

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

Draft Minutes of the Guildhall Committee held on Thursday 13th June 2013 at 5.30pm in the Committee Room at the Old Abbey House, Abingdon-on-Thames

Present:

Cllr Iain Littlejohn	Chairman
Cllr Alison Rooke	Vice Chairman
Cllr Marilyn Badcock	
Cllr Lesley Legge	
Cllr Sandy Lovatt	Leader of the Council
Cllr Katie Nobes	

In attendance:

Ms Johannah Aynsley	Guildhall Manager
Mr Steve Rich	Head of Service Delivery
Mr Nigel Warner	Town Clerk (Clerk to the meeting)

1 member of the public.

G13 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Samantha Bowring, Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames, and Heather Brown (co-opted member)

G14 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

G15 **Minutes**

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting of the Guildhall Committee held on 16th May 2013 be approved and be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

G16 **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from the previous meeting which were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

G17 **Manager's Report**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Guildhall Manager, as circulated with the agenda.

The Manager reported that she is speaking with the current website providers to terminate the current contract so that the site can be moved to the new town portal.

The Manager outlined the work which had been taking place in relation to the marketing of events. Members were keen that events should be successful and a number of suggestions were made in relation to improved marketing and PR. It was suggested that there be more joint working with "Choose Abingdon" and that the profile of Guildhall events be raised on the new town portal. Events for younger people could be promoted through the schools. A member suggested that research should be undertaken with customers regarding which media they use in order to find out about events.

A Member stated that one of the ways to attract publicity is the use of banners and she stated that some years the use of a banner across Stert Street had been very helpful.

The Manager reported on the "Out of Bounds comedy club." Attendances had fluctuated but public awareness of this evening was gathering momentum. It was noted that the July comedy club evening was previewing two Edinburgh fringe shows.

The Manager reported that live music events were difficult to promote in the current Abbey Hall due to the issues of sound leakage from the hall. The use of the noise limiter resulted in a level of sound so low that customers had walked out of previous live music events complaining that they could not hear the acts properly. As a consequence, the Abba evening had been moved to the Roysse Room where it was not necessary to use the sound limiter; however, this had resulted in complaints from customers as this is such a small room for these sorts of events.

As a consequence of these issues it had been decided that in future any events organised by the Guildhall would be much smaller and held in the historic rooms; this severely limited the possibilities of using the venue for live music. However, there remained a small number of bookings already in place which involved a live band and it had been agreed that these would go ahead as long as prior warning was given to neighbours and the noise limiter was used as appropriate. A letter would be issued to neighbours informing them of the dates. Members requested that they also be copied into this letter.

The Manager reported that the Vintage Fair had been very successful and had attracted over 700 visitors. In total, Guildhall-organised events had attracted over 1000 visitors since February 2013.

The Manager reported on a number of building issues. Unfortunately there had been some water leaks to the roof on the historic side of the building above the stairwell and these were being addressed. Recently, a pool of water had been developing in the Roysse Court garden and the outdoor team were monitoring this. The Manager reported that it may be necessary to take professional advice on why this pool of water was appearing.

Finally, the Manager reported on Guildhall bookings which were increasing that were showing a utilisation rate of 15%. Work was continuing to fully implement the bookings software system.

Resolved: that the report of the Guildhall Manager be approved.

G18 **Guildhall Development Project**

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

This report detailed the public engagement process which had taken place in April 2013 and included details of correspondence that have been received from neighbouring residents, comments made at the various public meetings and a report in relation to the results of the public questionnaire. It was noted that 230 questionnaires had been returned and in summary:

- 94% of respondents were either positive or very excited about the plans they had seen for the Guildhall.
- 82% of respondents gave priority to a cinema being part of the scheme (49% purpose built cinema; 33% cinema as part of the Abbey Hall).
- In terms of the kinds of films and events people would like to see at the Guildhall there was a broad mix from cinema through to music and comedy.
- In terms of the phasing preferences the most popular, at 51%, was to undertake the project in one go, even if this required some delay in order to raise money.
- Respondents were evenly split in terms of the action they would like taken should external funding need to be “topped up” from other sources. 34% of respondents felt that the Council should then work to a budget of £1million and phase the other work later; 33% agreed with borrowing provided it could be financed by savings and increased revenue; and 25% were content to raise the Council Tax.

The consultation feedback report is attached to these minutes.

In discussing the comments from local residents, it was noted that the major area of concern related to the creation of the new cinema on stilts which some residents felt would cause overshadowing and over dominance in relation to their properties. This matter was being considered by the architects who were looking at what the impact would be and they had also been asked to consider ways in which this may be mitigated. The Chairman, Cllr Iain Littlejohn, tabled draft comments from Lewandowski Wilcox in relation to this matter and stated there would be a further report in this regard. In relation to the noise that was created by the collection of bins, it was noted that these bins did not belong to the Guildhall.

It was noted that the acoustic report on the Abbey Hall had now been received and would be dealt with under the confidential agenda. The intention was that this matter be transferred to the open agenda once the report had been shared with the local residents.

Members were keen that a constructive dialogue be continued with the residents and it was resolved that authority did delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Vice- Chairman of the committee to organise a meeting with residents prior to the next committee meeting in order to discuss progress on the phased to project, to discuss with the Council's comments in relation to their comments at the public engagement exercise and to share with them the results and findings of the acoustic report.

Resolved: that the report be noted and approved.

