

Minutes of the Council of the Town of Abingdon held in the Council Chamber, Guildhall, Abingdon on Wednesday 24 March 2010

Present: Cllr Samantha Bowring  
Cllr Duncan Brown Deputy Mayor  
Cllr Margaret Crick  
Cllr Alastair Fear  
Cllr Peter Fulk  
Cllr James Halliday  
Cllr Jeanette Halliday  
Cllr Patricia Hobby Mayor  
Cllr Angela Lawrence  
Cllr Lesley Legge  
Cllr Patrick Lonergan  
Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer  
Cllr Diana Nixon  
Cllr Lorraine Oates  
Cllr Tim Oates  
Cllr Alison Rooke  
Cllr Lorraine Smith  
Cllr Martin Smith  
Cllr Colin Walters

In Attendance: Mr Nigel Warner – Town Clerk  
Mrs Sandra Hill – Deputy Town Clerk  
Mr Steve Rich – Projects & Technical Manager

**70 Prayers**

Prayers were taken by the Rev Dr Charles Miller.

**71 Public Participation**

Oxfordshire County Council Councillor, Cllr Peter Jones, addressed the meeting outlining that Oxfordshire County Council has appointed a new contractor to re-lay some of the newly paved areas in High Street, and that funding has been made available to deal with the huge amount of potholes.

**72 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Jan Morter and Audrey Tamplin.

**73 Declarations of Interest**

Cllrs Samantha Bowring, Jim Halliday, Patrick Lonergan, Julie Mayhew-Archer, Angela Lawrence and Alison Rooke all declared personal interest in any matters concerning the Vale of White Horse District Council as they are Members of that Council, and in particular the County Hall Museum as the District Council provide an annual grant towards the Museum.

Cllr Duncan Brown declared a personal and prejudicial interest regarding the Fire Fighters' Union address within the Minutes of the Town Council held on 20 January 2010, as he is an Oxfordshire retained fire fighter, based at Abingdon.

All Councillors present declared a personal interest in the Finance & General Purposes Minutes of 23 March 2010, Minute 122 – Members’ Allowances.

**74 Minutes**

*Cllr Duncan Brown declared a personal and prejudicial interest regarding the Fire Fighters’ Union address within the Minutes of the Town Council held on 20 January 2010, as he is an Oxfordshire retained fire fighter, based at Abingdon.*

**Resolved** to adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Council of the Town of Abingdon held on 20 January 2010, subject to the following amendments:

- Minute 63 - the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Duncan Brown left the room at 7.50 pm, at returning 7.57 pm
- Minute - 67 Cllrs Jim and Jeannette Halliday, Duncan Brown and Alastair Fear returned to the meeting at 8.47 pm.

**75 Mayor’s Announcements**

The Mayor announced:

- The High Sheriff of Oxfordshire would be walking the Thames Path in aid of charity and is looking for sponsors.
- Clubs and Societies Day is on Saturday 10 April 2010;
- Air & Country Show would be taking place on 2 May 2010;
- Gloria Rayner the Council’s Finance & Admin Officer would be leaving the Council on 26 March 2010;
- The annual PHAB v Councillors would be taking place at Christchurch, Northcourt Road at 7.00 pm on Thursday 25 March 2010.

**76 Finance and General Purposes Committee**

The Chair of Finance & General Purposes Committee relayed thanks to the Town Clerk and the Deputy Town Clerk in ensuring that the minutes of the reconvened meeting on held 23 March 2010 were available for Town Council on 24 March 2010.

*All Councillors present declared a personal interest in Minute 122 – Members’ Allowances.*

Minute 126, Major Projects 2010-2011

Cllrs Patrick Lonergan and Alison Rooke expressed an interest in serving on the Major Projects Group which would be meeting with the Projects & Technical Manager and the Council’s retained architect.

**Resolved** to receive the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee of 9 March 2010 and the reconvened meeting on 23 March 2010, and approve any recommendations contained therein.

**77 County Hall Museum Management Committee**

The Chair of the County Hall Museum Management Committee announced the Council’s success in getting approval from the Heritage Lottery Fund to proceed with Stage 2 of the County Hall Improvement and Access Project.

