

**Minutes of the Council of the Town of Abingdon-on-Thames held on 29 January 2014
in the Council Chamber, Guildhall, Abingdon-on-Thames.**

Present

Cllr Samantha Bowring Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames
Cllr Alice Badcock
Cllr Marilyn Badcock
Cllr Michael Badcock
Cllr Jason Fiddaman
Cllr Lesley Legge
Cllr Iain Littlejohn
Cllr Patrick Lonergan
Cllr Monica Lovatt
Cllr Sandy Lovatt
Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer
Cllr Hermann Matheson
Cllr Jan Morter
Cllr Katie Nobes
Cllr Lorraine Oates
Cllr Helen Pighills
Cllr Andy Todd

In Attendance

Mr Nigel Warner Town Clerk
Mrs Sandra Hill Deputy Town Clerk and Clerk to the Meeting
Mr Stephen Rich Head of Service Delivery

The Town Clerk announced that the 7pm start would be delayed. The meeting commenced at 7.20pm.

SECTION I (Open to the Public Including the Press)

C57 Prayers

Town Clerk relayed a reading from the Bible, St Matthew's gospel, Chapter 5.

C58 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

C59 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Jeanette Halliday, Angela Lawrence, Aidan Melville and Alison Rooke .

C60 Declarations of Interest

The Town Clerk had been requested by a Member to advise on potential interests in relation to Minute F101 (Swimming Pool) of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and conveyed to the meeting the contents of an email from the Vale of White Horse District Council Monitoring Officer. This advised that as a number of Town Councillors were also members of the District Council there could be a potential conflict of interest, as the Vale of White Horse District Council own the Abbey Meadow Outside Pool and, as the decision was a financial matter, this could affect the District Council. All Councillors who were members of the District Council

were therefore recommended to declare that they have a conflict of interest and the reasons for the conflict of interest. They were advised to step down from the meeting whilst it considered the matter and made its decision. It was further advised that Councillors could remain in the public gallery, making an address to the remaining Councillors if so desired.

The Town Clerk stated that the advice from the Monitoring Officer is for the Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC) Councillors and not specifically for Members of the District Council's Leisure Contract Committee.

Cllr Sandy Lovatt declared a potential conflict of interest in Minute F101, and he recommended that all Vale of White Horse District Councillors, who are also Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council Councillors, should do the same.

Cllrs Michael Badcock, Marilyn Badcock, Jason Fiddaman, Patrick Lonergan, Sandy Lovatt and Julie Mayhew-Archer declared an interest in F101 Abbey Meadow Outside Pool as they are Members of the Vale of White Horse District Council who own and manage the pool.

Cllr Michael Badcock declared a non-pecuniary interest in connection with the letting agreement within minute F100 of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on 14 January 2014, as he is a member of a Masonic Lodge which had expressed an interest in the letting agreement. Cllrs Marilyn Badcock and Alice Badcock also declared a non-pecuniary interest as spouse and daughter of Cllr Michael Badcock.

Cllr Jan Morter joined the meeting, the time being 7.30pm.

C61 Minutes

Resolved to adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Council of Abingdon-on-Thames held on 25 September 2013 and the Special Meetings held on 4 November 2013 and 11 November 2013 – subject to the following amendments:

25 September 2013:

C31 – 3rd paragraph. The Council asked for clarification regarding the name of the scheme – the minute should therefore read as:

The Chairman of Finance & Purposes Committee reported that the committee had concerns about the one year shop ban for those who had been listed under the *Abingdon Shopwatch* scheme, and the detrimental impact this may have on them – such as difficulties in accessing other shops due to transport problems.

Matters Arising

25 September 2013:

C32 – 3rd paragraph. It was suggested that the Council should contact Mrs Bragg in the hope that she may be able to help them in ascertaining the correct information regarding the length of time the Fire Station has been sited in Ock Street.

