

Amersham Town Council

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 15 APRIL 2024

PRESENT:

Councillor D Pinkney (Deputy Town Mayor)
Councillor E Shepherd (Town Mayor)
Councillor M Roberts (Vice Chair)
Councillor J Barnes
Councillor M Flys
Councillor A Lamont
Councillor H Maitland-Jones
Councillor P Milliner

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs E Richardson - Town Clerk Finance & Policy
Mr S Catanach – Town Clerk Community Services & Engagement
12 Amersham in Bloom Volunteers

60. APOLOGIES:

Councillor M Dormer
Councillor Mrs V Head

61. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

62. OPEN SESSION

Following a previous discussion between Cllr Pinkney and the Bloom volunteer group, twelve of the volunteers attended the F & GP meeting to voice their objection to the proposed purchase of additional town signs, particularly in regard to the intended wording for the signs, which they felt did not reflect the community spirit of the Amersham in Bloom initiative.

63. PURCHASE OF 'FLOWER CAPITAL OF BUCKS' TOWN SIGNS

As a result of his discussion with the Amersham in Bloom group on 10 April, Cllr Pinkney suggested that the wording of the signs should be reviewed. The process for the installation of six news signs around the town was explained and it was noted that permission is required from Buckinghamshire Council as the proposal is to install the signs on Bucks Highway land. After lengthy discussion, during which Cllr Flys repeated his previous request for a report from Cllr Pinkney on the viability of the whole 'Visit Amersham' initiative, two proposals were made and voted on as follows:

Proposal 1 made by Cllr Roberts

That the Council proceeds with the purchase and installation of signs, but that a working group is set up, including representatives from Amersham in Bloom, to discuss the revised wording and final designs for the signs and to decide whether a survey should be carried out to gather the views of residents and businesses on the proposals.

A formal vote was taken on the proposal. Those in favour: Cllr's Pinkney, Barnes, Maitland-Jones, Roberts & Shepherd (5). Those against: Cllr's Flys, Lamont, Milliner (3)

Proposal 2 made by Cllr Milliner

That Council should review the decision to continue with the Visit Amersham initiative, particularly in relation to the costs of the proposed signs, website and additional staffing.

A formal vote was taken on the proposal. Those in favour: Cllr's Flys, Lamont and Milliner (3). Those against: Cllr's Pinkney, Roberts, Barnes & Maitland Jones (4)
Abstention: Cllr Shepherd (1).

Proposal 1 was therefore carried.

64. **TO RECEIVE THE FINANCE REPORTS FOR JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2024:**

- i) Income and Expenditure Reports for periods ending 31 January & 29 February 2024
- ii) Balance sheets as at 31 January & 29 February 2024
- iii) Accounts paid from 1 January to 29 February 2024

It was Proposed - Councillor D Pinkney
Seconded – Councillor H Maitland-Jones

RECOMMENDED that the finance reports for the period 1 January to 29 February 2024 be accepted.

65. **RENEWAL OF SLCC MEMBERSHIP FOR TOWN CLERKS:**

The Town Clerk's comments on the benefits of membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks were noted.

It was Proposed – Councillor J Barnes
Seconded – Councillor H Maitland-Jones

RECOMMENDED that the SLCC membership be renewed for 2024-25 at £832.

66. **RENEWAL BUCKS & MILTON KEYNES ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (BMKALC) & THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (NALC):**

After brief discussion

It was Proposed – Councillor D Pinkney
Seconded – Councillor E Shepherd

RECOMMENDED that the council's membership of BMKALC be renewed for 2024/25 at £2,378.67

67. **REVIEW OF THE ANNUAL RISK REGISTER:**

The Annual Risk Assessment had been circulated prior to the meeting with Councillors noting the items requiring attention.

It was Proposed Councillor M Roberts
Seconded Councillor J Barnes

RECOMMENDED to accept the Risk Assessment and to note the actions required.

68. **BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL CONSULTATION ON STREET TRADING POLICY:**

The draft policy had been circulated prior to the meeting. The impact of the proposals was discussed and concern was voiced that the proposed street trading policy would in fact include all public open space. Given the short deadline for submission of comments, it was agreed that Councillors would submit their comments to the Clerk who would draw up a response on behalf of the Town Council. It was noted that Bucks Council would be holding a public drop-in session on Tuesday 23 April (2pm to 4pm) at the Amersham Library.

Post-meeting note – following a request from BMKALC and feedback from parish & town councils, Bucks Council has agreed to extend the consultation deadline until 26 May. The Clerk will therefore draw up a response for agreement at the ATC Annual Statutory meeting on 13 May 2024.

69. **PROPOSAL TO REQUEST A VOLUNTARY £10 DONATION TO THE MAYORAL CHARITY FOR THE CLERKS ACTING AS AUTHORISED SIGNATORIES FOR RESIDENTS:**

It was Proposed – Councillor A Lamont
Seconded – Councillor M L Flys

RECOMMENDED that this suggestion would not be implemented, but the matter could be reconsidered if the frequency of requests for signatures become onerous.

70. **MATTERS FOR REPORT:**

There were no matters for report.

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.

71. **DEPOT STAFFING MATTERS:**

Following agreement at the previous F&GP Committee meeting with regard to depot staffing, the Clerk reported that the depot vacancies were being filled as follows:

- DR – offered permanent contract as a groundsman, to replace the promotion of MW to Administration Officer in the Town Council office.
- DS – promoted to Team Leader (no change in hours)
- Interviews were being held for recruitment of two temporary posts (one 6 month contract and one 9 month contract) to cover the loss of depot hours, with DC's long term sick leave and the reduced hours for KW who had requested a reduction to part-time employment. (Overall there would be a nett loss of one man-day per week in the depot, which could be covered by overtime where necessary).

72. **LEASE OF REAR GARDEN AT 146/148 STATION ROAD**

The Town Clerk's report regarding the tenant's requested alterations to the draft lease had been circulated prior to the meeting. All alterations were agreed, except with regard to the requirement for planning consent. Members requested that the tenant provides confirmation from the planning authority that consent is not required for change of use of the land, given that the previous consent appears to have been limited to Daybreak Nursery.

The meeting closed at 8.31pm

Chairman.....

Date.....

F&C