

Minutes of the meeting of the **Finance, Administration and Personnel Committee** of Buckingham Town Council held on **Monday 1st August 2011** in the Town Council Chamber, Cornwall's Meadow, Buckingham at 7pm.

Present: Cllr. T. Bloomfield
Cllr. Mrs. G. Collins (Chairman)
Cllr. P. Collins
Cllr. J. Harvey
Cllr. P. Hirons
Cllr. D. Isham
Cllr. R. Lehmann
Cllr. H. Mordue
Cllr. Ms. R. Newell
Cllr. Mrs. L. O'Donoghue
Cllr. M. Smith
Cllr. R. Stuchbury
Cllr. M. Try

Also in attendance: Mrs. A. Simonds Deputy Town Clerk
Liz Campbell Committee Clerk

249/11 Apologies for Absence
There were no apologies received.

250/11 Declarations of Interest
There were no declarations of interest at this point.

251/11 Minutes
RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the Finance, Administration and Personnel Committee meeting held on Monday 13th June 2011 and ratified at Full Council on 27th June 2011.

252/11 Action Report
Members noted the Action Report.
139/10 Cllr. Smith asked that a meeting of the Computer Working Party be arranged in the near future, and Cllr. Try offered to assist the Town Clerk in drawing up a protocol for information on the website. **ACTION TOWN CLERK**
772/10 Cllr. Harvey asked that the Town Clerk formulate a draft policy on permitted allowable expenses for members. **ACTION TOWN CLERK**
437.6 Cllr. Newell, who had previously worked in human resources, offered to assist the Town Clerk with drafting a confidential information policy. **ACTION TOWN CLERK**

253/11 Accounts and Budgets
Cllr. Bloomfield asked the Town Clerk to check the Community Centre budgets to ensure that all monies were listed under the correct budget code. **ACTION TOWN CLERK**

Cllr. Stuchbury requested clarification regarding the lack of a specific budget line for the Charter Fair. He was concerned that this prevented the Town Council from keeping a track of the income and expenditure associated with this event.

ACTION TOWN CLERK

Cllr. Hirons noted that AVDC had not yet invoiced the Town Council for the costs of the elections last May. He also asked for clarification about the Town Council's postage costs, as the relevant budget line (4011/102) appeared to show that no postage costs had been incurred this financial year.

ACTION TOWN CLERK

254/11 Invoices passed for payment, Income and details of Councillors' Expenses
These were noted.

255/11 Motion from Cllr. Harvey

Cllr. Harvey proposed the following motion, which was seconded by Cllr. Newell:
"As part of the Council's ongoing commitment to do all it can to end all forms of discrimination in Buckingham, and whilst acknowledging that the word 'Chairman' is used within English law to denote people who chair the whole council, committees and sub-committees, we resolve that these office holders are entitled to choose to be referred to as Chair (or other suitable title) in all minutes, press releases, external communication and correspondence, on the understanding that such a term is the equivalent to the statutory term in usage in Acts of Parliament etc."

Cllr. P. Collins proposed the following amendment, which was seconded by Cllr. Lehmann:

"That this Council continues with the status quo and adopts a standardised form of address for all committee chairmen, rather than allowing individual members to choose."

The amendment was **REJECTED**, with 2 votes in favour, 9 against.

Cllr Harvey's motion was **AGREED** with 7 votes in favour, 4 against. Cllr. Isham asked for his abstention on both the amendment and the substantive motion to be formally recorded.

ACTION TOWN CLERK

256/11 Email signatures

Members reviewed the examples of email signatures that had been previously circulated. Members discussed whether it was appropriate for town councillors to include the Town Council crest and office details on correspondence with constituents, and differing views were expressed. Cllrs Mordue and Stuchbury, who were also district councillors, confirmed that they had been provided with AVDC headed paper for their own use. Cllr. Smith proposed the following motion, seconded by Cllr. Harvey:

"That the Town Clerk drafts a policy regarding written and electronic communication by councillors and brings it back to the next meeting."

The motion was **AGREED** with 7 votes in favour and 5 against.

ACTION TOWN CLERK

257/11 Town Council Officers' seating at committee meetings

It was **AGREED** that Town Council officers attending meetings would be invited to sit at the table where it was practically possible.

258/11 Payback of Public Works Board Loan

Members considered the report on repayment options that had been previously circulated. Cllr. Harvey proposed, seconded by Cllr. P. Collins, the following motion: "That the Town Council does not pay off the loan early and continues with its current repayment schedule."

The motion was **AGREED**, with 11 votes in favour and 1 against.

259/11 Town Council bank accounts

Members **AGREED** to the recommendation in the Town Clerk's report, which had been previously circulated, that the following bank accounts be closed and that the monies and related transactions moved to the Town Council's current account: Circular Walk Account; Cemetery Lodge Account; Deposit 30 Day Account; Capital Reserve Account; Section 106 Account.

260/11 Work experience placements

Members discussed the benefits and pitfalls of offering work experience placements at the Town Council. Cllr. Stuchbury proposed the following motion, which was seconded by Cllr. Hirons:

"That the decision to offer work experience placements should be left to the Town Clerk, subject to the needs of the office."

The motion was **AGREED**, with 7 votes in favour and 5 votes against.

ACTION TOWN CLERK

261/11 Internal Audit

The report from the Town Council's internal auditors was noted. There were no recommendations.

262/11 Changes to Lloyds Bank safe custody service

Members noted the letter from Lloyds Bank informing them that the Buckingham branch of the bank would no longer offer secure storage for the Town Council mace, but that storage could be offered by a specialist firm, located outside Buckingham, which would charge £20 each way for transporting the mace. Members noted that the mace was currently retrieved from safe storage on a regular basis for civic events, and that therefore the proposed charges to the Town Council would be significant.

Cllr. Lehmann proposed the following motion, seconded by Cllr. P. Collins and **AGREED** :

"That the Town Council accepts the new storage arrangements as an interim measure but actively seeks to find a cost effective but secure alternative."

ACTION TOWN CLERK

Cllr Lehmann left the chamber.

263/11 Financial Matters

Financial Risk Assessment and Financial Regulations.

Members discussed the draft documents from the Town Clerk, which had been previously circulated. They were generally in agreement that this was a comprehensive and useful document, but Cllrs Smith, Try and Hirons raised some minor corrections that they wished to discuss with the Town Clerk.

It was **AGREED** that the Town Clerk would liaise with councillors and bring a revised draft back to the next meeting. **ACTION TOWN CLERK**

264/11 Action Plan

Members noted the updated action plan that had originally been discussed by the committee on February 15th 2011. Cllr. Harvey commented that there was no column estimating the staff time that would be consumed by each task. Councillors **AGREED** that the Town Clerk would provide a quarterly update on progress with the Action Plan. **ACTION TOWN CLERK**

265/11 Chairman's Items

There were no Chairman's items.

266/11 Date of Next Meeting: Monday 19th September 2011

Meeting closed at: 8.39pm

Signed.....

Date.....