

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council
Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting
held on Tuesday 5th March 2019 at 7:00pm
in the Roysse Room, Guildhall, Abingdon-on-Thames.

Present

Cllr Mike Badcock	Chairman
Cllr Dennis Garrett	Vice-Chairman and Chairman of Guildhall Committee
Cllr Alice Badcock	Chairman of Amenities & Recreation Committee
Cllr Samantha Bowring	
Cllr Margaret Crick	Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames (Ex-officio)
Cllr Vicky Jenkins	Chairman of Community Services Committee
Cllr Helen Pighills	
Cllr David Pope	Chairman of Planning, Highways & Consultations Committee
Cllr Andrew Todd	

In Attendance

Mr Nigel Warner	Town Clerk
Mrs Susan Whipp	Treasurer/Responsible Financial Officer (Clerk to the meeting)

SECTION I (Open to the Public Including the Press)

F48 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Monica Lovatt and Sandy Lovatt.

F49 **Declarations of interest**

Minute F55: Abingdon Carousel

Cllr Samantha Bowring and the Mayor, Cllr Margaret Crick declared a non-pecuniary interest in the report of Abingdon Carousel as they were both trustees of the charity.

F50 **Minutes**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 15th January 2019.

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 15th January 2019 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

F51 **Statements and Questions from the public**

There were no statements or questions from the public.

F52 **Matters referred**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk in relation to matters referred from the Planning, Highways and Consultations Committee and from the Amenities and Recreation Committee.

Planning, Highways and Consultations Committee of 28th January 2019

Members considered the recommendation regarding the allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The Town Clerk reminded members that the Town Council will be receiving 15% of the CIL and the remaining 85% will be received by the district council.

Following a consultation from the District Council in relation to the allocation of their proportion of the CIL, the Town Council's Planning, Highways and Consultations Committee had considered the allocation towards different areas of infrastructure spending proposed and recommended the following split for the town council's share (*the figures stated in italics are the corresponding share of the town council and district council combined*):

County Council: education and transport infrastructure	0%	(42.50%)
Clinical Commissioning Group: community health care	40%	(23.00%)
District Council: sports and leisure facilities	20%	(20.00%)
District Council: green infrastructure / biodiversity provision	20%	(7.25%)
District Council: public art and cultural heritage/public realm	20%	(7.25%)

It was **recommended** to **FULL COUNCIL** that these allocations be approved.

Amenities Committee Meeting 6th February 2019

Members considered the recommendation that Manchester bollards be used to replace the current bollards surrounding the Market Place. Funding for the new bollards was already approved (within nominal code 299/4845 for 2019/20, amounting to £15,000) and the matter was referred due to the proposed change in materials, thus making this a property matter and within the responsibility of the Finance and General Purposes Committee. The Chairman of the Amenities and Recreation Committee, Cllr Alice Badcock, explained that the proposed bollards are made of rigid rebound polymer rather than cast iron as per the current bollards and it was felt by the Head of Services and Works Team this was a more robust material and would withstand impact more favourably.

It was **resolved** that that the purchase of these bollards be approved.

The committee then considered the request to use £1,640 from the 2019/20 budget to cover the cost of new Christmas lights. The Chairman of the Amenities and Recreation Committee Cllr Alice Badcock explained that new

Christmas lights had been chosen from the sale which had taken place at the end of the Christmas lights “season” and so it would save the Council money if they could purchase them now. The Chairman Cllr Mike Badcock stated that the 2019/20 budget should be available for the newly elected council in May to spend and therefore did not agree that a share of the budget should be spent early. Cllr Mike Badcock asked the Treasurer / RFO Mrs Susan Whipp if there was an alternative capital purchases budget which could be used. Mrs Whipp explained that the majority of the Council’s capital budgets were being allocated to the Guildhall project but she reminded members that it was expected that the revenue budget for the Amenities and Recreation Committee would show an underspend at year end. It was therefore suggested that the shortfall of funds could be vired from another budget line within the responsibility of the Amenities and Recreation Committee. It was agreed by the committee for the Treasurer / RFO to identify a suitable line, inform the Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and make the virement¹.

It was **resolved** that the recommendation to use £1,640 of the 2019/20 budget to fund the purchase of Christmas lights in 2018/19 **not be** approved, instead the shortfall be vired from another expenditure line within the Amenities and Recreation 2018/19 budget.

