

Minutes of the Council of the Town of Abingdon held on Wednesday 29 June 2011 in the Council Chamber, Guildhall, Abingdon.

Present

Cllr Michael Badcock	Mayor of Abingdon
Cllr Peter Jones	Deputy Mayor of Abingdon
Cllr Alice Badcock	
Cllr Marilyn Badcock	
Cllr Samantha Bowring	
Cllr Jeanette Halliday	
Cllr Aidan Melville	
Cllr Angela Lawrence	
Cllr Lesley Legge	
Cllr Iain Littlejohn	
Cllr Patrick Lonergan	
Cllr Sandy Lovatt	
Cllr Monica Lovatt	
Cllr Hermann Matheson	
Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer	
Cllr Penny McDougall	
Cllr Katie Nobes	
Cllr Helen Pighills	
Cllr Alison Rooke	
Cllr Andrew Todd	

In Attendance

Mr Nigel Warner	Town Clerk
Mrs Sandra Hill	Deputy Town Clerk
Mr Steve Rich	Head of Service Delivery

Six members of the public.

SECTION I (Open to the Public Including the Press)

C12 Prayers

Prayers were taken by the Rev Jane Baun.

C13 Public Participation

Notice had been given questions from members of the public.

First set of questions: From Mr Duncan Brown to the Mayor of Abingdon, Cllr Michael Badcock.

Question: I was very disappointed that I did not finish my year with the traditional ceremony of Mayor Making. It robbed me of an opportunity to adequately thank the people of the town for all they have done to make the last year so special.

Response: Mr Brown you spent 40 minutes talking at the start of the meeting – then said “I’m out of here”

Question: I feel most sorry for my Mayor's award winners. They were deprived of a platform that could properly celebrate their achievements. It also denied them an invitation to the Mayor Making supper. This may not seem like a lot but if I have learnt one thing this year it is that small gestures mean a great deal to people.

Response: I was not in office when the arrangements for any such dinner would have been made, in fact it was yourself and the previous administration.

Question: The Mayor's allowance is calculated with the expectation that the Mayor will finance, in part, the Mayor Making supper. Has Cllr Badcock's allowance been altered to reflect the fact that this event did not happen?

Response: I cannot answer as you failed to specify which Cllr Badcock you refer to. Any financial question should be referred to the Chairman of F&GP.

Question: Does Cllr Badcock intend to take me and my Mayor Award winners out for dinner?

Response: Your Award winners I understand were invited by you to a private reception in the former Chairman's Parlour
Neither Cllr Alice Badcock nor Cllr Marilyn Badcock have any intention of taking you to dinner.
In fact I have no intention either.

Question 2: although notice had been given by Mr Barry Stayte, Mr Stayte was not present at the meeting to verbally convey his question. The question was therefore not taken.

C14 **Report from Oxfordshire County Council**

Cllr Peter Jones, County Councillor for Abingdon East reported that:

- Oxfordshire was the first County to the sign the military covenant.
- Oxfordshire County Council's Library Service Consultation commenced on 27 May 2011 – he highlighted that Abingdon Library is not one of those identified for closure or reduced hours, and would therefore remain open and fully staffed.
- Joanna Simons, Chief Executive of Oxfordshire County Council, was awarded the CBE for Services to Local Government in the recent honours list.

C15 **Apologies**

There were no apologies for absence.

C16 **Declarations of Interest**

It was requested that the declarations of interest guidance should be included with the agenda item on Declarations of Interest.

The Mayor of Abingdon, Cllr Michael Badcock and Cllrs Peter Jones, Sandy Lovatt and Marilyn Badcock declared a personal interest in any matters relating to Oxfordshire County Council and the Vale of White Horse District Council as they are Members of those Authorities.

Cllr Peter Jones also declared a personal interest in any matters relating to John Mason School, Abingdon as he is a Governor.

Cllrs Fiddaman, Melville, Pighills, Lawrence, Mayhew-Archer and Lonergan declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the Vale of White Horse District Council as they are Members of that Authority.

Cllr Patrick Lonergan declared a personal interest in agenda item 10, Earth Trust, as his wife is a Trust Warden.

C17 **Minutes**

Resolved to adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the special meeting held on 28 March 2011 subject to the following:

Minute 81 – Finance & General Purposes Committee

It was requested that responses in relation to Oxfordshire County Council's "Your Say on Children & Young Families," the Local Government Boundary Commission – Electoral Review of Oxfordshire and the Revised Household Waste Recycling Centre Strategy for Oxfordshire should be appended to the Finance and General Purposes Committee minutes.

