

Minutes of a meeting of the **Finance, Administration and Personnel Committee** of Buckingham Town Council held on **Monday 2nd April 2012** in the Council Chamber, Cornwalls 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. L. O'Donoghue
 Cllr. M. Smith Mayor
 Cllr. R. Stuchbury
 Cllr. M. Try

Also present: Cllr. A. Mahi
 Mr. C. Wayman Town Clerk
 Mrs. K. McElligott

903/11 Apologies for Absence

RESOLVED to receive apologies from Councillors Isham and Newell.

904/11 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this point.

905/11 Minutes

RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the Finance, Administration and Personnel Committee meeting held on Monday 13th February 2012 ratified at the Full Council held on 27th February 2012 (FAP/06/11).

906/11 Action Report

Members noted the Action Report.

The Town Clerk confirmed that 378/11 and 633/11 had now been completed.

907/11 Communications Strategy SubGroup Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14th March 2012 (CSG/07/11) were noted.

Cllr. Lehmann asked for clarification of 850/11 and was told it had included costs.

908/11 Accounts and Budgets

Members are asked to receive and consider the attached Income and Expenditure reports.

The tree work invoice had been received after the agenda was printed, but would be posted by year-end and included in the final accounts for the year submitted to the next meeting.

There had been a computer problem with the roundabout income section, but this had been resolved; both roundabouts 3 and 4 had been without sponsors for part of the year, so income would be down on the expected total.

Members asked about payment for safety work on memorials where grave owners were deceased or untraceable. The Town Clerk said that those nearest paths were to be done first and about 22 needed serious attention. Repair costs were dependent on stone size but estimated as from £65 upwards. All but one were pre-1940, so it was likely that the owners would be untraceable. The next tranche would be more recent burials. E&P had moved this year's remaining budget into Earmarked Reserves for the next financial year.

Members discussed what services were liable to VAT charges.

Cllr. Seabrook asked about the review process for the Horticultural Contract and was told that it was last done in 2011 and that the Green Spaces Manager was currently carrying out a thorough appraisal preparatory to going out to tender for April 2013.

909/11 Invoices passed for payment, income received and details of Councillor's Expenses

A question arose about expenses paid for travel within the parish; Members **AGREED** that the Town Clerk should look at the matter and bring it back to the next meeting for discussion.

ACTION TOWN CLERK/JUNE AGENDA

910/11 Personnel Policies

- 910.1 Adoption Leave and Pay
- 910.2 Annual Leave Policy
- 910.3 Bereavement Policy
- 910.4 Data Protection
- 910.5 Drugs and Alcohol Abuse Policy
- 910.6 Equal Pay Policy Statement
- 910.7 Flexible Working
- 910.8 Parental Leave Policy
- 910.9 Paternity Leave and Pay
- 910.10 Relationships at Work Policy
- 910.11 Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy
- 910.12 Sickness Absence Policy
- 910.13 Time off for Dependants

Members discussed with the Town Clerk the derivation of the Policies, and whether any were subject to national statute, i.e. a separate Council policy was unnecessary. The Town Clerk pointed out that Council versions saved searching through the quantity of legislation in the field, and that ratified policies would form part of the Staff Handbook.

It was felt useful, due to lack of Member expertise, that the Town Clerk mark each with its sources of information and changes made to suit the Council's particular circumstances.

Proposed by Cllr. Smith, seconded by Cllr. P. Collins, that the Committee review the policies when the changes to source material had been highlighted.

Members asked if any of the list were required to be in place immediately; the Town Clerk said that 910.11 was needed to support a WREN application. Cllr. O'Donoghue concurred, with reference to the Youth Council.

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. P. Collins, that the Committee **RECOMMENDS** to the Full Council the adoption of the Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy as circulated.

Cllr. P. Collins then proposed an amendment, seconded by Cllr. Hirons, that all the above policies be **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council for adoption; and that the next meeting be supplied with copies marked up with sources of the clauses and changes made to suit this Council.

Members voted 8 for and 5 against the amended motion; this then became the substantive recommendation, and was passed by majority vote.

ACTION TOWN CLERK

911/11 Pre Employment Questionnaire

Members discussed the draft document; it was felt some of the questions constituted an invasion of privacy. Medical problems should be sent to a qualified 3rd party for decision.

Proposed by Cllr. Smith, seconded by Cllr. Bloomfield, and **AGREED** that the legalities be looked into and the form revised accordingly.

ACTION TOWN CLERK

912/11 (Min. 668/11) Committees

Members thanked the Town Clerk for his hard work, but felt that the report should be discussed by the Chairmen in the first instance, noting that election of Committee Chairmen was due next month.

Proposed by Cllr. Mrs. G. Collins, seconded by Cllr. P. Collins, and **AGREED** unanimously that a Chairman's Meeting be called to discuss the Town Clerk's report FAP/82/11.