**Resolved** to receive the minutes of the meeting of the County Hall Museum Management Committee held on 23 February 2010, and approve any recommendations therein.

**78 Amenities and Recreation Committee**

**Resolved** to receive the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities and Recreation Committee held on 8 March 2010, and approve any recommendations therein, subject to the following amendment:

Cllr Lorraine Oates was **present** at the meeting.

**79 Planning and Highways Committee**

Members stated that the timescale for responses to Oxfordshire County Council's Informal Consultation on the proposed cycle contra-flow system in East St Helen's Street was too short.

**Resolved** to receive minutes of the Planning and Highways Committee meetings held on 19 and 22 February 2010 and 15 March 2010, and approve any recommendations therein.

**80 To receive Notices of Motion under Standing Order No. 8 as follows:**

(1) Motion proposed by Cllr Jim Halliday and seconded by Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer. *Abingdon Town Council welcomes the continued work to improve the environment of the town centre, and in particular the re-laying of the pavements in the High Street which is currently being carried out by Oxfordshire County Council.*

*However, it is concerned that the surface of the newly laid paving is very uneven and some slabs are already broken. The Council has received complaints from the public and the potential danger of falls is clear.*

*The Town Council is also concerned that the new "build out" of paving at the junction of the High Street and West St Helen Street may be damaged by heavy vehicles exiting West St Helen Street, during, for example, the Fair and other road diversions.*

*Any faults should be rectified so that the paving is of a good standard to match that of recent work in the town centre, such as in Stert Street and the Market Place. The Town Clerk is asked to raise the Council's concerns urgently with the Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet Member responsible for overseeing the project and request a meeting on site to review the work.*

In moving the Motion, Cllr Jim Halliday relayed that he was happy to hear that Oxfordshire County Council were relaying the newly laid paving, but the work needs to be completed quickly.

It was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed that an amendment to the first sentence, in the last paragraph, should read: ***Any faults should be rectified at no extra cost to the Council tax payer, so that the paving is of a good standard to match that of recent work in the town centre, such as in Stert Street and the Market Place.***

**Resolved** that the amended Motion be accepted and should now read:

*Abingdon Town Council welcomes the continued work to improve the environment of the town centre, and in particular the re-laying of the pavements in the High Street which is currently being carried out by Oxfordshire County Council.*

*However, it is concerned that the surface of the newly laid paving is very uneven and some slabs are already broken. The Council has received complaints from the public and the potential danger of falls is clear.*

*The Town Council is also concerned that the new "build out" of paving at the junction of the High Street and West St Helen Street may be damaged by heavy vehicles exiting West St Helen Street, during, for example, the Fair and other road diversions.*

*Any faults should be rectified, at no extra cost to the Council tax payer, so that the paving is of a good standard to match that of recent work in the town centre, such as in Stert Street and the Market Place. The Town Clerk is asked to raise the Council's concerns urgently with the Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet Member responsible for overseeing the project and request a meeting on site to review the work.*

It was unanimously agreed that Abingdon Town Council are very concerned about the standard of workmanship of the re-laid pavements within High Street, and have repeatedly conveyed their concerns to Oxfordshire County Council.

(2) Motion proposed by Cllr Samantha Bowring and seconded by Cllr Colin Walters. *Abingdon Town Council notes the hard work by the Environment Agency in designing flood prevention schemes for the areas around the River Ock and the River Stert in Abingdon.*

*Abingdon Town Council notes that several hundred homes are at risk by flooding from the River Ock or by groundwater that is unable to drain into the River Ock when it is flooded and that a smaller number are at risk from the River Stert.*

*Abingdon Town Council notes that the present funding formula for flood prevention schemes means that Abingdon does not qualify for a major flood prevention scheme.*

*Abingdon Town Council believes that a significant number of residents and businesses in the town would benefit enormously from the proposed scheme to hold water to the west of Abingdon and similar defences on the River Stert in the vicinity of Tilsley Park.*

*Abingdon Town Council requests that the Town Clerk writes to the incoming Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs following the general election on behalf of Abingdon Town Council to request that the Environment Agency is funded to put effective flood prevention schemes in place for Abingdon.*

In moving the Motion, Cllr Samantha Bowring stated that major flood prevention measures were not being implemented in Abingdon. The cost to put measures in place for would be £3.5m which is not a large amount for national Government. In seconding the Motion, Cllr Colin Walters stated that he would like to know how much was available and the costs of the flood alleviation scheme for the Stert.

