

Minutes of a meeting of the **Finance, Administration and Personnel Committee** of Buckingham Town Council held on **Monday 30th July 2012** in the Council Chamber, Cornwalls Meadow, Buckingham at 7pm.

Present: Cllr. T. Bloomfield
Cllr. H. Cadd
Cllr. Mrs. G. Collins
Cllr. P. Collins
Cllr. J. Harvey
Cllr. P. Hirons
Cllr. R. Lehmann
Cllr. H. Mordue
Cllr. Ms. Newell - Town Mayor
Cllr. M. Smith
Cllr. R. Stuchbury
Cllr. M. Try

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

242/12 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. D. Isham and Cllr. Mrs. L. O'Donoghue.

243/12 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

244/12 Minutes

The minutes of the Finance, Administration and Personnel Committee meeting held on Monday 11th June 2012 ratified at the Full Council meeting held on 25th June 2012 were received. There were no matters arising.

245/12 Minutes of the Communications Strategy Group meetings

The minutes of the meetings held on 20th June and 18th July 2012 were circulated with the agenda.

In answer to an enquiry about how long before publication articles needed to be submitted, Cllr. Harvey said that articles could be submitted any time and the Group would decide whether they would fit the next issue or held over for a later one. Last-minute rearrangement to incorporate urgent items could be organised. The proof was always circulated to Councillors for comment.

246/12 Action Report

Members noted the Action Report.

(437.6) Policy: It was agreed that the Policy for Confidential Information was a priority and the degree of urgency for other policies should be decided by the Committee.

ACTION TOWN CLERK

247/12 Accounts and Budgets

1010 – Chamber hire. This is an income figure so not marked with a – sign.

FAP 30/7/12
16/08/2012

Ratified 13th August 2012

202 – Roundabouts. The Town Clerk explained about the change of sponsor for Nø3 and would investigate why the remainder had no income to date.

505/4219 & 1065 – Buckingham Fringe. Cllr. Stuchbury asked that a new line be created in 301 for Comedy Nights other than that incorporated in the Fringe to keep the income & expenditure separate. The variance could be accounted for by the start-up funds, as payments had to be made before ticket money was received.

302 – Markets. Cllr. Lehmann was pleased to note that market income was as expected for this time of the year. Cllr. Stuchbury said that this was due to the hard work of the Deputy Town Clerk and Cllr. Bloomfield ensuring prompt payment. A new toby had recently been appointed.

248/12 Invoices passed for payment, Income and details of Councillor's Expenses Agreed.

Members discussed the mileage rates and whether these should be raised; if so agreement should be reached before the precept budgets were drawn up. It was pointed out that payments over 45p/mile would be taxable.

The Town Clerk referred Members to the Councillor Allowances Policy agreed at the 11th June meeting (Min. 120.2/12) which detailed mileage and subsistence allowances.

249/12 Memorandum of Understanding – Delivery of Newsletter

The draft MoU for the delivery of the newsletter was to formalise the employment of the deliveryman.

Agreed.

The University also produces a newsletter delivered to each household; joint working would be explored, subject to keeping to scheduled publication dates.

250/12 Policies

The following policies were discussed and **agreed**:

250.1 Agency Workers 2012 Policy

250.2 Absence: Trade Union Activities, Jury Duty, etc

250.3 Newsletter Policy & Procedure

Members discussed an issue raised at the last Communications Group meeting on whether articles submitted by another authority or organisation should be incorporated in the newsletter; there was nothing in the policy about this. It was agreed that this should be considered on an individual basis according to the merits of the item and the space available, but the principal intention of the newsletter was that it be a Town Council communication dealing with Buckingham matters. Articles with views contrary to those of the Council could be accepted; they might instigate debate in the town. Editorial control was vested in the Communications Strategy Group

Cllr. Harvey appealed for other members to join the Group as meetings risked being inquorate.

250.4 The Mayor's comments on previous policies

Members felt that parents should be included in the list of applicable relatives in the Bereavement Policy, stepchildren included with children and half-brothers & -sisters with siblings.

ACTION TOWN CLERK

251/12 General Power of Competence

The Town Clerk outlined the reason for this and the next item; they had arisen from the Localism Act but not come into force until April and June 2012 respectively. Members agreed that the power would be of use to the Council.

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Hirons, and **AGREED** the Recommendation that the Town Clerk attends the training when arranged and undertakes the work for the CiLCA module.

ACTION TOWN CLERK

252/12 Community Right to Build and Community Right to Bid

The Town Clerk described circumstances when these might be of use to the Council, and Members discussed the matter at length. AVDC would be asked for their list of assets in Buckingham, and the Town Council could then consider what should be added to it.

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Harvey, and **AGREED** in principle to make use of these rights and, subject to the content of the asset list, **RECOMMEND** that the Town Council agrees to add to the list of community assets and also that a project under the community right to build is investigated by the Council or the Planning Committee.

253/12 Consultation – Payments by parish & community councils and charter trustees

Members were informed that the current limitations on banking derived from the 1972 Act and banking practice had changed somewhat in the intervening years.

Members were strongly of the opinion that two signatures on a cheque and supporting paperwork were a prudent means of carrying out business even though this made internet banking and the possession of a Council credit/debit card impossible currently. It was agreed that no response be made to the consultation. Members felt that they were using public money and adequate safeguards should remain in place, and a single signature or purchase by card were not at present secure methods.

ACTION TOWN CLERK

254/12 Changes to Localised Council Tax Benefits

The Town Clerk outlined the background to the letter from Andrew Small and Members discussed the proposed meeting.

Proposed by Cllr. Harvey, seconded by Cllr. Stuchbury, that the Council seek an early meeting with Mr. Small;

Proposed by Cllr. Mordue, seconded by Cllr. Hirons, that the Town Clerk keep in touch with Mr. Small until the situation is clarified and then arrange a meeting;

The amendment was carried by 8:4, Cllrs. Stuchbury and Harvey asking that their votes against be recorded; this became the substantive motion and was carried by 8:3 with 1 abstention.

When matters became clearer, Mr. Small would be invited to a meeting of the Full Council.

ACTION TOWN CLERK

255/12 Visitor Information Centre

Members noted the figures, but asked for a year-on-year comparison to understand whether there was a pattern to fluctuations. The Mayor reported that she had met the representative of Tourism SE who had indicated that they would support Town

Council ideas and events. The Chairman pointed out that there were very few accredited b&bs in the area, so large accommodation figures could not be expected.

Further information would be requested, and comparison figures obtained from neighbouring towns – it might be that the dip in totals was widespread.

If the Council agreed the rejigging of the Committees at its next meeting, the VIC would become part of the Events Committee remit, and an agenda item for the next meeting.

ACTION COMMITTEE CLERK

256/12 Chairman’s Announcements

The Chair announced the appointment of a new Market Toby, Mr. William Horwood, who had worked in parallel with Cllr. Bloomfield and would take over completely as of 31st July.

Cllr. Harvey proposed a formal vote of thanks to Cllr. Bloomfield for all work during the interim period, especially bringing the finances into line, and – together with the Deputy Town Clerk – ensuring that traders insurances’ and contracts were up-to-date. Members heartily concurred.

257/12 Date of Next Meeting: Monday 17th September 2012

258/12 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

259/12 Employment issues

Members received the Town Clerk’s report and voted 11 for the recommendation with none against and 1 abstention.

Meeting closed at: 9.00pm

Signed.....

Date.....