

WALLINGFORD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES

of the

Finance and Properties Committee Meeting held in the Council Offices,
Wallingford on Wednesday 7th August 2019

P R E S E N T

The Mayor, Councillor Upcraft

Councillors Beauchamp, Cattermole, Dolton, Kidley and Whelan

The Town Clerk, Mrs Paula Lopez
The Responsible Finance Officer, Miss Michelle Taylor

170. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

To elect a Chairman for the 2019/2020 Municipal Year.

Proposed by Councillor Kidley, Seconded by Councillor Whelan and

RESOLVED

THAT Councillor Dolton is elected Chairman of the Finance and Properties Committee for the 2019/2020 Municipal Year.

171. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors McGregor and Wilder.

172. ADMISSION OF THE PUBLIC

Members considered and it was Proposed by the Mayor, Seconded by Councillor Whelan and

RESOLVED: THAT in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as amended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the Meeting during consideration of the following items on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public's interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted: -

Agenda Items 21: Castle Lodge & 22: Town Hall Office Space

173. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

A Councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in our Council's Standing Orders code of Conduct (Item 13) in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under code of

conduct and his right to participate and vote on the matter (guidelines are available at the meeting and all Councillors have received a copy prior to the meeting)

Agenda 9 Grants: Councillor Whelan and Councillor Dolton declared that they worked with the Wallingford Assessable Boat Club and BunkFest respectively but neither had any pecuniary interest. It was therefore decided that they would take part in the grant allocation agenda item to avoid the meeting being inquorate.

174. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION –NOTIFIED AND IMPROMPTU (Total 15 Minutes)

Mrs Suzanne Symons, Town Hall Events Manager had distributed a copy of her report prior to the meeting and she summarised this for Members, showing them photographs and giving them an overview what other town councils are charging for events. Mrs Symons explained why she believed the charges should be increased.

Members were extremely impressed with the progress and stated that Mrs Symons should ensure that she claims for any items that she bought for events.

1906 Hours – Here Councillor Beauchamp arrived.

175. TERMS OF REFERENCE

To note the terms of reference for this committee.

**Noted and Proposed by Councillor Kidley, Seconded by Councillor Whelan
RESOLVED: THAT no changes are needed to the Terms of Reference for Finance and Properties.**

176. MINUTES

To sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 1st April 2019 as set out on pages 264 - 268 of the Minute Book, copy previously circulated to members.

**Proposed by The Mayor, Seconded by Councillor Dolton and
RESOLVED: THAT the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 1st April 2019 as set out on pages 264-268 of the Minute Book, copy previously circulated to members, copy attached to the Minute Book.**

177. THE RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORTS

i) Bills Schedules for April, May and June 2019.

**It was Proposed by Councillor Whelan, Seconded by Kidley and
RESOLVED: THAT the schedule of bills paid in April 2019, May 2019 and June 2019 be received and the action of The Responsible Finance Officer in paying same is confirmed.**

ii) Quarter 1 Accounts - **It was Proposed by the Mayor, Seconded by Councillor Whelan and**

RESOLVED: THAT that the Quarter 1 Accounts ending the 30th June 2019, copy attached to the minute book be received and approved.

iii) Aged Debtors – The Responsible Finance Officer reported that there were no aged debtors. Members were very pleased with this report and thanked The Responsible Finance Officer.

178. GRANTS

a) Allocation For 2019/2020 - £1,500 - The Responsible Finance Officer reported on the available money.

b) Grant Applications: Members considered the grant applications and it was Proposed by Councillor Whelan, Seconded by Councillor Cattermole and RESOLVED: THAT the grant amounts awarded are as follows:

i) Sue Ryder South Oxfordshire Palliative Car Hub - £200

ii) Pebbles Story - £200 but before the grant is confirmed to Pebbles, the Responsible Finance Officer and The Town Clerk are to check the Council's policy with respect to the request from Pebbles to see if it meets the criteria. If not then any surplus grant money should be held over pending other applications later in the year.

iii) Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire - £200

iv) BunkFest - £200

v) Agatha Christie Weekend - £150

vi) ENRYCH (Used to be called Ryder-Cheshire) - £200

vii) Wallingford Assessable Boat Club Funding - £200

c) Allocation for 2020/2021 – Members discussed applications for next year and concluded that it would be better to set a deadline each financial year and invite applications to be heard at the first meeting of the committee.

