

**Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on**  
**Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at 8:00pm**

*Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this meeting was held online in accordance with The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (“the 2020 Regulations”)*

**Present**

Cllr Samantha Bowring	Chair
Cllr Jim Halliday	Vice-Chair and Chair of Amenities & Recreation Committee
Cllr Gabby Barody	
Cllr Charlie Birks	Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames (ex-officio)
Cllr Margaret Crick	Chair of Guildhall Committee
Cllr Eric de la Harpe	
Cllr Neil Fawcett	Chair of Community Services Committee
Cllr Andy Foulsham	
Cllr Pat Lonergan	Chair of County Hall Museum Management Committee

**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)

**SECTION I (Open to the Public Including the Press)**

*Prior to the start of the official business, Cllr Samantha Bowring led a minute’s silence to allow quiet reflection and remembrance of Cllr Jeanette Halliday who had passed away since the previous meeting of this committee.*

F1 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Ulrike Rowbottom.

F2 **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

F3 **Minutes**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, held on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020.

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

F4 **Matters arising**

There were no matters arising not already covered in the agenda.

F5 **Committee Membership**

The committee received and noted the report of the Town Clerk, which informed members of the changes to the regulations, allowing the annual meeting to be postponed until May 2021. It was noted that membership of all committees is determined by the Council and so the current membership will continue until the Council resolve any changes.

F6 **Statements and Questions from the public**

There no questions or statements from the public.

F7 **Matters referred from Guildhall Committee of 21<sup>st</sup> May 2020**

All matters referred were considered in the confidential section of the meeting, due to the sensitive and commercial nature. See minute F19.

F8 **Annual Town (Parish) Meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

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

Cllr Samantha Bowring informed members that a report of the answers to the questions asked by members of the public at the parish meeting will be published on the council's website. Cllr Bowring asked members to particularly consider the questions asked which are relevant to the committees on which they sit.

Members noted the report.

F9 **Coronavirus – COVID19**

The Town Clerk gave a brief verbal update on the current working arrangements of the council staff and the running of its services. It was noted that a more detailed report would be presented at the next Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

F10 **Finance Report**

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

The committee considered the management accounts for both this committee, and the Full Council. It was proposed by Cllr Samantha Bowring, seconded by Cllr Jim Halliday and **resolved** that the management accounts for 2019-20 be approved.

Regarding the 2020-21 management accounts, Cllr Jim Halliday requested that an explanation of the negative entries in the year to date column of the appendix be included in these minutes. The Treasurer confirmed that these entries are an accounting adjustment and relate to income / invoices not yet received for the previous financial year 2019-20. Once the income / invoices are received and entered in the accounts these negative entries will be offset and will show as zero. This ensures that the accounts are reported on an income and expenditure basis for the correct year, rather than a receipts (cash) basis. This is standard accounting convention for town councils.

It was proposed by Cllr Bowring, seconded by Cllr Halliday and **resolved** that the management accounts for 2020-21 year to date be approved.

Members then considered the request to obtain a company credit card. It was proposed by Cllr Bowring, seconded by Cllr Halliday, and **resolved** that a credit card be applied for, in line with the conditions set out in the Treasurer's report.

The committee considered the list of payments made in March and April 2020 and noted the change in payment method to electronic payments for all transactions, rather than the use of cheque (due to the current home working arrangements / Covid-19 pandemic). It was proposed by Cllr Bowring, seconded by Cllr Halliday, and **resolved** that the list of payments be approved.

With regards to the apportionment of central staff time (presented in Appendix F), Cllr Halliday asked how much time the recording was taking. The Treasurer explained that on a day-to-day basis, the time for all officers was minimal, and that she now had a record keeping system set up which enabled summary reports to be produced quickly.

It was **resolved** that the report of the Treasurer / RFO be approved.

F11 **Calendar of Meetings 2020-21 and Council / Committee Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation**

The committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk. It was noted that the draft calendar of meetings would be presented to the next meeting of Full Council, to be approved. Cllr Samantha Bowring explained that the calendar included two additional meeting cycles than in previous years. It was agreed that the additional meetings may not be required by all committees, but it was better to include the dates in the diary rather than struggle to agree additional dates later in the year.

Cllr Bowring requested that members should review the draft calendar and contact the Town Clerk and his PA if they have any concerns or clashes.

The Town Clerk had circulated the Council and Committee Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation, which he had reviewed. Members considered the document and the proposed changes. The document would be circulated with the Council agenda for approval at the next Council meeting.

F12 **Police Community Support Officer funding**

The committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk. The report detailed the role of the PCSOs in the Town, and partnership working previously identified and considered by the other committees. It was stated that the level of funding of the town centre PCSO by the Council was significant and members agreed that closer working should be encouraged if possible. Cllr Bowring suggested that a letter be sent to the PCSOs detailing the findings of the other committees and the questions asked by the public at the Annual Meeting (min F8). A response from the PCSOs would be sought, with the aim being to identify more ways of joint working. This was agreed.

F13 **Neighbourhood Development Plan**

The committee received and noted report of the Town Clerk which outlined progress made.

F14 **Environmental implications**

No matters not already discussed at other items in the agenda were identified.

F15 **Publicity**

Members recognised the efforts of the various community groups who have been helping residents during the Covid-19 pandemic. Cllr Neil Fawcett shared with the committee the proposed article in the next Town Crier magazine which outlines many of the new initiatives which have been set up in the town.

No other items of publicity were suggested.

F16 **Dates of meetings**

The committee noted the date of the next meeting as Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

F17 **Exclusion of the public, including the press**

It was 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.

F18 **Confidential appendix to the minutes**

The committee received and considered the confidential appendix to the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee of 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020.

It was **resolved** that the confidential appendix was a correct record and should be signed by the chair.

F19 **Matters referred from Guildhall Committee of 21<sup>st</sup> May 2020**

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

*See the confidential appendix to these minutes.*

The meeting rose at 9:01pm.

Chair.....

Date.....