4 November 2013:

C49 - Staffing Matters. The Chairman of Finance & General Purposes Committee relayed that the Staffing Matters item which due to be considered at the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting on 14 January 2014 was not taken forward.

A Special Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee would therefore be arranged in order to take this matter forward.

C62 Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames

The Mayor reported on her forthcoming events:

27 March - Morris Men Challenge – could Councillors please suggest table games to play.

8 March - Charity Ball – early bird tickets are £40 and are available via the Guildhall, on-line and through herself.

Cllr Michael Badcock as Chairman of the Vale of White Horse District Council invited the Mayor, on behalf of Abingdon-on-Thames, to fly the Commonwealth Flag on Commonwealth Day from the roof of County Hall Museum.

The Mayor relayed her agreement to this proposal.

C63 Questions under Standing Order 10

There were no questions under Standing Order 10.

C64 Finance and General Purposes Committee

The Council received and considered the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on 11 November, 3 December and 14 January 2014.

3 December 2013:

In considering the minutes of 3 December 2013 – F74, it was highlighted that in the past the Joint Environmental Trust (JET) has supported enhancement within the town and it was therefore suggested that a JET grant could be used to enhance Thames Street.

14 January 2014:

A non-pecuniary interest was declared by Cllr Michael Badcock in relation to F100 – Property Matters as he is a member of a Masonic Lodge which has an interest in the letting agreement. Cllrs Marilyn Badcock and Alice Badcock also declared an interest as spouse and daughter of Cllr Michael Badcock – they left the meeting at 7.40pm.

Recommendation under F100 – Property Matters it was unanimously **resolved** that a 5-year lease should be awarded to the Abingdon Music Centre Education Trust for £5,600 inclusive of VAT, buildings insurance and service charge, but not including water, electricity and telephone services, nor internal decoration – the total being received by the Council is £4,666.67 (ex VAT).

Cllrs Michael Badcock, Marilyn Badcock and Alice Badcock returned to the meeting at this point, the time being 7.47pm.

Cllrs Marilyn Badcock, Michael Badcock, Jason Fiddaman, Patrick Lonergan, Sandy Lovatt and Julie Mayhew-Archer declared potential conflict of interest in F101 as they are Members of the Vale of White Horse District Council who own and manage the Abbey Meadow Outside Pool. They left the meeting at 7.47pm whilst this item was being discussed

Recommendation under F101 – Open Air Swimming Pool - on being taken to the vote it was **resolved** by 6 votes in favour, 3 against and 1 abstention that:

- (a) the Town Council should continue with the grant towards the Abbey Meadow Outside Pool for the 2014 season, in accordance with the Agreed Heads of Terms for the Abbey Meadow Swimming Pool and pursuant to its powers under section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976;
- (b) this would be subject to no further expenditure to the Council for maintenance, repairs, renewal and operation of the pool and its surrounding areas - this includes prior to the pool's opening date to the public, and during its opening to the public.

Cllrs Marilyn Badcock, Michael Badcock, Jason Fiddaman, Patrick Lonergan, Sandy Lovatt and Julie Mayhew-Archer returned to the meeting the time being 7.50pm.

Budget estimates:

Cllr Michael Badcock declared a potential conflict of interest as the Chairman of the Vale of White Horse District Council and Cllr Marilyn Badcock declared a potential conflict of interest as a Member of the Vale of White Horse District Council in item F101, as it included a grant to the Vale of White Horse District Council who own and manage the Abbey Meadow Outside Pool - they moved to the public gallery whilst this item was discussed and taken to the vote.

F95 – it was highlighted that £1,670 has been over allocated to Fun in the Park due to an old budget line which related to this event, being left in the estimates; this sum should therefore be removed from its current allocation and taken off the additional savings of £11,709 which were required by the Council and which would be considered by the Finance and General Purposes Committee at a future meeting.

