

Minutes of a meeting of the **Finance, Administration and Personnel Committee** of Buckingham Town Council held on **Monday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2011** in the Council Chamber, Cornwalls Meadow, Buckingham at 7pm.

**Present:** Cllr. P. Collins  
 Cllr. J. Harvey  
 Cllr. P. Hirons  
 Cllr. D. Isham  
 Cllr. R. Lehmann (from Min. 625 as indicated)  
 Cllr. H. Mordue (from Min. 633)  
 Cllr. Ms. R. Newell  
 Cllr. Mrs. L. O'Donoghue  
 Cllr. M. Smith Mayor  
 Cllr. R. Stuchbury  
 Cllr. M. Try (from Min. 625)

**Invited Guests** Mr. P. Colling Operations Director, Tourism South East  
 Ms. T. O'Kelly Head of Visitor Services Team, Tourism SE

**Also present** Mr. C. Wayman Town Clerk

**Minute Taker** Mrs. K. McElligott

*In the absence of the Chairman and Vice Chairman, Cllr. P. Collins was selected to chair the meeting.*

#### **623/11 Apologies for Absence**

**RESOLVED** to receive apologies from Cllrs. T. Bloomfield, T. Chan and Mrs. G. Collins (Chairman); Cllr. H. Mordue for late arrival.

#### **624/11 Declarations of Interest**

The Mayor declared an interest in the next item as a Trustee of the Old Gaol. Various Members declared interests when discussing Grants (Min.633) as listed at the appropriate point.

*Proposed by Cllr. Collins, seconded by Cllr. Isham and **AGREED** that Standing Orders be suspended to allow the guests to address the meeting.*

#### **625/11 Tourism South East**

625.1 Presentation from Tourism South East regarding the Tourist Information Centre.

Mr. Colling thanked the Town Council for its support in the smooth transition to TSE, and outlined the changes in Government attitude to the tourism industry and funding.

*Cllr. Lehmann arrived.*

Regional funding was being withdrawn and the delivery of tourism services devolved to District and Town Councils. Visit England was working to boost Visitor Information services; it was estimated that for every £1 spent on information centres, £3 was generated in the local economy. Buckingham's had the advantage of being housed in a focal point of the town, with the Museum and community facilities, and was working to support local producers and business start-ups.

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Initial.....

Ms. O'Kelly reported that in the six months since they had taken over, the retained staff had been given training in various aspects of the business, and casual cover staff had been taken on. The limited interior space had been reworked to make it more welcoming and maximise the retail space; IT equipment had been bought and training given so that administration work was minimised, and the duty staff could give more attention to enquirers. The name had been changed to Visitor Information Centre and new signage installed.

Visitor figures (personal and by correspondence) had risen 12% over last year's high total.

Publicity concentrated on event and activity advertising in the free booklets such as MK18, Council Newsletters, the *Advertiser*, Visit Buckingham website and the Traders' Association Facebook page. A flyer had been produced, and this had been placed in local shops and businesses, and was being included in the University's fact pack for new students. Cllr. O'Donoghue asked for some for the Youth Centre.

The gift shop was carrying locally produced pottery and honey, candles, cards, etc. and some national tourist gift items supplied by TSE. They hoped to expand this aspect.

They supported the Traders' Association's Christmas Spectacular on 4<sup>th</sup> December, and were helping produce their visitor map.

The Centre also acted as a Box Office, selling West End Theatre token vouchers, National Express tickets, and tickets for local events. Payments for these went through the till, and this professional attitude inspired confidence in users.

The aim was to "manage" the visitor; rather than just hand out leaflets, visitors (and enquirers by phone and email), with advice on accommodation and reasons to extend a stay.

#### *Cllr. Try arrived*

The next project was to concentrate on available accommodation in and around the town, and promote events and competitions, working with the schools, perhaps a photo calendar; linking to national events promoted by English Tourism such as St. George's Day and the Jubilee. The small staff was limiting, but with one in the Centre, the other could perhaps do talks to organisations in the area promoting the Service.

Members asked if TSE was working with AVDC to promote tourism in the Vale; the Town Council was funding the Visitor Centre for the time being, but it was a District remit and funding should be available District-wide. Mr. Collings said they were persevering, but the future was unclear. They were emphasising the fact that tourism was the one area of the economy creating jobs.

It was unfortunate that the opening of the new Visitor Centre at Stowe had been delayed, but they looked to work with Silverstone (perhaps to the unenthusiastic families of motorsport fans), Stowe and Bicester Village to promote other local destinations. Much had been achieved in the six months so far, but much more needed to be done.

Asked whether the Visitor Centre would be able to take credit/debit card payments, Ms. O'Kelly said the monthly charge precluded this at present, but it was being considered.

