

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance, Administration and Personnel Committee of Buckingham Town Council will be held on Monday 15th June 2009. in Room MB1 in the Masons Building, University of Buckingham, Hunter Street, Buckingham.

**Present:** Cllr. R. Lehmann - Chairman

Cllr. H. Cadd  
Cllr. P. Collins  
Cllr. Mrs P. Desorgher  
Cllr. P. Hirons  
Cllr. D. Isham  
Cllr. H. Mordue  
Cllr. Ms R. Newell  
Cllr. M. Smith  
Cllr. R. Stuchbury  
Cllr. M. Try  
Cllr. W. Whyte

**Also present:** Anne Wilson - Town Clerk

### **132/09 Election of Chairman**

Cllr. Smith proposed that Cllr. Rob Lehmann be elected Chairman for the ensuing municipal year. This was seconded by Cllr. Stuchbury.

Cllr. Mordue proposed that Cllr Paul Hirons be elected Chairman for the ensuing municipal year.

A secret ballot was held and as there were six votes each the Town Mayor had the casting vote. Cllr. Lehmann was duly elected.

**RESOLVED** that Cllr. R. Lehmann be elected Chairman of the Finance and Administration Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

### **133/09 Election of Vice-Chairman**

Cllr. Stuchbury proposed that Cllr. Ms Ruth Newell be elected Vice-Chairman for the ensuing municipal year. This was seconded by Cllr. Smith.

Cllr. Mordue proposed that Cllr. Paul Hirons be elected Vice-Chairman for the ensuing municipal year. This was seconded by Cllr. Collins.

Both nominators gave their reasons for their nominations.

A secret ballot was held and Cllr. Ms Newell was duly elected Vice-Chairman.

**RESOLVED** that Cllr. Ms R. Newell is Vice-Chairman of the Finance and Administration Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

### **134/09 Apologies for Absence**

**RESOLVED** to receive apologies from Cllr. T. Bloomfield, Cllr. Mrs G. Collins and Cllr. Mrs P. Stevens.

### **135/09 Declarations of Interest**

**RESOLVED** to note that there were no declarations of any personal or prejudicial interest under consideration on this agenda.

Cllr. Whyte expressed concern about two agenda items number 15. The Town Clerk stated that it was a typo and members accepted that the additional agenda item should really be item 21 before the Chairman's Announcement.

### **136/09 Minutes**

**RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Finance and Administration Committee meeting held on Monday 27th April 2009

### **137/09 Action Report**

**RESOLVED** to receive the report and note the updated information.

Members noted that a follow up letter had been sent to BCC with regard to the Baby Café in May. The Town Clerk would monitor whether a response had been received in time the next meeting.

### **138/09 Changing the name of the Committee**

Cllr. Ms Newell proposed that the name of the Committee be changed to Finance and Personnel. Members had various views on whether administration should be included in the title and agreed that a separate Staffing Committee was not needed. Cllr. Lehmann said that Staff Committee meeting could be called on an ad hoc basis.

Proposed by Cllr. Collins, seconded by Cllr. Stuchbury and **RESOLVED** that the name be changed to the Administration, Finance and Personnel Committee.

10 for the proposal and 2 against. The motion was carried.

### **139/09 Standing Orders**

Councillor P. Collins proposed that "No person may sit on more than 3 committees of the Town Council".

Members accepted that there had been an oversight in the preparation of the agenda in as much as Standing Orders state that a Councillors name should be placed on the agenda if a member is making a proposal to amend Standing Orders.

Cllr. Whyte felt that the current committees are too big and are inhibiting the work of the Town Council. He felt that members spread them selves too thinly and the delegation of decisions to committees is not being used to its best advantage.

Cllr. Stuchbury said he found it quite strange that this item was on an agenda at this time in the electoral cycle. He was not happy with anything that does not allow members to represent the people of Buckingham in the way he thinks is best and would stand in the way of enthusiastic members.

Cllr. Hirons agreed with both the previous two members. He said it was the job of the committees to get things done and move forward.

Cllr. Mordue could also see both points of view and reminded members that they could attend meeting and speak but not vote at any meeting where they are not a member. Cllr. Smith he could for see a problem in as much as there could be too many people wanting to go on one committee and not enough on another.

Seconded by Cllr. W. Whyte.

3 in favour and 7 against. Therefore the motion fell.

Cllr. Collins proposed that" No Chairman of a Committee may hold the same office (i.e. over the same Committee) for more than three consecutive years (this rule does not apply to Vice-Chairman)"

Cllr. Collins said that three years was long enough for business continuity for the Town Council but felt that longer than three years would prohibit new people becoming Chairman and bringing in new ideas for the long term viability of the Council.

Cllr. Mordue felt that if you time limit Chairman it should be 5 years not 3. He felt that it could stop other people standing for Chairman if people felt that the same person would always be Chairman.

Cllr. Stuchbury took this proposal quite personally as he was the only Chairman that this currently effected having been Chairman of the Town Centre and Events Committee for nine years. He said it was up to the Council as individuals and not to limit the rights of people to become Chairman.

