

**ABINGDON-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL**  
**FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**2<sup>nd</sup> OCTOBER 2018**

**REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK**

Agenda Item 5 – Matters Referred

Amenities and Recreation Committee of 12<sup>th</sup> September 2018

At the Amenities and Recreation Committee it was proposed by Councillor Dennis Garrett and seconded by Councillor Jeanette Halliday and recommended:

- (i) That at the end of the period for the exclusive rights of burial in a plot in the Abingdon cemeteries, an extension to the period may be granted by the Council for an additional 50-year period, subject to any terms and conditions required by the Council. (Note the original period for new grave is the grant of a 75-year exclusive right);
- (ii) The cost of purchase of exclusive rights and immediate burial for a single depth grave be £768. (Note this is an increase of £68, to discourage the purchase of a new plot when an existing plot can be used).
- (iii) That the charge for the extended 50-year period be £268 (Note the same as the charge for the exclusive rights grant for a single depth grave excluding the charge for the burial itself).

For further details in relation to the background of this recommendation please see the report of the Assistant Town Clerk / Head of Services at Agenda Item 9 to the Amenities and Recreation Committee.

This matter is referred to the Finance and General Purposes Committee as this is a property matter and the Finance and General Purposes Committee is also responsible for fees and charges.

Following consideration by this Committee, this will be treated as a resolved item.

Guildhall Committee of 13<sup>th</sup> September 2018

The Guildhall Committee considered a recommendation from the Amenities and Recreation Committee that “the Guildhall Committee look again at

installing three flag poles in the Roysse Court Garden to complete the refurbishment”.

The Guildhall Committee at its meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> September 2018 considered this request and has referred the matter to the Finance and General Purposes Committee for further consideration with a recommendation that the flag poles be installed.

A sum of £5,000 is reserved in this regard. Whilst the costs of flagpoles themselves are modest, it would be necessary to install proper hard-wearing poles designed to allow only staff to be able to raise and lower flags.

The Amenities and Recreation Committee have resolved that if approved then the flagpoles would be funded from the street furniture budget.

The Council previously considered this matter in September 2017 but decided not to proceed.

Any recommendation from this Committee would be a recommendation to the Town Council.

Nigel Warner  
Town Clerk  
28<sup>th</sup> September 2018

**ABINGDON-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL**

**FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**2<sup>nd</sup> OCTOBER 2018**

**REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK**

**AGENDA ITEM 8 – GENERAL REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK**

a) Town Bus Service in South Abingdon

Following the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2018, it has been agreed that Thames Travel will commence a Town Bus Service principally serving South Abingdon and based on the previous no 41 bus route. It is anticipated that the service will commence on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2018. I am awaiting final confirmation in relation to the timetable but it will likely be the same as contained in the e-mail sent to all Members on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2018. However until confirmed by Thames Travel it is not being attached with this report as any minor changes could be misleading to potential users should the information be circulated. The fares charged will also remain the same as the previous service, the full adult fare being £1.80 single, a flat rate regardless of the distance travelled. Bus passes will also be valid for use on this service.

In accordance with the resolution of the Council at its meeting in January 2018 the contract with Thames Travel will be for a one-year period from 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2018.

**Recommended:** Members to note this section of the report.

b) Agency agreement with Oxfordshire County Council for the operation of the town centre Residents' Parking Schemes

At the Council meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018 it was resolved that notice be given to Oxfordshire County Council for the Town Council to terminate the agency agreement in relation to the Abingdon Residents' Parking Scheme, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019.

Following the meeting your officers have been in discussions with officers at Oxfordshire County Council. These discussions now included the potential introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) in the area, following the resolution of the District Council on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2018. Your officers discussed the timescales for CPE and also considered that this was a material change which ought to be considered by the Town Council in relation to the termination of the agreement. If the necessary local approvals for the introduction of the CPE are secured then there is a lengthy process for

obtaining the necessary powers from Government. It is considered that should Civil Parking Enforcement be progressed it would be both prudent and sensible in resource terms to extend the notice period for terminating the current administrative arrangements and the agency agreement to March 2020 and your officers propose accordingly. If by that time no prospects are in place for CPE to be delivered within the Vale then the responsibilities for delivering permit management and enforcement schemes in Abingdon would revert to the County Council and the agency agreement would be terminated. If prior to that date CPE came into place within the Vale then the responsibilities for the Residents' Parking Scheme would transfer at that point to the District Council. If before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 plans for CPE were cancelled, then this scheme would revert to the County Council and the agency agreement would be terminated and a six month notice period or at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, whichever was sooner.

At the meeting with County officers, your officers were briefed regarding planned improvements to the technology being used to deliver the Residents' Parking Scheme, which are positive moves by the County Council.

In the circumstances that the Town Council may agree to continue to operate the scheme for a maximum period of an additional 14 months over its previously agreed position your officers stated that they would be prepared to recommend this to the Town Council on the basis that the scheme continued to operate with one full time member of staff without the part-time (20 hours per week) attendant role.

Note that the original resolution of the Council to terminate the agency agreement was moved in the pursuance of a recommendation of this Committee and consequently is capable of amendment on the recommendation of this Committee.

The Committee is requested to consider this matter and make a **recommendation** to the Town Council.

c) Guildhall Project Update

At the Guildhall Committee of Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2018 Members received a comprehensive financial update on the building project / contract with Inside Out. This was previously circulated with the papers for that Committee.

The Committee noted that there had been major additional work commissioned by the Council resulting in an increased scope of works. This is all fully documented in the report to that meeting and the notes of the Guildhall Development Working Group.

