

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

Draft minutes of the Guildhall Committee held on
Thursday 30th May 2018 at 7:00pm
In the Roysse Room, Guildhall, Abingdon

Present:

Cllr Margaret Crick	Chair
Cllr Grace Clifton	Vice Chair
Cllr Charlie Birks	Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames
Cllr Samantha Bowring	

In Attendance

Mrs Jo Blackmore	Administrator (Clerk to the meeting)
Mr Jonathan Longden	Leys Longden
Mr Nigel Warner	Town Clerk

G5 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Neil Fawcett

G6 Declarations of Interest

None.

G7 Minutes

Members received and considered the minutes of the meeting of the Guildhall Committee of 4th March 2019.

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting of the Guildhall Committee of 4th March 2019 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

G8 Matters arising

None.

G9 Public participation

None.

G10 **Terms of Reference**

Members received and considered the Terms of Reference. The Committee felt that consideration should be given to transferring responsibility for the Abbey Hall back to the Guildhall Committee.

G11 **Financial report**

Members received and considered the report of the Treasurer/ Responsible Finance Officer in relation to the Guildhall.

- **Royse Room**

Consideration was given to whether art work from local A-level students could be displayed in the Guildhall and specifically the Royse Room. It was **resolved** that this be raised with the Abbey Cinema as they manage and operate the Guildhall.

- **End of Term Dinner**

The issues in relation to this matter were discussed. The Town Clerk reported that this had been discussed with the Abbey Cinema and he considered that they had addressed matters. A Member reported that the Twin Towns Society has recently had a dinner in the Guildhall and had been very complementary on the meal and the service.

- **Information Centre**

A Member raised the issue of the Information Centre which currently was situated on the first floor of the County Hall Museum and so was inaccessible to anyone who could not get up stairs. It was felt that the Information Centre should be moved to a more accessible location with the suggestion that the ground floor of Royse Court should be considered.

The meeting was informed that the Information Centre was the responsibility of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and therefore the matter would be placed on the next agenda of that Committee.

Exclusion of the public, including the press

The Chair 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.

Jonathan Longden left the meeting at this point it being 7.20pm.

See confidential appendix to the minutes.

Readmittance of the public, including the press

Jonathan Longden re-entered the meeting, it being 7.25pm.

Resolved: that the report of the Treasurer/ Responsible Finance Officer in relation to the Guildhall be approved.

G12 **Guildhall Development**

Members received and considered the notes of the meeting of the Guildhall Development Working Group which took place on 26th April 2019.

Resolved: that the notes of the meeting of the Guildhall Development Working Group of the 26th April 2019 be approved.

Matters arising

Lighting Issues - High Level Flood Lighting

The replacement of the wiring had already been agreed. The meeting is asked considered whether to replace of the current flood lights with white LED ones similar to those installed in the Bridge Street area. The additional cost was estimated at £840.

Resolved to replace the floodlights. The meeting also requested that consideration be given to installing photosensitive lights which could override manual timers.

Additional Contract Preliminaries

The Guildhall Working Group had already agreed this following consideration by the external quantity surveyor Peter Turvey of PT Projects, who had strongly recommended that the Council agree these.

Toilets

The previous Guildhall Working Group recommended that the new Guildhall Committee monitor the cleaning particularly the new toilets. The meeting was informed that the Abbey Hall toilets would be opening soon so the usage of the new toilets should reduce.

Members received and considered the report of the Town Clerk, as circulated with the agenda.

General Update on Guildhall Development Project

The Town Clerk reported that the Guildhall Project, which incorporated the works to the historic rooms (including the Old Magistrates' Court), Roysse Court Gardens, Roysse Court Offices and the Abbey Hall, has been a long and complex project for the Council. The project had worked through various proposals from 2011 onwards until works on the ground commenced in January 2018. There had been a significant change to the scope of works as the project proceeded, including the Council's decision which was made in April 2018 to undertake works to enable a cinema to open at the Abbey Hall.

