

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purpose Committee held on Monday 19 May 2008. Meeting commenced at 6.00 pm.

Present Chairman: Cllr J Capel
Cllrs M Cole, Mrs C Binns, P Davies, M Hewitt, M Taylor and Ms Hazell

Officer: Mrs Janet Holmes

518. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs P J Adams and S Tilbey

519. Election of Committee Chairman and Vice Chairman for the forthcoming council cycle

Proposed by Cllr Davies, seconded by Cllr Mrs Binns

AGREED that Cllr John Capel be the Chairman of the Finance and General Purpose Committee for the ensuing year

Proposed by Cllr Davies, seconded by Cllr Hewitt

AGREED that Cllr Mark Taylor be the Vice Chairman of the Finance and General Purpose Committee for the ensuing year

520. Declarations of interest

Members were asked to declare any personal interest and the nature of that interest which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting

521. Public Forum

None present.

522. To receive the minutes of the meetings held on 7 April 2008

The minutes were duly approved and signed as a true record by the Chairman of the Committee.

523. Terms of Reference

Councillors considered the Terms of Reference of the Committee and AGREED that no change be made. It was further AGREED that each Committee should be asked to review their Terms of Reference each year.

Cllr Capel brought to the meeting's attention the fact that Cllr Cole had signed a document regarding the hall's rebuild programme without due authority. Discussion took place on the role of councillors. Concern was expressed that councillors should not give instructions or commit the council to expenditure without such actions being authorised by the Council. It was agreed that all correspondence should go via the Parish Office with the Clerk, as the Proper Officer, being the only person able to sign documents on the council's behalf.

AGREED that

1. Cllr Capel should speak with Cllr Tilbey to see if he had authorised the action
2. Cllrs Capel, Taylor and Davies should meet with Cllr Tilbey to discuss what other commitments had been made

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6.50 pm Cllr Davies left the meeting
Cllr Cole joined the meeting

Cllr Capel informed Cllr Cole of the content of the previous discussion.
Cllr Cole agreed that he should not have signed the document and that he would obtain an amended copy to be resigned.

524. To receive information from the Halls Committee regarding an update of the available finances for the building project

1. AGREED that the Council's feasibility plan should be audited by an outsider before being offered for approval by the Full Council at the meeting on 16 June

2. It was noted that the next meeting of the Halls Committee, set for 4 June, would agree the external and internal designs to be submitted to South Bucks District Council

3. The architects should receive a "letter of comfort" from the planning officer during the course of the forthcoming week. This would state that the District Council felt that the outline plan was acceptable

7.pm Cllr Hewitt left the meeting

Cllr Capel distributed information from the feasibility study and business plan showing how the funds would be raised. £1.5 m from the Public Works Loans Board with £400,000 from reserves. Cllr Cole suggested that these figures could reach £2.3 m
Cllr Capel was still remodelling the information and the finished document would be available by 3 June.

AGREED that the parish council should seek estimates for the full size of the building. If we cannot afford it, then estimates for the most square footage we can afford

It was noted the Parish Council had agreed to apply for a loan of £1.5 m and this could not be increased

AGREED that Cllrs Cole, Taylor, Tilbey and Capel meet informally to discuss the finance arrangements. Clerk to attend

524. To consider the agreement of a "Council Mission Statement" or a "Council's Driving Principles"

Cllr Capel suggested that the Parish Council should agree a "mission statement" or similar. He suggested possible words being

The Council exists to serve the people of Burnham

*It will provide the residents with a channel to express their needs concerns and priorities
It will act as a catalyst for improvement and enhancement of the quality of life for people who live, work or visit Burnham*

It will represent the views of the local residents.

The guiding principles are:

1. *Communication and consultation*
2. *Civic and Community Leadership*
3. *Provision of Local facilities*
4. *Community Development*

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AGREED that this be an agenda item for the Full Council

525. Financial Matters

a] To note the comments of the District Auditor regarding the financial statement of 2006/7

The external auditor, UHY Hacker Young LLP, had completed the audit for the council year ended 31 March 2007. He had drawn to the council's attention that [at that time]

“ No formal risk assessment was completed during the year”

“The council does not have in place a formal asset register to record and control assets. It is recommended that such a register be prepared”

AGREED that a number of risk assessments should be discussed at the next Finance and General Purpose meeting

b] To note that the Council's accounts and records for 2007/08 will be reviewed by the Internal Auditor on 3 June 2008.

Information Noted

c] To note the financial statement for 2007/8 which will be presented to the Full Council for approval on 16 June 2008.

An advance copy of the information to be presented to the Internal Auditor and the Full Council meeting on 16 June was distributed to the meeting. Information Noted

It was suggested that the Parish Council should review, on a regular basis, where its funds are invested and move them for the best perceived interest rate.

d]. To note that the Parish Council will be receiving a VAT inspection on 29/30 May 2008.

Information noted

e] To consider the engagement of Mr A Harland on a monthly basis to assist with the ongoing monitoring and updating of the Council's financial records.

Mr Harland is already contracted to assist with the end of year returns.

AGREED

1. That with the reduction in hall bookings during the next year, the amount of finance work could be accommodated by the existing staff.

2. To review the matter when the halls are operational again

526. Part 2 Staffing

To receive the recommendation of the Staffing Sub-Committee re the change of contracts for the Council's grounds staff. See confidential report

AGREED unanimously that the recommendations of the Staffing Sub Committee be accepted. Clerk to write to staff with the proposed scheme

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8.40 pm