This Committee, as the Council's Finance Committee is requested to **endorse** approval of the report by the Guildhall Committee, and its financial implications.

The Guildhall Committee also considered the overall budget estimates update in relation to the various Guildhall projects, again detailed in my report to the Guildhall Committee and the Finance and General Purposes Committee is requested to **endorse** the approval of the report by the Guildhall Committee and its financial implications.

d) Financial Update in relation to use of the Abbey Hall as a cinema

It was reported at the Guildhall Committee that the objectives and progress of the cinema project are very positive but that it should be noted that this project has had a significant impact on the Guildhall Project and that this should not be underestimated. However it is worth repeating to this Committee two points which were made. Firstly your officers have taken on a major project which some 12 months ago was not planned and therefore this has, inevitably, diluted the resource available for other Council work and the Guildhall Project more generally, leading to delays in some areas. Members will need to be patient over the coming weeks until the Project is complete. Secondly the Guildhall and the Abbey Hall can only ever be considered as one building and plans for the Abbey Hall have had a consequential “knock-on” to the Guildhall project in relation to fire alarms / detection and emergency lighting.

The delivery of this project was never going to be a simple case of “opening the front doors”.

Note that where reference is made to the Abbey Hall, this generally includes the associated other new (1966 extension) parts of the Guildhall complex, with the notable exception of the kitchen.

In terms of the progress being made:

- The premises licence has been varied to allow for cinema use, planning permission has been granted for the alternative means of escape on the south-east corner of the Abbey Hall and historic use of the building as Class D1 / D2 has been confirmed.
- Members will be aware that Ridge and Partners undertook a survey earlier in the year detailing the works they considered necessary in order to allow the Abbey Hall to be used as a lease for a cinema. This work very much concentrated on the need to ensure that the building and its plant complied with all relevant regulations and was safe to use and fit for purpose rather than making improvements to the building. Consequently the work which was specified and has been undertaken relates to matters such as electrical and mechanical and engineering works and there is very little in the way of enhancements such as redecoration. Following the initial scoping of works further detailed studies were undertaken by the various professionals which resulted in

more detailed schedules of work which have been undertaken over the summer months.

- Members will be aware that a comprehensive fire risk assessment was carried out by Ridge & Partners in May 2018 and particular issues were identified with fire alarms, detection and emergency lighting. The fire alarm and emergency lighting were then looked at by a service provider and it became apparent that significant improvements were required. Consequently your officers decided to “take a step back” and Ridge & Partners, the professional advisors and project managers in relation to the Abbey Hall / cinema works, were commissioned to carry out a full survey of the fire alarms / emergency lighting across the whole of the Guildhall complex and requested to design a scheme to bring the property up to modern L1 system compliance. This has been a major development to the work.
- In relation to alarms / detection the L1 system provides for smoke heads in every room and space; the main panel upgraded and three new repeater panels installed. The works in relation to emergency lighting have also been comprehensive with new emergency lighting being installed across the whole of the complex. New wiring for the systems has been installed. In considering this matter the Guildhall Working Group took on board that the fully functioning, up to date fire alarm system was important because it detects and warns of results of any other problems in the building and its contents and use, which could include electrical / equipment / mechanical faults, fire stopping being missing, doors being held open and vandalism etc. Members will only be too aware of how important it is to ensure not only compliance but the very best fire alarm system to be in place and this has been the major additional expense to both the Guildhall and the Abbey Hall schemes.

Please see attached the latest financial estimate in relation to the Abbey Hall project. It is noted that the current estimate has risen from £116,195 reported previously in June 2018 to £173,542. This compares with the original “minimum works provision” figure published in the February 2018 Ridge Feasibility Study amounting to £176,000.

The additional expenditure will be financed from the Council’s pooled property budget for the year and the associated earmarked reserves.

The Committee is requested to approve this report and the expenditure on the Abbey Hall Project

(e) Abbey Hall lease

Over the summer your officers have been in negotiations with the Regal regarding the form of lease in relation to the Abbey Hall.

These negotiations have progressed well and in accordance with the Heads of Agreement previously approved by the Town Council.

As yet the lease has not been signed because there were a number of matters in relation to the Council's ability to grant the lease which required conclusion before the Council could commit to signing a lease, principally in relation to planning and works to improve the building to comply with the fire risk assessment.

The parties were considering entering into "an agreement to lease" but with the imminent conclusion of the outstanding matters this does not appear to be necessary and it is anticipated that the lease will be signed shortly.

Nigel Warner  
Town Clerk  
28<sup>th</sup> September 2018

**ABBEY HALL REFURBISHMENT WORKS FINANCIAL UPDATE  
28TH SEPTEMBER 2018**

£

<b><u>Electrical</u></b>	21,681
<b><u>Mechanical</u></b>	
Airhandling, ventilation, WCs and gas	21,219
Entrance doors	1,425
<b><u>Security etc</u></b>	
	TBC
<b><u>External Staircase: Construction and installation</u></b>	15,220
<b><u>Asbestos: Removals and making good</u></b>	9,250
<b><u>Planning</u></b>	418
<b><u>Other</u></b>	
Building works & associated	9,500
Abbey Hall/ new building fire alarm and detection	48,408
Abbey Hall/ new building Emergency lighting	32,829
<b><u>Professional fees</u></b>	
Building control fees	450
Design and CA works: includes project management; mechanical and electrical surveys	13,142
<b>Total</b>	<b>173,542</b>

Additional costs to be confirmed:  
 BWIC to mechanical  
 ? Service to lift  
 Replacement of missing window  
 Convert WC to shower room back stage  
 Phase 3 electrical works specifically for cinema