

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

The minutes of a meeting of the Amenities and Recreation Committee held in the Old Abbey House on Wednesday 28th May 2014 at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillor Helen Pighills - Chairman
Councillor Marilyn Badcock - Vice-Chairman
Councillor Alice Badcock
Councillor Samantha Bowring
Councillor Andrew Todd

In Attendance: Councillor Julie Mayhew-Archer
Mr. Nigel Warner - Town Clerk
Mr. Stephen Rich - Head of Service Delivery
(Clerk to the meeting)

A1 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sandy Lovatt (Chairman of Finance and General Purposes); Councillor Angela Lawrence (Mayor); Councillor Jeanette Halliday and Councillor Jan Morter.

A2 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest raised at this point in the meeting.

A3 **Minutes of the previous meeting**

Resolved: *that the minutes of the meeting held on 12th February 2014 be signed as a correct record by the Chairman.*

A4 **Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the Agenda**

Minute A13 – MG Garden

It was reported that the MG Garden was now complete and that arrangements would be made for an official opening by the Mayor in the near future. This item will no longer appear on the agenda.

Minute A11 – Cemetery Matters

The meeting was informed that a Working Group had been set up in the previous Civic year to consider arrangements which should be put in place for funerals which attract a large attendance. The group had yet to meet. It was **recommended** that this Group be

appointed by the Council **report** back to the Amenities and Recreation Committee with their recommendations. It was suggested that Councillors Alice Badcock, Samantha Bowring and Lesley Legge may wish to serve on this Group.

Minute A22 – Works Team Apprentice

The meeting was informed that an Apprentice had been appointed on a fixed term and that he would soon be taking up his studying.

Minute A24 – Ock Valley Walk

The Committee were informed that due to the severe weather experienced in recent months the Environment Agency not been able to meet regarding Water Voles in the Ock Valley walk area. The Head of Service will report back at the next meeting.

Minute A54 – Cemetery and Works Supervisor's Report

The Committee requested that the "Jubilee Trees" be planted in the Cemetery in the autumn and that the new pathway to the Memorial Garden be installed.

Minute A55 – Christmas Lights

The Chairman of the Christmas Lights Working Group, Councillor Alice Badcock, informed the meeting of the new lighting displays that had been purchased for the 2014 Christmas season. She also reported that the solar powered Christmas trees had been put up for sale by the contractors as they did not perform too well for Abingdon-on-Thames. The Committee were informed that all Christmas displays were changing over to LED lighting which was safer and cheaper to run and that some of the town's displays would be modified to LED this year. The Head of Service said he was waiting to hear how much the candles, placed in the Market Place, would cost to modify.

Minute A56 – Twinning Stone

The Committee noted that cleaning work had been undertaken on the Twinning Stone in the south of the town. The Committee noted that the Abingdon and District Twin Town Society had chosen not to apply for a grant for the work from the funds set aside in relation to the former Joint Environmental Trust.

Minute A58 – Flood Forum

The Committee requested that this item is placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

A5 **Abingdon in Bloom 2014**

The meeting was informed that the installation of the 2014 flower displays was currently being undertaken.

The meeting also **resolved** that if the take-up for the “Design a Display” competition was poor this year that the Abingdon in Bloom Sub Committee be instructed not to hold further competitions in future.

A6 **Summer Events Working Group**

The meeting was informed that previous minutes of the Summer Events Working Group had been agreed.

The Chairman of the Summer Events Working Group informed the meeting that tickets were selling fast and that the event was approaching a sell-out situation.

The meeting was also informed that there were problems with the Road Closure and a local business, however the Chairman and Officers of the Council were working to try and resolve the situation.

The Event Plan had been issued to the emergency services, the District Council and those involved in the organisation of the event.

The Chairman informed the meeting that the Working Group and Officers would be having further meetings to finalise arrangements however most of the organising had now been completed.

The Committee thanked the Summer Events Chairman and her Working Group for all the hard work that had been put in to the event.

A7 **Finance Report**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Treasurer in relation to the above.

The Town Clerk answered Members questions concerning the accounts and it was **resolved** that the report be approved.

(The Town Clerk left the meeting at this point.)

A8 **Cemetery and Works Supervisor’s Report**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Cemetery and Works Supervisor as circulated with the agenda.

The Committee wished Mr Badcock a speedy recovery from his operation and asked that their best wishes be forwarded to him.

A9 **Cemetery**

Members, with mind to the Cemetery Service Review, recalled that the current cemeteries in Abingdon had enough capacity to maintain burials for another 10 to 15 years. Members were informed that a start-up of a new cemetery can take up to five years for it to become operational.

Members asked that this matter becomes an item on future agendas of the Amenities and Recreational Committee and that officers come back to the next meeting with a report on what has been done or can be done to expedite matters in finding a new location for a town cemetery, with proposals as necessary.

It was **recommended** that a Working Group be set up regarding a New Cemetery and that members be appointed at the next Town Council meeting.

A10 **Play Areas**

The Committee were asked to consider how the £30,000 budget for play areas should be allocated this coming year. The Committee was asked to consider the repair and replacement of safety surfaces which needed attention.

The Committee requested that an audit be carried out of play areas with regard to safety surfaces and non-play equipment and that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

The Committee considered a complaint received from a local resident to the Elizabeth Avenue play area. The Committee felt there was no justification for the complaint as this was a well established play area and the equipment installed was not noisy. The Council had received no other complaints concerning the play area however the Committee asked officers to report this to the police to see if local PCSO's could keep an eye on the situation.

Members considered a request from an Abingdon resident to place a Geocache in the Masefield Crescent recreation ground. Members were informed that Geocaching was an outdoor treasure hunting game using GPS services (e.g. mobile phones). The Committee were supportive of this initiative and agreed that this could take place on the Masefield Crescent recreation ground.

A11 **Allotments**

A Member had been approached to ask if an Allotment Association could rent out allotment plots to non residents of Abingdon-on-Thames. The meeting was informed that this had not been a previous policy of the Town Council and that all allotment holders should be residents of the town. The Committee **resolved** *that the policy of the Town Council should remain that Allotments were for residents of the town only.*

Members also asked that Allotment Association who no longer have waiting lists for plots should help other Allotment Associations by taking residents from their lists.

A12 **Publicity**

Members requested that the following items be given publicity:

- Fun / Music in the Park
- Geocaching
- MG Garden opening
- Play Areas more profile on Website.

A13 **Items for Next Meeting**

There were none unless stated within these minutes.

A14 **Dates of meetings for 2013/2014**

The dates for future meetings of the Amenities and Recreation Committee are;

- Wednesday 3rd September 2014
- Wednesday 26th November 2014
- Wednesday 11th February 2015

A15 **Exclusion of the public, including the Press**

It was moved by the Chairman and **resolved**

That in accordance with section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

A16 **Fisheries**

Members received a verbal report from the Head of Service Delivery and it was **resolved** that *delegation be given to the Town Clerk, Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Amenities and Recreation Committee to look at the charges on the Abingdon-on-Thames Fisheries with a view to recommending a new pricing policy to Council. Also a report be made to the Committee regarding the regulation, operation and enforcement of the Abingdon-on-Thames Fisheries.*

The meeting rose at 9.05 pm

Signed Date