Resolved to adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 30 March 2011, and the Annual Meeting held on 16 May 2011.

C18 **Mayor's Announcements**

Mayor's Cadets

The Mayor reported that that he is working with Cllr Andrew Todd on a procedure for the appointment of the Mayor's Cadets.

War memorial

The Mayor conveyed his thanks to those who had been involved in the project to improve the war memorial and its surroundings; he had received a number of positive comments from members of the public regarding this matter.

Mayor's Charities

The Mayor relayed to the meeting a letter he had received from one of his charities, the War Widows Association of Great Britain.

Civic Protocol

The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and the Town Clerk would be reviewing the Council's Civic Protocol.

Mayor's Bowls Match

The Mayor reported that the annual bowls match would be taking place on Friday 5 August; he extended an invitation for Members to join him.

C19 **Approval of Annual Return and Financial Statements**

The Council received and considered the report of the Town Clerk, the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2011 and the Annual Return, as circulated with the agenda. The Town Clerk spoke to his report highlighting that under the Accounts and Audit Regulations the Council is required to approve its financial statements and complete its sections of an annual return by 30th June 2011

each year. It was noted that the Council is required to produce statements of accounts. There was not a prescribed format for these, and for consistency, after a number of years where formats have been changed as regulations had changed, the Council had decided to produce statements in a similar to that of last year, based on FRSSE (Financial Regulations for Small Scale Enterprises). The Council was also requested to approve its annual return for the year and in particular section 1, the accounting statements and section 2, the Annual Governance Statement.

The Town Clerk reported that the Internal Auditor has completed section 4, the Internal Audit report, when he visited on 28th June 2011. He intended to distribute this at the meeting but due to photocopier problems he has been unable to print the papers. Members had a copy of the template of this section in their papers and it was reported that the Internal Auditor had answered yes to questions A to J, and not applicable to question K. Section 4 would be appended to the minutes.

A query was raised that that councillors who were members of the council during the year of account and at the year-end, 31 March 2011, were not listed on page 2 under Council Information. The Town Clerk explained that the councillors listed within this section were those as at the date of approval of the accounts, 29 June 2011, in accordance with standard practice.

In response to a query, the Town Clerk was stated that progress on meeting audit recommendations was a matter for the Finance & General Purposes Committee. The recommendations from 2009/10 had been implemented.

Resolved:

1. That the Accounting Statements (section 1 of the Annual Return) for the year ended 31 March 2011 be approved and signed on behalf of the Council by the Mayor and the Town Clerk;
2. That the Annual Governance Statement (section 2 of the Annual Return), with questions 1 to 9 answered "yes," be approved and signed on behalf of the Council by the Mayor and the Town Clerk;
3. That the Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2011 (unaudited) be approved and signed on behalf of the Council by the Mayor and the Town Clerk.

C20 To receive questions under Standing Order 10 as follows

Questions to Cllr Michael Badcock, Mayor of Abingdon, from Cllr Jeanette Halliday

- (i) *I have been advised that a bill paid for redecorating the Guildhall Mayor's Parlour is not confidential; with that in mind, how much money has been spent redecorating the Guildhall Mayor's Parlour to date, and do you plan to prioritise any further work on this room?*
- (ii) *It is public knowledge that the Guildhall Mayor's Parlour was decorated shortly after you took possession of it as Mayor. Why was the Guildhall Mayor's Parlour, a room not normally open or available to the general public, considered to be a higher priority than the redecoration of publically accessible rooms and toilets?*

The Mayor queried whether the question had been submitted directly to the office by the Member concerned. Cllr Halliday stated that she has mislaid her copy of the question and had requested that the Leader of the Opposition had forwarded her copy of the question to the Town Clerk. The Mayor asked that in future questions be

forwarded directly by the Member asking the question. The Mayor stated that this question was not one for the Mayor and should instead have been directed to the Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

C21 **Representation on outside bodies**

The Council discussed whether they wish to appoint representation to the following outside bodies:

Abingdon & District Twin Town Society (ADTTS)

A vote was taken as to whether the Town Council wish to have a representative on the ADTTS. It was **resolved** (by 10 votes to 9) that the Town Council would not be nominating a representative to the ADTTS.

Abbey Fishponds

A vote was taken as to whether the Town Council wish to have a representative on the Abbey Fishponds.

