

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE HELD ON
MONDAY 20th March 2006 IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS AT 7PM**

<u>PRESENT</u>	Councillors	J. Barnett	
		P. Collins	(Mayor)
		Mrs. P. Desorgher	
		D. Isham	
		R. Lehmann	(Chairman)
		H. Mordue	
		Ms. R. Newell	
		Mrs. P. Stevens	
		Mrs. C. Strain-Clark	
		R. Stuchbury	
	Town Clerk	Ms. P. J. Heath	

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. H. Cadd.

167/2006 DECLARATION OF INTEREST FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations of interest for items on the agenda.

168/2006 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Members received and noted the minutes of the last meeting held on 16th November 2005 which were ratified on 20th February 2006.

169/2006 REPORTS AND UPDATES ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

There were no updates on items that were not already on the agenda.

170/2006 QUALITY PARISH COUNCIL HEALTH-CHECK

170.1 Annual Rates Leaflet

The 2006 Rates leaflet would be distributed via the Royal Mail door to door system at the end of the month. Members were given a copy of the leaflet. Planning for 2006/2007 newsletters and leaflets would be on the next meeting's agenda. The Clerk reminded Members that in order for the Council to retain Quality Parish Status the 2007 elections would have to be contested, with a minimum of 17 candidates nominated for the 17 seats. It was **AGREED** that the Council would actively promote the elections and the work undertaken by the Council.

ACTION THE CLERK

171/2006 BUDGET REVIEWS

171.1 F & A Committee current budgets, Overview of all current budgets

Members looked at all the budgets based on the up to date figures produced at the meeting. Questions were put to the Town Clerk on the detail of some of the figures.

171.2 Bank Letters

The RFO reported that a meeting had been held with the bank earlier that day to check on the Town Council's accounts. Two letters were circulated at the meeting, which were agreed and signed by those councillors designated as signatories: 1) To re-confirm that the RFO/Town Clerk had the authority to access and manage the accounts including the ability to transfer funds between the Council's accounts; 2) To open a deposit account to include ring fenced s106 monies.

172/2006 PROCEDURES FOR THE PRECEPT AND BUDGET SETTING

Members discussed at great length the procedures that had historically been followed in respect of the budget setting and the precept meeting and those they wished to see in place for future years.

The Members felt that prior to the October/November Council meetings Members should be given a copy of the up to date accounts with an indication of year end outturn. The Council would then give a steer to the Committees as to the increase they are looking for. The Committees set their budget request including in the minutes the explanation and reasoning behind the requests, to help those who were not at the meeting; the budget requests should be in order of priority from the statutory "must do" to the "would like to do". At the December/January F & A Committee meeting the Committee would provide an overview of the position based on the requests and the ¾ year figures, with a recommendation to the Precept Meeting. The Precept Meeting would then have the right to challenge the recommendation and/or any of the individual amounts. Members did note that they also had the right to table a question to any of the Chairmen of Committees, at the Council meeting, on any aspect of their Committee.

Proposed by Cllr. Lehmann, seconded by Cllr. Stuchbury, and **RECOMMENDED** the following procedures: 1) prior to the individual Committee budget consideration the Committees are to be given a steer by the Council on either the percentage indicative range or the amount to spend; 2) the individual Committees to set their budget with the Council's steer in mind; 3) the F & A Committee would upon receipt of the individual Committee requests provide for the Precept meeting an indication and overview of the requests in the respect of precept.

173/2006 ANALYSIS AND REPORT ON THE TOWN CLERK'S AND CLERICAL ASSISTANT'S TIME SHEET/HOURS WORKED/TYPE OF WORK.

Cllr. Cadd had sent his apologies and therefore this item was deferred to the next meeting. Members expressed concern that the issue was to be delayed another 7 weeks which would take it close to when the temporary accounts assistant's fixed term contract ends. The Chairman agreed to contact Cllr. Cadd to talk through the results so far.

Proposed by Cllr. Lehmann, seconded by Cllr. Collins, and **AGREED** that the Council extend the Accounts Assistant's fixed term contract by 3 months to the end of September.

