

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GUILDHALL COMMITTEE,  
HELD ON THURSDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2009,  
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KING'S HOUSE, THETFORD,  
STARTING AT 6 P.M.

Present:

Councillor S N H Wright, Chairman (as of item 209/09 below)  
The Mayor, Councillor Mrs P A Spencer

Councillors:

M Brindle  
T J Lamb

Mrs P P Quadling

In attendance: Councillors T J Jermy (left during 215/09) and D G Mortimer

209/09 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

Chairman

RESOLVED by electing Councillor S N H Wright as Chairman of the Guildhall Committee for Mayoral Year 2009/10.

Vice-Chairman

RESOLVED by electing Councillor Mrs P P Quadling as Vice-Chairman of the Guildhall Committee for Mayoral Year 2009/10.

210/09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

211/09 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors J A Harding, A Paines and B J Skull.

212/09 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2009, as received by the Council on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2009 under minute 415/08a, be confirmed as a true record and signed/initialled by the Chairman.

213/09 FINANCIAL PICTURE 2009/10

Members had an opportunity to ask the Town Clerk and Finance Manager to comment on the Guildhall Cost Centre financial position as at end August 2009, a copy of which had been included in the agenda papers. The

Chairman took members through the figures. The need to increase usage of the Large and Small Courts was recognised and a recommendation to Council was agreed, as recorded below under item 215/09. Standard, hourly charging, with usage of the Small Court costing the same as the Carnegie Room, should, in the Committee's view, be discontinued. It was acknowledged that caretaker costs for evening and weekend functions remained too high and the Committee looked forward to the introduction of a degree of flexible working, which would reduce this overhead; the Town Clerk confirmed that the Personnel Committee was looking into how this might be achieved. This too is referred to under 215/09 below.

#### 214/09 CARNEGIE ROOM BOOKING PERIOD GUARANTEE

The Town Clerk confirmed that the last public announcement made by the Town Council regarding guaranteed bookings had given 'until the end of September 2009' as the period. The need now was to re-appraise the situation. A discussion ensued over what was an acceptable additional period, there being no prospect in the immediate term, at least, of any alternative, comparable venue becoming available. Eventually, it was:

RECOMMENDED that the Council, at its meeting the following week, agree to guarantee bookings at the Carnegie Room up until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013.

Councillor T J Lamb asked for his vote against the above recommendation to be recorded in these minutes.

#### 215/09 TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF HIRE: AMENDMENTS AND RELATED MATTERS

A paper from the Town Clerk, dated 18<sup>th</sup> September 2009, had been included in the agenda papers. This was asking the Committee to consider a set of six proposals. In the event, some of these were accepted as set out in the paper, others were modified and one was rejected. The following recommendations to the Council resulted.

RECOMMENDED that:

- (a) a separate charging regime be introduced for daytime hire of the Large and Small Courts by clubs and societies; under this regime, the first two-hour hire period per event would cost £15 for the Large Court and £10 for the Small Court, with each subsequent hour for the same event to cost £15 and £10 respectively ('3 hours for the cost of 2' would be another way of describing this); the existing Carnegie Room hire charges would continue to apply;
- (b) in light of the overtime costs still being incurred when providing a caretaking service for weekend and evening functions, a degree of flexible working be introduced as soon as reasonably possible;
- (c) a tendering exercise be undertaken without delay to secure the services of a bar provider, who must also be capable - and this

would be made clear in the tender brief - of meeting any security requirements that may be required for certain functions; the suggested deadline for submission of tenders was Friday, 30<sup>th</sup> October 2009, with the Committee Chairman and Vice-Chairman nominated to supervise the tendering process; the chosen provider would have the prospect of providing said service until the end of March 2013, subject to performing to the Council's satisfaction;

- (d) a ban on the advertising of 'private parties' on the internet be included in the terms and conditions;
- (e) an explicit reference to the rules regarding underage drinking be included in the terms and conditions;
- (f) thought be given ahead of the next financial year to passing Performing Rights Society charges onto hirers in certain circumstances, these being currently incurred by the Town Council under its PRS licence.

#### 216/09 MATTERS RAISED BY MEMBERS

The Town Clerk had been asked to include the following items in the agenda:

- (a) Condition of Carnegie Room Roof
- (b) General Décor throughout the Complex
- (c) Bar and Caretaking Arrangements
- (d) Access Issues

Item (c) had been dealt with earlier in the meeting, which left the other three to be addressed. Of these, the first was agreed to be the most urgent. As the discussion developed, the Committee was reminded of the distinction that had to be made between the Guildhall building and the Carnegie Room, with the former requiring major refurbishment in the longer-term and the latter warranting an 'emergency repair' approach in the shorter term. If the Council was minded to support 'extending the life' of the Carnegie Room until at least the end of March 2013 (item 214/09 above referred), then the approach to those repairs had to be considered carefully.

The Carnegie Room Roof was showing signs of further, significant deterioration, if the reported number of leaks was anything to go by. The Committee agreed that the following approach was needed:

RECOMMENDED that J P Chick & Partners be asked to comment on the existing state of the roof and produce potentially a specification for a more thorough and lasting solution, which the Council might have to go out to tender with. The ongoing, piecemeal, 'patch repair' approach was not proving to be effective.

As regards general décor, the Town Clerk would make arrangements with the Works Supervisor to have the Council's maintenance and grounds staff embark on an 'autumn blitz' at the Complex.

Finally, it was acknowledged that access issues, especially at the Guildhall building, were always going to be part of an overall refurbishment project.

That said, the Committee was keen to see progress made on that front and would be addressing this at its next meeting, the date of which would be agreed at the Council meeting the following week.

Chairman