F53 Finance Report: Payment Schedules and Management Accounts

Members received and considered the report of the Treasurer /RFO.

It was **resolved** that the Finance Report, and the recommendations contained therein, (i) to approve the schedule of accounts for the period 1st December 2018 to 28th February 2019 and (ii) to approve the management accounts for the period 1st April 2018 to 31st December 2018, be agreed.

F54 Risk Register Annual Update

The Committee received and considered the report of the Treasurer / RFO.

With regard to the outstanding actions listed in the Action Plan, Cllr Andrew Todd asked for further explanation on the risks around the accounting software in relation to VAT submissions. The Treasurer explained that the requirement on submitting VAT returns is changing from October 2019 and the accounting software needs to be updated in order to meet this new requirement. The Treasurer reassured the committee that the software supplier is aware of the issues and it is anticipated this will be resolved by early Summer.

The committee noted the report.

¹ In accordance with the Council’s Financial Regulation 4.3(b), any spending committee has the power to authorise a virement between cost centres that fall within the responsibility of that committee; the nature of the structure of the other spending committees and the “parent” Finance and General Purposes Committee allows for the Finance and General Purposes Committee to also authorise any such virements, thus eliminating the need for this to be reconsidered by the Amenities and Recreation Committee.

F55 **Abingdon Carousel**

The Committee received and considered the report from Abingdon Carousel.

The Chairman, Cllr Mike Badcock, asked Cllr Samantha Bowring, in her role as a trustee of Abingdon Carousel, whether the charity was still planning on setting up a Saturday Dad's group as he believed another group was also seeking grant funding to set up a similar regular event. Cllr Bowring confirmed that Abingdon Carousel are in the process of setting up a Saturday Dad's group and thanked Cllr Badcock for the information.

Cllr Badcock thanked Abingdon Carousel for the report and advised the Committee that he felt that the cheque for the half-yearly instalment of the annual grant should now be released.

It was **resolved** that the committee approved the report.

F56 **General report of the Town Clerk**

This item was not tabled.

F57 **Guildhall and Abbey Hall Improvement Project**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk updated Members on additional works and associated costs since the previous report and also the overall funding position for the entire project.

Cllr David Pope asked whether the Town Clerk felt that the future funding need as shown in the appendices was achievable. The Town Clerk reminded members that the future funding requirement related to future years and not necessarily just the next financial year 2019-20, and that any future spend would be for the incoming Council to determine.

With regards to the installation of a defibrillator the Town Clerk explained that the costs included in the appendix D related to the electrical works and not the purchase of the defibrillator itself, this was expected to be in the region of £1,500. It was suggested that the Council could seek sponsorship to cover the cost of this purchase but the committee considered that this was not viable due to restrictions on officer availability and the timing of the project.

It was **recommended** to **FULL COUNCIL** that:

- (i) The financial update and revised budget estimates in relation to the Guildhall Project, both capital and revenue (appendices A and C of the report), including the transfers between the budget lines as reported and funding from the deferred grant from the District Council, Town Council earmarked reserves and revenue budgets be approved;

- (ii) The financial update and the revised budget estimates in relation to the Guildhall related projects – the Abbey Hall / cinema and Roysse Court – both capital and revenue (appendices B and C of the report) including the transfers between budget lines as reported and funding from the deferred grant from the District Council, Town Council earmarked reserves and revenue budgets be approved;
- (iii) The financial update and the funding position in relation to the Guildhall related maintenance items and funding from the current year revenue budgets (appendix C of the report) be approved.

It was **resolved** that the financial update in relation to the building project / contract with Inside Out Developments as detailed in Appendix D of the report, and all related variations in the project to date, be approved.

F58 **Publicity**

The Committee considered areas which required publicity and it was agreed that the new Space for Change facilities in the Guildhall should be publicized once they are open.

F59 **Meeting dates**

The Committee noted the calendar of meetings for 2019/20 and the proposed start time of 7:00pm:

- 18th June 2019
- 18th September 2019
- 14th January 2020
- 21st January 2020
- 17th March 2020
- 18th June 2020 (first meeting of 2020/21)

F60 **Confidential Report of the Town Clerk**

This item was not tabled.

The meeting rose at 7:45pm.

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Chairman

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Date