Cllr. Whyte said it was good corporate governance to change Chairman on a regular basis, as was the way with many private organisations and he supported the motions. Cllr. Mordue said this motion was not getting at Cllr. Stuchbury as he had done a good job as Chairman and many Chairmen stood down for a year and then sought re-election.

Cllr. Hirons supported the motion as he felt that a change could bring out more in the Committee. Cllr. Ms. Newell felt that the Standing Orders should remain as they were as the Council would decide who the best person to Chair that Committee was.

Cllr. Mordue made an amendment to the original motion that the term should be five years and not three so the motion now read "No Chairman of a Committee may hold the same office (i.e. over the same Committee) for more than five consecutive years (this rule does not apply to Vice-Chairman)". This amendment was seconded by Cllr. Cadd and the original proposer Cllr. P. Collins accepted the amendment.

6 in favour and 5 against therefore the proposal is carried.

Cllr. P. Collins proposed that "No person may be Town Mayor for more than three consecutive years (this rule does not apply to Deputy Town Mayor)".

Cllr. Stuchbury felt strongly that the office of Town mayor should not be restricted but Cllr. Collins did point out that the motion said three consecutive years. Some discussion was held with regard to the few Town Mayors that had ever held the office for more that the usual two years and this was felt to be three people.

Cllr. Try said that he had no feelings about this but felt that due to the economic climate that as the post of Town Mayor receives little remuneration that people may not be able to afford to do more than the two years. Cllr. Stuchbury said he was lucky as his employer fully supported him but this would not always be the case. Cllr. Try felt that some words should be added to the proposal as a "get out clause".

Cllr. P. Collins proposed an amendment to his original proposal by adding “unless no other nominations are received” therefore the proposal now read “No person may be Town Mayor for more than three consecutive years (this rule does not apply to Deputy Town Mayor)”. The proposal was seconded by Cllr. Hirons.

5 in favour and 6 against. Therefore the motion fell.

### **140/09 Budget Reviews**

Members noted the Trial Balance and Committee Budget paperwork but felt that although the information they required was present it would be better understood if it was presented committee by committee. The Town Clerk stated that in future she would give members the Income and Expenditure (I&E) report paperwork where everything that is spent and what is remaining can be seen. The Town Clerk would add a report to this I&E report if there are any unusual or unidentifiable spends.

Members asked about and commented on the following items:

- £213.00 to Patrick Knibbs – what is this payment?
- Unison payment – The Town Clerk confirmed that this is taken out of her wages each month
- A full heading was needed on reports/cheque payment lists where just “expenses“ was written
- The drinks for the Town Mayors reception – the Town Clerk confirmed that the Town Mayor has been invoiced for them
- Why was the cheque for the Old Gaol made payable to WREN – the Town Clerk explained that the Town Council’s annual grant to the Old Gaol of £3000 is match funding a grant received from WREN for work to it. The Old gaol had to show money was going to them before the grant is released
- Payment to Lightfoots – for Chandos Park lights
- Cheque to Mrs Bloomfield – the Town Clerk explained that Mrs Bloomfield arranged the food for the Freedom parade
- Cheque for Music in the Market listed as such. The Town Clerk explained that this cheque was for Buckingham acoustic Club for music in the market.
- A cheque for £747.50 to reality care. Cllr. Smith explained this was for the review that Mark Gadd did of the Circular Walk Project
- Why was there two lots of expenditure for meeting room costs – the Town Clerk thought this may be the last financial years invoice as well as the most recent invoice but she would check

The Town Clerk said that she would respond to the questions she was not able to answer at the meeting.

### **141/09 Invoices passed for payment**

**RESOLVED** that members noted the schedule of cheque payments.

Members were concerned that the list of cheques to be paid was not easy to follow. The town Clerk said, dependent on the outcome of the next agenda item, then only the list of cheques shown through the Purchase Ledger report would be necessary. This report allowed for more than one invoice to be paid through the accounts system and would show what the expenditure was for.

Cllr. Mordue said that the members that sign the cheques have a duty to ensure that the cheques are being issued correctly and correspond to the order and the invoice as well as debited to the correct cost centre and code.

### **142/09 Cheque Payments**

**RESOLVED** that members agreed to amend the way in which invoices are paid at the Town Council to streamline the payment system and

- That the automated cheque system is installed
- That cheques are paid on or around 16th of any month – this allows for invoices sent out at the end of any month to be put onto the system and a cheque created
- That the blue (and yellow) slip system be retained
- That only urgent cheques be written manually

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that 1000 two colour cheques be purchased at a cost of £276.00.

The Town Clerk confirmed that only one quote had been obtained as this was the company that was recommended where the cheques were compatible with the accounts system in use. Cllr. Try asked what happened if the Town Council changed bankers as the name of the Councils bank has to be put onto the cheque. The Town Clerk confirmed that the Town Council was likely to remain with Lloyds Bank for the foreseeable future.

### **143/09 Parish Precept**

**RESOLVED** that Members noted that Aylesbury Vale District Council have notified the Town Council that with effect from this year Town and Parish Council are expected to schedule their precept meetings for November or December as of this year to enable the information to be with AVDC by the 31st December.

