

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

The minutes of a meeting of the Amenities and Recreation Committee held on Wednesday 29th August 2012.

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| Present: | Councillor Marilyn Badcock | - Chairman |
| | Councillor Andrew Todd | - Vice Chairman |
| | Councillor Alice Badcock | |
| | Councillor Samantha Bowring | |
| | Councillor Monica Lovatt | - Mayor |
| | Councillor Lesley Legge | |
| In Attendance: | Mr Stephen Rich | - Head of Service Delivery |
| | Miss Pam Onions | - Service Delivery (Clerk to meeting) |
| | Mr M Foster | - Abingdon-on-Thames Fisheries (for item 6 only) |
| | Mr Nigel Warner | - Town Clerk (for item 7 only) |

A23 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jason Fiddaman.

A24 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Marilyn Badcock declared a personal interest in any matters concerning the Vale of White Horse District Council and the Oxfordshire County Council as she was also a Member of both those Councils.

A25 **Minutes of the previous meeting**

Resolved: *that the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd May 2012 be signed as a correct record by the Chairman.*

A26 **Matters Arising not covered elsewhere on the Agenda**

There were a few matters arising that were not covered elsewhere on the agenda as follows:

- **Play Area** – it was noted that the Play Area Reports were due in September and would be discussed at the next meeting

- **MG Garden** – work on this project had been delayed, but a “tidy-up” would be undertaken in time for the MGB 50th Celebration on 23rd September and full work programme would begin again in October after the Fair had taken place. ;
- **Pond At Drayton Road Allotments** – it was noted that the Chairman and Head of Service Delivery had visited the area on 28 August and agreed with John Watson that no more work was required. The area would be allowed to fill up and drain naturally in future. **Resolved:** that the Head of Service Delivery would write to the appropriate parties to ensure that a previously planned Workshop would not take place;
- **Gate at Chaunterell Way** – a cattle grid type entrance had been made and installation would take place in the following few weeks. If successful, this would be replicated throughout the Town Council’s play areas as required.

A27 **HM the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Working Group Minutes**

The Committee received the minutes of the HM The Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Working Group meeting held on 19th June and 25th July 2012.

It was noted that feedback for the Jubilee events had been very positive and some letters of appreciation had been received. In discussion, it was agreed that these letters would be attached to the Minute as a permanent record.

It was **Resolved** *that the Working Group for the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee would be disbanded.*

A28 **Abingdon-on-Thames Fisheries**

Mr M Foster, the Water Keeper, gave a report on the current position with regard to fishing rights under Abingdon–on-Thames’ responsibility. He was concerned that an increasing number of boats now came in to Abingdon’s waters.

The Committee also received a report from the Deputy Town Clerk concerning the Abingdon-on-Thames Fisheries. However it was not clear from items mentioned in the report as to how policies had evolved and how prices had been fixed for permits, matches etc.

The Committee were also concerned regarding the mooring of boats along the stretch of the river to which the Town Council has fishing rights under the Oxfordshire Act of 1985.

It was **Resolved:**

1. that the Chairman of the Committee, Cllr Marilyn Badcock, should write to the District Council to express the Committee’s concern regarding the boats being moored in the waters for longer than they should be, particularly in so far as it affected access to the Abingdon fisheries and

2. *that information regarding the mooring situation be sought from the District Council and that further clarification of the Fishing Policies be placed on the agenda of the next meeting of the Amenities and Recreation Committee.*

Mr Foster then left the meeting.

7.55pm The Chairman left the meeting temporarily and the Vice-Chairman took the chair.

A29 **Financial Report**

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

Resolved that the report be approved.

A30 **Council Forward Plan 2012 / 2013**

Members received the report of the Town Clerk and the draft sections of the Plan which related to the Committee's services.

It was noted that a service review of allotments had taken place. It was recognised that only a few allotment spaces remained and it was felt that it may be sensible to issue further spaces in half sizes as and when they became available. Further discussion on this matter would take place when the review was considered by this Committee in November 2012. It was agreed that the first KPI (Key Performance Indicator) "Cost per allotment revenue a/c (£)" should be removed.

In discussion of the remainder of the report, under the item "Town Environment" it was agreed that there were too many KPIs and three of them i.e. "Number of in Bloom sponsors", "Number of entries in Abingdon in Bloom competition", and "Number of grit bins installed" should be removed.

