	PT Projects Ltd
Mr Nigel Warner	Town Clerk (Clerk to the meeting)

39. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Katie Nobes and the Mayor of Abingdon, Cllr Monica Lovatt.

40. **Declarations of Interest**

The Town Clerk confirmed that the advice from the District Council Monitoring Officer is that membership of other local authorities is not deemed to be a declarable pecuniary interest.

There were no declarations of interest.

41. **Minutes**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the meeting of the Guildhall Committee held on 2nd August 2012.

Resolved: that the above minutes be signed as a correct record.

42. **Matters Arising**

The Vice-Chairman, Cllr Marilyn Badcock, reported that confirmation had been received from the Conservation Officer at the District Council that the Vale had no objection to the Town Council lining out the panelling in the Roysse Room using the same colour as the ceiling as long as the lining out is simply applied to the moulding. The Committee was pleased to receive this information and asked that this work be commissioned.

Minute 32 Guildhall Website – it was reported that the Guildhall website was now available online, and there was a link from the Town Council site.

Minute 35 (5) – corridor from reception to the Mayor's Parlour. The Town Clerk reported that the surveyors had estimated that the carpeting of the proposed widening of the corridor area from the new part of the building to the Mayor's Parlour would cost approximately £1,500,

and it was considered that if the Council wished to proceed with this work a sum of £5,000 should be set aside. During discussions on this matter, a Member argued that this work could wait until the Phase Two works were undertaken; she did in any case ask that the Officers identify a location for the contents of the robing cupboard which would be removed should this work proceed. The alternative view in favour of the work taking place was that this was in relation to the Phase One works and the old part of the building.

It was proposed by Cllr Marilyn Badcock and seconded by Cllr Iain Littlejohn and **recommended** to the Council that a sum of £5,000 be set aside from the Council's property budget to enable the corridor widening works to take place as detailed in these previous minutes.

The Chairman of the Committee, Cllr Iain Littlejohn, updated Members in relation to the replacement of the large front doormat from the main entrance. Obtaining a mat of the correct size was proving to be more difficult than originally anticipated, and should the current mats be removed it was evident there was also other work which would need to take place. Consequently there was no positive progress to report in relation to this matter but it would be further investigated and the Officers would come back with a solution to a future meeting.

43. **Financial and usage report**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk in relation to the above. A Member stated that whilst the reports were helpful, it would be of assistance if the spreadsheets for the different months in relation to income and utilisation were displayed on the same sheet, i.e the July 2012 income breakdown on the same sheet as the July 2011 income breakdown. **Resolved:** that the report be adopted.

Mr Peter Turvey of PT Projects entered the meeting at this point, it being 5.10pm.

44. **Date of next meeting and calendar of meetings**

Members noted that the date of the next meeting has been agreed as Thursday 4th October at 5.30 pm.

Subsequent meetings had been arranged for:

Wednesday 14th November;
Tuesday 18th December;
Friday 11th January 2013;
Wednesday 6th February;
Thursday 7th March;
Wednesday 3rd April;
Tuesday 30th April.

45. **Exclusion of the Public including the Press**

The Chairman 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.

46. **Confidential Appendix**

It was **resolved** that the confidential appendix of the Guildhall Committee held on 2nd August 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

47. **Matters Arising**

Minute 38 – Property Matters

The Town Clerk reported that the meetings with the various organisations were being arranged and that he would be seeking professional advice in accordance with paragraph three of the minute. In relation to Roysse Court, it was reported that the updated asbestos survey had been undertaken and this had not found that there was a need for any remedial work to take place. Consequently, the work in relation to the roof void would progress within the budget.

48. **Staffing Matters**

The Town Clerk reported that following the interviews which took place on 23rd August 2012, the interviewing panel had appointed the Guildhall Manager. Further details regarding this appointment had been circulated to all Members by email on 28th August 2012. It was anticipated that the new manager would commence her duties in mid-September.

49. **Council Chamber curtains**

Members received and considered the confidential report of the Head of Service Delivery in relation to the above.

There was a debate regarding whether curtains or blinds should be installed within the Council Chamber. Members reconvened in the Council Chamber to look at the samples which had been obtained in relation to blinds. It was agreed that should blinds be installed a white wooden pelmet would also be required, behind which the blinds could sit when not being used. A Member stated that some thought needed to be given to the use of blinds and whether they could be operated using a pulley system or whether the blinds would only be operated by staff using a long pole. It was **resolved** by four votes in favour and one against that roller blinds be installed in the Council Chamber with the fabric being used Costello Ivory. In relation to the method of operation of the blinds this was delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

See also confidential appendix.

50. **Guildhall Improvement Programme Phase Two**

Report of the Town Clerk

Members received and considered the report of the Town Clerk in relation to the above. At the meeting of 2nd August 2012, the Committee had approved the draft design brief in relation to Phase Two of the Guildhall Improvement Project. It was intended that this design brief be issued to architects in September with a view to appointing an architect to develop plans to RIBA Stage D (without planning permission). The draft design brief was being presented for final approval by Members prior to it being issued to architects.

Resolved: that the design brief be approved for issue to architects.

PT Projects had been appointed to lead on the appointment of the architect, and the Chairman introduced Mr Peter Turvey. Mr Turvey explained to Members the process which it was recommended the Council go through to appoint an architect to produce plans based on the design brief as attached to these minutes.

The architectural work would be advertised in an appropriate trade journal, and also locally. The Council would also invite a number of architects which were known to the authority to complete a pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ). In response to a question from a Member, Mr Turvey stated that it was envisaged that six architects be asked to tender for the work and following receipt of tenders, these be shortlisted to three companies.

The Town Clerk explained that as Mr Turvey had had difficulties getting to the meeting he had also spoken at some length with him earlier in the day and as a result had produced a further report on this matter which was included with the confidential appendix to these minutes. He stated that this report had originally started as a set of notes and therefore was slightly more colloquial than was the usual style.

Members noted in the report that previously the Council had allocated a sum of £30,000 towards feasibility and technical studies in relation to Phases Two and Three and had delegated this budget to the Guildhall Committee. The Committee noted the allocation of budgeted sums to date and under the confidential appendix the additional sum which it is recommended be released towards this work is quantified.

This matter was being dealt with in the confidential appendix because the architectural work was subject to tender and disclosure of the budget could compromise the Council's ability to receive a competitive price for the work.

It was therefore **recommended** that:

1. the Council proceeds with the procurement of architectural services to a RIBA Stage D in relation to phase 2 of the Guildhall Project, together with an allowance for associated works such as advertising the contract, surveys (including structural engineering advice), and other professional fees and
2. that the Council releases an additional sum for these works as detailed in the confidential appendix, and that authorisation to utilise this budget then be delegated to the Guildhall Committee.

51. **Royse Court**

Members received and considered the confidential report of the Head of Service Delivery as circulated with the agenda. It was **resolved** that the report be approved.

The meeting itself rose at 6.00pm following which Members visited the Council Chamber to look at the issue of curtains / blinds and then had a tour of the Royse Court offices. The tour itself finished at 7.15pm.