179. TO CONSIDER THE RATE OF COMMISSION THE TOWN INFORMATION CENTRE CHARGES FOR SERVICES/SALES

Minute 634/04/2019 refers. Members considered the attached proposal regarding rates of commission. It was Proposed by Councillor Dolton, Seconded Councillor Beauchamp and **RESOLVED: THAT with immediate effect the Town Council's Commission Charges are as follows:**

Local Ticket Sales – No Charge

Non Local Ticket Sales – 10% Commission

Sale and Return Greeting Cards – 5%

Sale and Return Goods/Books – 10%

Action: Instructions to be given to the Town Information Centre to charge commission as above.

180. TRANSFER OF FUNDS BETWEEN THE WALLINGFORD TOWN COUNCIL AND BULL CROFT TRUST CHARITY BANK ACCOUNTS

The Responsible Finance Officer explained that money needs to be transferred from Wallingford Town Council bank account to the Bull Croft Trust account from time to time and requested that approval be given for the Responsible Finance Officer to transfer the required amount of money when needed. It has been discovered that the Bull Croft Trust Account currently owes the Town Council Account and therefore a similar request would be made to the trust. **It was Proposed by Cllr Kidley, Seconded by Councillor Dolton and RESOLVED:**

THAT as and when required and subject to the necessary authorisation, the Responsible Finance Officer may transfer money between the accounts.

Going forward the required transfers will be made on a more regular basis.

181. CHURCH CLOCK

Members discussed the payments made in respect of the Church Clock (Town Clock) and in particular a contribution towards the electricity used that was awarded in the past. The Responsible Finance Officer reported that a company in Coventry had the contract to service the clock once a year at a cost of £198 however last year £2131.30 had been spent on the clock as it needed the internal mechanism changed. There had been other small issues not least that the curfew chimes were continually out of sync. This was believed to be caused in part by the bell ringers turning the bell of the clock off to avoid it chiming when they were practising. An Officer from the office met with all concerned in order to resolve this. A meeting with the Town Clerk was requested by the Church and the Reverend Rice and Church Warden Roger Morgan asked that they be given £530 per year for the electricity for the running of the clock, as previously agreed in the past and that it be backdated for the last 3 years. However this agreement could not be found. This money was previously given as a grant under S137 which can no longer be used. Grant funding has been greatly reduced these last few years and there is less money to award. Members discussed and it was agreed that they were happy to contribute to the electricity but that the cost would not be as much as £530 per year. The Responsible Finance Officer advised that it appeared the £530 was not just for clock's electricity but also for repairs and use of the Church for Civic functions. The Town Council is prevented from contributing to Church repairs but is happy, in addition to a reasonable contribution for clock's electricity to pay for the use of the Church for Civic functions as and when used at the same rate that is charged for other adhoc bookings in relation to meetings. Members agreed however that any payment could not be back dated.

Action: The Town Clerk to contact the Reverend Rice and Roger Morgan for a realistic cost for the electricity and to formally advise the Church of the above.

182. FRIENDS OF READING ABBEY

The Town Clerk appraised Members of a donation (£40) received in respect of repairs to Wallingford Town Hall. The Mayor to write a letter to the Friends of Reading Abbey to thank them for their kind donation towards the cost of repairs to Wallingford's Town Hall. The Responsible Finance Officer reported that a separate nominal code had been set up to record this donation.

