

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON MONDAY 31ST MARCH 2008 AT 7PM**

PRESENT

Councillors

T. Bloomfield
H. Cadd
P. Collins (Chairman)
D. Isham
A. Mahi
H. Mordue
R. Newell
M. Smith
R. Stuchbury
W. Whyte
M. Try

Town Clerk

Ms P. J. Heath

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs. Mrs. G. Collins, P. Hiron, R. Lehmann and Mrs. P. Stevens.

375/2008 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of personal interest were made by Cllr. Smith and Cllr. Whyte as Trustees of the Buckingham Heritage Trust in respect of item 13 on the agenda "To receive notification of use of Buckingham Heritage Trust 'Corporate Benefactor' logo by the Town Council".

376/2008 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Members accepted the minutes of the last meeting held on 14th January 2008, which were ratified by Full Council on 25th February 2008.

377/2008 ACTION REPORTS AND UPDATES AS PER ATTACHED LIST

Members noted the action reports and updates sent with the agenda.

378/2008 QUALITY PARISH COUNCIL – UPDATE ON THE REVIEW

The Town Clerk explained to Members that the Quality Parish Council review which had been due out the previous week had been delayed again.

379/2008 BUDGET REVIEWS

379.1 To review Finance and Administration Committee budgets

The Clerk explained that the spreadsheets had not been available prior to the meeting. Members noted the information on the spreadsheets. The year end accounts were being prepared and these would be available prior to the next Finance and Administration Committee Meeting.

379.2 To review all Committee budgets

Members noted the figures on the spreadsheet. The Town Clerk explained that the out turn at year end is expected to be similar to the figures projected at precept.

379.3 To discuss the final accounts of Circular Walk Project

The Town Clerk explained the problems that had been associated with the funding reconciliation between the figures produced by the Community Plan's treasurer, the Community Plans Project Manager, and the actual amounts paid from the Circular Walk account. The Town Clerk explained that part of the problem was the lack of information and figures on the proportion of the funding that had been paid direct by BCC to itself. The Project review is due in July and as part of that a full auditable set of accounts would be required; the Clerk to work with Mr. Gadd to get the accounts available as soon as possible.

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK

379.4 To discuss the outcomes on Council budgets

It was noted that the Events Committee had undertaken a complete review of their budgets with a view to reallocating all balances. The Clerk's earlier comments were noted.

380/2008 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS

The draft review of the standing orders had been circulated with the agenda; these were discussed at great length by the Members before **recommending** them to Council with the following adjustments. (The following numbers relate to the draft standing orders as circulated.)

11.2 and **11.3** relating to the timing of the acceptance of the Committee minutes. It was noted that the minutes should be agreed by the following Committee meeting before being ratified by the Council. The Town Clerk explained in detail how this was discussed by the Council in the past and the current system evolved of the Committee Chairman presenting them to the Committee Members at the following Council meeting before they are then ratified at that meeting. Concern was expressed that not all Committee Members were at the Council meeting and therefore could not respond on the accuracy of the minutes although these are sent in advance of the Council meeting to all Members.

Members discussed how the system would work in practice and the problems it might create in extending the action time to items of 'recommendation'. Minutes of the meeting would be noted at the next Full Council but could not be discussed as they had not been agreed by the Committee, the Committee would agree them at its next meeting 7 weeks later, then they would be presented to the Council for ratification. The Town Clerk explained that the Committee can only agree the

minutes and it was only the Council who could ratify them; action on 'recommendations' would have to wait until they were ratified.

Members felt that the Terms of Reference for each committee should be revised to allow Committees to make decisions and reduce the number of items for 'recommendation'. The Financial Regulations should also be reviewed to reflect the draft standing order changes

Proposed by Cllr. Mordue, seconded by Cllr. Cadd, that clauses 11.2, 11.3 are withdrawn from the draft standing orders and the status quo remain. This was defeated by 6 votes to 4.

1.1.3 Proposed by Cllr. Smith, seconded by Cllr. Whyte, and **AGREED** by 10 votes to 0 to take out the word "only" and include the words "and any standing committee recommendations".

13.1 to include the words "before the vote is taken" at the end of the draft standing order.

13.3 to include the words "including those abstaining from voting".

15.1 & 15.2 relate to the new code of conduct section 12 (2) as adopted by the Town Council.

24.1 It was confirmed that the quorum was in line with legal requirements.

Members discussed the terminology used in the standing orders in respect of the title of Chairman.

Proposed by Cllr. Newell, seconded by Cllr. Stuchbury, that the standing orders be changed to read 'Chair' instead of 'Chairman'.

An amendment was proposed by Cllr. Collins, seconded by Cllr. Whyte, that the draft standing orders should be altered by replacing the word "Chairman" with "Chair (Man/Woman/Person)"; this was defeated by 7 votes to 3.

