

GUILDRY AND MORTIFICATION FUNDS SUB COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 14 April 2014. - Minute of Meeting of the GUILDRY AND MORTIFICATION FUNDS SUB COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Finlayson, Master of Mortifications, Chairperson; Councillor Noble; and Mr Frederick G.S. Dalgarno, Dean of Guild.

The agenda and reports associated with this minute can be found at:-

<http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=419&MId=3362&Ver=4>

DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT BUSINESS

1. The Sub Committee was requested to determine that the following item of business, which contained exempt information as described in Schedule 7(A) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, be taken in private:-

- Sale of Ground, Torry Quay/Greyhope Road

The Sub Committee resolved:-

in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of the aforementioned item of business (Article 5 of this minute refers) so as to avoid disclosure of exempt information of the classes described in paragraphs 6 and 9 of Schedule 7(A) of the Act.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

2. The Sub Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 18 March 2013.

The Sub Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute.

REVIEW OF ALLOWANCES

3. The Sub Committee had before it a paper by the Head of Finance which (a) provided information concerning (1) the amount of allowances paid from the Guildry Funds to Burgesses of Guild, Widows and Widowers of Burgesses and Children of Burgesses from 1995 to 2012; and (2) the number of people receiving allowances for the same period; and (b) proposed that the allowances be increased by either 3% or 5% rounded up to the nearest £10, backdated, for 2013/14.

The Sub Committee resolved:-

to recommend that the following increases (5%) in annual allowances be approved by the Council backdated from 1 May 2013:-

Guildry Fund Allowance	Present Allowance	Proposed Allowance
Burgesses	£1,680	£1,765
Widows/Widowers of Burgesses	£1,680	£1,765
Children of Burgesses	£1,560	£1,640

REPORT BY DEAN OF GUILD

4. The Sub Committee had before it a report by the Dean of Guild which discussed the use of the Guildry funds.

The report explained that the Burgesses of the Guild of the City of Aberdeen were about to celebrate the granting of a Royal Charter by King Alexander II who came to the throne in 1214. The precise date of granting was not known however a programme of events was planned to celebrate this important landmark in the history of Aberdeen's oldest civic body.

The report highlighted that concern had been expressed that because the amounts paid to Burgesses (or widows of) were *de minimis* in relation to the total funds, and that no awards had been sought nor claimed from the Guildry Award Scheme in the past three years, that the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) could consider that the Burgesses of Guild no longer qualified as a charitable body, which would have adverse consequences for the Guild and its funds.

Therefore, the report put forward the following proposals for consideration:-

- (1) that a one off payment of £500 be made to all current recipients of payments from the Guildry funds - this would be by way of a heating allowance at a time when people were suffering hardship in meeting such bills, and this should not affect other benefits;
- (2) under the Guildry Award Scheme, payment of annual scholarships be made to students at Aberdeen University, The Robert Gordon University and the Saltire Society, and that the annual amount payable under the scheme be increased to a maximum of £20,000. The criteria for qualification would be the same as the current award scheme and ordinary applications to the current award scheme would still be considered but the scheme would be better administered and more widely advertised;
- (3) in recognition of the forthcoming 800th anniversary of the granting of the Royal Charter for the Burgesses of Guild and the City of Aberdeen, that a one off competition be held for charities in Aberdeen requiring assistance with projects of a capital nature, with the suggestion that three awards be made of £10,000, £6,000 and £4,000, with charities applying for these by submitting an application detailing the project and what the award would be used for; and
- (4) that funding be made available for the creation of a coat of arms for the Burgesses of Guild.

The Dean of Guild advised that he had since consulted officers in Finance who advised that benefit in kind would be more appropriate than a financial payment in terms of (1) above, and that the proposals would require further work with a more detailed report to be submitted to a future meeting for consideration, with final approval to be sought from the Council. He added that a review of the Burgesses of Guild constitution was due to be undertaken and that this would include a review of equality issues, as had been raised by the Sub Committee. He concluded that he would be working closely with his successor in order to bring these matters to fruition.

The Sub Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the report meantime, expressing support for the general principles contained within it; and
- (ii) to request the Dean of Guild to report back to a future meeting of the Sub Committee in more detail.

In accordance with the decision recorded under Article 1 of this minute, the following item was considered with the press and public excluded.

SALE OF GROUND, TORRY QUAY/GREYHOPE ROAD

5. The Sub Committee had before it a report by the Director of Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure which advised of discussions which had been undertaken with Aberdeen Harbour Board in regard to ground at Torry Quay/Greyhope Road.

The report recommended:-

that the Sub Committee -

- (a) approve the sale of the ground at Torry Quay/Greyhope Road to Aberdeen Harbour Board for the amount specified; and
- (b) instruct the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to conclude missives for the sale of the property on the terms agreed with Aberdeen Harbour Board.

The Sub Committee resolved:-

to recommend to the Property Sub Committee that the recommendations be approved.

ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

6. The Dean of Guild advised that this was his last meeting before his term of office came to an end in May, and thanked elected members and officers for their support and assistance during his eight years in the role.

The Chairperson thanked the Dean of Guild for his excellent service to the Burgesses and the Council, and wished him well in his future endeavours.

The Sub Committee resolved:-

to concur with the Chairperson's remarks.

- ANDREW FINLAYSON, Master of Mortifications, Chairperson.