



Town Crier



Abingdon Town Council News and Events

January 2011

40th Edition



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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



Town Council
Wed
19 January
7pm
Guildhall

County Hall
Museum
PUBLIC CONSULTATION
Thurs 27 January
7pm
Guildhall

MAYOR'S
CHARITY BALL
Guildhall
7pm for 7.30pm
Sat 12 February

Annual Parish
Meeting
Wed 16 March
Guildhall
7pm

French Market
Fri 8
and
Sat 9 April
Market Place

Abingdon's
RETAIL
MARKET
every Monday
Market Place

FARMERS'
MARKET
every
3rd Friday
Market Place

Abingdon
Country Market
Every Friday
Royse Room,
Guildhall
9.30am - 11am

ABINGDON MARKET PLACE FOR THE COMMUNITY

The Market Place is your community area. The Town Council encourages local clubs, charities and voluntary organisations to use the area free of charge. If you would like further details please visit the Town Council offices, call **01235 522642**, email enquiries@abingdon.gov.uk or visit the website www.abingdon.gov.uk

From Local Successes to International Ambitions

Choose Abingdon Partnership



Cllrs Jan Morter and Julia Bricknell using the *Choose Abingdon* Loyalty Card in Fabulous Flowers

The successful formation of the **Choose Abingdon Partnership** which includes the Town, District and County Councils, the Chamber of Commerce, the Abingdon Business Alliance and input from the community ensures that they all are working together for the benefit of Abingdon.

The Partnership is consolidating the successes of the past year and planning for the future. Last year was all about "local" such as the community shop scheme in the Abbey Shopping Centre and the innovative **Choose Abingdon** loyalty card scheme, which offers rewards at many local businesses.

In 2011 the **Partnership** is turning its attention to the visitor market and a major tourism marketing package. The package includes a tourism brochure, walking and cycling leaflets and a booklet promoting arts and culture in the Vale, as well as video footage of events which took place in 2010. The original intention was to use the video footage to attract international media attention to the area in the run up to the Olympics; now the challenge is to make the most of the Royal Wedding in April using Abingdon's bun throwing tradition as a perfect excuse for a bit of international attention-seeking.

For only £3 (which covers the cost of the chip technology in the card) you can purchase a loyalty card that gives you rewards at participating shops. Lookout for the **Choose Abingdon** Loyalty Card logo in shop windows.



The Town Criers helped to promote the *Choose Abingdon* Loyalty Card

One Man and his Dog



Abingdon's Deputy Mayor, Cllr Alastair Fear, was elected onto the Town Council seven years ago for the Caldecott Ward. He chairs one of the Council's main committees, Amenities & Recreation, and for some years has organised the annual Heritage Day. He is also Chairman of Abingdon Boxing Club and a Governor at Thameside Primary School.

Alastair can often be seen walking around the town accompanied by his dog Harry who is famous for having his own Dog Blog, and not to be out done Alastair writes his own blog called **This Abingdon** www.abingdonblog.co.uk. Harry's blog can be found on www.harrydogblog.com

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Town Clerk Celebrates Ten Years



Nigel Warner is the Town Council's Chief Executive and Responsible Financial Officer. He grew up in Witney and attended Henry Box School, before gaining a First Class degree in Geography from Jesus College, Oxford. At school Nigel played the cello but hung up his bow to pursue a hobby in amateur dramatics. A memorable starring role was in *Mother Goose*.

Nigel is an active member of the *Rotary Club of Abingdon*, and a keen *Oxford United* supporter.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Abbey Hall was added to the historic Guildhall in 1966. The Borough Police Station in Abbey Close was demolished to make room for the new building.

Town Grants

The Town Council supports the community directly through grants.

Larger grants are awarded annually and last year included:

- Vale of White Horse Foyer
- Abingdon Bridge Youth Charity
- Citizens' Advice Bureau
- Open Air Swimming Pool
- Albert Park
- South and Vale Carers

Smaller grants have been awarded, amongst others, to:

- Abingdon Green Gym
- Abingdon Music Centre
- St Edmund's Football Club
- Trinity Church
- 2nd Abingdon Scout Group
- Abingdon Carbon Cutters
- Abingdon Concert Band
- Abingdon Jazz Band
- Abingdon Swimming Club
- APAGE
- Breakaway Club
- Abingdon Marathon
- Carnegie Forum
- Assisted Reading for Children in Oxfordshire.



