

**Civic Hall Management Committee**  
Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020 at 7.30pm  
All Saints Room, Didcot Civic Hall



## Minutes

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a true and correct record by the next meeting of this Committee.

### Present:

Cllr P Siggers (Chair)  
Cllr A Thompson

Cllr E Hards (Vice Chair)  
Cllr M McNeill

### Officers:

Mrs J Wheeler - Town Clerk  
Mr A Silva - Civic Hall Manager (CHM)

#### 28. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr P Giesberg.

#### 29. Declarations of interests

None.

#### 30. To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2019

It was proposed by Cllr P Siggers; seconded by Cllr E Hards and RESOLVED to accept and sign the minutes as a true record. Queries were raised on the date of the Culture and Community Day which will be held on 4<sup>th</sup> July and also the progress of the Green Tourism application which was noted at the Full Council meeting.

#### 31. To review any advice received from Steve Parkinson regarding any unpaid VAT sums

Steve Parkinson is in contact with HMRC and the initial response is good news. We are awaiting their advice on the calculations over the last few years and confirmation of what we will have to pay.

### **32. To review the accounts to the end of December 2019 and clarification of the bar and food cost centres**

It was proposed by Cllr P Siggers; seconded by Cllr A Thompson to note the accounts and the report on the bar and cost centres. Cllr E Hards wanted to know about any potential virements but the Town Clerk advised that the next work to do on the accounts was to merge Civic Hall duplication with the Town Council. There was a difference of opinion between the Town Clerk and Cllr Hards as to the practice of virements. It was AGREED to leave the overspend in place for now.

### **33. Civic Hall Manager's report**

The Civic Hall Manager started his part of the meeting introducing the two cleaning quotes:

**A. Quotes for cleaning from company A and company B** were attached to the report. The Civic Hall Manager touched on the advantages and disadvantages of hiring cleaners as members of staff. The Town Clerk and the CHM felt that there was more risk to hiring internally as the problem of sick leave could leave the Civic Hall with the cost but no service. Also we would have to take on the TUPED staff from our current contractors and give them the same terms and conditions of employment as current staff.

It was proposed by Cllr P Siggers; seconded by Cllr M McNeill to award the contract to company A – Rapid Clean at a cost of £21,600 + vat per annum. The contract will be for one year with a review after three months. The notice period is three months if we are unhappy with the service.

### **B. Request for free use from Didcot Events**

This was another request for free use of the Didcot Civic Hall for the annual Food Festival. The event was very popular and well attended – it also took over a significant part of the downstairs space. The Chair said that we needed to adhere to a consistent and fair policy regarding the free use. Cllr E Hards suggested some wording for a policy:

*“Didcot Civic Hall does not make a profit and is subsidised by the Didcot Town Council – so “free use” use by organisations is ultimately a cost to the taxpayer. The Management Committee need to have a consistent policy that is transparent and fair to all users. Our auditors will look for evidence that this policy is adhered to. The Management Committee have decided that free use will not be granted but eligible organisations (as defined by the Didcot Town Council grants policy) will be informed of the Council's grant scheme.”*

It was AGREED to adopt this policy as it explained the situation and the stance of the Town Council over future use of the Didcot Civic Hall.

### **C. Planned events at the Civic Hall for 2020**

**30<sup>th</sup> May Outdoor Cinema Experience** – the film is “Rocketman”. Tickets will be on sale at the end of January. Price for a single ticket will be £9 and will include a small bag of popcorn. A group ticket will be £30. Tickets on the door will be £10 for single ticket and £35 for a group ticket. There has been a lot of interest on social media.

**4<sup>th</sup> July – Culture and Community Day** – tickets will be £3 and there will be a mixture of craft stalls and display of different cultures in the form of dance and music.

**25<sup>th</sup> October – Dog Show** - to raise money for an animal-based charity in the Didcot area. Tickets will be £3. The charity is to be confirmed – ideas to be brought to the next meeting.

**D. Charity events**

The CHM brought up the request for free use by the parents of a local Dance School who have been selected to represent England at a Dance competition. The School has also applied to the Finance Committee for a grant. The Chair was happy to offer them a 20% discount. It was also agreed that instead of performing free of charge at the Mayor’s Civic Dinner that the Town Council should pay for them.

**E. Two quotes for two new CCTV cameras**

The quotes were for two additional cameras in the car park as discussed in the previous meeting.

It was proposed by Cllr P Siggers; seconded by Cllr A Thompson to purchase two additional CCTV cameras at a cost of £800 + vat per camera.

It was NOT agreed to go ahead with the swipe cards for the door of the office – the staff will need to make sure the door is closed at all times.

**Up-date on the bookings**

The CHM circulated a sheet with detail of provisional bookings from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020. He also included a list of Civic Hall incomes from 2015. The following was noted:

	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20 To date</b>	<b>2020-21 projections</b>
<b>Bookings</b>	62,726	64,403	69,895	186,272	199,894	147,652
<b>Bar takings</b>	24,957	35,426	31,925	32,426	25,000	
<b>Catering takings</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	18,785	12,885	
<b>TOTAL TAKINGS</b>	<b>87,683</b>	<b>99,829</b>	<b>101,820</b>	<b>237,483</b>	<b>237,779</b>	

The discussion then went on to possible alterations to the All Saints and Park Room to allow for more flexible use of the rooms. The former Civic Hall Manager’s office will remain known as the Orchard Room and is available for hire. Storage will be available at a charge for regular users. The dressing rooms at the back of the stage are also being let out. Additional facilities such as the supply of microphones carry an additional charge in common with many venues.

It was noted that the hire rates would need to be reviewed for a possible increase from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020. The possible increase would be around 8%.

The discounts would be:

- 6 or more bookings = 15%
- Community Groups = 20%
- Registered charities = 30%

Decoration programme – All Saints will be next along with a rail to stop tables and chairs damaging the walls.

**34. To review the actions taken regarding single use plastics in the Civic Hall and related activities**

The CHM stated that we are using cups made from vegetables and they are compostable – and will be taken away by our contractor. Cllr A Thompson queried whether there was any sense in putting glass cups in the dishwasher. It was AGREED that we did not have the staff to be able to cope with this – and the dishwasher would use electricity and chemicals.

**35. To note the nominations for the Thames Valley Business Awards**

The Chair had informed all Councillors at the Full Council meeting of the two nominations for the Civic Hall; “Best Tourism and Business Venue” and “Outstanding Contribution to the Community”. The Committee congratulated the Civic Hall Manager and his team for their hard work.

**36. To note the opening of the commemorative patio and public art installation**

The Town Clerk gave a brief up-date on this event which is due to take place on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March. We are still at the planning stage and all Councillors will be invited to the event to mark and remember the cooling towers. Local artists have been approached for art to commemorate this landmark.

The meeting closed at 9:30pm.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman      Date \_\_\_\_\_