A second amendment was proposed by Cllr. Mordue, seconded by Cllr. Cadd, that the draft standing orders are amended to include a new clause "3.2 the person presiding at the meeting shall be addressed in their preferred manner". This was **AGREED** by 7 votes to 2; and as the substantive motion by 7 votes to 2.

1.2 Members discussed the wording and the current practice in respect of the Planning Council meetings. The current standing orders state Council meetings shall take place after Planning meetings but planning had since moved to its own night instead of with the Full Council meeting and the Interim meeting always preceded the planning meeting when held on the same night.

Proposed by Cllr. Whyte, seconded by Cllr. Smith, that clause 1.2 in the draft standing orders is removed. This was agreed by 8 votes to 0.

10.1.1 The word 'report' is changed to 'minute'.

18.1 The word 'obtained' is changed to 'sought' and that the limit for closed tenders is raised to £5000.

8.7 The clause on the proposing and seconding of motion 8(g) on the current standing orders to be included; this had been missed on the draft standing orders.

It was **AGREED** that Cllr. Smith and Cllr. Collins would review the Financial Regulations and bring a draft to the next meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee.

ACTION CLLR. SMITH, CLLR. COLLINS

It was **AGREED** that each Committee Chairman should review their Terms of Reference to be discussed at a Chairmen's Strategy Meeting before being agreed by each Committee for recommendation to Full Council.

ACTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

381/2008 TO REVIEW THE HOURS WORKED BY THE OFFICE STAFF 2007 – 2008; TO AGREE PAYMENT OF TIME IN LIEU FOR THE TOWN CLERK AND DEPUTY TOWN CLERK; TO DISCUSS WORKING ARRANGEMENTS AS FROM 1ST APRIL 2008 IN RESPECT OF TIME IN LIEU.

Proposed by Cllr. Collins, seconded by Cllr. Smith, and **AGREED** by 9 votes to 0 to pay the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk for all hours outstanding of Time in Lieu up to and including 31st March 2008.

Members discussed the office workload and the effective way of using the staff and available man-hours.

It was **AGREED** the Chairmen's Strategy Group would meet with the Clerk to discuss the division of work within the office and how future workloads could be managed; a written report would be prepared by the Chairmen for the next Finance and Administration Committee Meeting

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK/ALL COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

382/2008 TO DISCUSS THE INSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MILITARY SILVER BEING LOANED FOR THE MAYOR'S RECEPTION.

The Clerk had not received a response to a request for details of the Silver to be insured and the approximate value; this information was required by the Insurers before giving a price for the week's insurance.

Proposed by Cllr. Try, seconded by Cllr. Bloomfield, and agreed by 7 votes to 0 that the Town Clerk is authorised to insure the regimental silver which is being loaned up to a budget amount of £500 from contingencies.

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK

383/2008 TO DISCUSS AND REVIEW THE TOWN COUNCIL'S EMAIL ADDRESSES AND THE SERVER PROVISION.

Members discussed the action taken by the Town Clerk when Virgin.net gave notice to close the email accounts.

Proposed by Cllr. Collins, seconded by Cllr. Whyte, and **AGREED** by 8 votes to 0 that the Council should acquire the URL of "Buckingham.gov.uk" and that the

Council's web site should also use this URL. Cllr. Try would provide the Town Clerk with detailed instructions on obtaining the URL, and the seamless transfer of the server and address.

Proposed by Cllr. Collins, seconded by Cllr. Isham, and **AGREED** that Cllr. Try would provide an action flow chart and the Clerk, with Cllr. Try, purchase the domain name Buckingham.gov.uk up to a cost of £200 from the contingency budget.

ACTION CLLR. TRY

384/2008 TO REVIEW THE WEB SITE SPECIFICATION, MAKE ANY AMENDMENTS AND AGREE CRITERIA FOR TENDER INVITEES.

Members discussed the specification and agreed that due to the above minute adjustments to specification need to be made. Members also discussed the formation of an email, internet and access policy.

It was agreed to form a working group to look at both the above items and provide detailed recommendations and specifications to the Council on the Email provider, Web Server, Web site provider and the policies on email, access and internet usage.

ACTION CLLR. WHYTE, CLLR. TRY, CLLR. ISHAM, CLLR. COLLINS

385/2008 TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF AMENDMENTS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME CHANGES

Members noted the changes to the scheme that come into effect from 1st April 2008.

386/2008 TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF USE OF BUCKINGHAM HERITAGE TRUST 'CORPORATE BENEFACTOR' LOGO BY THE TOWN COUNCIL

Members noted the offer from Buckingham Heritage Trust and **AGREED** to use the logo.

It was felt that the headed notepaper design should be amended to incorporate the logo when the new email addresses were added.

387/2008 CHAIRMAN'S ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

387.1 Institute of Local Council Management

Members were informed that the Town Clerk had been appointed to the Institute of Local Council Management which entitled her to use the letters MILCM after her name. Members felt that the Council should decide if the Clerk could use the letters on the official note head.

Meeting closed at 9.45 pm.

CHAIRMAN DATE