The visitors were thanked for attending and left the meeting.

*Proposed by Cllr. Collins, seconded by Cllr. Smith, and **AGREED** that Standing Orders be reinstated.*

625.2 June - November visitor figures for the Tourist Information Centre.

Noted.

#### **626/11 Minutes**

**RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Finance, Administration and Personnel Committee meeting held on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2011 ratified at Full Council on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2011.

#### **627/11 Minutes of the Communication Strategy Group**

To receive the minutes of the meetings of the Communications Strategy Group meeting held on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> October and agree any recommendations therein.

##### **481/11 Facebook & Twitter**

Members **RECOMMENDED** that the previously **AGREED** Facebook usage policy be adopted.

Members **RECOMMENDED** that the Town Council creates a Facebook page and that a Twitter account is agreed in principle with the group further investigating.

**AGREED**

##### **482/11 Youth Centre – Leaflet Distribution**

Members discussed and considered whether the Youth Club members could deliver the Town Council leaflets. Members **RECOMMEND** to decline this offer based on past experience, reliability & cost. Prices & quotes are to be sourced from distribution companies for the future newsletters based on four deliveries per year.

**AGREED**

#### **628/11 Minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee**

To receive the minutes of the meetings of the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting held on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December and agree any recommendations therein.

##### **566/11 Trade Union Recognition**

c) That this Sub-Committee make a recommendation to FA&P as follows:

This Sub-Committee **RECOMMENDS** to the Finance, Administration & Personnel Committee that points 5.7, 6 (apart from 6.6) and 8.1-3 in respect to any Trade Union where they have a member of staff as part of the union requests these facilities.

The Minutes had been circulated at the meeting; Members felt this gave inadequate time to read and digest them, and would have liked details of the clauses listed.

**RESOLVED** to refer the Recommendation to Full Council, and that the Town Clerk supply the requested information with the agenda.

#### **629/11 Action Report**

Members noted the Action Report.

Cllr. Harvey asked about the when the publication of Members' interests on the web site agreed at Full Council would be carried out; Cllr. Try said this was in hand.

The Town Clerk reported that a new DCLG document on transparency had been received since the agenda was published, and several other items such as salary bands, contracts and grants would need to be added.

Members felt that the interests should be added immediately, as agreed; the other, national, items later.

**ACTION TOWN CLERK/CLLR. TRY**

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Initial.....

**630/11 Accounts and Budgets**

Noted.

**631/11 Invoices passed for payment, income received and details of Councillor's Expenses**

Noted.

**632/11 (513/11) 2012 Council Meeting Calendar**

Members had asked for fewer gaps in April and more in August.

The Town Clerk explained that the Annual Statutory Meeting must be held in May, and a Full Council towards the end of June was also required, to sign off the accounts. These constraints caused the irregular meeting schedule in April.

It was **AGREED** to move the Annual Statutory Meeting/Full Council forward to Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> May (Monday 7<sup>th</sup> being a Bank Holiday), Planning to 14<sup>th</sup> May, TC&E to 21<sup>st</sup> May and E&P to 28<sup>th</sup> May and leave the remaining meetings as listed.

**633/11 Grant Applications**

*Members took 11.2 next:*

633.1 To decide whether to discuss the following applications which were received after the deadline for grant applications:

- Well Street Church on behalf of Buckingham Churches' Children's Holiday Club
- North Bucks Carers Support Group
- Fibromyalgia Support Group

Proposed by Cllr. Smith, seconded by Cllr. Newell, and **AGREED** to consider these applications with the others.

633.2 To discuss the grant applications received by the Town Council and make a recommendation to the Precept meeting.

Members declared interests as noted.

The following amounts were **RECOMMENDED**:

1	AV Dial-a-Ride	£500	
2	Buckingham Canal Society	£100	MS: Member of Society
3	Buckingham Summer Festival	£1000	
4	Buck.& Winslow CAB	£5000	MS: Trustee
5	Buckingham Youth Clubs Ltd.	£5000	
6	Grenville Combined School	0	
7	Friends of Grenville School	£375	
8	Maids Moreton Avenue Conservation Group	£200	
9	Maids Moreton Pre-School Playgroup	£105	
10	North Bucks Young Carers	£445.50	
11	Friends of the Old Gaol Museum	0	MS: Trustee of the Old Gaol
12	Project Street Life	£375	
13	Swan Community Hub	£200	HM: Member of the group
14	Relate Mid-Thames & Bucks	£250	

15	Vitalise	0	
16	Festival of Music & Drama	£200	MS: supporter of the group
17	Thames & Chiltern Air Ambulance	£500	
18	Buck. Town Cricket Club	0	
19	Buck.& Dist. Horticultural Society	£50	
20	Buckingham Transition	£200	RN: Member of the organisation
21	Stowe Sub-Aqua Club	£800	
22	Buckingham Centre for the Arts	£2000	PH: Volunteer
23	Church Holiday Club	£500	
24	North Bucks Carers	0	
25	Fibromyalgia Support Group	£200	
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£18,000.50</b>	

It was agreed to place an item on the February agenda to review the information required on grant application forms, and the grant application process.