Resolved (by 12 votes to 9) that the Council would appoint a representative to the Abbey Fishponds. It was **further resolved** that the nominated representative would be Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer.

Cllr Patrick Lonergan declared a personal interest in Earth Trust as his wife is a Trust Warden.

Earth Trust

A vote was taken as to whether the Town Council wish to have a representative on the Earth Trust.

Resolved that the Council appoint a representative to the Earth Trust.

Cllr Lesley Legge and Cllr Monica Lovatt were proposed and seconded as nominations. A vote was taken and it was **resolved** (vote tied 10 vote each, mayor exercising the casting vote in accordance with the standing orders) that Cllr Monica Lovatt be the Council's representative on the Earth Trust.

Chamber of Commerce Fairtrade Group

Resolved that the decision regarding representation be deferred pending discussion of the related motion at minute

C22 **Finance and General Purposes Committee**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meetings of 16 May and 14 June 2011, as circulated with the agenda.

(i) Committee Terms of Reference

Resolved that the Committee Terms of Reference be altered and that responsibility for the following services be transferred from the Finance & General Purposes Committee to the Amenities & Recreation Committee:

- Abingdon Fisheries
- Community Events (including Market Place events, the proposed events for the Diamond Jubilee of HM the Queen, but excluding Civic

- /Mayoral events)
- Christmas Lights
 - Extravaganza Evening.

(ii) Sub-Committees and Working Parties of the Finance and General Purposes Committee

Resolved

- (a) that Cllr Angela Lawrence be appointed as the fifth member of the Audit and Performance Sub-Committee (previously Best Value Sub-Committee).
- (b) that the Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, Cllr Sandy Lovatt, and Cllrs Monica Lovatt, Peter Jones, Alison Rooke and Patrick Lonergan be appointed to the Personnel Sub-Committee.
- (c) (i) that Cllrs Penny McDougall, Aidan Melville and Alice Badcock be appointed to the Personnel Appeals Panel.
- (ii) that authority be delegated to the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition to appoint substitutes to the Personnel Appeals Panel should the Members named at (i) above, not be available.
- (d) that the Chairman of the Amenities and Recreation Committee (Cllr Marilyn Badcock), Alice Badcock, Monica Lovatt, Julie Mayhew-Archer and Samantha Bowring be appointed to the Communications Sub-Committee.
- (e) (i) that the Council appoint a Christmas Extravaganza and Lights Working Party to report directly to the Amenities and Recreation Committee, and that the membership of this working party consists of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor and past Mayor.
- (ii) that Past Mayor, Cllr Jeanette Halliday, be appointed to the Christmas Extravaganza and Lights Working Party, to serve alongside the 2011/2012 Mayor and Deputy Mayor, Cllrs Michael Badcock and Peter Jones.
- (f) that the Council appoints a Diamond Jubilee Working Party, and that Cllrs Alice Badcock, Katie Nobes, Jason Fiddaman, Aidan Melville and Alison Rooke be appointed to the working party.

(iii) Guildhall Committee

A proposal was made to increase the number of members on the Guildhall Committee from three to five members. Members resolved by 10 votes to 9 votes not to increase the number of members but to keep this under review.

(iv) Grants Sub-Committee

Resolved that Cllrs Monica Lovatt, Hermann Matheson, Katie Nobes, Andrew Todd,

Penny McDougall, Jeanette Halliday and Aidan Melville be appointed to the Grants Sub-Committee.

Cllr Angela Lawrence informed the meeting that she is Oxfordshire's elected member representative on the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). The next NALC meeting is on 12 July 2011 and she would be willing to put forward any issues that members may wish to raise.

(v) **Guildhall**

It was **resolved**

- 1 That the Town Council releases a sum of £140,000 towards capital improvements in the historic part of the Guildhall and for the improvement of services. This to be known as Phase 1 of the Guildhall Improvement Project. It was further resolved that approval of the specification for the improvements of this part of the building be delegated to the Guildhall Committee, and that this phase proceeds in the near future. It was noted that in addition a further £100,000 (approximately) of improvements would be recommended to be carried out in this area over the next ten years.
- 2 That the Town Council releases a sum towards comprehensive improvements to the kitchens, and that any urgent works (up to £3,500) are funded from revenue, and funded from the sum set aside by the Vale of White Horse District Council towards building repairs and renewals.
- 3 That the Council earmark a sum of £225,000 towards the Guildhall Refresh Scheme to undertake works to the Abbey Hall, excluding the foyer area, the scope of these improvements to be examined by the Guildhall Committee for a report to come back to the Council before proceeding with major works. It was further recommended that this, Phase 2 of the improvements, be scheduled for early 2012.
- 4 That the Council develop plans in relation to the foyer area of the Guildhall which would involve the potential for rebuilding of the space and possible inclusion of office accommodation.