F95 - it was unanimously **resolved** that the following recommendations under F95 be adopted:

- (i) that the proposed net expenditure should be £1,359,097;
- (ii) that option 2 - Band D Council Tax for 2014/15 be set at £108.34;
- (iii) that the total net spending provided in the estimates for 2014/15 of £1,359,097 be funded as follows:

a. Precept	£1,267,925
b. Grant from Central Government in accordance with the draft Local Government settlement	£ 79,463
c. additional savings	£11,709

F102 – should read Iain and not Ian.

Resolved that the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on 11 November 2013, 3 December 2013 and 14 January 2014 together with any recommendations therein, be approved.

C65 County Hall Museum Management Committee

The Council received and considered the minutes of the County Hall Museum Management Committee held on 19 November 2013.

The Chairman reported that the museum has reached its target of 30,000 visitors in its first year of re-opening to the public (July 2012-July 2013). This year's visitor figures currently stand at 20,000.

Resolved that the minutes of the County Hall Museum Management Committee held on 19 November 2013 together with any recommendations therein, be approved.

C66 Amenities and Recreation Committee

The Chairman relayed her thanks to the Outside team for their quality of service.

The Council received and considered the minutes of the Amenities and Recreation Committee held on 20 November 2013.

Resolved that the minutes of the Amenities & Recreation Committee Management Committee held on 20 November 2013 together with any recommendations therein, be approved

C67 Planning and Highways Committee

The Council received and considered the minutes of the Planning and Highways Committee meetings held on 30 September 2013, 21 October 2013, 11 November 2013, 2 December 2013, 16 December 2013 and 13 January 2014.

11 November 2013:

Minute 10-10 The Chairman reported that the Masefield Crescent application was refused by the Town Council on the basis that the bedroom sizes were so small that this did not represent acceptable living accommodation, but was passed by the Vale of White Horse District Council because there was no standard within the Local Plan relating to the size of rooms. It was noted that the bedroom sizes were such that they would not be allowed in Vale Housing Association properties.

13 January 2014:

Minute 06 - Marcham Road/Ock Street - Crossings

The Chairman stated that the Town Council should write to Oxfordshire County Council regarding the Council's concerns over the health & safety and welfare of children having to cross several roads at the Marcham Road/Ock Street crossings as a result of the proposals to move the existing crossing in the Marcham Road. The letter should also include the Council's opposition to this scheme as a whole, with the installation of the additional crossing in Ock Street and the resulting congestion, and its opposition to the principal that pedestrian crossings be used for traffic alleviation.

The Council **resolved** accordingly.

It was suggested that the Council nominate a Member to speak at the Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Environment Decisions at County Hall on 27 March 2014 regarding this matter. It was proposed and **resolved** that Cllr Samantha Bowring, as local Councillor (Ock Meadow) and Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames, should represent the Council along with Cllr Alice Badcock as a local

Councillor (Caldecott), with details to be sorted out between the two later. It was also noted that Cllr Alison Rooke would attend the meeting, as she would be within the vicinity of County Hall.

Resolved that the minutes of the Planning and Highways Committee meetings held on 30 September 2013, 21 October 2013, 11 November 2013, 2 December 2013, 16 December 2013 and 13 January 2014 together with any recommendations therein, be approved

C68 Guildhall Committee

The Council received and considered the minutes of the Guildhall Committee meetings held on 23 October 2013 and 19 December 2013.

The meeting were informed that the Roysse Court project has now been handed back to the Council by the developers. There were a few matters to attend to; telecommunications needed to be installed and the ground floor hallway needs to be decorated. Councillors are welcome to view the new offices.

A Member stated that the Old Abbey House should remain as part of the centre of Abingdon and the Vale of White Horse District Council should consider the future of Old Abbey House very carefully.

The plans for archives and storage are in progress; a representative from the Museum would assist in giving this matter consideration.

It was planned at that point for the office move to take place at the end of March 2014. Council staff were obviously aware that the offices were moving but were not aware of the actual dates for the move as these had not been set. They would be informed of the detailed timetable for the move when it had been set.

