

## Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

### **Minutes of the Guildhall Committee held on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2012 at 5.30pm 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 Sandy Lovatt	Chairman Finance and General Purposes Committee / Leader of the Council
Cllr Alison Rooke	

In attendance:

Ms Johanna Aynsley	Guildhall Manager
Mrs Jane Bowen	Museum Curator
Mr Steve Rich	Head of Service Delivery
Mr Nigel Warner	Town Clerk (Clerk to the meeting)

77. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Monica Lovatt (Mayor); and Katie Nobes and Ms Heather Brown (Co-opted member).

78. **Declarations of Interest**

Pecuniary interests

None.

Other interests

Cllr Marilyn Badcock declared an interest in relation to the matter detailed in minute 87, as her husband is a member of an Abingdon Masonic lodges.

79. **Minutes**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the meeting of the Guildhall Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2012.

The Chairman, Cllr Iain Littlejohn, stated following discussions with the Town Clerk it was suggested that, to assist in the efficient administration of the Committee's work, the Committee move from narrative towards resolution minutes. This would mean that decisions and recommendations would be minuted, but comments would be limited to substantive suggestions and disagreements.

**Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting of the Guildhall Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2012 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

80. **Matters Arising**

Minute 74: Guildhall Improvements Update

The Head of Service Delivery reported that installation of the blinds in the Council Chamber had been delayed as the contractor did not have the correct part to allow the blinds to be pulled up and down. Members expressed disappointment regarding this matter and asked that this be conveyed to the contractor.

A Member queried the fixing of the curtains in the Abbey Room, which were now above the window recess. The Head of Service Delivery stated that a quote had been requested for the curtains to be put back into the recesses.

81. **Report of the Guildhall Manager**

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

The Manager updated the Committee on marketing and reported that as part of the Christmas activities, Father Christmas and his grotto had been set up in the Roysse Room annexe, with the assistance of the “Guild of Town Criers.” She considered that the charge which was being levied, of £4.50 per child, had been pitched too high. Following discussion it was **resolved** that the price be reduced to £3.00 per child.

The Manager stated that it was important that an outside noticeboard be installed; the Town Clerk stated that this was part of a budget bid for street furniture which had been made by the Amenities and Recreation Committee. The Committee advised that the Manager should liaise with the Chairman of the Amenities and Recreation Committee and the Head of Service Delivery regarding this matter.

In response to a question regarding “in-house catering” the Manager stated that all catering continued to be sourced externally and the customer always had the choice of caterer.

A Member requested that the bar charts included in the report be reproduced for future meetings in colour. The Town Clerk reported on the issues in doing this, with perhaps one page of colour (and the consequential cost) in the middle of a much larger “black and white” report but stated that this would be done, perhaps by including these a separate sheets.

The Committee considered the draft projected actual income and expenditure outturn figures for 2012/13 and the draft estimates for 2013/14. In response to a question from a Member, the Manager stated that she considered that a minimum income of £25,000 from grants as outlined in her report was achievable although this was capital and did not show in the revenue budget. Similarly she considered that the 20% increase in equipment hire was realistic, as this would be a consequence of increased hirings.

It was **resolved**:

1. That the report be approved.
2. That the draft projected actual income and expenditure outturn figures for 2012/13 and the draft estimates for 2013/14 be approved for consideration by the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

3. That fees and charges not be changed at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 but should be reviewed at the June 2013 meeting of this Committee.

It was **recommended** that any excess of income against the net revenue expenditure budget during 2013/14 should, at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014, be transferred to an earmarked reserve for Guildhall Improvements.

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

Members discussed the date of the next meeting, which was not generally considered to be a good day or time. Subsequent to the meeting, it was agreed that the next meeting would take place at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2013, and that substantive business for this meeting should be limited to a meeting with the architects appointed to stage 2 of the Guildhall Improvement Project so that the architects can update Members on their proposals for undertaking the work and agree the way forward for the delivery of this Project over the coming months.

It was noted that subsequent meetings had been arranged for:

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> February;  
Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March;  
Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> April;  
Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> April.

Members would consider the date for the March meeting with a view to changing it to either a Tuesday or Wednesday.

83. **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.

84. **Confidential Appendix**

It was **resolved** that the confidential appendix to the minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

See also the confidential appendix for a comment under matters arising.

85. **Charitable Status**

The Committee received and considered the confidential report of the Town Clerk, as circulated with the agenda.

Members considered that the above issue required:

1. Initial briefing by solicitor followed by full consideration by the Committee;

2. A briefing to the Council.
3. A meeting of the Council for a decision.

It was **resolved** that the confidential report of the Town Clerk be noted.

It was **recommended**:

1. That the solicitor be contacted to arrange for her report to be updated.
2. That an initial budget of up to £3,000 be allocated to progress this matter.

86. **Report of the Guildhall Manager**

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

**Resolved:** that the report be noted.

87. **Guildhall Development and Improvements**

(a) The Committee received and considered the confidential report of the Town Clerk, as circulated with the agenda. This report outlined the progress in relation to the Guildhall Improvement Project. In particular it was reported that Lewandowski-Willcox had been appointed by the interviewing panel under their delegated powers and within the budget set aside, to act as architects in relation to the Guildhall Improvement Project Phase 2 (to RIBA work level D). The Committee endorsed the decision of the interviewing panel.

See also the confidential appendix for discussion on this matter.

**Resolved:**

1. That authority be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the interviewing panel to appoint the Quantity Surveyor/ cost consultant, in relation to the Guildhall Improvement Project Phase 2 (to RIBA work level D), from the budget set aside for this work.
2. That the confidential report of the Town Clerk be approved.

(b) The Committee received and considered the confidential report of the Museum Curator, as circulated with the agenda. Members agreed that the matters raised in the report should be brought to the attention of the stage 2 architects.

**Resolved:** that the confidential report of the Curator be approved.

The meeting rose at 7.30 pm.