However the Town Clerk had spoken to AVDC and informed them that our precept meeting is not scheduled until the 25th January 2009. AVDC have on this occasion agreed that we can let them have our figures after the meeting of the 25th January but from December 2010 for the 2010/2011 Financial Year onwards Buckingham Town Council will need to have their precept figures to AVDC by 31st December of each year. This appeared to be on the basis that small parishes often submitted their precepts late and meant that AVDC could not complete their paperwork. The Town Clerk confirmed that this was not a policy decision of AVDC but a request from the officers to assist with their workload.

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk write to Aylesbury Vale DC and explain that due to the complexities of a Town Council budget such as ours that it would not be possible for the Town Council to keep to within these timescales.

### **144/09 Cost of Rooms for Committee Meetings**

Members noted that the matter of placing on the agenda where to charge the costs for committee meetings had been first requested in February 2009 and had not been discussed to date.

**RESOLVED** that all costs of meetings would be charged to the central budget for meeting room costs and not to individual committees.

### **145/09 Revenue and Customs Local Councils and VAT Workshop**

**RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk and the Accounts Assistant may attend the workshop in Birmingham given that some of the subjects covered appear relevant to future projects for the Council including the redevelopment of the Town Council offices and the reclaiming of VAT on grants and donations.

### **146/09 Review of Devolved Services**

**RESOLVED** that Members noted that payment has been received for the devolved services work carried out from December 2008 – March 20-09 and from now on the work will be invoiced for quarterly.

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk would look back through the minutes and in the files to see what was agreed with regard to the devolved services. She stated that she was awaiting another copy of the agreement between BCC and BTC from Simon Dudley.

Members expressed concern about taking on any more services at this stage but may consider it further at a later date. Members did agree that it may be necessary to take on additional staff if required at a later date.

### **147/09 Staff Handbook**

**RESOLVED** that members are asked to note that Councillor Ms Newell and the Town Clerk are going to be reviewing and increasing the number of policies to be included in the Town Council policies to be included in the proposed Staff Handbook and include them for consideration and agreement on the next agenda of this committee.

Although the Town Clerk had found the Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure on the computers she was struggling to find the other personnel policies of the Council. She was going to ring the previous Town Clerk and ask about them. Cllr. Try handed the Town Clerk a copy of the paperwork he had – the new Councillor Checklist. This included some of the policies.

### **148/09 CRB Checks**

Members discussed the issue of CRB checks given the events that Town Council run and the staff are out in the play areas/parks/town on a daily basis and interaction between the staff and Councillors and children and young people as a result of the business of the Council.

Cllr. Smith said there was a very mixed view among Councils and some had been checked and others hadn't. It was felt it would be very rare that a member of staff or a Councillor is alone with a children carrying out the business of the Town Council.

**RESOLVED** that Members did not feel it necessary for the staff or Councillors to have CRB checks to carry out the business and the events of the Town Council.

The Town Clerk explained why she did not agree with this decision but stated that she respected the decision of the Town Council.

### **149/09 Closing the Town Council Office to the Public**

**RESOLVED** that Members agreed to the closing of the Town Council offices to the public on Wednesday 12th, Thursday 13th and Friday 14th August to enable refilling and a general tidy up of the office to take place.

Members thanked Cllr. Mordue for the offer of a filing cabinet and noted that Cllr. Try also had a spare one if it was needed.

Members asked that the Town Clerk find out the cost of having any waste that needed shredding taken instead of purchasing a new shredder.

**150/00 New Office Chairs**

Members noted the report with regard to the purchase of two new chairs for the office. Cllr. Mordue pointed out that there was a second hand furniture shop in Oxford.

**RESOLVED** that the Town Council purchase two Viking Direct Niceday office chairs at a cost of £59.99 each

**151/09 Licensing Application for Belci Food and Wine**

**RESOLVED** that members made the following comments:

- That the incorrect name for the shop is on the application – it is actually Ahead Food Stores not Belci Food and Wine
- That the Town Council have no objections to an alcohol licence subject to the timings being the same as that of Tesco Express in Buckingham
- That concern is expressed about shopping at that end of town and possible encroachment on the highway by people just stopping and popping into the shop. Enforcement action should be taken from the beginning

**152/09 Annual Report and Newsletter**

Members noted the amendments to the Annual Report and Newsletter and acknowledged the work put in by Cllr. Smith, Cllr. Cadd and the Town Clerk. It was agreed that any future editions of newsletters should be of a better quality.

Cllr. Smith suggested that it may be better if the annual report and the newsletters were two separate documents but the Town clerk and some members felt that two documents would be more difficult on this occasions due to the hand delivery scheduled with assistance from the Youth Centre.

**RESOLVED** that the quote for £773.00 from bcq be accepted for 5200 8 page A4 full colour 150gsm gloss magazine stitched in the middle.

**153/00 Chairman’s Announcements**

There were no Chairman’s Announcements at this meeting.

**154/00 Date of Next Meeting:** Monday 3rd August 2009

**COMMITTEE IN PRIVATE SESSION**

**155/09 Exclusion of Public and Press**

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

Signed ..... Date .....