G19 **Date of next meeting and calendar of meetings**

Members noted the calendar of meetings for the year. Subsequent to the meeting, the date of the next meeting was changed to the 18 July 2013 at 5:30 pm. It was noted that this would be an important meeting with a number of major items on the agenda.

There were a number of the dates which were proving to be difficult for Members. Members felt that the August meeting required either re-scheduling or cancelling. It was scheduled for 29th August, which was two weeks before the September meeting and Members were asked to consider moving it to either 15th (equidistant between the meetings) or 22nd. It was agreed that an e-mail would go out in that regard.

The other dates for the meetings were:

12th September; 17th October; 21st November; 19th December; 16th January 2014; 27th February; 6th March; 10th April.

G20 Exclusion of the Public including the Press

The Chairman moved 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.

G21 Confidential appendix to the meeting of 16th May 2013

Resolved: that the confidential appendix to the minutes of the meeting of the Guildhall Committee held on 16th May 2013 be agreed and be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

G22 Manager's Report

The Committee received and considered the confidential section of the report of the Guildhall Manager

The Committee noted that overall, the costs of running events to date had amounted to £1,500 but these had proved very valuable in bringing new people into the building, building up an audience base and potentially leading to increased income through additional bookings.

Resolved: that the Manager's report be noted and approved.

G23 Property Matters

The Committee received and considered the confidential report of the Town Clerk in relation to the above. A discussion and resolution to these confidential matters are contained within the confidential appendix. The report was noted and approved.

The Committee received and considered the confidential report of the Head of Service Delivery in relation to the plans for the improvements to Roysse Court and the relocation of the Town Council offices to that property. The Head of Service Delivery talked the Committee through the report and the plans in some detail. He and Cllr Katie Nobes (Cllr Lesley Legge having been unavailable) had met with the Council's surveyors to discuss the detailed tender for the Roysse Court refurbishment and Members considered the architectural specification and schedule of works which would be necessary to undertake the improvements so that the building could be used for the Council offices. It was noted that there was some debate as to whether the wall in the large office space could be retained; the Listed Building Officer was keen to retain a wall, Town Council to remove it. In response to a question from a Member, it was confirmed that there would be banisters on both

sides of the staircase. At first floor level there would be a reception hatch built in so that members of the public could be served. It was noted that the surveyors and architects would be working closely with the proper authorities to ensure that the improved office space met all necessary fire regulations.

Members reviewed a number of materials and agreed the finishes to the toilet as being and that the colour of the carpets be magenta.

(Cllr Sandy Lovatt left the meeting at this point, it being 7.20pm.)

Members noted that whilst the building works were taking place there would be an impact on the operations of the Guildhall as the builders' compound would need to be located within the Guildhall car park. Mr Rich also reported that he was in discussion with the Registry Office regarding arrangements whilst the building work was taking place and that there may be a need to relocate weddings to the Guildhall during periods of disruption, and this would have to be a cost borne by the Town Council. It was noted that where possible, roofing slates would be re-used.

It was **resolved** that:

1. the programme of works in relation to the Roysse Court improvements be approved together with the tender documentation, including the architectural specification and schedule of works, and that the matter proceed to tender stage.
2. The Working Group in relation to this project, consisting of Cllrs Lesley Legge, Katie Nobes and the Head of Service Delivery have delegated authority to progress this project within the agreed specification.
3. That a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Guildhall Committee regarding commissioning of the building works.

G24 **Guildhall Improvement Project**

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

The Manager had met with Sarah Mansell, a fundraising expert, and it had been agreed that to raise £1 million was a challenging but realistic target. It was noted that raising this sum would also have timing implications in relation to the proposed works.

It was noted that due to time constraints at the meeting, it was not possible to fully consider all the other matters covered in the Guildhall Manager's report and therefore these were deferred to the next meeting.

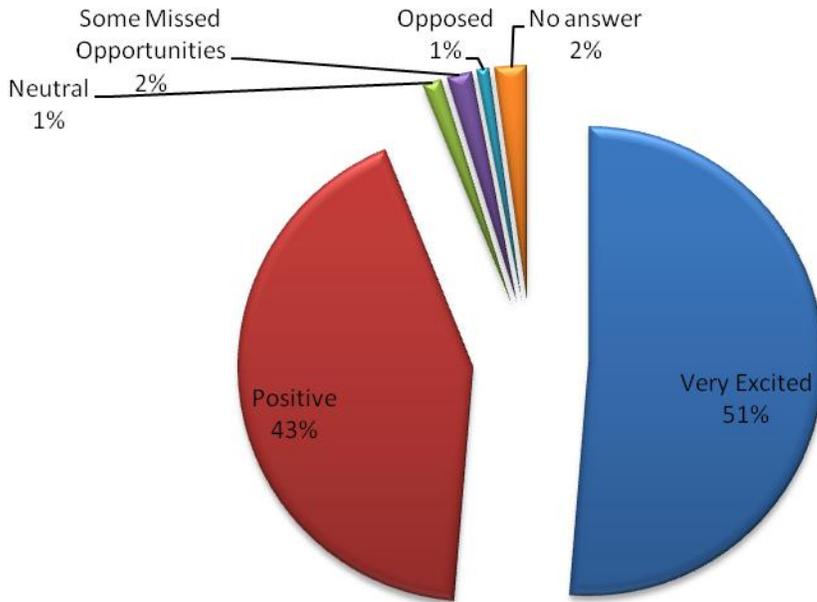
The meeting rose at 7.40 pm.

