

## Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

### **Draft Minutes of the Guildhall Committee held on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2013 at 5.00pm in the Committee Room at the Old Abbey House, Abingdon-on-Thames.**

#### **Present:**

Cllr Iain Littlejohn	Chairman
Cllr Alison Rooke	Vice Chairman
Cllr r Lesley Legge	
Cllr Sandy Lovatt	Ex-officio, Leader of the Council

#### In Attendance:

Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer	
Ms Johannah Aynsley	Guildhall Manager
Mr Nigel Warner	Town Clerk
3 members of the public	(Present for the open session)

#### G56 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Samantha Bowring (Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames), Marilyn Badcock, Katie Nobes and Ms Heather Brown (co-opted member).

#### G57 **Declaration of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### G58 **Minutes**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the meeting of the Guildhall Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2013, as circulated with the agenda.

**Resolved:** *that the minutes of the meeting of the Guildhall Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2013 be approved and be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.*

#### G59 **Matters Arising**

Minute G54 – Charitable Status. The membership of the Charitable Status Working Party was confirmed as Cllrs Marilyn Badcock, Angela Lawrence, Lesley Legge, Patrick Lonergan and Sandy Lovatt.

## G60 Public Participation

Dr Philip Kenrick had indicated that he wished to make a statement / ask questions. The Chairman of the Committee, Cllr Iain Littlejohn, proposed and it was **resolved** that Standing Orders be suspended to allow Dr Kenrick to speak.

Dr Kenrick made four points, and the Council's responses, which were given at the meeting, are indicated below each point, in italics.

1. Dr Kenrick had previously asked for a copy of the Council's commercial viability assessment and wondered when this would be available.

*Cllr Iain Littlejohn, Chairman of the Guildhall Committee, stated that it was intended to supply this document as soon as possible; however, it needed to be worked through in order to redact any commercially sensitive information which might otherwise prejudice the Council's financial position at a later date. Cllr Littlejohn also stated that it was intended to make public a similarly redacted version of the cinema report undertaken by Mayfield Arts.*

2. Dr Kenrick regretted that he had again recently seen the computer generated image of the rear view of the proposed new Guildhall published in the media. He considered that this image was misleading because it did not include the wall between the Crown and Thistle car park and the Guildhall, thus giving the impression that the Guildhall car park was much larger than it was.

*Cllr Littlejohn stated that this information had been supplied to the press as part of the public engagement process in April 2013 and the Council could not be held responsible for its continued use. However, the Town Clerk would be contacting all those organisations to which the computer generated images were emailed with a new version which did not include this particular image.*

3. Dr Kenrick understood that for the Heritage Lottery Fund bid the Council would be required to produce a conservation plan. He assumed this would be a public document and asked that a copy be made available at the appropriate time.

*The Guildhall Manager stated that if the Council were required to produce a conservation plan for the particular grant which was being applied for, the document would be a public document.*

4. Dr Kenrick had noted from the Manager's report that weddings were being held at the Guildhall, including wedding receptions. He noted that

previously there had been issues in relation to noise and asked what the Council's position was in relation to live music in the Guildhall.

*The Guildhall Manager stated that the remaining wedding receptions which were booked in the Abbey Hall were not numerous and that music was due to be supplied by DJs.*

Cllr Littlejohn thanked Dr Kenrick for his comments and reinstated Standing Orders.

*One of the members of the public left the meeting at this point, it being 5.42pm.*

#### G61 **Manager's Report**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Guildhall Manager as circulated with the agenda.

The Guildhall Manager talked Members through her report which detailed matters in relation to building maintenance, bookings, weddings, the new booking software, the town portal, events and Heritage Weekend.

Members noted the statistics and report which were now being produced by the bookings software and that there were some issues in relation to these as the software was new to the Council. However, they did request that in future reports more comparative data should be included so that Members can see what trends there are and what progress is being made and also asked that data be tabulated in a graphical format.

In relation to the town portal, the Manager stated that she had updated much of the content on the Guildhall part of the site and events were fully up to date. Members noted the progress that was being made and asked that a date be set for full updating and that a report be made to the next meeting.

It was noted that the Guildhall now has over 500 followers on social media and the Manager stated that there was a positive impact of Facebook and Twitter marketing campaigns on event ticket sales.

It was noted that hirers of Guildhall rooms had the opportunity to add their events onto the website and the Chairman asked whether the Guildhall also offered to do this for the customer. The Manager confirmed that the staff do offer to add events on.

Members were pleased to note that the Comedy Club was at 90% of capacity in August and is becoming an established monthly event. It was also noted

that this event tended to attract younger people and this was welcome in that typically the users of the Guildhall were somewhat older.

**Resolved:** *that the Guildhall Manager's report be approved.*

*(Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer entered the meeting at this point, it being 5.55pm.)*

G62 **Date of Next Meeting and Calendar of Meetings**

It was noted that the calendar of meetings for the year had been agreed with all meetings being scheduled for 5.30pm on Thursdays. It was noted that a number of Members would either be unable to attend or would find attendance difficult for the meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2013. However it was appreciated that changing the date may cause some problems for Members who were not present at the meeting. Members considered holding the meeting a week later, on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2013. The Town Clerk stated that there may some advantage to this at it would give the HLF Project Team an additional week in order to prepare their report for the Guildhall Committee.

It was **resolved:** *that Members of the Guildhall Committee be consulted on a possible change of date of the October meeting from 17<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> October and that authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee, to make a decision on this matter on the basis of the consultation.*

It was also noted that the remaining meetings were due to take place on:

21<sup>st</sup> November; 19<sup>th</sup> December; 16<sup>th</sup> January 2014; 27<sup>th</sup> February; 6<sup>th</sup> March; 10<sup>th</sup> April.

G63 **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 1060 (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.*

G64 **Confidential Appendix to the Minutes of the Meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> August 2013**

The Committee received and considered the confidential appendix to the minutes of the meeting of the Guildhall Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2013.

**Resolved:** *that the Confidential Appendix to the minutes of the Guildhall Committee meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2013 be approved and be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.*

G65 **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from the previous meeting which were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

G65 **Guildhall Improvement Project Phase Two – Fundraising**

The Committee received and considered the confidential report of the Guildhall Manager in relation to the above. The Chairman also brought forward the section of the confidential report of the Town Clerk on general Guildhall development matters which dealt with the meeting which had taken place with officers from the Heritage Lottery Fund on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2013 and the recommendations which had come forward from that meeting.

Please also see confidential appendix, which includes resolutions.

G67 **Staffing Matters**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Guildhall Manager in relation to the above.

Please also see confidential appendix, which includes resolutions.

G68 **General Guildhall Development Matters**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk in relation to the above.

The Chairman of the Committee, Cllr Iain Littlejohn, gave notice that he would be circulating to the Committee a proposal regarding the governance of the Guildhall and in particular the operation of the Guildhall Committee. This would be included on the agenda for the next meeting and he had been advised that would be within the delegated power of the Committee to resolve.

Please also see confidential appendix, which includes resolutions.

The meeting rose at 7.23 pm.