The Committee **Resolved** *to approve the report of the Town Clerk and suggest the changes to the Plan as outlined above.*

A31 **Abingdon in Bloom 2012**

The Committee noted that the competition had been cancelled this year but would be revived for 2013.

The Committee noted that many favourable comments had been received throughout the summer regarding the flower displays around the town. However, the Committee was concerned about the timing of planting of the flower beds in the town centre and about grass cutting around the town.

The Committee was informed that grass cutting of verges around the town was the responsibility of the District Council who also cut the grass in some Town Council play areas. The District Council also planted the flower beds in the Town Centre.

It was **Resolved** that the Head of Service Delivery should contact the District Council for a breakdown of service charges to the Town Council regarding the flower beds and grass cutting on Town Council sites.

A32 **Cemetery and Works Supervisor's Report**

The Committee received a report from the Cemetery and Works Supervisor.

It was noted that a replacement ride-on mower was needed and that the costs of this were being investigated. It was **Resolved** that the prices of varying sizes of mower be determined and brought to the next meeting for consideration. The Head of Service Delivery would notify the Works Supervisor accordingly.

The Committee was pleased to note that interviews for a new member of the Works Team staff would be taking place on 18 September. Thanks were also expressed for the ongoing work undertaken on the bus shelters which now looked considerably improved.

The Committee **Resolved** to accept the report from the Cemetery and Works Supervisor.

A33 **Jubilee Trees**

The Committee noted that various members of the public had made suggestions as to where the proposed Jubilee trees should be planted. Whilst most suggestions were acceptable, the suggestion to plant trees in the Preston Road/Cotman Close area needed further discussion as there were both safety and cost implications. It was **Resolved** that the Head of Service Delivery would contact the person who made the suggestion for further clarification.

In discussion with regard to the suggestion to plant trees at Caldecott School, Members agreed that it would be a good idea for the children to do the planting. It was also agreed that any tree planted would be a donation to the appropriate authority on whose land it was to be planted. The Head of Service Delivery would arrange for these to be costed and advise Members accordingly. It was decided that Members should be invited to watch trees being planted and information on this would be circulated to all appropriate Members in due course.

The Head of Service Delivery mentioned that some of the cemetery trees need to be replaced. The Committee agreed that this was a separate issue with funding coming from the general maintenance budget. Cemetery trees could be replaced on a rolling basis year by year.

8.30pm The Chairman returned to the meeting and took the chair.

A34 **Chilton Close Play Area**

The Committee noted that a request had been received from a local Member for a metal 10ft fence to be erected at the ends of gardens in Cherwell Close that back on to the football pitch area. Residents have experienced footballs being kicked in to their gardens and some have been struck by the balls. It was **Resolved** *that the Chairman and the Head of Service Delivery would visit the site with a local Member and their findings would be discussed at the next meeting.*

The same member had also requested that the Council looked at the pathway between Chilton Close Play area and Kennet Road as its surface is breaking up. Officers had been to look at this path and its condition warranted resurfacing. In discussion it was thought that resurfacing could be undertaken next year, and an allowance be made in the budget estimates for this item.

A35 **Glyme Close/Evenlode Recreation Area**

The Committee noted that a local Member has requested that a “Dog Bin” be placed in the walkthrough area between Glyme Close and Evenlode as there was a problem with dog excreta in this area. Officers had visited the area and considered the request to be valid and recommended that Members supported this request and instructed their officers accordingly.

It was **Resolved** *to accept this recommendation.*

A36 **Fun in the Park/Oxfordshire Play Association**

Members were asked to consider the initiative for the Town Council and Oxfordshire Play Association to amalgamate to provide a bigger and better annual event in the Abbey Grounds. Members were also asked to consider whether the event should be extended into the evening to incorporate local bands/proms so it would run on the lines of the recent Proms in the Park event.

Members felt that this was a good idea in principle but needed further discussion to ensure that it ran in the most beneficial way for all interested parties. It was **Recommended** *that responsibility for the “Fun in the Park” event be transferred from the Finance & General Purposes Committee to the Amenities & Recreation Committee, and that the Committee Terms of Reference be altered accordingly.*

Subject to approval of the above it was then **Resolved** *that a Working Group to be set up to consider all aspects of this idea with a view to the first of these events being held in June 2013 to mark the 60th anniversary of the Coronation of HM Queen Elizabeth II.*

A37 **Trees**

The Committee noted that the tree survey undertaken by the Council earlier this year indicated some urgent work to be undertaken in order to keep the trees as safe as possible.