Overall Feedback Report

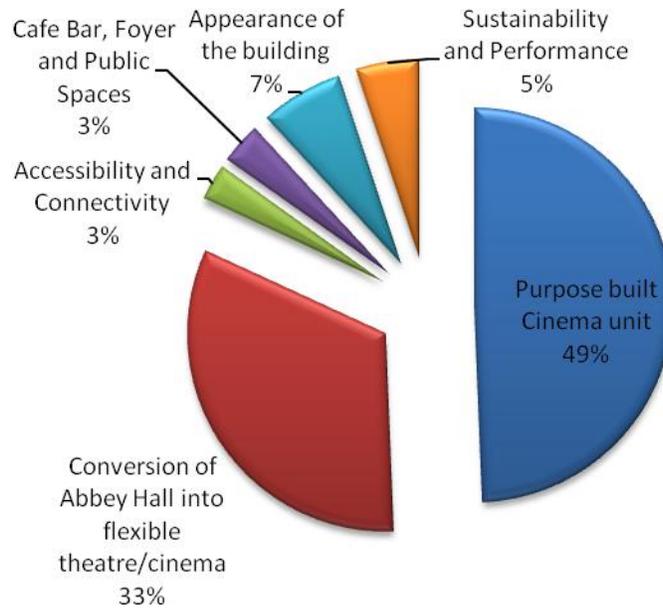
Data correct as of Saturday 10th June 2013

Responses – 230

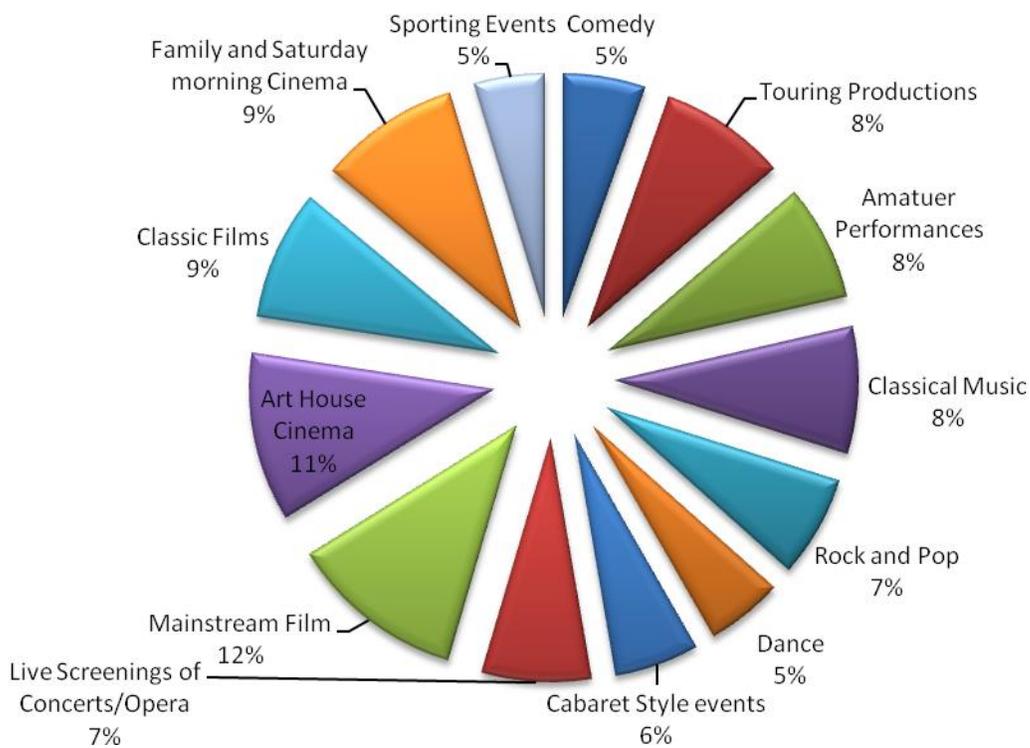
What do you think about the plans you've seen for the Guildhall?



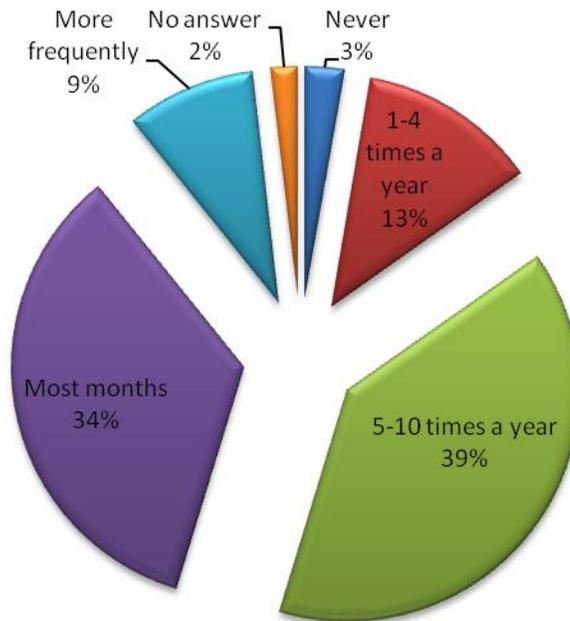
What are your favourite aspects of the scheme? Could you rank these in order of priority from 1 through to 3?