The Clerk explained that Mrs. Baughan has a young daughter and therefore may not be able to work all the hours during the school holidays.

174/2006 TO RECEIVE DRAFT JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR THE STAFF

This item was deferred pending further information on the previous item.

175/2006 REPORT ON STANDING ORDERS REVIEW

The working group presented the following changes to the Committee; these would be **RECOMMENDED** to the Council

Addition

ATTENDANCE (new section)

a) If a Member fails throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of his last attendance to attend any meetings of the Council, he shall, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the Council before the expiry of the period, cease to be a member of the Council.

b) Members of standing committees are required to attend those standing committees in accordance with the attendance requirements detailed in (a).

Amend

6. VARIATION OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

The order of business may be varied with the exception of 5(a), (b) and (c) subject to:

(a) *The Town Mayor at his discretion*

(b) *A resolution passed on a motion (which need not be in writing) duly moved and seconded, which shall be moved and put without discussion.*

PROPOSAL: - Delete 6 (a)

Amend

15. INTEREST OF MEMBERS IN CONTRACTS AND OTHER MATTERS

If any member of the Council has any pecuniary interest, direct or indirect, within the meaning of section 94 of the Local Government Act 1972 (other than an indirect interest described in section 95 thereof) in any contract, proposed contract, or other matter, that member shall withdraw from the meeting while the contract, proposed contract, or other matter, is under consideration by the Council unless: -

(a) *the disability to discuss that matter imposed upon them by the section has been removed by the District Council under section 97 thereof,*

or

(b) *the contract, proposed contract or other matter is under consideration by the Council as part of the report of a committee and is not itself the subject of debate.*

PROPOSAL:- New 15 (c) Members will be required to confirm the detail in their register of interests on an annual basis or within 28 days of any major change.

Members discussed the Chairmans' Strategic Group which consists of the Mayor and the Committee Chairmen. The Group has formal terms of reference, and its meetings, which have an agenda summoning members to attend, are open to any Councillor. The minutes/notes are circulated to all Members and appear on the Council agenda with the Committee minutes. It was **AGREED** after the discussion not to include it as a standing committee but to allow it to exist under its terms of reference as an ad hoc meeting. Recommendations from the Group can appear taken by the Council under standing order number 8(f).

Members also discussed the election of the Chairman of the Council or any Committee. It was **AGREED** that, although not specified in the Standing Orders, the election of the Chairman would be automatically passed to the senior Councillor to conduct.

176/2006 TO RECEIVE LETTERS REQUESTING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

176.01 Buckingham General Charities

Cllr. Isham and Cllr. Collins informed Members that they were the Buckingham Town Council representatives on this group.

Members discussed the request from the General Charities and appreciated that the application was for an unpredicted event. Members noted that the work had been started and that funding had been obtained from other sources.

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Collins and **RECOMMENDED** that the Council refuse the application from Buckingham General Charities for a grant.

176.02 Buckingham & Winslow Community Care Forum

Members discussed the application and noted that the Forum had been sent a grant application form and had been reminded to put in an application.

Proposed by Cllr. Barnett, seconded by Cllr. Newell, and **RECOMMENDED** that the Council refuse the application from Buckingham & Winslow Community Care Forum.

177/2006 CHAIRMAN'S ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

177.1 Office Opening Hours

Cllr. Newell asked that Members reconsider the office opening hours with the employment of the temporary Accounts Assistant. The Clerk informed Members that the Assistant did not normally work on Fridays and, if required, could only work for 2 hours. The Clerk asked that if Members were minded to open on a Friday then could the lunch hour be retained to enable the Clerk to have a break and undertake such work as was required outside of the office.

Proposed by Cllr Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr Barnett and **AGREED** that the Council offices would be open for the hours 10-12 and 1-3 on Fridays.

177.2 Street Naming Court Case

Members were informed that the Clerk would be in Aylesbury Magistrates Court on Thursday because of the Street Naming Appeal. The Clerk is to give a list of costs to AVDC for her attendance including travel and administration costs.

Meeting closed 8.50 pm

CHAIRMAN DATE