

Amersham Town Council

Flint Barn Court, Church Street, Amersham, Bucks HP7 0DB

TOWN CLERK: MRS J WHEELER, CILCA MILCM

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 11 AUGUST 2014

PRESENT: Councillor M. Vivis (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs L. Walsh (Town Mayor)
Councillor Mrs A. Lamont (Deputy Town Mayor)
Councillor Mrs V. Head
Councillor H. Newton
Councillor M. J. Phillips
Councillor H. Trevette

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs J Wheeler – Town Clerk

27. **APOLOGIES:** Apologies were received from Cllrs T. Williams; A. Seymour; Mrs J. Heydon, M. Lacey and Mrs D. Allen.

28. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
There were no Declarations of Interest.

29. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE APPROVED MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 16 JUNE 2014:** There were no matters arising.

30. **FINANCE MATTERS:** To approve the following:
(i) Income and Expenditure for the period ending 30 June 2014
(ii) Cash flow as at 30 June 2014
(iii) Balance sheet as at 30 June 2014
(iv) Accounts paid to 30 June 2014

It was	Proposed	Councillor M. J. Phillips
	Seconded	Councillor H. Trevette

RECOMMENDED to:
Approve the financial reports for June 2014.

31. **TO REVIEW THE CHANGES ON THE FINANCIAL REGULATIONS:** The Clerk went through the major changes in the new Financial regulations as approved by NALC. The main changes discussed were:

- * Standing Order 38 e and f – to increase the Imprest Account to £800;
- * Financial Reg 1.14 Council must approve any grant or single commitment in excess of £25,000; a delegated Committee can approve items over £2,500 but not over £25,000; the Town Clerk in consultation with the Mayor or Committee may approve items up to £2,500;
- * On-line banking arrangements
- * Personal credit or debit cards of staff or Members must not be used under any circumstances
- * Council need to draw up an Investment Strategy and Policy

* Tenders from at least three firms to be invited for contracts worth over £60,000
It was AGREED to adopt the amended Standing Orders and revised Financial Regulations.
Cllr Newton congratulated the Town Clerk for going through the detail of these regulations.

32. TO APPROVE THE USE OF ON-LINE TRANSFERS TO REPLACE CHEQUES WHERE APPROPRIATE AND WITHIN THE AGREED CONTROLS OF THE NEW REGULATIONS:

The Town Clerk introduced a process that maintains a robust system of controls, checks and greater transparency using the on-line system of making payments rather than the old system of raising cheques. ATC's bank had been consulted and the bank mandate of two Councillor signatures plus the Town Clerk or Deputy would remain in the new system. The TC report gives a summary of the proposed system. The Councillors were in favour of the on-line banking but were cautious about using their computers from home to sign off a schedule of payments. It was AGREED to trial the system for six months and Councillors could choose to come into the office and approve the payments using the ATC computers. This would combat the risk of viruses and would be relatively easy to do before a Council Meeting.

ACTION: JW/AA

33. TO APPROVE THE ADDITIONAL WORKS ON FLINT BARN: The initial works to remove the office screens on the main floor at Flint Barn had been completed at a cost of £3,200. However, while the dusty work was being done it made sense to reduce down the Comms Room to make the best use of the space for the coming Arts Festival. This – along with general decoration – has increased the invoice by £2,704. It was AGREED to approve the extra work.

ACTION: JW

34. TO DISCUSS THE USE FOR BOLLARDS IN FLINT BARN COURTYARD AND POSSIBLE COSTINGS:

The Councillors had approved additional CCTV cameras in the Courtyard along with improved outside lighting and signage. The Town Clerk was concerned that there was a danger that a child dropped off for classes in the Church Rooms was at risk of being knocked over by cars entering the Courtyard. After much discussion, Councillors voted against the bollards but wanted to see what the signage and lighting would do to warn car-users to take care of pedestrians. It was suggested that movement sensitive lighting could help.

ACTION: JW

35. TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE SIGNAGE IN THE COURTYARD: Following on from the previous item, the Councillors suggested the Clerk to talk to a car parking consultant for correct legal wording.

ACTION: JW

36. TO DISCUSS THE INDEPENDENT HELP WITH BUDGET SETTING: DCK Beavers was offering to help with the annual budget setting. The Town Clerk felt that it would be a good exercise to get a fresh eye on the budgeting after all the recent changes of property and renovations. We could also use the professional to advise us on the financial management of the Depot services and taking over devolved services. The Councillors AGREED to engage the services of DCK Beavers for one year at a cost of £450 plus mileage and vat.

ACTION: JW

37. TO CONSIDER COMMENTS ON A RECENT APPLICATION TO REGISTER THE FREEHOLD INTEREST ON LAND ADJOINING THE NEW RECTORY, CHURCH ST, AMERSHAM:

The Councillors were confused as to why the Church would want to register the freehold interest. It was AGREED to object to the application and to talk to the estates departments at both CDC and Bucks CC.

ACTION: JW

38. **UP-DATE ON MEETING TO DISCUSS THE DEVOLUTION WITH PARISHES:** We had representatives from 11 parish councils and Bucks County Council. Notes of the meeting have been circulated to all Councillors. Mark stated that we currently carry out devolved works for Gerrards Cross Parish Council and, under the current establishment we have the capacity to do work for Fulmer; Coleshill and Penn. The parishes were asked to be quite specific as to the length of the verges and hedgerow and to what standard. Some verges may not be so high a profile as others so the frequency of the cuts could be tailored to what the parishes wanted. ATC Councillors were keen to help the smaller parishes and requested that Mark must offer to help them with their specification. Bucks need to know about who wishes to take on the work by early September. ACTION: MR/JW

39. **CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL MATTERS:** Nothing new to report.

40. **BUCKS COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS:** Nothing new to report.

41. **MATTERS FOR REPORT:** There was a request for funding from the Buckinghamshire Guild of Spinners and Weavers Association as they are celebrating their Silver Jubilee. The Councillors felt that as the exhibition was not being held in Amersham so it was not correct to make a payment on this occasion.

Part two

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

That under Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admissions to meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they include the likely disclosure of exempt information, stated to be confidential.

42. **ITEM CONCERNING ATC PROPERTY**

The meeting closed at 21.00pm.

Chairman.....

Date

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