

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GUILDHALL COMMITTEE, HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, 3RD DECEMBER 2008, IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KING'S
HOUSE, THETFORD, STARTING AT 6.30 P.M.

Present:

Councillor D G Mortimer, Chairman
The Mayor, Councillor J A Harding (for concluding part)

Councillors:

Mrs P P Quadling

S N H Wright

280/08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor S N H Wright declared a personal interest in item 282/08, given his involvement in the management of the Dad's Army Museum. This was in line with his declaration made under agenda item 257/08 at the November 2008 Council meeting. He was not required to vote on the resolution below, given the presence of the Mayor (a voting member of all Committees).

281/08 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors Mrs M P Chapman-Allen, S H Chapman-Allen and A Paines.

282/08 GUILDHALL COMPLEX: INSURANCE OBLIGATIONS

Following a decision reached at the November 2008 Council meeting under agenda item 268/08, the Committee had delegated authority to decide the terms under which '1940s Dance Classes' might be permitted on Sunday afternoons in the Carnegie Room over 14 consecutive weeks, starting 11th January 2009.

Councillor Wright was able to brief his fellow committee members on why it had been decided that Sunday classes were the only option (the unavailability of a teacher on any other day had proved key). A 'charging structure' for participants could not really be agreed until the cost of overheads was known. The teacher would be paid.

Given the wish to price things reasonably, the organisers – who included Councillor S N H Wright – were asking whether the Council would consider waiving the requirement for a Council staff member to be present during periods of hire.

The Town Manager briefed the Committee on conversations held with the Council's insurers. An understanding had been arrived at which meant that, whilst a Council employee did not necessarily have to be involved, an 'authorised person' had, at the very least, to attend to the unlocking and locking up of the building. It was only through a process of further risk assessment that the need to have an authorised person present during an event could be determined.

The Committee was loath to take any risks with the building and agreed that it would be advisable in most cases - if not necessarily all - to require attendance during events. As to what constituted an 'authorised person', that could be agreed in the coming days. What could not be lost sight of was the resultant cost saving through not requiring a paid member of staff to be present.

It was recognised that any agreement reached regarding the organisation of the dance classes could have wider application. In other words, it could herald the start of a fundamental change in staffing requirements. Council officers would work up some proposals for consideration by the Committee in January 2009, with a view to a possible recommendation being made to the January Council meeting.

A charge of £50 per session was agreed as a reasonable charge designed to cover any possible cleaning costs that might arise from Saturday night bookings. Clear-ups after such bookings were customarily left to the following Monday morning in order to avoid incurring a 'double time' labour cost. It remained to be seen whether the £50 would cover such costs and the Committee agreed to review the position at the end of the 14-week period.

RESOLVED that, for the 14-week series of Sunday 1940s Dance Classes, planned to start in January 2009, the organisers be charged £50 per Sunday hire on the understanding that an 'authorised person' would be in attendance throughout, thereby meeting insurers' requirements.