2nd Abingdon Scout Group



Runners at the Abingdon Marathon

The Council also administers the Burgess Trust which offers grants to encourage young people, between the ages of 17 and 25, to undertake educational projects in our twin towns.

Application forms and grant criteria can be downloaded from the Council's website on www.abingdon.gov.uk or call Sandra Hill on 01235 468340

Erratum *The Oldest and Youngest article in the last Town Crier should have included the following paragraph:*

Cllr Colin Walters moved to Abingdon in 1957 with his former wife. They had three daughters and one son all of whom were educated at Dunmore Primary School and John Mason School. He has lived in Dunmore Ward with his present wife Jean since 1986.

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A Busy Year Ahead

These are exciting times for the town as its Council takes forward several projects to support the important facilities in the town - the County Hall and Museum, the Guildhall, the War Memorial and the Spring Gardens Cemetery. These projects have been made possible by careful planning, useful public consultation and hard work.

Wedding Bell Buns?

The project to improve the Old County Hall and Museum has moved into its final phase, supported by funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the County and District Councils. The Town Council, as owner of this 300 year old building, has a responsibility to ensure that it continues to play an active part in the town by improving access.



Children's Activities

DID YOU KNOW?

The oldest bun in the Museum's collection is Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887.

We are all looking forward to the successful conclusion in 2012. It is hoped that Abingdon's traditional bun throwing will take place so everyone can celebrate the Royal Wedding on 29 April 2011. Further details will be posted in the March *Town Crier*.

War Memorial

Work to straighten and strengthen the War Memorial and enhance the area around is being undertaken shortly to ensure Abingdon continues to have a fitting tribute to those who have given their lives for this country.

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Remembrance Sunday, 14 November 2010
Photo by Courtesy of the Oxford Mail

Guildhall Returns to Abingdon Ownership

The future of the Guildhall is being secured as a result of negotiations between the Town Council and the Vale of White Horse District Council. The Town Council sees the Guildhall as an important community facility which houses the collection of town treasures. Since 1974, when the Borough Council was dissolved, the District Council has owned and operated the Guildhall. However, both Councils agreed that the Town Council is best placed to run the Guildhall. The Town Council aims to take over the Guildhall complex in April, when it will be reviewing the needs and requirements of the consumer, exploring opportunities for increasing the use of the facilities and looking at how to attract more bookings.



Roissey Court, a part of the Guildhall complex

There will be a capital sum from the Vale of White Horse District Council which will allow the Town Council to secure long term repair and maintenance, plus improvements in the short term, especially on the sound system in the Abbey Hall. Finally, the Town Council is also looking at the option of creating a charitable trust which would enable savings to be made on running costs.

Market Place Events

The summer events on the Market Place have increased in popularity. People are enjoying the town centre on a Saturday, and as a consequence of this initiative the Town Council is pleased to note that retailers have also seen an increase in footfall. Summer events for this year will be starting with the French Market on Friday 8th and Saturday 9th April.

A detailed list will be published in the Spring *Town Crier* and is currently available on the Town Council website - www.abingdon.gov.uk and on the Abingdon Diary website www.abingdondiary.co.uk.

I must thank the Town Clerk, Office Staff, Outside Team, Residents' Parking Wardens and Museum Staff for their hard work, skill and dedication to the work of the Council for the people of Abingdon.

Lesley Legge
Leader of Abingdon Town Council



Land of Smile - Thai Dancers at last year's Abingdon's Got Talent

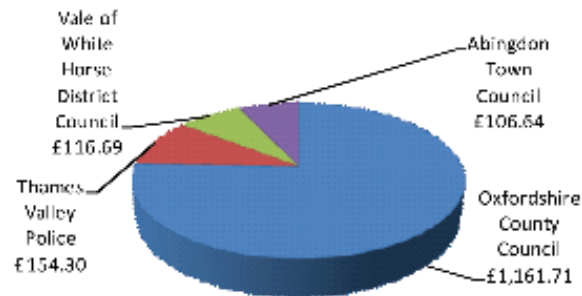
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Where is the Council Tax spent?

