

Ab.1

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ABINGDON AREA COMMITTEE

HELD AT THE GUILDHALL,
ABINGDON ON THURSDAY, 2ND
JULY, 2009 AT 7.00PM

Open to the Public, including the Press

PRESENT:

MEMBERS: Councillor Julie Mayhew-Archer (Chair), Angela Lawrence (Vice-Chair), Samantha Bowring, Paul Burton, Mary de Vere, Tony de Vere, Gervase Duffield, Jim Halliday, Pat Lonergan and Richard Webber

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Jason Popham and Carole Nicholl

NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:

Ab.1 ELECTION OF CHAIR

It was proposed by Councillor Tony de Vere, seconded by Councillor Angela Lawrence and

RESOLVED

that Councillor Julie Mayhew Archer be elected Chair for the Abingdon Area Committee for the 2009/2010 Municipal Year.

Councillor Julie Mayhew Archer- Chair - In the Chair

Ab.2 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

It was proposed by Councillor Angela Lawrence, seconded by Councillor Mary de Vere and

RESOLVED

that Councillor Beth Fleming be elected Vice-Chair of the Abingdon Area Committee for the 2009//2010 Municipal Year.

Ab.3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Beth Fleming, Richard Gibson, Janet Morgan, Alison Rooke, Tim Smith and Laurel Symons.

Ab.4 MINUTES

One Member recollected that there had been a discussion on the future of the Abingdon Area Forum and she questioned why this had not been recorded in the minutes. In response the Officers explained that consideration of this had not been on the agenda for the last meeting and the discussion which the Member recollected had taken place afterwards and therefore was not recorded as it was not part of the formal

business of the Committee. The Member commented that she was keen to see the Forum re-established and asked that it be included on the agenda for the next meeting of this Committee to enable a discussion to take place regarding this matter.

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Abingdon Area Committee held on the 19 March 2009 were adopted and signed as a correct record.

Ab.5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of interest were made in respect of report 19/09 – Community Grants as follows:-

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Type of Interest</u>	<u>Grant Application</u>	<u>Reason</u>	<u>Minute Ref</u>
Jim Halliday	Personal and Prejudicial	Abingdon Bridge	In so far as he was well acquainted with a member of the Management Committee.	Ab.9(1)
Tony de Vere Julie Mayhew archer	Personal and Prejudicial	Abingdon Bridge	In so far as they were acquainted with the Mike Brown the Treasurer who made a statement in support of the application. Mr Brown had been their personal friend for many years.	Ab.9(1)
Mary de Vere	Personal and Prejudicial	Abingdon Bridge	In so far as her husband was acquainted with the Treasurer who had been a personal friend of his for many years.	Ab.9(1)
Samantha Bowring Paul Burton Mary de Vere Tony de Vere Gervase Duffield Jim Halliday Angela Lawrence Pat Lonergan Julie Mayhew Archer Richard Webber	Personal	Abingdon Bridge	In so far as the building used by the Abingdon bridge belonged to the District Council and was leased to the Abingdon Bridge.	Ab.9(1)

Angela Lawrence Pat Lonergan	Personal	Abingdon Bridge	In so far as Mr Brown who spoke in support of the application was known to them.	Ab.9(1)
Tony de Vere	Personal	Abingdon Music Centre Trust	In so far as he knew Mr Hines who spoke in support of the application. He advised that he knew Mr Hines in his capacity as Deputy Head of John Mason School as he had been a governor of the School for some years.	Ab.9(2)
Mary de Vere	Personal	Abingdon Music Centre Trust	In so far as her husband knew Mr Hines who spoke in support of the application.	Ab.9(2)
Samantha Bowring Paul Burton Mary de Vere Tony de Vere Gervase Duffield Jim Halliday Angela Lawrence Pat Lonergan Julie Mayhew Archer Richard Webber	Personal	Abingdon Music Centre Trust	In so far as the Music centre rented its premises from the District Council.	Ab.9(2)
Angela Lawrence Pat Lonergan	Personal	Abingdon Music Centre Trust	In so far as Mr Hines who spoke in support of the application was known to them.	Ab.9(2)
Jim Halliday Mary de Vere Tony de Vere Angela Lawrence	Personal	Northcourt Centre	In so far as they had rented rooms at the Northcourt Centre.	Ab.9(3)
Mary de Vere Tony de Vere	Personal	APAGE	In so far as they knew Mr Ross.	Ab.9(4)

Ab.6 URGENT BUSINESS AND CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

Vale of White Horse District Council

Ab.7 STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDER 32

The Chair reported that notice had been received from two members of the public who made each made a statement as follows: -

(1) Abingdon Bridge

Mr Brown spoke in support of the application for grant funding toward the Abingdon Bridge which he explained was a Drug and Alcohol project providing education and support for young people in and around Abingdon. He reported that one of the aims of the Bridge was to increase awareness of the risks involved with a view to reducing the number of young people drinking in public areas. He commented that the Bridge provided support in relation to other issues such as housing and sexual health for young people. He stated that much of the projects' work was outreach and that assistance was sought towards funding the short fall on charitable activities. He explained that the Bridge undertook fund raising and received small grants from elsewhere and some donations but there was a shortfall and that approval of the grant application would allow the Bridge to continue without depleting reserves.

(2) Abingdon Music Festival

Mr Hind made a statement in support of awarding a grant to the Abingdon Music Centre Education Trust. He commented that the Abingdon Music Centre had been established to make music widely available within the local community for both children and adults. He reported that the intention was to reach as many people as possible with activities being provided to varying age children. He explained that the Trust's aim was to encourage musical ability. He cited the enormous work that had been done already and the strong links that had been established with Oxford Brookes University, leading to a post graduate musicians exchange. He explained that fees had been kept low and a 50% reduction had been put in place for parents who could not afford to pay. He explained that the award of the grant sought would enable the Trust to update the décor in the building and purchase some new instruments.