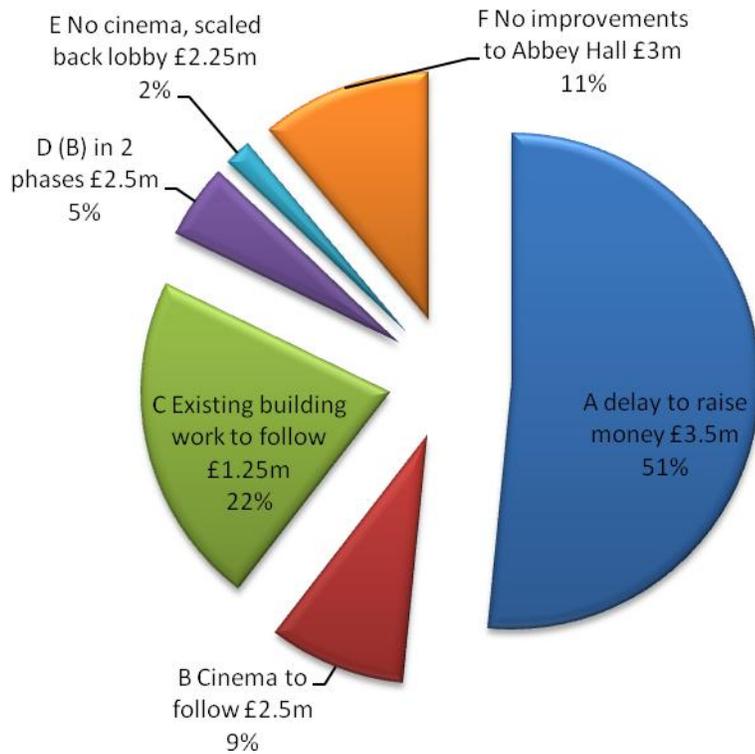
What kind of films and events would you like to see at the new Guildhall?



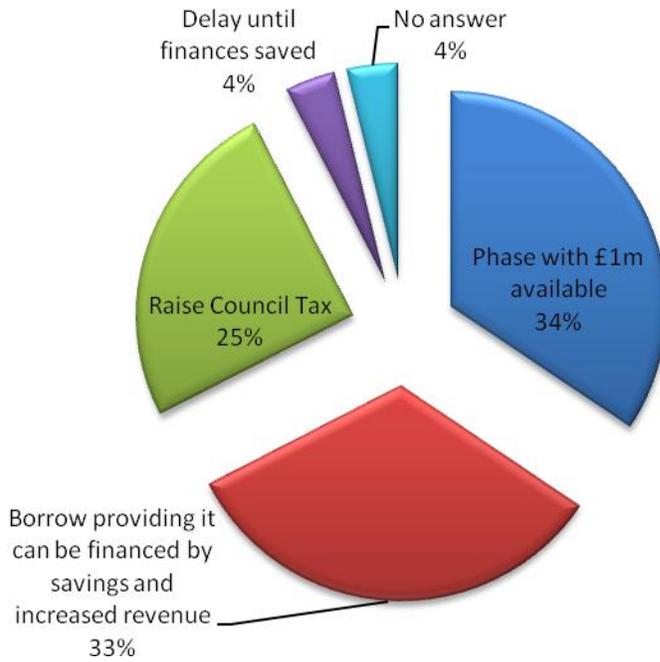
How often would you attend the cinema or live performance at the Guildhall?



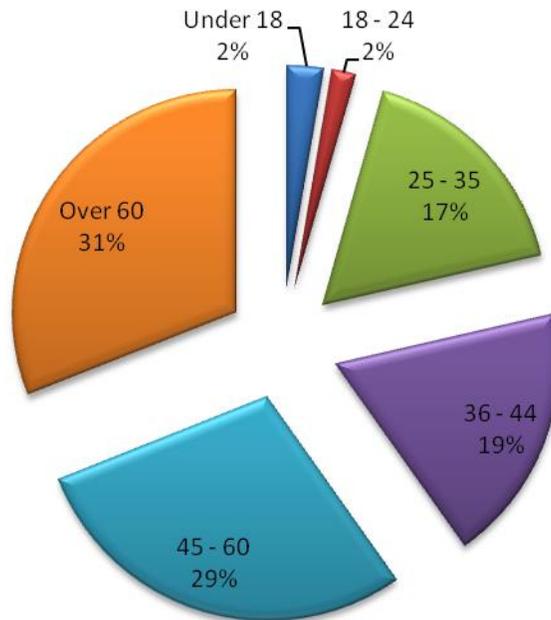
Phasing Preferences



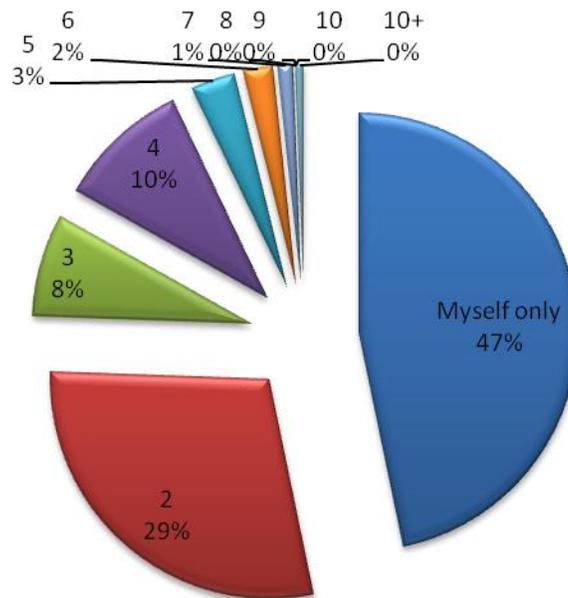
It is hoped that external funding will be found to deliver this scheme but if this needs to be topped up what would your preference be?



