

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD
ON MONDAY 23rd July 2007 at 7.30PM**

PRESENT

Councillors T. Bloomfield
H. Cadd
P. Collins
D. Isham
H. Mordue
R. Newell
M. Smith
P. Stevens
R. Stuchbury
M. Try
W. Whyte
Town Clerk Mrs P. J. Heath

The preceding public session was extended to 30 minutes.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. P. Hirons.

303/2007 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest for items on the agenda

304/2007 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Members accepted the minutes of the last meeting held on 4th June 2007, which were ratified by Full Council on 2nd July 2007.

305/2007 ACTION REPORTS AND UPDATES AS PER ATTACHED LIST

There were no reports on action points not included elsewhere on the agenda

306/2007 QUALITY PARISH COUNCIL

Members noted the email circulated to all Councillors informing them that the work on the Annual Report had not been completed by the previous Chairman of the Finance and Administration Committee prior to the elections. It was agreed that Cllr. Mordue would co-ordinate the revised reports from the Committee Chairman incorporating the forthcoming budgets. The report will also include the Councillor photographs and contact details.

ACTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN and CLLR. MORDUE

307/2007 BUDGET REVIEWS

307.1 Finance and Administration Committee budgets & Overview of all budgets

Members noted the budgets for the Council circulated with the agenda. A query was raised as to whether money was available for any flood defence or assistance within the current year budget. It was noted that the capital reserve account code 4083 included £4000 for flood defence. Members discussed what assistance could be offered to those affected by the floods: a report would be made to the next Full Council meeting. The Mayor would issue a press release from the Town Council on flooding.

ACTION CLLR MORDUE/ THE CLERK

307.2 To receive information of the Town Clerk's hours

The Clerk informed the Members that currently there are 51 hours in lieu owed to the Clerk from 1st April 2007 to 20th July 2007; this is increasing and will continue to increase until the new deputy is fully operational.

308/2007 RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL PREMISES COMMITTEE HELD ON 25TH JUNE 2007 AND DISCUSS THE CONTENTS.

Members received the minutes of the Town Centre Premises Committee held on 25th June and noted the contents.

309/2007 RECEIVE THE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR THE TOWN CLERK AND AGREE TIMESCALE FOR AN ANNUAL APPRAISAL REQUIRED UNDER THE TOWN CLERK'S CONTRACT SECTION 10.

The Clerk had circulated the training and development programme as requested under minute no 2942 14.05.07; Members noted the document. It was **AGREED** that Cllr. Collins would carry out the Town Clerk's appraisal prior to the next Finance and Administration Committee.

ACTION CLLR. COLLINS

310/2007 RECEIVE AND AGREE THE ACCOUNTS TO 31.03.07 AND RECOMMEND ACCEPTANCE TO COUNCIL SUBJECT TO THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL AUDIT.

Members went through the accounts with the Clerk as Responsible Financial Officer answering Members' questions.

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Bloomfield, and **RECOMMENDED** that the Council approves the accounts subject to the Internal and External Auditor's report.

This recommendation will go to the Interim Council meeting for approval.

311/2007 TO DISCUSS THE REPORTS USED TO PRESENT AMOUNTS FOR PAYMENT AND RETROSPECTIVE PAYMENTS AT THE COUNCIL MEETINGS; AND DISCUSS THE ACCOUNTS PACKAGE USED BY THE COUNCIL.

The Town Clerk informed the Members of the history of the accounts software and the options considered at the time. The Clerk confirmed that the software which is specific for Local Government is used by a lot of Town and Parish Councils. The Clerk explained that several report formats were available on the system, and the type of reports to Council had been changed over the years as the requirements of the Council had changed. A format based on Members' requirements could be drawn up on the either Excel or Word. The Clerk was asked to obtain details of a web site or demo CD which would allow Members to look at the accounts package used; Members noted that if the package is changed there would be a time and cost implication over and above the purchase of the new software.

ACTION THE CLERK

312/2007 DISCUSS THE ALLOWANCES TO PARISH COUNCILLORS

The report produced by Cllr Whyte was circulated with the agenda and received by Members. This was discussed at great length by the Committee; it was noted that the Council already pays Member's travel allowances on Council business. It was agreed that the criteria for a mileage claim be agreed by the next Finance and Administration Committee.

