

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council
Draft minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee
on Tuesday 9th January 2018 at 7.00pm
in the Røsse Room, Guildhall, Abingdon-on-Thames.

Cllr Mike Badcock	Chairman
Cllr Alice Badcock	Chairman of Amenities & Recreation Committee
Cllr Samantha Bowring	
Cllr Margaret Crick	Chairman of Planning, Highways & Consultations
Cllr Helen Pighills	
Cllr Vicky Jenkins	Chairman of Community Services Committee
Cllr Monica Lovatt	Chairman of County Hall Museum Management Committee
Cllr Sandy Lovatt	
Cllr Andrew Todd	

In Attendance

Mr Steve Rich	Head of Services/Assistant Town Clerk
Mr Nigel Warner	Town Clerk
Mrs Susan Whipp	Treasurer/Responsible Financial Officer (Clerk to the meeting)

5 members of the public

SECTION I (Open to the Public Including the Press)

F45 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Dennis Garrett and Cllr Jan Morter, Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames.

F46 **Declarations of interest**

None.

(Cllr Samantha Bowring entered the meeting, the time being 7:02pm).

F47 **Minutes and matters arising**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 19th December 2017.

Cllr Sandy Lovatt asked for an update on minute reference F37 regarding the first instalment of the grant to Abingdon Carousel. Cllr Mike Badcock replied and explained that no further progress had been made, the requested paperwork has still not been received and so the payment has not yet been issued.

Regarding minute reference F38 (i) Bridge at Ock Valley Walk, Cllr Mike Badcock informed the committee that officers are still waiting for information

from the Environment Agency.

Cllr Mike Badcock updated the committee on minute F38 (ii) Bid questions from the public. These questions have been forwarded to Abingdon BID.

Regarding minute reference F44, the draft Memorandum of Understanding has been passed to the Council's solicitors for their professional advice. Once the solicitors give their approval of the details within the document it will be ready to be signed. The committee then **recommended** that the signing of the document should be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of Finance and General Purposes Committee. Cllr Mike Badcock also confirmed that the survey and feasibility report on the Abbey Hall has now been commissioned with Ridge and Partners and the survey is scheduled to take place shortly.

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 19th December 2017 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

F48 **Statements and Questions from the Public**

None.

F49 **Matters referred**

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

It was noted that Matters referred relating to budget estimates were detailed in the agenda item at minute F50.

Community Services Committee 28th November 2017

The Committee discussed the grant application of £7,000 from Be Free Young Carers referred from the Community Services Committee. The recommendation from the Community Services Committee was that a grant of £5,000 be awarded from the Community Fund.

An amendment to this recommendation was proposed by Cllr Margaret Crick and seconded by Cllr Helen Pighills that a grant of £7,000 should be awarded instead. The amendment was voted on (5 votes in favour, 3 votes against and 1 abstention).

Resolved: that a grant of £7,000 be awarded to Be Free Young Carers.

F50 **Financial Report and Estimates 2018/19**

The committee received and considered the report of the Treasurer / RFO. The Treasurer explained that the proposed budget was the same as that presented to the committee meeting in December. The report had been updated to include

additional information requested by members regarding fees and charges and reserve balances.

It was **recommended** that:

- (i) All recommendations included within the Treasurer's Report regarding fees and charges be approved;
- (ii) All recommendations included within the Treasurer's Report regarding proposed reserve movements be approved;
- (iii) The draft budget estimates for 2018/19 be approved in the sum of £1,533,499 (net expenditure);
- (iv) The total net spending provided in the estimates for 2018/19 amounting to £1,533,499 be funded by way of precept;
- (v) The Council request the District Council to levy a precept, for Town Council purposes, amounting to £1,533,499 for the financial year 2018/19.

It was **resolved** that:

The interim report of the Internal Auditor be approved.

F51 **Honorary Archivist – Annual Report 2016/17**

The committee received and considered the report of Mrs. Jackie Smith, Honorary Archivist.

The committee noted the report and commented on the outstanding role Mrs. Smith continues to fulfil for the Council. The committee requested that a vote of thanks be passed on to Mrs. Smith for all her hard work and dedication.