There was further discussion in relation to this matter under the confidential agenda.

(vi) **Internal Audit report 2010-11**

Members received and considered the above report, which had been circulated as a confidential report but was moved to the open section following its consideration. The report was noted and the response to the recommendations approved.

Resolved to receive the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 16 May 2011 and 14 June 2011, and to approve any recommendations contained therein.

C23 **County Hall Museum Management Committee**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the County Hall Museum Management Committee meetings of 16 May and 7 June 2011, as circulated with the agenda.

Minute 10 – Recommendation for items to be loaned to the Museum.

Consideration was given to potential benefit of the requested items being displayed at the Museum, which was a Town Council facility, as they were important to the

pans for a display of the town's history. However it was also considered that the future plans for the Guildhall may include displaying some of the requested items within the Guildhall, and that this would be an extension of the Museum.

Resolved that the requested loan items be presented for discussion at the Guildhall Committee and the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Resolved to receive the minutes of the meeting of the County Hall Museum Management Committee held on 16 May 2011 and 7 June 2011.

The Chairman of the County Hall Museum Management Committee, Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer, outlined that the Museum Friends had recently been successful in securing a further grant for £25,000 for the Museum, and had raised £550 at the recent Gardens Open Day in aid of the Museum Fundraising Appeal. She outlined that the Museum Resource Centre Open Day is on 9 October 2011.

Cllr Mayhew-Archer informed the meeting that she is a member of the countywide Museums' Joint Working Group, and asked for the Council's continued support for her future involvement with the group. **Resolved** that the Council would continue to support Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer in her role as a member of the Museums' Joint Working Group.

C24 **Amenities and Recreation Committee**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the Amenities and Recreation Committee meetings of 16 May and 8 June 2011, as circulated with the agenda.

The Chairman of the Committee, Cllr Marilyn Badcock, informed Members that she had taken the decision to withdraw Abingdon from the Britain in Bloom contest. There had not been sufficient preparation of the town's entry by the previous administration. This would not however affect the town's floral displays and would allow the time saved by the staff to be used on other projects such as painting the bus shelters.

Cllrs Rooke and Legge expressed their disappointment and felt that there had been sufficient preparation by the previous administration to allow the entry to go forward.

Cllr Marilyn Badcock also stated that the closing date for "Abingdon in Bloom" entries had been extended by one week to 18th July 2011 to allow more time for entries to come in.

Resolved to receive the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities and Recreation Committee held on 16 May 2011 and 8 June 2011, and approve any recommendations contained therein.

Subject to the following amendment:

16 May 2011, Minute 2 - Election of Vice Chairman

Should read: "It was proposed, seconded and resolved that Cllr Andrew Todd be appointed Vice Chairman of the Amenities and Recreation Committee for the municipal year 2011/2012."

(Note: whilst matters of accuracy are for the Committee, it was considered appropriate that this alteration of a typographical mistake be taken at this meeting as the minutes had been approved by the Amenities and Recreation Committee).

C25 **Planning and Highways Committee**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the Planning and Highways Committee meetings held on 16 May 2011, 17 May 2011 and 31 May 2011, as circulated with the agenda.

Resolved to receive the minutes of the Planning and Highways Committee meetings held on 16 May 2011, 17 May 2011 and 31 May 2011, and approve any recommendations therein.

C26 **To receive Notice of Motion under Standing Order 8 as follows**

Motion proposed by Cllr Samantha Bowring and seconded by Cllr Angela Lawrence.

Abingdon Town Council supports the principles of Fairtrade:

- *all farmers deserve a fair price for their produce, in developing countries as well as in Oxfordshire,*
- *Fairtrade Town status for Abingdon is important for the town and community,*
- *It will help local businesses promote themselves as Fairtrade businesses,*
- *It will aid Fairtrade tourism, an increasingly important niche market.*

The town council will help and encourage the fair trade group continue to promote fair trade status for Abingdon. Fair trade products will be offered as a choice wherever food and drink are served by the town council.