The total annual Council Tax for a Band D property in Abingdon is £1,539.34 in 2010/2011

The District Council collects the Council Tax.

Abingdon Town Council receives no Government grants or any business rates.



HOW YOUR COUNCIL TAX IS SPENT

Abingdon Town Council 2010-2011	£
Democratic, Corporate, Property and other Services	353,111
Cemetery	65,665
Recreation & Open Spaces (incl. swimming pool and <i>Albert Park</i>)	215,894
Community & Tourism	66,283
Other Community inc. markets, Christmas lights and street furniture	43,726
Town Centre & <i>Choose Abingdon Partnership</i>	54,300
County Hall and Museum	121,525
Grants	46,150
Residents' Parking Scheme	- 3,300
Total	963,354
Transfer to capital projects – County Hall/Museum access	117,000
Transfer to capital projects reserve – new cemetery	10,000
Sub-total	1,090,354
Pooled property and capital works budget	245,525
Net Total amount required from Council Tax (Precept)	1,335,879

More information can be obtained via www.abingdon.gov.uk or from Abingdon Town Council Offices



Town Centre PCSO, Ali Blood

Abingdon is one of the safest places to live in the country. Abingdon Town Council is committed to tackling anti-social behaviour by all ages by funding a part-time Police Community Support Officer (PCSO).

Last year the Town Centre Neighbourhood Team conducted a number of initiatives, one being *Operation Maverick*. Its aim is to educate young people about the dangers of underage drinking, and the negative impact it can have on the local community. All young people found with alcohol have their details taken and a letter sent to their parents. If they are caught again, a home visit is made by the Neighbourhood Team and a referral to the Abingdon Bridge.

If you wish to contact a member of the Neighbourhood Team please call **0845 8 505 505**

How to contact your Abingdon Town Council Councillor

Abbey & Barton

Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer 01235 521626
Cllr Lesley Legge 01235 520768
Cllr Martin Smith 01235 201853

Caldecott

Cllr Margaret Crick 01235 523895
Cllr Alastair Fear 01235 203023
Cllr Peter Fulk 01235 533239

Dunmore

Cllr Julia Bricknell 07896 612576
Cllr Janet Morter 07720 464140
Cllr Colin Walters 01235 521540

Fitzharris

Cllr Jim Halliday 01235 521303
Cllr Jeanette Halliday 01235 521303
Cllr Diana Nixon 01235 523508

Northcourt

Cllr Duncan Brown 07999 283885
Cllr Helen Pighills 01235 534446
Cllr Angela Lawrence 01235 525436

Ock Meadow

Cllr Samantha Bowring 07767 072095
Cllr Timothy Oates 01235 535807
Cllr Lorraine Smith 01235 201219

Peachcroft

Cllr Patrick Lonergan 01235 202784
Cllr Lorraine Oates 01235 535807
Cllr Alison Rooke 01235 522508

Town Council Offices 01235 522642

Museum 01235 534794

Visitor & Community Information Centre 01235 522711

If you wish to email your local councillor please use first.name.surname@abingdon.gov.uk

Abingdon's Green Spaces

The Amenities and Recreation Committee looks after a number of open spaces which include:

- The Market Place
- The War Memorial
- Margaret Brown Garden
- 8 play areas
- 3 allotment sites - Drayton Road, Wildmoor and West End
- 2 cemeteries
- St Helen's closed churchyard
- Areas of natural beauty including *Ock Valley Walk* and *Boxhill Wood*
- Many containers, hanging baskets and flower beds.

This means that the Town Council staff are often seen cutting grass, looking after trees, litter clearing and watering floral displays. Behind the scenes they have also been involved in some more major improvements to some of the facilities.

Of the eight play areas, four will see new investment this year. New equipment and better surfaces have already been installed at River Close, Caldecott, Chauntrell Way and Hillview. At Elizabeth Avenue, where the grass gets very worn, a suitable surface will be laid in front of the popular kick wall.



New play equipment and surface at the *River Close* play area

The Spring Gardens Cemetery

(previously known as the *New Cemetery*) will also see major improvements this year. A new area for cremated remains has now been installed in the cemetery and work is currently underway to landscape the area, ready for when the present Garden of Remembrance is full.