Age Range



Number of People whose views you are representing



Total views represented – 257

Any comments or suggestions about the architectural design?

A big improvement on the current design

I like the extra light and the more logical arrangement of the floors and interconnectedness. I am glad there are going to be photovoltaic cells on the roof and more efficient heating system. Please include plenty of bike parking!

Generally imaginative within the limitations. I particularly like the integration of public spaces and the increased possibilities of use for the spaces.

I like the idea of a cinema unit, but the design looks ugly from the outside in the artist's impression.

A very imaginative scheme, vastly improving the current modern building and linking it with the 16th Century buildings. Pleasantly pleased with the proposal for a dedicated cinema.

Like the solution of the entrance and connection to Bridge Street.

Excellent ground floor lobby.

Entrance on the ground floor brilliant

Should co-ordinate better with the old building alongside, worried by glass box next to Abbey Garden.

Please include place for bikes!

Important to get the external materials right, don't repeat the mistakes of the 1960's.

Not keen on the new lobby, affects the architectural integrity. Appearance of the Abbey Hall building

Do it all together

It looks ugly, especially adding on cinema/fronting glass entrance/ugly 'ladder' staircase in lobby

Looks brilliant!

I was overjoyed to hear about the cinema, YES!

I really like the modern architecture and think it works well within the historic town centre

Further to comments in 2 maybe a reflection, a separate building for the cinema could be considered - but surely this would cost a great deal more than using the Guildhall.

Looks great!

Making sure all disabled toilets are baby changing as well

The focus on arts based community hub would be a great benefit for the town

I found it difficult to visualise the new exits and entrances and overall appearance from the diagrams and models

I hope the acoustics will be improved for several of the purposes!

Bicycle racks, where are they? Need them near both the cinema entrance and the main Guildhall entrance

Very good.

Whilst the dedicated cinema may sound a good idea, I do not think it will be able to compete with the various multiplex cinemas within a 10 mile radius

I was very impressed with the presentation from the architects. The improvement to the exterior of the building is very impressive too and the provision of a cinema, improved access and a café bar will be great assets.

Abingdon needs this, but it needs to be in keeping with the surrounding buildings

Must be in keeping with the area

Given the financial constraints I feel the architects have done a good job.

Public input and local knowledge more important. What could the right local electrician/plumber/sound engineer do in the short term to make inside more user friendly? More small rooms.

It looks good

We need to know parking considerations have been dealt with!

I like the honesty of the modern design

In keeping

I have some doubts about more halls in Abingdon. What we have in underused. Perhaps a place to eat and have

a think before a performance/cinema might attract people.

We would like to have seen a cinema/bowling alley in the precinct instead of the planned supermarket where the multi storey car park is now.

Looks very swish! And good accessibility for disabled people

Improved accessibility for the disabled would be excellent - this looks promising

Disabled access - Bars or rails to on to.

Looks great, will the cinema be large enough?

Don't use cedar cladding, it will look ok at the start but awful after a couple of years

I think teenagers need public space/arts centre and cinema possibly. Lots of cafes, restaurants in town for 'oldies'.

Cinema good idea, Fri and Sat night for school children so need more than 100 seats

Very modern but aesthetically pleasing to the eye

It's a mixture of ultra-modern aside with the traditional buildings

Very nice scheme for representing the 21st Century

I wish it could be larger building to cater the local area i.e. more seating

The more of the old building is left and the more of the 1960's concrete is covered up the better

About time

A big improvement to what is currently an ugly piece of architecture amongst beautiful, historic buildings

I'd like to see the building rendered in a larger city map, so you can see how the design fits into the town centre

Spoil the look of the space

Take care with wooden cladding. Looks great when clean, not so good when it goes black, otherwise great.

In keeping with Abingdon

Looks good

Impressive

I like it!

Very impressed

Need it!

Anything is better than the present 60s time warp!

Missed opportunities - welcome changes to front or building. Side and back of building much worse than it is now.

A great improvement! Currently has quite a shabby and forgotten appearance

A huge improvement on a facade of concrete Probably too expensive to try and go for the historic look, as in Bury Street to match surroundings of Museum and church.

Although the wood effect is fashionable now, on other buildings where this has been used and the wood has faded over time it looks gray and unattractive.

Anything would probably be an improvement on the current! Modern styling is acceptable but if possible should acknowledge the proximity of the historic buildings, perhaps reflecting some of their features.

Can you confirm that no wood is used on external walls, just brick?

Contemporary but not to look out of place in our historic town

Fairly sympathetic to local area and a great improvement on existing appearance.

I am afraid I do not like it looking too modern - especially as it is part of such an iconic historic building!

I believe this is an exciting introduction and provides an ease of access through the building. The Cinema/Theatre will also be a focus for the community.

I cannot see the options phase diagrams clearly. They are out of focus when enlarged.