**Resolved** that the Motion be accepted.

(3) Motion proposed by Cllr Jeanette Halliday seconded by Cllr Di Nixon

*Abingdon Town Council:*

- *Recognises the need for the Armed Forces to carry out thorough training prior to being deployed to conflict zones;*
- *Notes that the Ministry of Defence has announced that from 2012 the majority of the fleet of 70 new Chinook helicopters will be based at RAF Benson;*
- *Notes that it is reported that training exercises involving the Chinooks will be carried out at Dalton Barracks and may start as soon as Autumn 2010;*
- *is concerned about the possible noise disturbance that may be experienced by Abingdon residents as the helicopters fly to and from Dalton Barracks;*
- *Resolves that it will liaise with neighbouring Parish Councils, and in particular St Helen Without Parish Council, to set up a joint meeting with RAF Benson in order to discuss flight paths that may be used to minimise the potential disturbance to residents.*

In moving the Motion Cllr Jeanette Halliday relayed that it was essential for the Council to be involved in meeting with neighbouring parish councils, and the RAF, to discuss ways to minimise potential disturbance. It has been proved that by a householder that vibrations from helicopters can cause damage to homes.

Cllr Alison Rooke highlighted that there is a need for the Council to take this issue forward but should be cautious when doing so, in order not to jeopardise the very good relationship the Council has with local armed forces.

**Resolved** that the Motion be accepted.

**81 Motion under Standing Order No.34, to permanently vary the Council's Standing Orders**

*At the last meeting it was proposed by Cllr Lesley Legge, Chair of Finance & General Purposes and seconded by Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer, Vice-Chair of Finance & General Purposes that the Council amend Standing Order 34 to read:*

*"The Council's control of expenditure shall be governed by its Financial Regulations."*

*"All cheques for payments will be drawn on an Abingdon Town Council Payments Account, and all receipts deposited into the Current Account."*

*"All cheques shall be signed by two Members of the Council. All such payments shall be detailed on a monthly schedule and these schedules shall be presented to the next meeting of the Council's Finance and General Purposes Committee."*

*"The Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the Town Clerk shall be authorised to approve expenditure up to a maximum of £1,000 for which budgetary provision has not been made and where the matter is considered by him/her to be too urgent to wait for the appropriate Committee."*

*"All orders shall be issued by the officers of the Council in accordance with the Financial Regulations."*

*That the Financial Regulations in relation to banking arrangements and*

*cheques (section 6), payment of salaries and wages (section 9) and orders for works goods and services (section 12) be amended in accordance with the report of the Town Clerk.”*

*In accordance with Standing Order no.31 consideration of this motion was deferred this meeting.*

In moving the Motion Cllr Lesley Legge relayed that Members had been signing all cheques for some time, but there was a need to review and change written procedures in order for the Council to apply for Quality Town Status.

**Resolved** that the Motion be accepted

**82 Calendar of meetings**

**Resolved** that the calendar of meetings be accepted subject two changes: Amenities & Recreation should read 2 March and County Hall Museum Management Committee should read 1 March

**83 Election of Mayor**

**Resolved** that the nomination of Cllr Duncan Brown as Mayor of Abingdon for the 2010/2011 civic year go forward to the Annual Meeting of the Council.

**84 Election of Deputy Mayor**

**Resolved** that the nomination of Cllr Alastair Fear as Deputy Mayor of Abingdon for the 2010/2011 civic year go forward to the Annual Meeting of the Council.

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

The Mayor moved:

*“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 Town Council meeting held on 20 January 2010;
- Confidential minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 9 March 2010;
- Confidential minutes of the County Hall Museum Management Committee held on 23 February 2010;
- Confidential minutes of the Amenities and Recreation Committee held on 3 March 2010.

Signed ..... Date .....