

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council
Draft minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting
held on Tuesday 2nd October 2018 at 7:00pm
in the Ceremony Room, Roysse Court, Abingdon-on-Thames.

Cllr Mike Badcock	Chairman
Cllr Dennis Garrett	Vice-Chairman and Chairman of Guildhall Committee
Cllr Samantha Bowring	
Cllr Margaret Crick	Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames (Ex-officio)
Cllr Vicky Jenkins	Chairman of Community Services Committee
Cllr Monica Lovatt	Chairman of CH Museum Management Committee
Cllr Sandy Lovatt	
Cllr Helen Pighills	

In Attendance

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

One member of the public

SECTION I (Open to the Public Including the Press)

F21 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Alice Badcock, David Pope and Andrew Todd.

F22 **Declarations of interest**

Minute F25: Matters referred – Amenities and Recreation Committee meeting of 12th September 2018

Cllr Mike Badcock declared a non-pecuniary interest in this matter as his Father had purchased him a grave space in Abingdon Cemetery some years ago.

F23 **Minutes**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 12th June 2018.

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 12th June 2018 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

F24 **Statements and Questions from the public**

There were no statements and questions from the public.

F25 **Matters referred**

(Cllrs Monica Lovatt and Sandy Lovatt arrived at this point, it being 7:05 pm).

The committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk in relation to matters referred from the Amenities and Recreation Committee and matters referred from the Guildhall Committee.

Amenities Committee Meeting 12th September 2018

Members considered the recommendations regarding exclusive rights of burial and related changes to fees and charges. A member questioned the current policy regarding the when the 75-year period of an exclusive right commences. The Town Clerk confirmed this is from the date of purchase and not the date of use.

It was **resolved** that:

- (i) At the end of the period for the exclusive rights of burial in a plot of in 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;
- (ii) The cost of purchase of exclusive rights and immediate burial for a single depth grave by £768;
- (iii) The charge for the extended 50-year period be £268.

Cllr Mike Badcock declared a non-pecuniary interest in the above matter as his Father had purchased him a grave space in Abingdon Cemetery some years ago.

Guildhall Committee Meeting 13th September 2018

Members considered the recommendation that three flag poles be installed in the Roysse Court Garden. It was noted that the Town Clerk had recommended that a sum of £5,000 is reserved should the recommendation be agreed on. This costing was on the basis that 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. It was also noted that the Amenities and Recreation Committee have resolved that if approved then the flagpoles would be funded from the street furniture budget.

Members were reminded by Cllr Helen Pighills that there is a difference between the Council flying flags in support of particular events, groups or organisations, and the Council providing flag poles to allow groups and

organisations to fly their flags. Cllr Badcock agreed that a flag flying protocol for these particular poles should be written.

It was agreed for this matter to be referred to Full Council, to be considered at the meeting on 17th October 2018, for consideration by all members.

Recommended to Full Council that three flag poles be installed in the Roysse Court gardens.

F26 **Commemorations of the 100th Anniversary of the end of the First World War and arrangements for Remembrance Day**

The Committee received and considered the notes of the meetings of the Working Group in relation to the above, held on 1st May and 14th August 2018.

Regarding the notes of the meeting held on 14th August 2018, Cllr Monica Lovatt commented that the army did not appear to be represented as fully in the list of invites for the reception compared to the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy. Cllr Lovatt suggested that representatives from *ABF The Soldiers' Charity* also be included. Cllr Mike Badcock responded that the associations usually invited will continue to be invited.

Cllr Mike Badcock asked members to let him know if they have any suggestions of appropriate readings for the service to be held on Saturday 10th November 2018.

Cllr Margaret Crick asked whether councillors would be invited to read the Roll of Honour. Cllr Badcock confirmed this was the case and also that members of the public will be invited to read some of the names This will be advertised on the Council's website in due course.

Members are requested to inform the officers at Roysse Court offices whether of not they are planning on attending these events.

Members noted the notes of the meetings.

F27 **Finance Report**

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

[At the last meeting of this committee in June, Cllr Samantha Bowring asked the RFO whether the format of the payment schedules could be changed so that VAT is shown separately or not included. The RFO explained that the report is generated by the Cash Book module of accounting software and the cashbook does not record VAT separately, instead it records the full value of the payments being made. An alternative report could perhaps be produced by the Purchase ledger module of the accounting software but this would not be in the same format. It was agreed that the RFO would investigate alternative formats and report back at the next meeting].

The RFO reported that she had contacted the software supplier to see if any additional reports could be produced from the cash book module and confirmed this was not the case. She then explained that she had manually split out the VAT for one month's payment listing which had taken her nearly two hours. This was a time-consuming process as the invoice for each payment had to be reviewed in order to verify whether VAT had been paid, and at what rate. She acknowledged this would take less time for future months due to the number of regular monthly payments. Members agreed that the benefit of showing the net payment in the payment listings was outweighed by the officer time this would take. Members were reminded that the regulations mean that the committee is required to approve the payments themselves, listed by date of payment, rather than a report of the purchase ledger or the Management Accounts which is by date of invoice.

Regarding the Management Accounts, Cllr Sandy Lovatt asked why none of the £5,000 budget shown against cost centre 360 for publicity had been spent. The Town Clerk explained that this was a new cost centre which had been set up to separate out the revenue budget which related to the Abbey Hall rather than the Guildhall historic rooms. Previously this budget would have been included in cost centre 350. The budget is showing as unspent as the figure was part of the full Guildhall budget for the year which had remained unchanged since the refurbishment work had begun. The Town Clerk assured Cllr Lovatt that this budget will be considered fully during the budget setting process for 2019-20.