The driveway in the Spring Gardens Cemetery will be resurfaced to improve accessibility and the environment of the area. The depot is undergoing a facelift with a new toilet for visitors and a new office for cemetery enquiries.



Chapel in the Old Cemetery

News in Brief

Abingdon Achieves Silver

Abingdon achieved a silver award as part of *Britain in Bloom* in 2010. With more local community involvement we are looking forward to doing even better in the summer.



L to R Andy Knott and Chris Seaward - *Abingdon MG Club* and Tim Badcock and Steve Rich - *Abingdon Town Council*

MG Garden (by the mini roundabouts)

Work has started in collaboration with the *MG Car Club* on the creation of an MG mosaic and a new area of planting. Seats, fencing and paving will also be added this year.

County Hall Museum

We are pleased to say that local builders, *Leadbitter*, will start work on the *County Hall Museum Improvement and Access Project* early this year.

This work will safeguard the building from deterioration, whilst maintaining and improving the day-to-day function of the Museum.

The work will:

- Create education, commercial and community areas in the cellar
- Upgrade the WC provision
- Include work to prevent water and damp entering the building
- Display the historic 1902 water pump
- Make the cellar more accessible with a platform lift
- Research the archaeology of the lift shaft and the cellar
- Improve the conditions in both the display and storage areas so the Museum can borrow important Abingdon objects
- Reduce energy consumption with up-to-date heating and lighting controls and fixtures
- Maintain natural ventilation so the building can 'breathe'
- Repave and refurbish the public space around the County Hall.



County Hall Museum at night



Mayor, Cllr Duncan Brown, with Museum Curator, Dr Lauren Gilmour, at the thank you reception for Museum staff who left at the end of October

DID YOU KNOW?

The County Hall was built in 1678-1682 by Christopher Kempster.

County Hall Museum Looks Forward to Re-Opening in 2012

The Museum closed its doors to visitors on Sunday 31 October with the Museum's longest serving employee, Mrs Kay Porter, locking the door.

Emptying the Museum has been taking place since August. The treasures required for reopening have been stored at the *Museum Resource Centre*, Standlake, remaining accessible for further research, cleaning and conservation before returning in 2012.

Plans and research for the new displays are being prepared by **Jane Bowen** (Heritage Lottery Funded team member) and museum designer **James Dibble** of *Equal Art*. Their ideas will be presented to the public at the

County Hall Museum Public Consultation Meeting at 7pm on 27 January 2011 in the Guildhall.

Meanwhile Museum staff, the new Heritage Lottery funded team and volunteers are temporarily based at the Town Council offices in the Old Abbey House. Two services will be provided throughout the closed period: an **Outreach Service** to schools and community groups is one (contact Adela Thomas on **539794** or email adela.thomas@abingdon.gov.uk). The other is an **Enquiries Service** on Mondays from 1.30 – 3pm when you can bring both museum object enquiries and materials you'd like to show us about Abingdon's history (contact Victoria Jones on **539794** or email victoria.jones@abingdon.gov.uk).

*We mentioned volunteers.
If you would like to consider
helping us please contact
Peter Gale on **539794**
or email
peter.gale@which.net*