### FEBRUARY AGENDA

*Cllr. Isham left the meeting.*

633.3 Long term grant funding to organisations; agree any action

Members felt that, in order to agree to renewal of the long-term funding agreements for The Film Place and the Old Gaol, the organisations should be asked to provide a formal application with a business plan. Their financial situations could well have changed over the last three years, and some evidence of benefit from the grant should be demonstrated. Should the timescale (the Precept meeting is on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2012) be too short to allow the information to be made available before the meeting, Members were willing to allow for the continuation of the funding providing the information was brought to the Committee before payment in May.

### ACTION TOWN CLERK

#### 634/11 Chamber Hiring

The Buckingham Economic Group had made a request for use of the Chamber for its quarterly meetings without fee as the Group had no funding.

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Mordue, and **AGREED** by a majority that the Economic Group could use the Chamber free of charge.

*Proposed by Cllr. Collins, seconded by Cllr. Lehmann, and **AGREED** that Item 15: Precept be taken next, and the remainder of the agenda as time allowed. Members added that Item 21: Staffing Report should be taken first, as any resulting changes would reflect on the Precept amount requested.*

#### 635/11 Staffing Report

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Newell, and **AGREED** unanimously that the Town Clerk's Recommendation in the Staffing Report be accepted.

**636/11 Precept**

636.1 To agree the Committee Recommendations to the Precept Meeting.

636.2 To receive a report on the budgeting of staff costs and to agree any action  
Members discussed the recommendations in the report, the Town Clerk explaining and answering questions as necessary.

102/4013 Equipment Purchase should have a sum allocated in case of need.

102/4032 Publicity: it was decided not to increase the budget from £8000.

103/4020 & 4044 Mayor's Allowance and Councillor Mileage/Expenses: Information was still awaited on the matter of an allowance for the Deputy Mayor. The Mayor's Allowance was to be split into Events (Civic Service; Reception) and Allowance (which would be taxed). Members **AGREED** to change the title to Mayoral Duties, keep the Allowance at the present level but raise the Mileage/Expenses to £1000. The feeling of the meeting was that the Deputy Mayor, as holding an elected post, should receive an allowance. The Town Clerk was asked to construct a legal proposal for means of doing this.

**ACTION TOWN CLERK**

The Committee Recommendations were **AGREED** subject to the above changes and the alteration to the estimated total for grants.

*Cllr. Lehmann left the meeting.*

*Agenda order was resumed.*

**637/11 Health and Safety Policy**

Members **AGREED** the Policy provided the phrase "not to find a scapegoat to blame" was deleted from the second Guidance paragraph on page 9.

**ACTION TOWN CLERK****638/11 Asset Register – valuation of Town Council buildings**

The third contractor had been unwilling to quote. Members accepted the lowest quote of £1200.

**639/11 Correspondence**

639.1 To receive correspondence from The Department of Communities and Local Government regarding co-opted Councillors Allowances and to note that a letter has been sent back to express the desire to be involved in these discussions and to have consultations sent to the Town Council.

Noted; the Town Clerk's action was ratified.

639.2 Buckingham Centre for the Arts

Noted.

**640/11 Conference**

To agree for the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk to attend the SLCC Larger Local Council's Conference.

The Town Clerk had been asked to address the Conference on running events and would therefore be allowed a reduction in Conference fee. He felt the Deputy Town Clerk who had a more direct management of events should also attend.

Members congratulated the Clerk on the recognition of the skill and **AGREED** unanimously.

**641/11 Exclusion of Public and Press**

**RECOMMENDED** 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, **RECOMMENDED** that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

**AGREED**

*Cllr. Mordue left the meeting*

**642/11 Staffing Update**

The Town Clerk gave a verbal update on the staffing situation.

Proposed by Cllr. Hirons, seconded by Cllr. Stuchbury, and **AGREED** that temporary staff be hired and the post re-advertised. Cllr. Newell and the Town Clerk to arrange this as seemed fit.

**643/11 Chairman's Announcements**

The Councillors and staff were wished a Merry Christmas.

**644/11 Date of Next Meeting:** Precept: Monday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2012  
Committee: Monday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2012

Meeting closed at: 9.55pm

Signed.....

Date.....