

Minutes of a meeting of the **Finance, Administration and Personnel Committee** of Buckingham Town Council held on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2009. in Room MB1 in the Masons Building, University of Buckingham, Hunter Street, Buckingham at 7pm.

**Present:** Cllr. R. Lehmann - Chairman  
Cllr. H. Cadd - Mayor  
Cllr. Mrs. G. Collins  
Cllr. P. Collins  
Cllr. Mrs P. Desorgher  
Cllr. P. Hiron  
Cllr. D. Isham  
Cllr. Ms R. Newell  
Cllr. M. Smith  
Cllr. R. Stuchbury  
Cllr. M. Try  
Cllr. W. Whyte

**Also present:** Christopher Wayman – Deputy Town Clerk

### **309/09 Apologies for Absence**

**RESOLVED** to receive apologies from Cllr. Mrs P. Stevens and Cllr. Mordue

### **310/09 Declarations of Interest**

**RESOLVED** to note that there were no declarations of any personal or prejudicial interest under consideration on this agenda.

### **311/09 Minutes**

**RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Finance and Administration Committee meeting held on Monday 15th June 2009 subject to the changes made at Full Council.

Members also asked in future that the top sheet of all minutes be printed in the Committee's appropriate colour.

### **312/09 Action Report**

**RESOLVED** to receive the report and note the updated information.

Members queried as to why the action list stated that three actions listed would be considered at the next meeting when none of them had appeared on the agenda.

437.6 Cllr. Newell had received details of stress policies of other Councils from the Town Clerk, however, she had been on holiday and had not had time to consider them.

454 Members felt that our current policies could be incorporated into the SLCC staff handbook and that that would be an appropriate place to start from.

481 **RESOLVED** that another letter be sent to BCC regarding the Baby Café and if no reply is received then a letter should be sent to the Chairman on the County Council.

### **313/09 Status of the Chairman's Committee**

Members discussed how often the Chairman's Committee met, which was very rarely. Councillors discussed if therefore there was a need for this Committee or if it would be best if specific groups of Councillors were created to discuss or make decisions when needed for specific matters.

Proposed by Cllr. Smith, seconded by Cllr. Newell and **RESOLVED** to dissolve the Chairman's Committee by 8 votes to 2.

*Cllr. Try arrived at the meeting*

### **314/09 Accounts and Budgets**

Members discussed the accounts and highlighted problems with the following budgets:

102/4010 Stationery – Members were concerned that although the stationery budget was increased at the last precept we had already used over 90% of the budget this year.

120/4070 Section 137 Grant – Members enquired as to why the budget was overspent as this had been agreed at Precept. [Deputy Clerk's note: The £3,000 overspend had been listed under the wrong budget heading].

Members were concerned about the number of headings which were duplicated and under two different committee headings.

Some members were concerned that these figures did not include virements made by committees which had been ratified by the Full Council.

Members discussed what constituted committed expenditure; the current figures only included orders raised.

**RESOLVED** that committed expenditure should also include other headings such as rates, rent etc. which the Council knows that it will have to spend this year and is committed to.

### **315/09 Invoices passed for payment**

Councillors were unhappy with the information contained in the "Transaction Details" heading - there needs to be a fuller breakdown and explanation on what has actually been purchased.

Members were concerned that a large number of these invoices had not yet been coded to the appropriate account code.

Members were worried that it appeared that some expenditure had not been discussed and passed by Committees.

Members were very concerned that it appeared on one invoice that the financial regulations have not been followed as it appears the invoice was over £500 and three quotes were not obtained.

Members were worried that some money was paid to Councillors where the correct procedure should be for the Councillor to ask the company to invoice the Town Council, this way the Council would be able to reclaim the VAT.

**RESOLVED** that an item be placed on future agendas which will include approving accounts for payment.

### **316/09 Lloyds TSB Business Charge Card**

Members discussed in great detail if there was a need for a Charge Card and if it was in fact legal. Members were worried by potential misuse and felt a strict protocol for usage would have to be produced, including upper limits on the card and on individual purchases. Members were also concerned about VAT and wanted to ensure that VAT would still be recoverable, a charge being levied on cash withdrawals.

**RESOLVED** to contact NALC/BALC seeking guidance on obtaining a Charge Card and to contact Lloyds to see if they have guidance for Parish/Town Council use of the Charge Card.

**RESOLVED** that following guidance a protocol is drawn up for the Card's use.

### **317/09 Quarterly Accountant Visits**

Members were concerned that they were being asked to discuss an expenditure which had not been budgeted for and which would cost above £1,400 a year. Members wanted clarification on what help we currently receive from RBS Account Solutions and some expressed concern about the lack of accounts qualifications shown on their website. Some Members felt that the Town Clerk should be able to look at the accounts quarterly and spot any problems.

Members felt that there should be a fuller detailed report as this was for an un-budgeted expense.

**RESOLVED** that advice should be sought from the Audit Commission as to what the requirements or qualifications are needed for companies reviewing the accounts and that a yearly check of the accounts software system should be done, with the Town Clerk providing a further more detailed report for the next meeting

### **318/09 Petty Cash**

Members noted that the Financial Regulations allowed for a petty cash float of £250.

### **319/09 Computers**

Cllr. Try informed Members of the history of the office computer systems. Members discussed the requirements of a health-check and whether it should be undertaken or if a whole new computer system should be purchased.

**RESOLVED** that Cllr. Try with the help of the Deputy Town Clerk draw up a specification for the health-check which would then be circulated to Members for agreement.

### **320/09 Members and staff events**

Councillors discussed the idea of a vision event and some Members felt the focus should be more on business planning and implementation of the vision and ideas. Different possible ideas for the event were discussed including having a independent person to Chair/facilitate the meeting as the Town Clerk should be taking part.

**RESOLVED** to conduct the Accounts Training on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October.

**RESOLVED** that a vision event be held on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> September with a working group consisting of Cllrs. Hirons, Lehmann, Stuchbury, and Whyte with the Town Clerk meeting to discuss ideas and to set an agenda.

### **321/09 Cemetery Lodge**

Members discussed if a regular service was needed or if one should take place if the building is being used on a permanent basis. Some Members were concerned that this was a domestic service and that the service may not be the same for the Town Council or that the cost may increase as it is a public building.

Proposed by Cllr. Cadd, seconded by Cllr. Isham, that the Town Council should enter the E-on boiler service scheme.

An amendment was proposed by Cllr. Smith, seconded by Cllr. Stuchbury, and **RESOLVED** by 8 votes to 1 that as the service from E-on was domestic that a local company should be contacted to provide costs for an annual service of the boiler.

This then became the substantive motion and was passed by 9 votes to 0.

### **322/09 Buckingham Partnership**

Members noted the information circulated with the agenda.

**323/09 Publication of Report – Local Authority Investments**

**RESOLVED** that a report should be prepared for the next meeting to detail possible uses of this information and how the Town Council should proceed with investments.

**324/09 Items for Note**

Due to the increase of agendas and paperwork it was **RESOLVED** that information that is “to note” should be provided in the Town Clerk’s fortnightly emails to all Councillors. Any Councillor could then ask for it to be placed on an agenda if it was deemed important enough.

**325/09 Chairman’s Announcements**

There were no Chairman’s Announcements at this meeting.

**326/09 Date of Next Meeting:** Monday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2009

**COMMITTEE IN PRIVATE SESSION**

**327/09 Exclusion of Public and Press**

**RESOLVED** In terms of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, the following items will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and it is, therefore, **RESOLVED** that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

Signed ..... Date .....