Proposed by Cllr. Smith, seconded by Cllr. Isham, and **RECOMMENDED** by 8 votes to 0 that this Council provides for each Councillor to claim an allowance of £480 to cover their expenses as a Councillor over and above any claim for travel allowance.

It was noted that no budget exists in 2007/2008 for a Councillors' allowance.

313/2007 DISCUSS THE APPOINTMENT OF ANOTHER PART-TIME CARETAKER BASED ON INFORMATION FROM EVENTS AND E & P COMMITTEES; RECOMMEND TO THE COUNCIL THE TERMS & CONDITIONS OF ANY EMPLOYMENT.

Members discussed the Job Description which had been circulated with the agenda, including amendments proposed by the Environment & Property Committee, and the person specification drawn up by Cllr. Newell. It was **AGREED** to employ a second caretaker on the same terms and conditions as Mr. Jones'.

Proposed by Cllr. Stevens, seconded by Cllr. Stuchbury, and **AGREED** that Cllr. Collins, Cllr. Newell, Cllr. Isham and Cllr. Bloomfield with the Town Clerk be given designated authority to advertise the position up to a budget of £500, interview and appoint on the same conditions as Mr Jones.

314/2007 TO RECEIVE DETAILS OF THE APPLICANTS FOR DEPUTY TOWN CLERK

Members were informed that Cllr Newell, Cllr Mordue and the Clerk had interviewed one candidate the previous Wednesday and would be interviewing other candidates on the 25th July.

315/2007 TO DISCUSS THE COUNCIL'S WEB SITE, REVIEW THE SITE AND AGREE ANY CHANGES TO WWW.BUCKINGHAMTOWNCOUNCIL.GOV.UK

This was deferred to the next meeting.

316/2007 TO DISCUSS CREATING A ROLL OF HONOUR FOR MAYORS, FRIENDS OF BUCKINGHAM, FREEMEN OF BUCKINGHAM, TOWN CLERKS.

This was deferred to the next meeting.

317/2007 TO DISCUSS AND REVIEW THE COUNCIL'S DISCIPLINE POLICY – CLLR. NEWELL

It was **AGREED** to amend the discipline policy from "Stage" to "Level"

318/2007 TO REVIEW STANDING ORDERS, IN PARTICULAR RULE 1D; TO CLARIFY THE USE OF THIS RULE.

Members discussed in detail the reason behind standing order 1d and how it was intended to be used and is being used. Members noted that the current requirements allow for all Members and the Clerk to decide to carry on after 10pm if items are still outstanding on the agenda

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Newell, and **RECOMMENDED** by 5 votes to 3 that standing order 1d be changed to "All Council and Committee meetings are to finish at 10 pm, unless a Member is unhappy to continue; then a vote is taken prior to the 10 pm deadline and if a quorate majority agree to carry on they do so until the decision is further challenged".

It was stated that the officiating Clerk could leave at 10pm if the Members agree to continue after that time with a Councillor taking the minutes.

319/2007 TO DISCUSS THE PURCHASE OF A DESKTOP COMPUTER FOR THE USE OF THE DEPUTY CLERK AND THE ASSIGNMENT OF THE LAPTOP FOR USE WITH THE CEMETERY SOFTWARE UNTIL THE DATA HAS BEEN ENTERED.

Members **AGREED** that the Clerk could purchase a desktop computer with relevant software up to a budget of £750 from contingencies.

320/2007 TO DISCUSS AND REVIEW THE CURRENT CONTRACTS FOR CHANDOS PARK TOILETS.

This item was deferred.

321/2007 CHAIRMAN'S ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

321.1 Attendance Register

It was confirmed that the Attendance Register of the Councillors, which is a legal record, had been circulated to all members.

321.2 Caretaker – Temporary accommodation

Members were asked to consider allowing the Caretaker to use Cemetery Lodge as his property had been flooded; Members discussed this at length. It was agreed to allow the Caretaker to use the Lodge with the terms being agreed at Interim Council Meeting.

Meeting closed at 9.30 pm.

CHAIRMAN DATE