

Annual Parish Meeting - Tuesday 12th March 2019

Report of the Chairman of the Amenities and Recreation Committee – Councillor Alice Badcock

- **Abingdon Common** – west of the Marcham Road interchange. Mainly used for allotments, hay making and grazing. This year the Council has undertaken some major tree works there and this continues.
- **Adverse Weather Arrangements** – this year we have used the snow clearing equipment once as the winter has not been so severe as it was last year
- **Allotments** – three sites all run by their own individual Allotment Associations. The Council does have funding to assist in the Associations in the maintenance of these areas such as fencing, gates, roads and tree maintenance.
- **Abingdon In Bloom** – The Town Council uses Wick Farm Nurseries, off Audlett Drive to provide our floral displays around the town. The Town Council has received many favourable comments regarding the floral displays around the town.
- **Cemeteries – Burials, maintenance, Lodges and Chapels** – The cemeteries continue to be busy places visited by thousands of people over the course of the past year. The Council continues to maintain the cemeteries to a high standard and work has recently begun on the Spring Road cemetery to refurbish and tarmac the road within it.
The Council have also approved this year that extensions to the exclusive rights of burial can be made after 75 years. This will allow burials to continue within grave spaces that are not yet full.
- **Christmas Lights** – As reported last year the Council continues to upgrade its Christmas lights year on year. This year we saw some new lights

displayed around the town and even more will be seen this coming Christmas. I have to report again this year that it is unfortunate the leaseholders of the Bury Street precinct do not talk to the Town Council to ensure continuity of the illumination theme around the town.

- **Events** - The Council has undertaken several events during the course of the year including the annual Fair, Fun and Music in the Park, Remembrance Sunday and a Bun Throwing ceremony, This includes the responsibilities for Road Closures, redirecting traffic, erection of crowd controls, control of the general public and organising layouts etc. A lot of work, carried out by a dedicated Town Council team.
- **Fairs** – They continue as required under the Oxfordshire Act 1985.
- **Fisheries** – New signage has been installed along the Abingdon Fisheries denoting where the boundaries lie and the regulations in force. We also have an officer policing the fisheries ensuring those fishing have the right to do so and the relevant permits.
- **Litter Picking** – The Town Council undertakes litter picking duties in all of its areas including the Market Place, the precincts of the County Hall and the War Memorial.
- **Recreation and open spaces** – the Town Council is responsible for 8 play areas around the town and two large recreation grounds as well as part of the Ock Valley Walk area. The Council has an annual programme of improving the play areas with new equipment and repairs to safety surfaces. Since the last Parish meeting the Town Council has installed new equipment in to Elizabeth Avenue and Hillview play areas and is currently waiting for equipment to be installed in Masefield and Boxill play areas.

Other major works that have taken place this year is the refurbishment of the entrance to the Chilton Road play area to try and alleviate the puddling there during heavy rainfall. Also, part of the path running through Boxhill Wood was resurfaced and repaired.

The Bridge over the River Ock near St Helen's Church, had to be replaced due to vandalism and was reopened to the public soon after the last Parish meeting.

- **Royse Court Garden** – Work has now been completed on the refurbishment of Royse Court Garden and the installation of two memorial benches which you may have seen on your way in to the meeting.
- **Street Furniture** - The Town Council look after some 42 bus shelters and it is a constant battle against vandalism and fly posters to ensure they remain fit for purpose. The Council are currently undertaking a cleaning and repainting programme on the bus shelters around the town. The Council has also replaced public seating around the town when it has worn out or been vandalised and this year the Council has replaced two benches on St Helen's Wharf which are manufactured from recyclable materials, which seem to be more robust and in turn saves on maintenance costs.
- **Tree Work** - Due to a ruling by the Court of Appeal local councils nationally are having to look at the frequency of tree surveys that are undertaken. The Town Council currently undertakes a tree survey every four years but this will be reduced to bi-annually starting in 2019 / 2020.
- **Weed Control** – The Town Council undertakes weed killing on its areas of responsibility. Generally speaking weed killing on the highway and pavements is the responsibility of the Oxfordshire County Council,

Councillor Alice Badcock

Chairman Amenities and Recreation Committee

March 2019