Is there disabled parking or at least a drop of space for those who can only walk short distances (many elderly do not use wheel chair but cannot walk far)

It looks like the design has made a good blend from the historical building to the modern part

It looks really good and will be a big improvement for this corner of Abingdon

It's an ugly building anyway so anything to improve its appearance is good.

Like the entrance hall. Please do as much as possible to erase the grim 60's concrete

Looks fine

Looks Good!

Looks great!

Looks interesting

Love the addition on the front, also the linkage from Bridge Street. How about an artwork on the blank wall at left hand end - or use this space or the new curved one to project pictures on to?

Needs to remain in keeping with surrounds

No complaints...it looks really good, much better than it does at the moment.

Overall the design looks good. My only comment is in relation to what appears to be timber cladding used at the rear of the building to encapsulate the cinema 'wing' - you may need to investigate the durability and maintainability of this material and whether another may be more appropriate/lower life cost. You may be aware of the WHLTC building, which is a relatively new build, recently underwent what looked like fairly lengthy and expensive maintenance of its external timber cladding.

Please let it be sympathetic to historic buildings around or ultra modern with plenty of glass to reflect them

The accessibility is great and it's good the cinema is behind the building thus not affecting view of nearby older buildings. It all appears to flow well the only poor bit is that parking cannot be increased due to the size of the site. Perhaps it will be possible to persuade the Council to extend free parking on all Council car parks to include viewing times. At present the multi storey closes too early. However, good bus services should ensure good use

The addition to the front of the building would increase its attractiveness and also improve access for the disabled. The curved foyer reflects the arches to the right, so sympathetic to the town's history.

The artist's suggestions are a big improvement on the current look.

The new entrance, while aesthetically pleasing doesn't seem to add much benefit to the project. The representations of the design will not enlarge with my browser so it's not possible for me to comment further.

The outside should be given some further thought into the suitability for access. The ramp for disabled access is open to the elements on a north facing wall. If this is not protected with a cover it will become a toboggan run

in the winter. Owing to the slope being lower than the surrounding ground level it will be a rubbish trap for the area. This will be heightened by the presence of a tree overhanging the slope shedding its leaves and aided and abetted by the local bird population. Can this have a cover incorporated in the design?

The purposed plans seem like a nice design keeping the old and hiding the ugly 60's extension behind a modern design.

Very clean fluid lines. Bright and open, makes one want to visit.

Very impressive - I didn't think there was anything that could be done to bring the Guildhall into the 21st century without knocking it down and starting again. Somehow you have managed to create a refurbished building that is still recognisable as the Guildhall but that is, at the same time, bang up-to-date and , hopefully, ageless.

Very similar to old design. Just modernised. Still very 'boxy'. I suppose this is to avoid starting from scratch, but it would be nice for the design to be as 'soft' as possible & less intrusive somehow.

We discussed with the team at their display outside Tesco a couple of weeks ago and fully endorse the proposals put forward for the internal part of the building (in particular a purpose built cinema) and the external changes - all will be a vast improvement to a prominent building in the centre of an historic town.

Wow! Certainly an improvement on current facade.

Ideas for new names

Abbey Hall

Abingdon Phoenix?

Allow suggestions from residents of the town, perhaps even nominating names of people who have contributed to the Local community.

ask a local school for name suggestions

I am not a fan of naming rooms.

I don't have any immediate ideas but it's important that the names are inspiring and appeal to young and old. Don't name the parts after local people.

I think historical names should be used - I like that idea and people may not even realise what the names mean - a lot of people don't know about "John Mason" for instance. It would be good to introduce the Fitzharrys room etc.

I think we've pretty well exhausted former prominent Abingdonians with our naming of schools, roads, buildings etc. & would mean nothing to those we might wish to attract from outside the town. Perhaps a focus on nearby geographical features (Thames?) or a nod to the fact that it is situated within the former Abbey precinct (I note we have dropped the former name of Abbey Hall).

Local historical figures eg John Mason, St Edmund, Bowyer, Mercy (after the Sisters of Mercy who founded the Covent which was in Abingdon for 150 years)

Local villages to Abingdon, famous people of Abingdon, positive characteristics of Abingdon: rivers, parks, bun-throwing, You could raffle off the chance to name parts of the Guildhall to use it as a fundraising exercise.

MG should feature somewhere.

name them after MG cars

Names linked with AbingdonThames room, Abbey room, Stert room, Morland room, etc

Names reflecting the town's history and the dominant presence of the Thames would be nice.

Neave. Churchill

New Regal

Not politicians or sports people - not everyone is a sports fan. Let's look at using Actors names, Local interest names - let's pull some ideas from the museum and have some joined up thinking here. Please don't go and try to be ethnically diverse - it is England's oldest town.

Not sure - perhaps theatre could be named after a noteworthy local actor, cinema after local director? Or maybe investigate the abbey's history to see if there were any noteworthy residents or place names which could be used.

Should be named after parts of the Abbey complex, so New Exchequer for instance! Or after some of the people who have lived/ visited here/

The Radiohead Room The MG Suite The Buns balcony The Moorland Main Hall

Use the history of the town's Abbey perhaps. Mews Brewery Refractory Cloisters Arches Archives Chancel Alter

This is getting ridiculous I don't have anything to offer without reference Have no further suggestions

Famous local artists/writers who could sponsor the room as well

NOT after local councillors

Local rivers

Abbey Arts, Screen Zone, Film Zone, and then for the café Rendezvous or The Hub

Abingdon Hub

Fitzharrys, John Mason, Larkmead, Get local schools/students involved.

