

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

Minutes of the Guildhall Committee held on Thursday 4th October 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 Katie Nobes	
Cllr Lesley Legge	
Cllr Sandy Lovatt	Chairman Finance and General Purposes Committee / Leader of the Council
Ms Heather Brown	Co-opted Member

In attendance:

Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer	
Cllr Katie Nobes	
Ms Johanna Aynsley	Guildhall Manager
Mr Steve Rich	Head of Service Delivery
Mr Nigel Warner	Town Clerk (Clerk to the meeting)

52. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Monica Lovatt, Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames, and Cllr Alison Rooke.

53. **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Marilyn Badcock declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to the item at minute 63 as her husband is a member of one of the Abingdon Masonic Lodges.

54. **Minutes**

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting of the Guildhall Committee held on the 5th September 2012 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

55. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

56. **Report of the Guildhall Manager**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Guildhall Manager as circulated with the agenda. This report included the revenue and usage figures for recent and coming months. The Chairman of the Committee, Cllr Iain Littlejohn, welcomed the Guildhall Manager, Ms Johannah Aynsley to the Guildhall Committee.

The Manager talked the Committee through her report. She had been in post for two and a half weeks and was looking forward to working with the Council and the staff with improving

the services on offer at the Guildhall. She believed that there were a number of relatively small and quick changes which could be made which would result in improvements.

(Ms Heather Brown entered the meeting at this point, it being 5.41pm).

However there were some items which she was bringing forward for expenditure and these were presented to the meeting. The current stock of tables were heavy, which gave problems in moving them around the building, and they were also scratching the floors. The Manager was looking at lightweight aluminium alternatives which would be more manoeuvrable.

Members were in agreement with expenditure for this purpose, subject to the new tables being of suitable look and standard. It was proposed by Cllr Littlejohn and seconded by Cllr Badcock and **resolved** that authority be delegated to the Town Clerk (on the recommendation of the Manager) in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee to purchase new tables in the sum of £2,000 from the Guildhall equipment budget.

The Manager reported that she was reviewing the general cleanliness of the building and the arrangements in place. The main kitchen was subject to regular deep cleans and therefore was of an appropriate standard. The Manager stated that she was currently reviewing the arrangements for regular cleaning of the building and this could potentially result in some changes. However, there was a need for a deep clean throughout the building, including windows, flooring, etc and Members **endorsed** expenditure from the appropriate budget to undertake this work.

The Manager drew the Committee's attention to a number of maintenance items and the need for a general smartening up of the new building, ahead of the general refurbishment. The potential for undertaking some of this work through the Council's in-house Works Team was discussed; Cllr Marilyn Badcock, as Chairman of the Amenities and Recreation Committee, stated that she was concerned that other long standing projects should not be delayed by the introduction of new work in the Guildhall. However there was a general consensus that if it was possible for the Works Team to undertake some of the work, this should be considered. It was **resolved** that these matters should be considered and taken forward by the Head of Service Delivery and the Guildhall Manager in consultation with the Chairman of Amenities and Recreation Committee. It was **resolved** that authority be delegated to the Town Clerk (on the recommendation of the Manager), in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, to incur any necessary expenditure

57. **Finance Report**

The Committee received and considered the spreadsheets in relation to income and utilisation of rooms at the Guildhall.

The Town Clerk stated that August had been a quiet month with revenue and utilisation during 2012 being lower than the corresponding period in the previous year, this being the one month during the year to date which had shown such a decrease. However, usage was picking up again in the autumn, with the revenue for September 2012 at £7,636 was more than a 25% than during the corresponding period the previous year. **Resolved** that the report be adopted.

58. **Guildhall Licensing**

The Town Clerk reported that following objections from some local residents, he and the Guildhall Supervisor, Mrs Karan Webb, had attended a meeting of the Vale Licensing Sub-Committee to consider the Town Council's application for extended hours for public entertainments and the sale of alcohol.

