

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

The minutes of a meeting of the Amenities and Recreation Committee held in the Old Abbey House on Wednesday 12th February 2014 at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillor Helen Pighills - Chairman
Councillor Marilyn Badcock - Vice-Chairman
Councillor Alice Badcock
Councillor Jeanette Halliday
Councillor Andrew Todd

In Attendance: Mr. Nigel Warner - Town Clerk
Mr Stephen Rich - Head of Service Delivery
Mr. Timothy Badcock - Cemetery and Works Team Supervisor

A46 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sandy Lovatt (Chairman of Finance and General Purposes); Councillor Samantha Bowring (Mayor); and Councillor Julie Mayhew Archer.

A47 **Declarations of Interest**

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

A48 **Minutes of the previous meeting**

Resolved: *that the minutes of the meeting held on 20th November 2014 be signed as a correct record by the Chairman with the following amendment being made to Minute A35 paragraph two: " Members considered the proposal for purchasing a "flower cart" as part of the town's floral displays. It was noted that the cart was too large and in terms of detail it should be a Berkshire cart not an Oxfordshire one. Example costings were too expensive and it was proposed that the matter be referred back to the Abingdon-on-Thames in Bloom Sub Committee to return to the Amenities and Recreation Committee with a recommendation for other options for this site".*

A49 **Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the Agenda**

Minute A13 – MG Garden

A Member requested that Committee Members have an opportunity to view content of the new information boards prior to their installation.

Minute A11 – Cemetery Matters

The meeting was informed that a Working Group had been set up to discuss the contingency plans for large funerals at the town's cemeteries and the group would meet in due course.

Minute A21 Cemetery and Works Supervisor's Report

The Committee had requested a report from the Head of Service Delivery into the impact that the extra watering and weed-killing had on the Works Team resourcing during their busy summer period. The Committee had been informed that a member of staff is required full-time on these services throughout the spring and summer. The report from the Head of Service Delivery had been deferred pending the staffing review and the intention was that this now be presented to the next meeting.

Minute A22 – Works Team Apprentice

The Committee were informed that discussion on this matter would be deferred until the next meeting, as it was subject to the Staffing Review.

Minute A24 – Ock Valley Walk

The Committee were informed that a meeting with the Environment Agency concerning the water vole habitat and care of the river bank had not been possible to arrange due to the extreme weather conditions being experienced and consequently the Agency having other priorities at this stage.

Minute A30 – Play Areas

The Committee were informed that the hard surface at Masefield Crescent play area, the outdoor gym equipment at Boxhill recreation ground and the new play equipment at Elizabeth Avenue had all been installed.

A50 **Abingdon in Bloom 2013**

The Committee were informed that the Abingdon in Bloom sub-committee had decided that a garden competition would not be held this year due to the poor response to the competition in the previous few years. Instead a competition would be held to design a floral display for the town and to suggest locations. This would be open to two categories of entrant, adults and children under the age of 16 (sixteen,) with a closing date of 30th June 2014 and the winners would be announced at the end of July 2014.

Members asked about the planting of poppies in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the start of the First World War. The meeting was informed of the Royal British Legion's guidance received from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which stated poppies were for use on individuals' own land only. However the Margaret Brown Garden and Spring Road Cemetery were areas that could be planted along with other wild flowers.

A51 **Summer Events Working Group**

The Committee had some queries over the Summer Events Working Group minutes of the 29th November and referred them back to the Chairman of that Working Group for clarification. The minutes would be considered by the next meeting of the Committee.

The Chairman reported on the preparations for the Fun and Music in the Park events that were to take place on 7th June 2014 and possible funding opportunities.

A52 **Allotments**

The Committee received and considered the report of Head of Service Delivery in relation to the above.

The Committee were pleased that the flood alleviation work carried out on Wildmoor Allotments seems to have worked, particularly as the weather had been so extreme this winter.

A53 **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 was present for this item only.

A54 **Cemetery and Works Supervisor's Report**

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

Councillor Alice Badcock expressed her thanks and also those from members of the public, to the Town Council staff who helped to deliver and distribute sandbags during the recent flooding alert.

Councillor Alice Badcock said that another Flood Forum should be held and funded from either the Extreme Weather contingencies or Flooding funding held in reserve. She also suggested that the Army be invited to attend the event to demonstrate the best way to lay sandbags in the event of floods.

The Committee felt it appropriate that if further flooding forums were to be held it may be appropriate to hold one in the south of the town and another in the north. Also that the three local authorities should agree a contingency plan between themselves for assisting those in need during floods at local level.

The Committee **resolved** *that funding set aside for Jubilee trees be used to restock the cemeteries with trees lost to disease, mistletoe, storm damage and age.*

The Committee **resolved** *that a walkway be constructed to the new Garden of Remembrance so that people can have easy access to the area.*

Resolved that the report be approved.

A55 **Christmas Lights**

The Committee noted that the Christmas Lights Working Group would be meeting on Wednesday 26th February 2014 with the Contractors present to discuss the lighting displays for the 2014 Christmas season.

A56 **Twining Stone**

A request had been received from the Abingdon and District Twin Town Society to have the Twining Stone on Preston Road cleaned. The Committee in considering this request noted that the stone pre-dated the Town Council and, although the Council had previously refurbished the stone some years ago, the Committee felt that the best option was for the society to make an application to the Joint Environmental Trust for funding to have the stone cleaned. The Committee **resolved** accordingly.

A57 **Publicity**

Members requested that the following items be given publicity:

The June 2014 Fun and Music in the Park events; and the new Abingdon-on-Thames in Bloom competition.

A58 **Items for Next Meeting**

It was requested that the following items be placed on the agenda for the next meeting:

- Flood Forum
- Land holdings

A59 **Dates of meetings for 2013/2014**

Members were informed that the new civic calendar had not yet been finalised and they would be informed of the date of the next meeting in due course.

A60 **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.

A61 **Fisheries**

See confidential appendix.

A62 **Consultation**

Members of the Committee felt that the present system of installing play equipment etc should continue as it was up to local Members to know the will of local residents on matters concerning the area in which they live. A Member said that should an action of the Town Council represent a change in role of an area then local residents should be consulted

*Amenities and Recreation Committee
12th February 2014*

It was **resolved** that issues were decided by Committee and endorsed by Town Council as necessary, and this should remain the case.

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The meeting rose at 9.25 pm

Signed Date