Morland

The Abingdon Picture House, The Guildhall Theatre

The Rendezvous, The Abbey Screen

People who have contributed a lot to the town

Distinguished past contributors to town

Watch @ Abingdon-on-Thames

Historic Abingdon businesses / events

An area named after Richard Griffiths

As her majesty, our Queen visited could we use the name 'Royal' or perhaps a jolly name 'At Last' (the cinema)

Old Abingdon Town names

How about 'Swift Ditch' for the bar

Connections with Abingdon history with small plaques to explain their significance (Parlova loves, MG) or our Twin Towns

ACA - Abingdon Community Arts

Memorable deceased people from Abingdon

Named seats?

Historical

Something relating to Abingdon history like MG, Morland, Abbey etc

Mouse trap as this was the old name for the café in 1963!

Morland Cinema, Pavlova Café, Thames, Heritage, Monks Bar,

Morland, Pavlova

Name the arena after past mayors, freeman and aldermen

Any other comments?

A company proposed to build a cinema free to the ratepayers near to the Tesco site and this was turned down. There is now a cinema in Didcot. There is not enough parking in Abingdon for the cinema. We do not want an increase in rates as costs for utilities and food has gone up considerably

Abingdon needs a cinema and a place for teens to congregate in a safe, fun environment. I think this project is fantastic and would help revive the Town - we would love a bar which is open in the evening before the cinema/theatre events - something similar to Phoenix Picture house. I'm sure we would frequent it monthly if there was enough on! We find going into Oxford/Didcot in the evening too tedious and would much prefer being closer

to home!

An ambitious and exciting project - something Abingdon can be proud of. I like the idea of offering individuals the opportunity to make voluntary subscriptions - there are many who can't afford increased Council Tax, but also many who can and would make voluntary contributions. Also like the idea of getting some young people involved.

Are you sure you can afford to run the cinema as a long-term venture? - I.e film hire, marketing etc is all fairly pricey. The venue room has to be close to the quality of Cineworld and screenings have to be similar in price (as otherwise people will continue to go to Didcot). It's unlikely you could afford first run films either so there will be a need to educate people in the town to stop them going elsewhere before you are able to show them.

Car parking may be an issue for larger/more popular events. Possible to include an area for local artists, photographers etc to showcase their work (done on a rolling basis), a small-scale sound recording studio for use by local bands, maybe a small studio theatre for smaller theatrical productions, a performance area in the bar/cafe etc

Concerned that this cinema will be rendered of little use if a major one is built in Abingdon. Also I think the one you are proposing is far too small at 100 seats.

Didcot cornerstone cafe last year ran a very popular popup activity hub during the summer months. parents could stop for a coffee whilst children played with free games provided, got to decorate cookies etc. no space for this in any current abingdon cafes but could work well in the guildhall

<http://caniwalkmummy.blogspot.co.uk/2012/08/cornerstone-cafe-bar-pop-up-activity.html> liked the idea in leaflet about asking for group of older children what they would like to get out of the changes.

Given the huge campaign there was to use the Old Gaol as an arts venue, I believe that there is a demand for art, theatre, and music in Abingdon in an attractive location with meeting spaces.

Great idea but getting the local community to fund this by an increase in council tax is not really the best idea. I'm sure there are other issues that require resolving in abingdon and this would not be priority.

Had a more 'town-orientated' proposal been accepted for the development of the Old Goal site then it would have provided more opportunities for the existing town centre businesses, including the Guildhall. It seems a bit contradictory that the bid was chosen based upon it raising the largest amount of money, and then the Council give away an asset with an additional £1m. Unsure how that is saving money

Has the project been covered on the local TV news recently? If not, it needs to be. I'm impressed by how much local consultation there has been, including LW representatives basing themselves outside Waitrose and Tesco, showing the model, distributing leaflets, referring people to the website and asking them to provide feedback.

Have flexible design to encourage live bands, comedy, etc similar to Didcot Cornerstone

I am not clear why so many places are adding cinemas - at least this (it appears) won't be a standard multiplex showing only standard Hollywood blockbusters. Parking will be a consideration for people attending in the evening - would not want lack of or expensive parking to deter people. But daytime events (? films) would be nice - don't restrict to the 'Silver Screen' cohort.

I strongly support this, but it needs to be well run by experienced teams. Look at examples of outstanding cinema/arts spaces. Abingdon is a large town and should be able to support and finance (via council or public) this kind of venture

I think a new cinema is a fantastic idea but I think it MUST be unusual to attract visitors from across Oxford. The REX cinema in Berkhamsted is very unusual and popular and I think this would be an excellent model to follow. I also think that this set up may allow theatre productions to be staged at the same venue. As well as the set up, I like the fact that you can watch old films, especially at Christmas time. As far as I am aware, nowhere else in Oxfordshire offers this, so I think it would be a great way of attracting people to Abingdon.

I think it's great that you are thinking about the future of the Guildhall in such a positive way - it can only be a good thing and having a cinema in Abingdon again is such a great idea! All the plans for the Guildhall will hopefully reawaken local residents that the Guildhall has a lot to offer and is the place to be for all the wonderful events in the town!