The officers found this to be a very positive process and in response to the concerns put forward, they had agreed to amend the Council's application, which was subsequently approved. This increased the licenced hours. Although the hours had not extended as much as originally desired, the increase would nonetheless be positive for users of the Guildhall, with licenced entertainment allowed until midnight during weekdays and 1 am at weekends, with the serving of alcohol ending 30 minutes earlier.

A copy of the revised licence had now been received and is attached as an appendix to these minutes.

Members **noted** this matter and thanked the officers for taking the application forward.

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

Members **noted** that the date of the next meeting had been agreed as Wednesday 14th November at 5.30pm.

Subsequent meetings had been arranged for:

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

60. **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.

61. **Confidential Appendix**

It was **resolved** that the confidential appendix to the minutes of the meeting held on 5th September 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

62. **Funding Phase Two**

The Guildhall Manager tabled a report to the Committee regarding the funding possibilities for Phase Two of the Guildhall Scheme. She outlined the various grant funds which may be available from organisations such as the Arts Council, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Big Society Fund. It was noted that a number of grant making bodies either only dealt with charitable organisations or preferred to give grants to charitable organisations.

Members noted that charitable organisations received an 80% mandatory rate relief but that there were issues relating to recovery of VAT. Members **resolved** that charitable status be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of the Guildhall Committee.

(Cllr Katie Nobes entered the meeting during discussion of this item, it being 6.16 pm).

63. **Royse Court and The Magistrates' Court**

The Committee received and considered a verbal update from the Chairman, Cllr Iain Littlejohn, in relation to various meetings and discussions which had taken place in relation to the above. These are further detailed within the confidential appendix. Please note that this appendix is particularly sensitive at this time given that negotiations with tenants have not yet commenced and this information should not be discussed with individuals who are not members of the Town Council.

It was **resolved**: That the report be approved and the Town Clerk authorised to undertake further work in relation these areas and to present a report together with recommendations to the next meeting of this Committee.

It was **recommended** to the Town Council to agree, subject to further investigation, the removal of the unkempt open space to the side of the Royse Room/ Royse Court, and behind the Guildhall, as it has little amenity value or potential and to allocate this area for car parking as the amount of parking available for the Guildhall is currently very limited.

64. **Guildhall Improvement Programme Phase Two**

The Town Clerk reported that during recent very wet weather there had unfortunately been water ingress through a number of places in the roof of the modern part of the Guildhall. This was being investigated by the Council's surveyors and a quote was being obtained from a builder to address the problem.

In relation to the appointment of architects and associated engineers for Phase Two of the project, the Town Clerk reported that expressions of interest through the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) was being advertised this week and the following dates had been agreed:

Thursday 4th October 2012

Advertisement Published
and PQQs issued to all
companies that express an

	interest
Thursday 25 th October 2012	Closing date for return of completed PQQs (by 12.00 midday) and shortlisting begins
Thursday 8 th November 2012	Completion of PQQ evaluation and Invitation to Tender published to shortlisted suppliers
Date TBC	Site Visit (date will be confirmed)
Thursday 29 th November 2012	Closing date for return of completed Invitation to tenders (ITT)
Thursday 6 th December 2012	Completion of ITT evaluation and shortlisting to Presentation
Thursday 13 th December 2012	Shortlisted supplier Presentation to ATC panel

It was **recommended** that following receipt of PQQs, the architects and engineers be shortlisted to a maximum of six against each professional discipline and that following receipt of tenders at the end of November, a maximum of three per discipline be shortlisted for interview.

The Town Clerk considered that the Committee should delegate authority to a panel of members to select those to be shortlisted for tender and for interview and also to make the final selection and make appointment of the architect and the engineers. It was **resolved** such a panel be appointed and that the panel consist of Cllrs Iain Littlejohn, Marilyn Badcock and Alison Rooke. The Town Clerk and the Procurement Advisor would work with the panel in this regard. The Committee further **resolved** that all matters in relation to the appointment should be delegated to the panel, subject to the panel remaining within the budget set aside for this work.

The meeting rose at 7.30pm