Action: Mayor to write to Friends of Reading Abbey

183. TOWN HALL WEDDINGS

i) Members considered The Town Hall Events Manager's report. Members thanked the Event Manager for her very clear report and for her dedication and the time she had given to this along with collecting personal items such as vintage tea sets. Whilst some of these items were obtained at no cost some were paid for personally by her. Members stated that

she must always claim expenses for money spent on behalf of the town council and must not be 'out of pocket'.

ii) Members considered an increase in charges for hiring the Town Hall for events and weddings and it was **Recommended by Cllr Whelan and Proposed by Cllr Cattermole that the increase in all charges for the events in the town hall be taken to Full Council for approval.**

184. WEEDS IN THE RIVER BY THE BOATHOUSE

The Town Clerk reported that there had been a complaint regarding weeds in the river outside of the Boat House. Councillor Prunier met with two companies and received quotes of £1,000 from each company for removal of the weeds but this did not include the disposal of the removed weeds. Councillor Cattermole kindly offered to remove the weeds at no charge and Councillor Prunier had said that he could probably get together volunteers to help. However due to the recent rains it would appear that the weeds have subsided and there have been no complaints of late. Therefore, it was decided that no action is required imminently but the situation will be monitored.

Action: Monitor weeds in river

185. PARTY WALL SURVEY FOR 10/11 AND 12 ST MARTINS STREET

Members had received a copy of the Party Wall Award and advised the Town Clerk that no action was required.

186. 9 ST MARTIN'S STREET – TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES

The Town Clerk appraised members of the quotation to repair the sash windows in the Town Council office. Members discussed and decided that the rendering around the windows externally was more urgent and that the Town Clerk should proceed with this repair. The Mayor stated that it was time to make a decision of the future of this building and to put this as an agenda item at the next council meeting.

Action: 9 St Martin's Street to go on Full Council agenda

187. FASTCENTRAL LTD (ST MARTIN'S STREET)

The Town Clerk appraised Members of her concerns regarding the lease agreement with Fastcentral Ltd in that it appeared that Fast Central Ltd were in breach of the lease granted originally by Wallingford Town Council to Greytown Ltd which was then purchased by Fastcentral Ltd.

Action: The Town Clerk was instructed to ask the council's solicitors for advice.

188. SUMMER HANGING BASKETS

Councillor Dolton advised that he has been concerned by the practise undertaken by the Parks Staff watering the plants during the summer season by the Parks Staff and the safety issues resulting from this. The Office had made enquiries regarding outsourcing the hanging

baskets and had found a contractor who would be able to supply, water and maintain hanging baskets.

A discussion took place and the Town clerk was instructed to inform the Park's Foreman that the Council had concerns over the health and safety aspect of water the hanging baskets and that they were considering outsourcing.

Action: The Town Clerk to speak to the Parks Foreman and to be an agenda item at the next Personnel Committee meeting.

189. MOORING

i) **Collection Times** – The Town Clerk appraised Members of the temporary change in collection times for the mooring fees. The trial period has not finished yet but the mooring money that has been collected late afternoon/early evening indicates that the cost of the staff salary outweighs the benefit of loss of income from the boats that leave early in the morning before the fees are collected. It was decided that fees should be collected in the mornings only going forward but over Bunkfest the mooring collector should be asked to collect in the afternoon and evening as well.

It was noted that any significant changes to the mooring contract/policy would need to go before SODC Cabinet.

Councillor Whelan advised that herself, Councillor Cattermole and Councillor Prunier had met to discuss loss of mooring revenue and other river related problems and suggestions but these will be reported the next Full Council meeting.

ii) **Henley Town Council** – Councillor Beatty was not present at the meeting to update Members on his conversation with Henley Town Council in respect of having a robust collection process in place. Therefore this item is deferred however it will be discussed at the Tourism and Economic Development meeting on the 12th August 2019.

190. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Future of 9 St Martin's Street
Mooring
Precept

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