I think that including a cinema and a theatre space more accessible than the Unicorn is a great idea. What isn't clear from the design is the parking for the transformed Guildhall (unless I've missed something, which is entirely possible). If it's going to be a viable meeting place, parking without having to walk down the narrow road from the park or trying to sneak into the Town Council building will be essential. Are you taking over the pub's car park? As a disabled resident, I appreciate and know about the disabled spaces at the back of the Guildhall but it still feels like a potentially dangerous walk walking up around the corner when the entrance into the car park is so narrow.

I think that the cinema would be very popular, particularly to those who go to the schools along Faringdon road within walking distance of the Guild Hall.

I think the key to the project is beginning with parts which will raise income. Weddings are surely a key potential of income so The Abbey Hall should be improved to guarantee increased bookings. The cinema is an obvious advantage to the community as a whole and would be a very positive addition to the town.

If Abingdon could have something as nice as the Cornerstone in Didcot, with the same mix of events, it would be a real asset. We drive to Didcot once every 4-6 weeks for theatre / comedy events there.

If some of the rooms will be available for children's ballet classes, music classes (as in the cornerstone at Didcot), I hope that they will be priced suitably.

It is so important for -Abingdon to have a good facility. Which can function on all levels and something for all ages with access ability for everyone.....buggies, wheelchairs etc.

It would be great for Abingdon to have a cinema

It would be very positive to have a centre that would draw people to the centre of Abingdon in the evening. At the moment it lacks life except for the weekends.

Look on the Vale records and approach the groups who have left the Guildhall in the last 3-4 years. Try to get them back as a priority. Then look for new customers.

Many musical groups (of all genres) regularly tour smaller venues around the UK. It would be great if the Guildhall could become a natural consideration for these when planning such tours.

No one is interested in seeing last year's movies in a second rate cinema. The cinema will not make money unless it has a top rate company on board. Take a look at Elgiva; Chesham for an example of how they are struggling despite Sainsbury's having put all the money in for their building.

Simply that the whole is a wonderful scheme to boost interest and enjoyment in the town, but waiting must not be

too long - 3 years - or everything will go off the boil. I am too old to anticipate in all possible activities but recognise just how much this could mean to the town as a whole. Fundraising events must be possible as well as grants. If necessary loans will have to be taken to avoid too much delay. This stagnant building must come alive again and meet people's needs well into the next century.

Sounds good to me - to quote Sir Richard Branson, "Screw it let's do it"

The Cinema should show a wide range of blockbuster films, showing black and white French films would have limited appeal to the wider population and would fly in the face of placing the building at the heart of the community.

The outside should be given some further thought into the suitability for access. The ramp for disabled access is open to the elements on a north facing wall. If this is not protected with a cover it will become a toboggan run in the winter. Owing to the slope being lower than the surrounding ground level it will be a rubbish trap for the area. This will be heightened by the presence of a tree overhanging the slope shedding its leaves and aided and abetted by the local bird population. Can this have a cover incorporated in the design?

This is a brilliant idea and will greatly enhance life in Abingdon, as well as bringing extra trade to cafes, shops and restaurants

we have waited many years for a cinema - now we need to get on with it

We hope this project moves quicker than the timescale it took to rejuvenate the abingdon shopping precinct!

Thank you for inviting along the residents of Abingdon. So many are forced to use the Phoenix in Oxford for Art House films. There is a private cinema appreciation group, a U3A group at Botley - and I would hopefully start a similar U3A group here. Hopefully a cinema would be a profit. I have just moved from Shrewsbury, where a central town 83 sweater cinema is a huge financial and social success.

Rainwater harvesting for use in the facility

Would this project conflict with one supported by the Vale for Botley, which would include a multiplex cinema.

Raise the cash and get on with it

Any room for a bowling alley?

Option 2 - I feel the main hall should be left as such to obtain revenue from hiring out the hall for proms, table top sales etc. If the cinema is there, more passing trade. Same reason there should be a café - cinema provides instant trade

Looking for commercial partner for the cinema would be a good idea, BUT at the outset, NOT when brand new state of the art is all finished. We don't want a private company reaping the profits once Abingdon people have financed the development.

With planning and programming, reach out to large international community in the area (Culham, Harwell etc)

Fresh rebrand to reflect the new offering and connect with the old and new audience/users

Tables outside for picnics

A big effort is needed to overcome the bad experience of clubs/societies in trying to use this place in the past. And sound quality is a MAJOR PROBLEM

I think it's a great idea. Keep the families in Abingdon and give the kids something to do.

Pleased to see Abingdon is starting to catch up with surrounding towns like Witney and Didcot.

Tour guided walks of Abingdon would be appreciated

Free 3 hour parking

Fantastic, something for people without one foot in the grave!

Where will the car parking be?

Pricing is key, and if you can take your drinks in too that would sell well.

I am thrilled!

Just what Abingdon and WE need!

Please provide for teens and tourists. We oldies live happily, little ones have lots to do but teens and tourists can find Abingdon dull.

Car parking - are there issues to be considered especially when phase 2 of 'Abbey' precinct development

Not sure the current car park arrangements in Abingdon would cope with extra demand

It's a great pity that the organ is not in Abingdon now.

Where will people park?

If people are made aware of how little their council tax would go up by (£21.59) I think everyone will be supportive

Long time coming!

Best of luck, great idea!

Visit the Broadway cinema in Nottingham and Hyde Park Picture House in Leeds for inspiration

Concern about the impact on the Abingdon Music Centre, based in the old Magistrates court

Raise funds by public subscription - perhaps give membership to guildhall with discounted ticket prices

More loos open to the public during the day