The Chair thanked the two speakers for their statements advising that they would be taken into account when Members considered the applications later in the meeting.

Ab.8 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDER 32

None.

Ab.9 COMMUNITY GRANTS

The Committee received report 19/09 from the Strategic Director regarding Community Grants.

Each of the grant applications were considered with comments made as follows: -

(1) The Abingdon Bridge.

Councillors Samantha Bowring, Paul Burton, Mary de Vere, Tony de Vere, Gervase Duffield, Jim Halliday, Angela Lawrence, Pat Lonergan, Julie Mayhew Archer and Richard Webber had each declared a personal interest in this item.

Councillors Tony de Vere, Mary de Vere, Julie Mayhew Archer and Jim Halliday had each declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item and they left the room during its consideration.

Councillor Angela Lawrence, Vice-Chair in the Chair for this application

One Member commented that the functions carried out by the Bridge were the responsibility of the County Council and questioned whether it was appropriate for this Committee to grant aid the Bridge. He also referred to the financial position of the Bridge. The officers explained that funding had been provided by the County Council but that this had been restricted. In terms of the financial position of the Bridge it was explained that reserves had been drawn upon to fund a particular project.

Members supported the grant application this year in view of the positive benefit to the community although it was highlighted that in view of this Council's reducing grant budget, the Committee might not be able to support a similar application to the same amount next year.

(2) Abingdon Music Centre Foundation.

Councillors Samantha Bowring, Paul Burton, Mary de Vere, Tony de Vere, Gervase Duffield, Jim Halliday, Angela Lawrence, Pat Lonergan, Julie Mayhew Archer and Richard Webber had each declared a personal interest in this item.

One Member questioned whether the County Council provided similar teaching and covered its funding. He commented that musical tuition was a County Council function and should be financed by the County Council accordingly. The Officers advised that they had approached the Oxfordshire Education Service regarding this and had been advised that small groups could not be financially supported.

One Member sought clarification on the funding in the long term. It was considered that seeking advice from the applicant in this regard would be useful. It was thereupon proposed by the Chair of the Committee and

RESOLVED

- (a) *that the meeting of the Committee be adjourned for 5 minutes to enable Members to ask questions of members of the public.*

The meeting adjourned at 7.40pm and reconvened at 7.45pm.

One Member commented on the excellent teaching provided by the Centre, expressing her support for the application.

However, another Member raised concern that the Centre did not attract pupils from low income families from deprived areas. In this regard it was agreed that an informative be attached to the grant offer requesting that the Music Centre should make positive steps towards attracting pupils with potential rather than from parents who recognised the long terms benefits.

Members supported the application commenting that the Music Centre was a high quality music school.

(3) Northcourt Centre

Councillors Mary de Vere, Tony de Vere, Jim Halliday and Angela Lawrence had each declared a personal interest in this item.

Members supported this project noting the centre was well used by members of the public.

(4) APAGE

Councillors Mary de Vere and Tony de Vere had each declared a personal interest in this item.

Members were asked to review the role of the arts in Abingdon and discuss future support for APAGE.

One Member commented that in making a grant application each year there was uncertainty for APAGE. He commented on the grants awarded by the Committee towards arts groups, commenting on their luck and timing in submitting applications and suggested that instead the Committee should target funding to the major arts activities, such as the Arts Festival where various groups and individuals could participate. He commented that in giving money the APAGE, the Committee would be assured that funding would reach the maximum number of people. He suggested that APAGE was an organisation with a proven track record of dealing with the arts and would be able to distribute the Committee's grant funding in a more focussed way.

Members spoke against this suggestion commenting that Members of the Committee should determine applications for funding noting that all the applications supported were for worthy causes and there was a genuine need for help from this Committee. Furthermore, it was commented that not all arts were represented by APAGE.

It was recognised that the APAGE would prefer regular funding and to this end it was considered that a service level agreement might be appropriate for a reasonable period of 3 years. Members supported this but previous concerns raised regarding leaflet printing costs were highlighted. Members sought a reassurance that the costs were as best they could be.

RESOLVED

- (b) that the budget position for the Abingdon Area Committee at the beginning of the financial year be noted;
- (c) that grant applications be determined as follows: -

<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Scheme</u>	<u>Grant</u>	
The Abingdon Bridge	Funding Shortfall	£5,000 with the applicant being advised that in view of reducing budgets each year, the Area Committee might not be able to support a similar application to the same amount next year.	Proposed by Councillor Angela Lawrence, seconded by Councillor Pat Lonergan and agreed by 6 votes to nil (with 4 of the voting Members not being present).
Abingdon Music Centre Education Trust	Minor Alterations to the building and funding to purchase new instruments	£1,000 and that an informative be added to the grant offer advising the applicant to provide a detailed breakdown of who takes advantage of the scheme, where they come from and how many discounted fees were given.	Proposed by Councillor Pat Lonergan, seconded by Councillor Angela Lawrence and agreed by 10 votes to nil.
Northcourt Centre	Towards the renewal of the flooring	£2,500	Proposed by Councillor Mary de Vere, seconded by Councillor Paul Burton and agreed nem com.

- (d) that entering into a 3 year service level agreement with APAGE to provide funding of £3,000 per annum towards the Arts Festival be supported in principle, with the Officers being asked to meet with Malcolm Ross of APAGE to discuss terms and conditions (including assurances regarding leaflet printing) and that a report thereon be presented to the next meeting, (agreed by 10 votes to nil).

Exempt Information Under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972

None.

The meeting rose at 8.20 pm