Cllr Samantha Bowring noted that the budget for electricity and gas showing under cost centre 602 Works Department appears to be considerably overspent (£907 actual.v. £108 budget). The RFO stated that this was likely to be a coding issue and agreed to investigate and report back to the next meeting.

Members noted the Internal Auditors Report and the RFO's update on the sales ledger.

Resolved: that the report, and all recommendations contained therein be approved.

F28 **General Report of the Town Clerk**

The committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk.

(a) Town Bus Service in South Abingdon

Members **noted** the Town Clerk's update on this service.

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

Members noted the Town Clerk's update on his meeting with Oxfordshire County Council. The Town Clerk explained that a resolution by the District Council in July 2018 meant that there was now a possibility that Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) be introduced in the area and therefore it would be sensible if the termination date for the current administrative arrangements

be postponed until March 2020.

It was **recommended to Full Council** that:

- (i) The Town Council agree to continue to operate the scheme for a maximum period of an additional 14 months over its previously agreed position (previously agreed to terminate on 1st January 2019), ending on 31st March 2020;
- (ii) Should CPE come into place before 31st March 2020 then the responsibilities for the Residents' Parking Scheme would transfer at that point to the District Council;
- (iii) If before 31st March 2020 plans for CPE were cancelled then this scheme would revert to the County Council and the agency agreement would be terminated after a six-month notice period or at 31st March 2020, whichever was sooner;
- (iv) The scheme continues to operate with one full time member of staff without the part-time (20 hours per week) attendant role.

(c) Guildhall Project Update

The Town Clerk updated the committee on the financial position of the Guildhall Project. This had been fully reported at the Guildhall Committee meeting held on 13th September 2018 and the Guildhall Committee had approved the report. Members of this Committee were asked to endorse the approval of the report by the Guildhall Committee.

Cllr Sandy Lovatt asked whether members could receive a summary of the funding of the project. The Town Clerk explained that a summary of the financial position and funding had already been circulated to all members of the Council as part of the agenda and reports for the Guildhall Committee, which are emailed to all members. Cllr Lovatt explained it was difficult to keep up-to-date with progress and the financial position of the project, as he was not a member of the Guildhall Committee. The Town Clerk asked Cllr Lovatt if he could suggest a better way to update all members. Cllr Dennis Garrett showed the committee a copy of the finance table which had been circulated with the Guildhall Committee Agenda. Cllr Lovatt agreed that appeared to be useful and the Town Clerk agreed to recirculate the report (*attached to these minutes*).

Regarding the Space for Change disabled toilet facilities, Cllr Vicky Jenkins asked whether radar keys would be available to purchase from the Roysse Court Offices. The Town Clerk confirmed he would investigate.

Regarding the improvements to Roysse Court Gardens, Cllr Helen Pighills raised concerns regarding the finish of the coping stones. The Town Clerk stated that work was ongoing and that this, and similar issues would be picked up, as necessary, as part of the snagging list, before the building work is signed off and thanked Cllr Pighills for her comments.

The Committee **endorsed** 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

The Town Clerk updated members on progress made.

The Committee **approved** the report of the Town Clerk and the expenditure on the Abbey Hall Project, currently estimated at £173,542.

(e) Abbey Hall lease

The Town Clerk updated members on progress made.

The Committee **approved** the report of the Town Clerk.

[The member of the public left the meeting, the time being 8:00pm].

F29 **Publicity**

Cllr Mike Badcock informed the committee that further details of the events planned for Remembrance weekend will be publicized shortly.

F30 **Dates of meetings for 2018/19**

The Committee noted the dates of the meetings for 2018/19 as:

- Tuesday 18th December 2018;
- Tuesday 15th January 2019;
- Tuesday 5th March 2019.

Members also noted that having regard to current ongoing projects it may be necessary to convene special meetings of the Committee, for which a minimum of three working days' notice (including Saturdays and excluding Sundays) will be given.

F31 **Exclusion of the public, including the press**

The Chairman moved:

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.

F32 **Confidential Appendix**

The committee received and considered the Confidential Appendix to the Minutes of the meeting of 12th June 2018.

Resolved: that the confidential appendix to the minutes of the meeting of the

Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 12th June 2018 be approved and signed as a correct record.

F33 **Matters referred from other standing committees**

The committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk regarding a recommendation from the County Hall Museum Management Committee meeting held on 20th September 2018.

It was **recommended to Full Council** that:

a delegation be sought for the County Hall Museum Management Committee to have resolved powers in relation to approving the future staffing model for the Museum, subject to the costs being within the exiting budget for staffing.

F34 **Confidential report of the Town Clerk**

The committee received and considered the confidential report of the Town Clerk, noting the report in relation to the contract for the management and operation of the Guildhall and an update in relation to the Information Centre. There were no recommendations in this regard.

Regarding the arrangements for the Bun Throwing Ceremony planned for 10th November 2018, it was **recommended** that the existing list as per the previous bun throw be approved for this year. The Mayor, Cllr Margaret Crick, commented that as the bun throwing competition had not taken place this year, additional representatives from the army, who were Corporate Freemen of the Town, should be invited.

Regarding Staffing Matters, members approved the report and the recommendations contained therein, this being a **resolved** matter.

Meeting rose at 8:18pm.

.....
Chairman

.....
Date

ABINGDON-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
2nd OCTOBER 2018
REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK
AGENDA ITEM 8 – GENERAL REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK

Section of report in relation to the Guildhall/ Abbey Hall

Guildhall Project Update

At the Guildhall Committee of Thursday 13th 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
28th September 2018

DRAFT

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

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

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