Whilst the current Guildhall Project was nearing complete there will, over the coming years, there would be significant additional improvement works, repair and maintenance required. Having due regard to the size of the building, the age of many of its services and the works which have been undertaken in the last year, which despite the increase in scope remain limited in terms of overall scope, it should not be considered that the Guildhall Project was "done".

The Town Clerk stated that the Guildhall project had, since 2011, been the Council's major project and has been very consuming of both councillors and staff resource. In terms of what had been achieved it is important to consider what had been undertaken over the last 18 months. The best document which detailed this was the financial update which had been presented to the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee in March 2019, and this had been circulated with the report for this evening's meeting.

There were a number of items which are due to be completed this year, these including:

- the installation of a new modern and up to date treasures cabinet in the Roysse Room.
- the fit-out of the new muniment room, once the drying out process is complete.

Ongoing points

Water Fountain: Listed and building permission has been granted. Reserved matters pending, including in relation to samples of stone.

Audio Visual Equipment for the Guildhall: The Committee **endorsed** the delegation agreed previously that following receipt of quotes authority be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Guildhall Committee and the Mayor to select the equipment supplier and place the order.

The Committee toured the building at this point to look at the access issues in relation to the Guildhall and the Abbey Hall.

Access

The Committee considered the proposals from Leys Longden in relation to access in the building, as detailed in their letter of 23rd May 2019.

Resolved: to instruct Peter Turvey (Quantity Surveyor, PT Projects) to provide costings for the various options detailed in the above letter, for consideration at a future meeting of the committee.

Current lift passenger lift to Abbey Hall and car park area

Members considered that access required improvement and requested a costing for resurfacing of shared access pavement/road to the east of the Abbey Hall and part the carpark, to include drainage works. Members felt that signage to the lift needed to be improved. The Town Clerk would discuss this with the Abbey Cinema. The works team would be requested to tidy up the area in order to improve the look, including weeding.

In relation to the car park, proposals were requested to be brought forward for the parking of bicycles and for consideration of the most efficient layout for parking of vehicles.

Wheelchair platform lift

It was agreed that the Council should request a cost for installing a chair lift from the Abbey Hall lobby up to the Abbey Hall itself.

(Cllr Samantha Bowring left the meeting during discussion of this item, it being 8.15pm).

G13 **Management and operation of the Guildhall**

It was reported that Sue and Ian Wiper of the Abbey Cinema, who were managing the Guildhall, were unable to attend the meeting and therefore it was agreed that a separate meeting should be held for committee members to meet them.

G14 **Exclusion of the public, including the press**

The Chair 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.

G15 Guildhall Development

Members received and considered the confidential appendix to the notes of the meeting of the Guildhall Development Working Group which took place on 26th April 2019.

Resolved: that the confidential appendix to the notes of the meeting of the Guildhall Development Working Group of the 26th April 2019 be approved.

Members received and considered the confidential report of the Town Clerk in relation to the above.

Ongoing building priorities

It was noted that whilst the Council had undertaken significant works, these have been limited in scope (see above) and there is now a need to inspect the whole of the buildings, both internally and externally, setting out the principal issues and producing a costed plan and maintenance report. This will identify the priorities for ongoing development, maintenance and repair and assist with budgeting for future years.

- i. It was proposed by Cllr Grace Clifton, seconded by Cllr Charlie Birks and **resolved** that the building survey, including the survey of the roofs, be approved as detailed in the report of the Town Clerk. The survey to be undertaken by Leys Longden.
- ii. It was proposed by Cllr Grace Clifton, seconded by Cllr Charlie Birks and **resolved** that: the electrical and mechanical / plumbing survey be approved as detailed in the report of the Town Clerk. The survey to be undertaken by Ridge and Partners.
- iii. It was proposed by Cllr Charlie Birks, seconded by Cllr Margaret Crick and **resolved** that a survey is commissioned to ascertain the works required to upgrade the lift in the Abbey Hall to be suitable for use in a fire be approved. The survey to be undertaken by Ridge and Partners.

Use of Old Magistrates Court as part-time cinema screen

The Town Clerk was requested to discuss matters further with the Abbey Cinema.

The meeting rose at 9:15 pm.