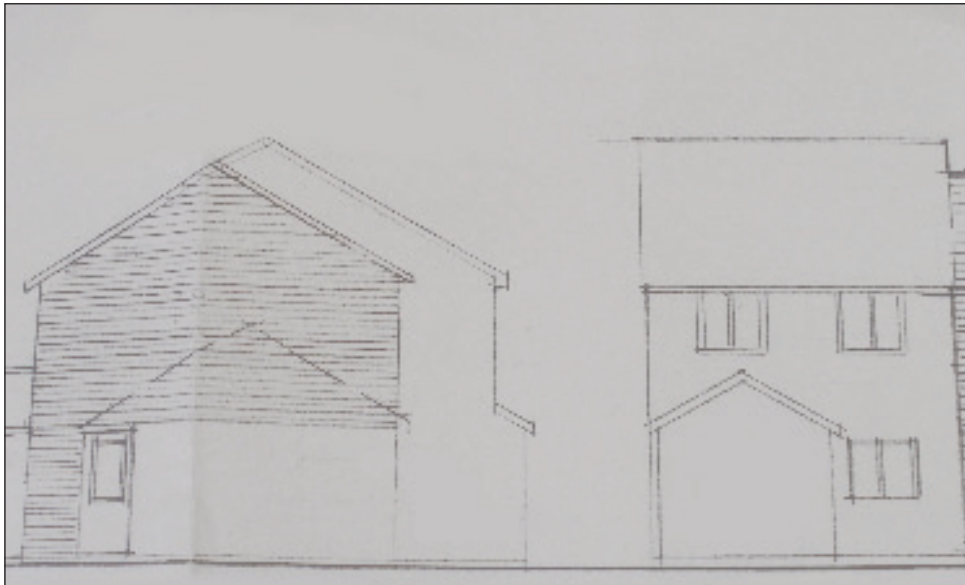


Mrs Kay Porter locking the Museum door with Nigel Warner, the Town Clerk

DID YOU KNOW?

Abingdon's Archives are kept by the Town Council in the Old Abbey House. You can book with the Honorary Archivist to consult them on a Thursday.

An Englishman's Home



Why Planning?

"An Englishman's home is his castle" is an old saying, and in planning law there is a presumption that people may do what they like with their property, provided that they cause no **harm** to their neighbours. The rules interpreting this legal principle are elaborated in the Vale of White Horse District Council's Local Plan.

Harm to neighbouring properties which could rule out the granting of planning permission is defined as 'loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight; dominance or visual intrusion; noise or vibration; smell, dust, heat, gases or other emissions'. Loss of a view does not count, so if a developer applied to build a housing estate in the field at the back of your house, blocking your view of the countryside, that would not be grounds for a material objection.

Wider issues concerning the community are considered with major developments. Ribbon development, unplanned buildings along main roads in the countryside, is no longer allowed and new buildings in the open countryside are only permitted for agricultural purposes. New development is only permitted in established settlements i.e. in towns and infill in villages. However, new buildings are supposed to respect the character of the neighbourhood, especially in conservation areas. You can't object simply because you don't like a planning application; you need what the law describes as *material objection*.

Architectural fashions change, and in the 1960s and 1970s everything had to be modern. The Queen's Hotel, the Corn Exchange and picturesque old houses in Broad Street were demolished to make way for a typical new town shopping precinct. The

pendulum has now swung the other way, and we have new buildings in a neo-Georgian style, such as St Helen House (the Coop building in West St Helen Street) with replica classical columns.

The Town Council is a consultee on all planning applications in Abingdon, and the Planning and Highways Committee submits recommendations to the District Council, based on planning law and guidelines. In 90% of cases, the District Council agrees with our recommendations. If a planning application is refused, the applicant can appeal to the planning inspector, but there is no right of appeal by objectors against the granting of planning permission.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Abbey Room in the Guildhall, above the Archway, used to be a prison from 1560 - 1812



Twickenham House - part of the Old Gaol Development

All planning decisions are non-party political. The planning rules are set by Government. Abingdon Town Council is a consultee and the District Council makes the decisions. If you have any planning concerns or need further information, contact the Vale of White Horse District Council, Abbey House, Abbey Close www.whitehorse.gov.uk or call 01235 520202.

Abingdon County Hall Museum

PUBLIC MEETING



Please join us for this first opportunity to talk about the Museum's future presentation of Abingdon's story.

**Thursday 27 January 2011
at 7pm in the Guildhall**

ALL WELCOME (see also page 13)

Mayor's Charity Ball

SATURDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2011

7pm for 7.30pm

GUILDHALL, ABINGDON

Tickets £45 each

which includes a reception drink,
3 course dinner and wine on the table

With comedian

KEVIN TOMLINSON

and dancing to

FULL CIRCLE

Everyone Welcome

TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM ABINGDON TOWN COUNCIL, THE OLD ABBEY HOUSE

Published by Abingdon Town Council, Old Abbey House, Abbey Close, Abingdon, OX14 3JD.
Telephone: 01235 522642 Email: enquiries@abingdon.gov.uk. Website: www.abingdon.gov.uk

Printed by leachprint 01235 520444 www.leachprint.co.uk