

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

Draft Minutes of the County Hall Museum Management Committee held on Thursday 17th November 2016 at 7.00 pm in the Roysse Room, Roysse Court, Abingdon-on-Thames

Present

Cllr Monica Lovatt	Chairman
Cllr Dennis Garrett	Vice-Chairman
Cllr Samantha Bowring	
Cllr Margaret Crick	
Cllr Brian Hedley	
Cllr Angela Lawrence	
Cllr Patrick Lonergan	
Mr Peter Clare	Friends of Abingdon Museum (Co-opted)

In Attendance

Mr Nigel Warner	Town Clerk
Mrs Susan Whipp	Treasurer/Responsible Financial Officer
Mr Matthew Stevens	Museum Manager
Ms Elin Bornemann	Museum Collections Officer (Clerk to the Meeting)

32 Apologies for Absence

None.

33 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

34 Minutes

Resolved that the Committee receive the minutes of 8th September 2016 as a correct record to be signed by the Chairman.

35 Matters arising

Minute 23: Report of the Museum Officers:

The Committee had delegated the decision whether to extend the trial of opening the café on Mondays to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman reviewed the trial after six weeks and decided not to extend the trial period.

36 Public Participation

No representations or questions from the public.

37 Report of the Museum Officers

The Committee received and considered the report of the Museum Officers as circulated with the agenda.

Cllr Dennis Garrett entered the meeting at this point, the time being 7.15 pm.

The Museum Manager reported on events and income, visitor numbers, the café and shop, staff and volunteers, education and the exhibition programme. The Collections Officer reported on collections projects.

It was **resolved** that the report of the Museum Officers be approved.

It was **resolved** that the Museum's commission on exhibition sales be set at 30%.

The Museum Manager requested advice from the Committee on possibly reduced café opening hours. Cllr Patrick Lonergan proposed and Cllr Margaret Crick seconded and it was **resolved** that the café opens 10 am to 2 pm on weekdays, if there are no staff or volunteers available, and 10 am to 4 pm on weekends.

38 Financial Report for year to date

The committee received and considered the management accounts and the Treasurer's financial report. Discussions regarding a recommendation for 2017-18 budget were continued within the confidential section of the meeting.

It was **resolved** that the Management Accounts for the period up to 30th September 2016 be approved.

39 Abingdon Museum Friends

The committee received and considered a written report on the activities of the Friends given by Mr Peter Clare.

40 Dates and times of future meetings

The Committee noted the proposed dates and times of the Committee meetings for the remainder of 2016/17:

- 9th February 2017 7 pm

41 Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Chairman moved and it was **resolved** that

“In accordance with the 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 press) be excluded from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.”

Elin Bornemann left the meeting, the time being 8.30 pm.

42 Confidential Appendix to the Minutes

Resolved that the confidential appendix to the meeting of 8th September 2016 be approved.

43 Confidential Report of the Museum Manager

The committee received and considered the report of the Museum Manager.

The committee discussed options for charging for entry to the Museum. The general consensus was that it would be unfair to charge local residents but charging non-residents would be an option. One member would prefer to try to increase voluntary donations but others felt this had already proved to be difficult. It was suggested by the Museum Manger that if an entry fee was charged then visitors would not then be subject to an additional fee to visit the roof.

It was proposed by Cllr Patrick Lonergan and seconded by Cllr Angela Lawrence that all visitors excluding those living within the parish of Abingdon-on-Thames be charged an entry fee. The committee voted and the result was unanimous.

It was **resolved** that a Museum entry fee be charged, in principle, to non-Abingdon residents.

The Museum Manager was requested to bring a further report on the financial and practical implications of charging to the next meeting of this committee, along with confirmation of visitor numbers, floor by floor.

The committee then considered the Museum Manager’s report on potential efficiency savings and grants. It was agreed that the Museum Manager investigate the scheme more fully and report back to the next meeting. The Museum Manager explained that any such grant would not be available until late Autumn / early 2018 and so should not be factored into 2017-18 budget setting.

The option to tax the County Hall Museum was discussed. It was explained that by opting to tax this would enable the rooms at the Museum to be hired out, without being limited by the partial exemption calculation. Agreeing to opt to tax would not mean that it would be agreed that room hire would be expanded at the Museum as a service, but more that the ability to do so in the future would be available. The Treasurer / RFO explained that there would be no negative implications for the museum finances of opting to tax that she was aware of. The committee agreed in principle and it was proposed by Cllr Angela Lawrence and seconded by Cllr Margaret Crick to obtain a report from professional advisors for the next meeting.

It was **resolved** that:

A report on the option to tax the County Hall Museum be obtained from professional advisors and considered at the next meeting of this committee.

The committee then turned their attention back to the requirement to agree a 2017-18 budget proposal to recommend to the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee. It was proposed by Cllr Dennis Garrett and seconded by Cllr Samantha Bowring that a net expenditure budget of £178,000 be recommended to Finance and General Purposes Committee, supported by a 3 year Forward Plan. This would represent an increase compared to the current year budget (£164,271) of 8.4%. All members of the committee agreed. It was further proposed by Cllr Dennis Garrett and seconded by Cllr Samantha Bowring that a small group consisting of the Chairman Cllr Monica Lovatt, Vice Chairman Cllr Dennis Garrett and Cllr Samantha Bowring be requested to produce a detailed budget of £178,000 to the next meeting. All members agreed.

It was **recommended to the Finance and General Purposes Committee** that:

(iii) a net expenditure budget for 2017-18 of £178,000 be agreed, supported by a 3 year Forward Plan.

(iv) a group consisting of the Chairman Cllr Monica Lovatt, Vice Chairman Cllr Dennis Garrett, Cllr Samantha Bowring, the Museum Manager and the Treasurer/RFO be requested to produce a detailed budget of £178,000 to the next meeting.

Meeting rose at 9:25pm.