To help maintain fairtrade town status the council resolves to continue meeting the basic requirements of fairtrade town status, namely:

- *Commit to continue making fairtrade tea & coffee available at council meetings (where applicable) and in its offices.*
- *Recognise the Abingdon Fairtrade Group as the official fairtrade group for the town and commit to working with it to promote fairtrade. Support fairtrade use, along with local workplaces and community organisations, places of worship, schools, colleges and other community organisations*
- *Use fairtrade products whenever possible.*

The council also recognises that ongoing re-certification as a fairtrade town requires a commitment to going beyond the basic requirements needed to be a fairtrade town and therefore it also resolves to:

- *Explore providing fairtrade wine for sale at the Guildhall bar and only sell fair-trade wine at Council controlled functions*

Promote the fair trade mark and fairtrade towns' initiative by

- *Displaying fairtrade foundation materials in refreshment areas.*
- *Using the fair tradetowns' logo on the Council website.*
- *Reporting regularly in the Town Crier on progress made to meet these requirements. Report back on fairtrade progress within the town and council at the last full council meeting of every civic year.*

Cllr Bowring spoke to the motion. In seconding the motion, Cllr Lawrence highlighted that in the past Fairtrade products were limited and expensive. Times have now moved-on and there is now an extensive range of products, which are also

affordable. Supporting Fairtrade ensures that workers are getting a fair price for their products, and people now want to use and support Freetrade products.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Sandy Lovatt, stated that whilst he sympathised with the motion, there were concerns regarding the implications of the proposal. For instance, restricting wine sold within the Guildhall complex to Fair trade would not be a viable business proposition whilst the Council was trying to reduce operating costs, and would constrain choice. He further stated that concerns have been published about Fair Trade and its position as a massive global company and unease has also been expressed over its economic concepts. He proposed that further debate regarding the Council's stance on Fair Trade take place at the next Finance & General Purposes Committee 13 September 2011.

Cllr Samantha Bowring stated that this would delay the renewing of the Town's Fair Trade status by not meeting the required deadlines. Cllr Rooke stated that it would not be democratic for the motion to be debated at the Finance & General Purposes Committee, as this was not politically balanced, and should therefore be debated at Full Council.

A vote was taken and it was **resolved** that the motion be **referred** to the Finance & General Purposes Committee on 13 September 2011 to assess the motion's impact on the Town and the Council and advise the Council on the appropriate action to take.

C27 **Proposed Change of Town Council Dates**

- (i) **Resolved** that the Group Leaders would liaise with the Town Clerk to find a mutually agreeable date.

The Group Leaders and the Town Clerk have subsequently agreed that the previously agreed date of 28 September 2011 would stand.

- (ii) **Resolved** that the date of the November Council meeting be changed to 23 November 2011.

C28 **District Council Community Grants Scheme**

It was noted that as part of the community grants scheme criteria the district council require applicants to provide a letter of support from their town or parish council. In the case of Vale wide applications, applicants are also expected to provide evidence that they are also seeking support from their town or parish council.

Resolved that the Grants Sub-Committee should decide whether the Town Council wish to support applications to the District Council's Community Grants Scheme.

C29 **Confidential Item to Open Section – Civic Matters, Town Council 30 March 2011**

It was **resolved** that Minute 25/10 – Civic Matters, Confidential Town Council Minutes of 30 March 2011 be moved from within the confidential section, to the open section of these minutes.

Civic Matters

It was noted that at the previous Council meeting a motion had been moved by Cllr Jeanette Halliday and seconded by Cllr Lesley Legge. In accordance with the

Council's convention, this motion had stood adjourned without debate until this meeting. The motion read:

That Councillor Janet Morgan should be made a Freeman of the Town of Abingdon.

Cllrs Jeanette Halliday and Legge spoke to the motion stating that Cllr Morgan had represented Abingdon for almost 30 years on each of the local authorities. She was well-known and respected, was very community minded and was particularly supportive of young people.

On putting the matter to the vote it was

Resolved unanimously that Cllr Janet Morgan should be made a Freeman of the Town of Abingdon.

C30 **Exclusion of the Public, Including the Press**

The Mayor moved and it was **resolved**

“That in accordance with section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted as summarised below.”

SECTION II (Excluding the public and the press)

Items for Discussion:

- Confidential minutes of the Special Town Council meeting held on 29 March and the Ordinary Town Council meeting 30 March 2011;
- Confidential minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 14 June 2011;
- Confidential notes of the Guildhall Working Party held on 30 March and 20 April 2011;
- Confidential minutes of the Guildhall Committee held on 21 June 2011.