

**Minutes of the Council of the Town of Abingdon-on-Thames held in the Committee Room, the Old Abbey House on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2012 at 6.00 pm**

**Present**

Cllr Monica Lovatt	Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames
Cllr Andrew Todd	Deputy Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames
Cllr Alice Badcock	
Cllr Marilyn Badcock	
Cllr Michael Badcock	
Cllr Samantha Bowring	
Cllr Jason Fiddaman	
Cllr Angela Lawrence	
Cllr Lesley Legge	
Cllr Iain Littlejohn	
Cllr Patrick Lonergan	
Cllr Sandy Lovatt	
Cllr Hermann Matteson	
Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer	
Cllr Katie Nobes	
Cllr Helen Pighills	
Cllr Alison Rooke	

**In Attendance**

Mr Nigel Warner	Town Clerk (Clerk to the Meeting)
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C85 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Jeanette Halliday, Peter Jones, Penny McDougall and Aidan Melville.

C86 Declarations of Interest

None.

C87 Council acting as a Committee

To assist in the expeditious conduct of business it was **resolved** that the Council conduct its business as a Committee with regard to the rules of debate.

C88 Electoral Review of Vale of White Horse

The Council received and considered the draft recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) for “New electoral arrangements for Vale of White Horse District Council” (November 2012) and copies of letters to Mr David Buckle, Chief Executive of the District Council and the Town Clerk, relating to this matter. These documents had been circulated with the agenda.

The Council considered the Council’s response to the consultation.

*(Cllr Katie Nobes entered the meeting at this point, it being 6.25 pm).*

District Council wards

It was noted that this was primarily a consultation regarding electoral arrangements in relation to the District Council and the warding arrangements assuming a reduction in the size of the Council from 51 to 38 Members.

It was noted that the proposed District Council warding structure was in accordance with the Council's resolution of 30<sup>th</sup> August 2012.

It was proposed by Cllr Sandy Lovatt, seconded by Cllr Andrew Todd and **resolved** (by 13 votes in favour to 1 against, and 3 abstentions) that:

*The Town Council agree with the recommendation for a warding structure for the District Council to be based on five, two-member wards in Abingdon.*

Members debated the proposed District Council ward boundaries. Overall it was considered that the proposed wards would reflect the different communities of Abingdon-on-Thames and that the boundaries were sensible ones based on these communities and features such as the main arterial roads. The ward boundaries were in accordance with those which had been suggested by the Town Council in its previous submission to the LGBCE, with the exception of the boundary between the proposed Fitzharris and Central wards. Members considered whether the LGBCE should be advised that they should alter their recommendation so that the boundary between Fitzharris and Central wards follows the Wootton Road all the way down from the north of the ward, to join up with Bath Street in the southern part of the ward. A number of Members considered that this would represent a much more logical line for the boundary, reflecting the local community. However other Members pointed out that co-terminosity with the County division boundary would be lost at this point, this creating "micro wards" for the Town Council.

It was proposed by Cllr Iain Littlejohn, seconded by Cllr Michael Badcock and **resolved** (by 13 votes in favour to 4 against) that *the Council agrees with the ward boundaries shown on the map which was published as part of the consultation by the LGBCE with the exception of the boundary between the proposed Fitzharris and Central wards, which it considers should be altered so that it follows the Wootton Road all the way down from the north of the ward, to join up with Bath Street in the southern part of the ward, in accordance with its submission to the LGBCE dated 5<sup>th</sup> September 2012.*

Members then considered the District Council Ward names, noting that at the previous stage of the consultation it had indicated that there was a need more local input so that they are more meaningful. It was **resolved** that the following District Council ward names be suggested:

<i>Ward name Proposed in consultation</i>	<i>Town Council Suggested name</i>
<i>Caldecott</i>	<i>Caldecott</i>
<i>Central</i>	<i>Abbey Northcourt</i>
<i>Fitzharris</i>	<i>Ock Fitzharris</i>
<i>Northcourt</i>	<i>Long Furlong</i>
<i>Peachcroft</i>	<i>Barton Peachcroft</i>

Parish electoral arrangements

It was noted that changes to the electoral arrangements for the District Council would have a consequential effect on parish electoral arrangements, and that the LGBCE

was required to make recommendations in this regard. The Town Clerk confirmed that the LGBCE technical guidance was that each and every County division and District ward boundary would create a Town Council ward boundary and therefore Town Council ward. However, it was understood that the District Council would be undertaking a community governance review shortly after the adoption of the LGBCE's final recommendation and there would be an opportunity as part of this review to make a further adjustment, including achieving co-terminosity of district and town ward boundaries. It was therefore likely that any parish council ward arrangements proposed by the LGBCE would be superceded by the recommendations from the District Council community governance review prior to the local elections in 2015.

There was also a debate regarding the size of the Council (between 19 and 21 Members) and the number of Members in each ward.

It was **resolved** by 11 votes in favour to 6 against that:

*(i) The Town Council agree with the Commission's recommendation that the Council should return 21 Councillors, as at present.*

*(ii) The Town Council does not agree with the seven ward structure proposed by the Commission; it recommends that the Town Council wards should be co-terminous with the District Council wards, with four Members in four of the wards, and five in one of the wards.*

It was finally **resolved** that authority be delegated to the Town Clerk to submit the Council's response to the LGBCE consultation, in accordance with points set out in the above resolutions. A copy of the response is attached to these minutes.

The meeting rose at 7.40 pm.