

**Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council**

**Draft Minutes of the Guildhall Committee held on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2013 at 5.30pm in the Committee Room at the Old Abbey House, Abingdon-on-Thames**

Present:

Cllr Iain Littlejohn	Chairman
Cllr Marilyn Badcock	Vice Chairman
Cllr Lesley Legge	
Cllr Kate Nobes	
Cllr Alison Rooke	
Cllr Sandy Lovatt	Leader of the Council

In attendance:

Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer	
Mr Nigel Warner	Town Clerk (Clerk to the meeting)
Mrs Karan Webb	Guildhall Supervisor

G107 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from the Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames, Cllr Monica Lovatt.

G108 **Declarations of Interest**

None

G109 **Minutes**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the meeting of the Guildhall Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2013.

**Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting of the Guildhall Committee held on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2013 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

G110 **Matters Arising**

None.

G111 **Date of next meeting and calendar of meetings.**

It was noted that there would be a special briefing for Members regarding charitable status, on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2013 at 5 pm. The calendar of meetings for 2013/14 had been agreed by the Council and the next Committee meeting was due to take place on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2013.

G112 **Manager's report**

It was reported that unfortunately the Manager was unable to attend the meeting and The Guildhall Supervisor, Mrs Karan Webb, updated the meeting on a number of matters.

**Events** It had been anticipated that attendance at Guildhall-organised events would be slow to build up but had nonetheless been a little disappointing. Approximately 50 people had attended the Beatles Tribute night and approximately 90 people had attended Rumpelstiltskin. However the numbers attending the Comedy Night in the Roysse Room were encouraging, with 75 at the March evening.

The portable sound system had been purchased but this did not include induction loop equipment. The Guildhall Supervisor stated that this would cost an additional £350. Members considered that the addition of this facility was important and **resolved** that the induction loop equipment be purchased accordingly, to be funded from the appropriate equipment budget.

The Supervisor reported that following complaints from neighbours regarding noise emanating from the Abbey Hall at a function, she had met with an officer from the District Council. He was content with the action being taken by the Council and matters were being kept under review.

G113 **Exclusion of the Public including the Press**

The Chairman moved and it was **resolved**:

That in accordance with section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

G114 **Confidential appendix to the meeting of 4<sup>th</sup> March 2013**

The Committee received and considered the confidential appendix to the minutes of the meeting of the Guildhall Committee held on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2013.

The Chairman informed Members that he had asked Cllr Kate Nobes to assist with the work in relation to the office move to Roysse Court, as she could bring her professional skills to this matter to the benefit of the Council.

**Resolved:** that the confidential appendix to the minutes of the meeting of the Guildhall Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2013 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

G115 **Guildhall Development and Improvements**

The Chairman of the Committee, Cllr Iain Littlejohn, stated that the architectural plans for the Guildhall Phase Two development had been approved by the Council at its meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2013 and during April there would be a period of public engagement. The process had been called public engagement to differentiate it from the consultation which would be part of the later formal planning process.

The Chairman tabled the public engagement schedule that he had produced, as attached to these minutes.

The officers and the architects would be working on the various materials which would be produced for the engagement. These would include display boards, handouts and leaflets. In accordance with the previous resolution, approval of these materials was delegated to the Project team. Project team, consisting of the Chairman of the Guildhall Committee, Cllr Iain Littejohn; Cllr Alison Rooke (opposition member); the Town Clerk; and the Guildhall Manager.

In considering the schedule the following were discussed/ noted:

- The date for the press briefing was indicative and not final. Cllr Littlejohn had already spoken to Radio Oxford.
- Members were welcome at the various briefings/ meetings.
- There was no specific event planned for the schools. It was intended that they be brought in after the main engagement events. A Member suggested using the Vale Youth Forum. The Chairman considered that they should be brought in to the process, but that there needed to be engagement with younger people beyond that group. A suggestion was made that materials could also at that later time be made available at the Abingdon Bridge and the Foyer.
- There were specific meetings planned with the neighbours, current and potential facility users, the Vale Disability Group and staff. These briefings would attempt to address some of the specific issues and questions for these groups. Members emphasised that disability issues wider than mobility should be considered.
- There were four “road show” sessions planned, to bring the plans to the public on stalls set-up in the Market Place and outside Tescos (Marcham Road) and Waitrose. It was noted that Tescos were asking for a fee of £300 for each of the two days for the stall, and the Committee approved this payment. However on further investigation it became clear that there was a misunderstanding and that no fee was payable, although it was not possible to sell the “Music in the Park” tickets in these circumstances.
- Materials should be made available at the Library.
- There would be two public meetings in the Abbey Hall.
- Members requested that materials be made available both via a website and also in paper form, and that all materials subscribe to the principles of “plain English.”

It was **resolved** that the public engagement schedule be approved.

Members reviewed the questionnaire which had been drafted by the Chairman, and the following comments were made for incorporation in to the final draft. The final draft is attached to these minutes.

- Question 2: rank the priorities for the development from 1 to 3.
- Question 4: There was a discussion against question 4 regarding whether specific options should be suggested or whether this should be an open question with free text allowed. Members agreed to include both formats, and to include an option against sporting events.
- Question 6: Produce as a table showing what each option would offer against the four project objectives.
- Question 7: An option to “phase the improvements with the first stage using the funding of £1.00 mi which it is anticipated is already available” should be offered.
- Question 7. A Member felt that this question seemed somewhat negative. However it was agreed that this should be asked, but reworded if possible. Personal information: add question to ask if representing a group, club or society.

Members were content with the questionnaire, subject to the above, and **resolved** that authority be delegated to the Project Team to approve the questionnaire for publication.

It was noted that previously a sum of £2,000 had been indicated towards the costs of the public engagement materials. The Town Clerk stated that this budget was modest and there may be a need for additional budget.

Members **approved** a budget of £2,000 for the public engagement, this to include a sum of £550 for a dedicated Project website. However Members did not feel that the proposed video (approximate cost of £750) should be commissioned.

The meeting rose at 7.01 pm.