In order to undertake the work the Works team would carry out items in the report that were within their capabilities; a professional tree surgeon had been instructed to carry work on the other items. The cost of the contracted out work was £16,050 and was within the budget for trees for the 2012/13 financial year.

A38 **Trees in Ock Valley Walk**

The Committee considered a request from a resident in the Brewery site regarding the trees in the Ock Valley Walk. The resident felt that some of the trees were leaning and could be a potential danger to nearby houses should high winds topple them. Tree experts had been consulted and had recommended that lopping the trees was not sensible as it could lead to disease and /or the trees could become more unbalanced and could sprout and cause further vegetation etc. It was also noted that this was a conservation area. However, the tree survey report had identified some urgent work required in the area and this had now been commissioned to be carried out by Ringrose Tree Services. Any leaning trees would be further inspected.

It was **Resolved** *that the Head of Service Delivery should write to the resident explaining the actions taken and resolutions made.*

A39 **Notice Boards**

Members were asked to consider several requests regarding notice boards in the town.

A request had been received from the Communications Committee via the Finance and General Purposes committee to look at the Town Council's notice boards within the Town Centre with a view to having two notice boards in the south of the town.

Another request had been received from a Member in the north of the town that a notice board should be installed at the North East Abingdon Community Centre (Peachcroft).

Finally, the three notice boards in the town centre, Market Place, Stratton Lodge and Old Abbey House, all needed replacing either because of age and deterioration or vandalism.

Discussion centred round cost and general strategy regarding notice boards. It was **Resolved** *that the Head of Service Delivery would ascertain costs of new notice boards and how these would be serviced and maintained and report back to the next meeting.*

A40 **Christmas Lights**

The Committee noted that £10,000 had been set aside in the current year's budget for the purchase of new Christmas Lights. In discussion, Members **agreed** to set up a working group to discuss and purchase new lights in consultation with the Town Clerk and the Chairman of the Amenities and Recreation Committee.

A41 **Jubilee Parks**

Members noted that, as part of the Jubilee celebrations of HM The Queen, applications on two areas, Boxhill and Caldecott recreational areas; were put forward by the Town Council for Jubilee status which protects the land as open space by legal deed. The applications made had now been approved and the legal work was proceeding.

A42 **Publicity**

The Committee thought that the following items would benefit from publicity:

- Fun in the Park idea;
- Salt Bins
- Sanctuary 2000

A43 **Items for Next Meeting**

Members were asked to contact officers, in writing, with any future agenda item requests. They were also requested to consider items to be included on the agenda of the next meeting of the Amenities and Recreation Committee (7th November 2012).

- Play Equipment – suggestions are required from Members as to where to place outdoor exercise equipment in the north of the town, such as that located in the Ladygrove paddock. Any other specific play area items should be notified to officers.
- Service Review – report on Allotments or future actions.

A44 **Dates of meeting for 2012/13**

Members were informed that future meetings of the Amenities and Recreation Committee would be held on the following dates:

- Wednesday 7th November 2012
- Wednesday 2nd January 2013
- Wednesday 20th February 2013

There was some concern in regard to the January date being too close to the New Year break and it was **Resolved** *that the Chairman discuss the possibility of moving it with the Town Clerk.*

A45 **Exclusion of the public, including the Press**

The Chairman proposed and it was **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.

A46 **Cemetery matters**

The Committee received a confidential report from the Head of Service Delivery.

The Committee was asked to consider the proposed fees to be made for using the Sanctum 2000 system of interring cremated remains.

The Chairman proposed to the meeting that the fees for using the Sanctum 2000 vaults should be as follows:

- 10 years rental - £1,000
- 20 Years rental - £1,500

Considerable discussion was undertaken regarding the difference in costs of a standard burial or cremation and the proposed costs for using Sanctum 2000. Finally it was **Recommended** *that the proposed fees were accepted, subject to a review being undertaken after one year from commencement of the new system.*

A47 **Salt Bins**

The Committee received a confidential report from the Head of Service Delivery.

It was noted that the installation of grit bins last year had been successful and a budget for a further 15 bins had been agreed. The proposed sites (numbering more than 15) were listed in the report. The Head of Service Delivery was writing to Oxfordshire County Council to obtain approval to place new bins on their land. Members were content for the purchase to proceed and **Resolved** *to install a further 15 salt bins this coming winter.*

The meeting rose at 9.55pm

Signed Date
Chairman