It was **resolved** that:

The Annual Report 2016/17 of the Honorary Archivist be approved.

F52 **General Report of the Town Clerk**

The Town Clerk gave a verbal report regarding the proposed purchase of IT tablets for members. This had been considered in previous years and a sum of money had been allocated for this purpose (£1,500-£3,150 in Equipment / Computers earmarked reserve). In light of the impending requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) which come into force in May 2018, the Committee felt that this be considered again. The committee discussed some of the requirements of the GDPR, particularly relating to the sharing of data and emails.

Cllr Sandy Lovatt requested that software be purchased to allow the editing of pdf documents. Some members also expressed their frustrations over embedded links to other documents (particularly regarding planning applications) not working in pdf agendas. The Town Clerk confirmed this would be investigated.

Cllr Alice Badcock requested that the range of IT skills amongst members are taken into consideration when any tablets are purchased.

Cllr Andrew Todd warned that the initial budget may no longer be sufficient due to the changes in IT security requirements.

It was confirmed that any tablets would be assigned to individual members, but if they ceased being a member of Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council, they would be required to return the equipment, which would then be re-used by incoming members.

It was **resolved** that:

Authority be delegated to a working group of Cllr Mike Badcock, Cllr Andrew Todd, Cllr Vicky Jenkins and Cllr Margaret Crick to investigate the options available and purchase suitable tablets, taking into consideration the GDPR regulations and individual needs of members.

F52 **Publicity**

Cllr Mike Badcock informed the committee that increased, targeted use of Facebook was currently being investigated by officers. This would mean a small financial cost, starting at £7 per week and would allow for all users within the Abingdon OX14 postcode to receive information from the Council (with the option of opting out). The Committee were content that this proceed and Facebook be used accordingly.

The committee discussed the use of Facebook, Twitter and any other social media and agreed that this is best used as an “information service” limiting the ability for comments. This was on the basis that it was understood that there would be issues with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and that these were not appropriate platforms to receive comments/ complains which may require emergency action by the Council, as it was not practical for them to be monitored 24/7.

It was agreed that information on the impending work to Ock Valley Walk Bridge and any updates on Guildhall / Abbey Hall be published on the website and social media.

F53 **Dates of meetings for 2017/18**

The Committee noted the date of the next meeting:

- 27th March 2018.

F54 **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.

SECTION II (Excluding the public and the press)

F55 **Confidential Appendix to the Minutes**

Members received and considered the confidential appendix to the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 19th December 2017.

It was **resolved** that the confidential appendix to the minutes of the meeting held on 19th December 2017 be approved.

F56 **Confidential Report of the Treasurer**

Members received and considered the confidential report of the Treasurer / RFO in relation to Members' allowances.

It was proposed by Cllr Mike Badcock (seconded by Cllr Samantha Bowring), and agreed by all members of the committee that the following should be recommended to full council:

- (i) The Members' allowance for Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council for 2018-19 remain at 20% of the basic member's allowance of Vale of White Horse District Council, consistent with previous years;
- (ii) The authority to pay travel and subsistence expenses for duties outside of the parish be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the RFO, and considered on a case by case basis;

It was further proposed by Cllr Mike Badcock (seconded by Cllr Monica Lovatt) that the Mayor's allowance for 2018-19 remain at £3,270. This was agreed by all members.

It was **recommended** that:

- (i) *In accordance with the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended), the Members' allowance for Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council for 2018-19 remain at 20% of the Vale of White Horse District Council, consistent with previous years;*
- (ii) *In accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended), section 26 (1), members may claim travel and subsistence for travel outside the parish, and any such claims shall be authorised by the Town Clerk, in consultation with the RFO, and considered on a case by case basis;*
- (iii) *In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, sections 15 (5) and 34) (5), a Mayor's Allowance be awarded for 2018-19 in the sum of £3,270.*

F57 **Civic Matters**

The Committee received and considered the confidential report of the Town Clerk. See the confidential appendix to these minutes.

After discussing the report, the Committee decided to discuss this further at the next full council meeting.

The meeting rose at 8:15 pm.

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Chairman

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Date