ACTION TOWN CLERK

Cllr. P. Collins declared an interest in the course of the next discussion, as he booked the Chamber for use by an outside organisation.

913/11 (FC Min. 791/11) Council Chamber Booking Policy

Members felt that the Policy was rather complicated, and discussed whether a different rate should be levied for evening meetings to cover staff time for unlocking and locking, but this was felt to be inconvenient. The Town Clerk pointed out that the majority of bookings were during the day and covered by normal staff hours. Some evening ones were covered by attending Councillors.

The Policy was **AGREED**.

914/11 Action Plan

Pressure of work had prevented some items being moved on as the Town Clerk had wished. Printing restraints resulted in a very small font, and Members asked that colour be restricted to an indication at the edge, leaving the main part black on white. Some items had been taken on by individual Committees, and it was now up to the Chairmen to see that these matters were taken forward.

ACTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN/TOWN CLERK

915/11 Financial Regulation

915.1 Financial regulations

915.2 Standing orders

915.3 Financial Risk Assessment

Minor corrections to spelling and amendments to reflect staff changes had been made to the above documents. Members **AGREED** to accept these changes.

915.4 Appointment of the Internal Auditor

Tearle and Carver were confirmed as the Internal Auditor for the year.

Members asked that this item be presented on an earlier agenda next year.

ACTION TOWN CLERK

916/11 Grants

The Town Clerk explained that he had tried to firm up the process, as grants given under s137 of the Act have to demonstrate direct benefit to the area. He had adapted the previous policy and form, with additional sections to describe what the grant would be spent on and how many people it would benefit; also organisations would have to provide proof (eg by copy invoice) that the money had been used as per the application form. The process of grant review would not change, all Councillors would be circulated with copies of the applications. FA&P would then make recommendation to the full council for Precept.

Members discussed whether the process – application in October or November for decision in January and payment the following May - was too long, and whether Precept should set a total amount for grants, which could subsequently be applied for, discussed and agreed at a special meeting of the Council. This would allow a more thorough discussion of the merits of individual applications. It was pointed out that any Councillor could attend the relevant FA&P meeting.

Members agreed that the present system worked well; discussion and recommendation by the Committee to the Full Council, for agreement en bloc at Precept, but felt that applicants should be asked if they had received a previous grant and what it had been used for.

ACTION TOWN CLERK

917/11 Insurance Valuation, various Town Council properties

Members noted the report. The Council had a five-year contract with its current insurers; at the last review this company had been selected as it was the only one to offer cover for flood events.

Cllr. Lehmann left the meeting.

918/11 Destination Buckingham

Members **AGREED** the recommendation in the report from the Town Clerk, that the Council hold funds for the Destination Buckingham Group as it did for NAGs, and the Green Buckingham and Fair Trade Groups.

919/11 www.Buckinghamuk.info

Cllr. Smith explained the background of the site. Members **AGREED** to cancel the existing Memorandum of Understanding. It was possible that Destination Buckingham would take over, with funding. Cllr. O'Donoghue knew of a local person who could advise.

Members also noted that Cllr. Try was still running the Town Council's website, and **AGREED** that this be put on a future agenda to discuss the regularisation and funding of the website. The Town Clerk was asked to estimate the costs and draw up a tender schedule.

ACTION TOWN CLERK

Cllrs. Bloomfield and Smith declared an interest in the following item, as Trustees.

920/11 Safe Housing of the Mace

Members discussed whereabouts the mace might be accommodated in the Old Gaol Museum; security, ease of viewing and accessibility for Civic Occasion use had to be considered.

Members accepted the Old Gaol's suggestion of the civic room, and asked who would own the case, and whether a stipulation of a minimum time for display would be made (10 years was suggested). Concern was expressed at possible light damage if it was on permanent view instead of in its box. The mace would be removable only by the Mayor or Council staff; a system of signing it out was advocated.

Proposed by Cllr. Mrs. G. Collins, seconded by Cllr. P. Collins, and **RECOMMENDED** that £2000 (to be amended if the accurate full cost became known before Full Council) be taken from contingencies to pay for the secure case and its fitting.

921/11 Tourism South East

The latest Buckingham VIC statistics were noted.

922/11 Correspondence

922.1 Letters of thanks had been received from the Aylesbury Vale Fibromyalgia Support Group, the Churches Holiday Club and the Buckingham Winslow & District Citizens Advice Bureau.

Noted.

922.2 To receive information about leaflet display from AVDC

Noted.

923/11 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman thanked the Committee for their support over the year.

924/11 Date of Next Meeting: Monday 11th June 2012

Meeting closed at: 9.02pm.

Signed.....

Date.....