

FARINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Finance Committee meeting held on Wednesday 26th November 2008 in the Council Chamber, the Corn Exchange, Faringdon

PRESENT: Cllrs. S. Leniec (Chairman)
Mrs. M.J. Barker
J.C.W. Gillman (from Min. 72/08)
A.V. Hickmore
A. Marsden
D. Price
M. Wise

In Attendance: Mrs. J. Haynes, Focus on Faringdon
Mr. Andrew Chell, Faringdon Catholic Church
The Town Clerk

At the start of the meeting, Cllr. Leniec proposed moving the item concerning the Corn Exchange Lease to the end of the meeting with a view to discussing the matter in confidential session, and this was AGREED.

67/08 Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received.

68/08 Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

69/08 Minutes of Last Meeting : 22nd October 2008

The Minutes were signed as a correct record.

70/08 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

71/08 Public Speaking Time & Public Question Time

The Chairman suggested that the members of public who were present to support their grant applications should be invited to speak just prior to their respective application being discussed, and this was AGREED. They did not wish to make any other statement, and no questions had been received.

72/08 Applications for Financial Assistance

The following applications were considered:

1. Home Start Southern Oxfordshire £200 towards the cost of training volunteers to work with Faringdon families.

It was proposed, seconded and CARRIED to award a grant of £200, as requested.

£2,000 towards the cost of producing
Faringdon Town Guide.

Mrs. Haynes was invited to speak in support of the application. Following this, and after a lengthy discussion, it was AGREED to reject the application and to ask the Venues Committee to consider placing an advertisement in the guide for the Council's venues.

3. Faringdon Youth Centre £600 to pay for the cost of hiring rooms to carry out youth work during renovation of Youth Centre.

After considerable discussion, and in the light of the diminished grants budget, it was AGREED either to ask the War Memorial Trust to consider allowing free use/reduced charge of the Old Town Hall for this purpose, or to award a grant of up to £600.

4. Faringdon Catholic Church £525 towards cost of new piano for Church Hall for use by Sing Faringdon ó a community choir.

Mr. Chell was invited to speak in support of the application, and it was proposed, seconded and CARRIED to award a grant of £525 as requested. The Clerk pointed out that this grant was outside of S.137, and she was authorized to vire the sum of £525 from the S.137 Grant budget to cover the grant.

73/08 Accounting for Depreciation

Members received a table of depreciation rates, recommended by Cllrs. Hickmore, Marsden and the Clerk which was AGREED. It was also AGREED to add the total sum of £7,418 to next year's budget.

74/08 Internal Audit Report

Members received the Internal Audit Report carried out on 20th October 2008. The Internal Auditor's comments concerning a review of Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations were NOTED and it was AGREED that the group set up under Min. 50/07(b) should meet to carry out this review.

The Clerk was asked to bring a report to the next meeting outlining her proposals to comply with the Internal Auditor's comment regarding direct debit payments.

75/08 Council's Banking Arrangements

A letter from the Bank of Ireland requested at the previous meeting was received and NOTED and it was AGREED to maintain the existing banking arrangements until the end of the financial year.

76/08 Health & Safety

(a) The Clerk asked members to consider the employment of Peninsula Business Services to supply Health & Safety advice for an additional cost of £108.36 per month. She stated that the Council were very vulnerable in terms of health and safety, and she did not have the expertise to ensure that Council were meeting their obligations. After considerable discussion, it was proposed, seconded and CARRIED to employ Peninsula for a minimum period of 3 years to provide health and safety guidance and advice.

endations following the risk assessment carried out by Cllr. Hickmore and Jensen. It was AGREED to discuss this further at the next meeting.

77/08 Bad Debt Recovery : Mr. Martin Phillips

Members were informed that a meeting of Mr. Phillips's creditors had been arranged on 10th December and Cllr. O'Keeffe had volunteered to attend on the Council's behalf. It was proposed, seconded and CARRIED that Cllr. O'Keeffe's offer be accepted and that his attendance expenses would be reimbursed as an approved duty. It was AGREED that he should be instructed to agree any decision which would maximize any return there may be arising from the meeting.

78/08 Teenage Action Group

Members received a proposal from the meeting held on 30th October 2008, who were proposing to organize an all day youth event in March 2009. An interim request for funding in the sum of £4,100 had been received from Cllr. Boyle, the Group's Chairman. However, as this was not specified on the Agenda, it was decided that no decision could be made at this meeting, and it was AGREED to hold an Extraordinary Finance Committee meeting on 10th December to consider this further, with a view to approval by the Town Council meeting which would follow. The Clerk was asked to produce a report regarding the level of Council reserves for the meeting.

80/08 Faringdon Voluntary Information Bureau

Members received correspondence concerning the remaining funds held by the Bureau, and a request to state how the funds should be disposed. It was proposed, seconded and CARRIED that the funds should be given to Faringdon United Charities.

81/08 Precept 2009/10

The Clerk's draft budget figures were considered and various amendments were made, resulting in the following:

(a) Office & Establishment

(i) Revenue Budget & Grants – Total £175,400

(ii) Capital Expenditure

The following capital expenditure was AGREED:

Relocation of Clerk's Offices to Pump House £10,000

(b) Faringdon Community & Tourist Information Centre

(i) Revenue Budget – Total £20,234

(ii) Capital Expenditure

The following capital expenditure was AGREED

Replacement computer £ 850

(c) Direct Council Expenditure

(i) Revenue Budget : Total £7,000

(ii) Capital Expenditure

The following capital expenditure was AGREED

Costs of organizing 'Recession Conference' £ 1,500

budgets were reviewed

Cllr. Price asked for the following additional Capital Expenditure items to be included on the Venues Committee's budget:

Corn Exchange toilet refurbishment	£ 5,000
Pump House : Draught exclusion measures	£ 5,000
Pump House : Audio/Visual equipment	£ 2,000

bringing the Venues Committee capital expenditure budget to £15,000 and their total budget to £40,640.

(ii) *Recreation & Open Spaces* – No further changes

(iii) *Planning & Highways* - No further changes

Following the above amendments, the total draft Council budget of £301,762 was NOTED.

Cllr. Leniec proposed invoking S/Order 65 for the next two items because of the confidential nature of the matters to be discussed, and this was seconded and CARRIED.

82/08 Staff Matters

(a) *To consider implementation of the NJC National Salary Award for 2008/09 which are recommended jointly by the NALC and SLCC. Further details are contained in the attached Clerk's Report.*

It was proposed, seconded and CARRIED to implement the recommended salary award with effect from 1st April 2008. Cllr. Hickmore also proposed that the Clerk be authorized to make an interim payment of the backpay as soon as possible, and this was seconded and CARRIED.

(b) *To receive report on the Park Superintendent's continued absence on sick leave.*

Cllr. Hickmore and the Clerk gave a verbal report of their recent visit to Mr. Bream, and the Clerk outlined the advice she had received from Peninsula on this matter.

83/08 Corn Exchange Lease

(a) *To receive report on meeting held with VWHDC Officers on 19th November 2008*

Cllr. Leniec gave a verbal report on the meeting and a confidential email from the Vale's Interim Strategic Director was tabled. It was AGREED to await further decisions from the VWHDC.

(a) *To consider security arrangements*

The Clerk explained the existing security arrangements and made a recommendation, which was AGREED.

(b) *To consider costs of maintaining telephone equipment*

The Clerk explained that the VWHDC were proposing to terminate their contract on the telephone switchboard in the Corn Exchange and had asked whether the Town Council wished to take this over, at a cost of approx. £208 per quarter. It was AGREED that this should be transferred to the Town Council for a period of one quarter and the position would then be reviewed.