It was also confirmed that the money allocated for Old Abbey House rent has been removed from the agreed budget.

Resolved that the minutes of the Guildhall Committee meetings held on 23 October 2013 and 19 December 2013 together with any recommendations therein, be approved.

C69 Community Governance Review

The Council gave further consideration to this matter and it was proposed and seconded that the Town Council should re-submit their previous response. In taking into account this proposal the meeting discussed several factors:

Need to review some of the changes.

A request to the Vale of White Horse District Council to extend the consultation deadline to Tuesday 4 February 2014.

Need to have electorate numbers for the proposed wards from the Vale of White Horse District Council - which had not as yet been forthcoming.

Need to split two wards: Fitzharris and Northcourt as they are too big – wards should be as equal as possible:

Look at ward names – although it was highlighted by the Town Clerk that the Vale of White Horse District Council Chief Executive could not recommend this to his Members as these had been set by law.

The number of Councillors per ward was suggested as a “fall-back” position should an extension on the consultation not be agreed by the Vale:

A	-	2 Abbey
B	-	4 Caldecott
C	-	4 Dunmore
D	-	2 Fitzharris South
E	-	3 Fitzharris North
F	-	2 Northcourt
G	-	4 Peachcroft

It was proposed, seconded and **resolved** that the District Council should be approached for a deadline extension, and if agreed, that a Special Council Meeting should take place after Planning & Highways Committee on Monday 3 February 2014 to give the Council’s response further consideration. It was further **resolved** that the Special Council Meeting should be provided with additional information on the number of electors in each of the proposed seven wards.

It was also **resolved** that Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer would attend, on behalf of Cllr Sandy Lovatt, the District Council’s community governance review meeting on Friday 31 January 2014; whereby she would request a submission deadline extension to Tuesday 4 February 2014. If the extension is refused, it was **resolved** that a letter should be sent to the District Council outlining the Town Council’s original submission, and that this should be delivered by the deadline date of Friday 31 January 2014.

C70 Exclusion of the Public, Including the Press

Resolved that the Mayor move:

“That in accordance with section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted as summarised below.”

SECTION II (Excluding the public and the press)

C71 Confidential appendix to the minutes of the Town Council

Resolved to adopt and sign the confidential appendix to the minutes of the Town Council held on 25 September 2013.

C72 Confidential appendix to the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee

14 January 2014:

F100 – Old Magistrate’s Court, Abingdon-on-Thames. In awarding the 5-year lease to the Abingdon Music Centre Education Trust, concern was expressed regarding music noise coming from the Centre, and this being clearly heard in some of the rooms within the Guildhall complex.

Cllr Michael Badcock declared a non-pecuniary interest in connection with the letting agreement within minute F100 of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on 14 January 2014, as he is a member of a Masonic Lodge which has an interest in the letting agreement. He left the meeting at 9.28pm whilst this item was being discussed.

It was therefore proposed, seconded and **resolved** by 11 votes in favour, 0 against and 3 abstentions that the Council should include in its lease terms, subject to contract, that the music areas should be sound proofed.

Cllr Michael Badcock returned to the meeting, the time being 9.31pm.

Resolved to receive and consider the confidential appendix to the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 3 December 2013 and 14 January 2014, and approve any recommendations therein.

C73 Confidential appendix to the minutes of the County Hall Museum Management Committee

Resolved to receive and consider the confidential appendix to the minutes of the County Hall Museum Management Committee held on 19 November 2013, and approve any recommendations therein.

C74 Confidential appendix to the minutes of the Guildhall Committee

Resolved to receive and consider the confidential appendix to the minutes of the Guildhall Committee held on 23 October 2013 and 19 December 2013.

C75 Staffing Review

The Leader of the Council relayed that as the matter had not been discussed at the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 14 January 2014 he had no further report to make and referred to his previous statement on this issue which he announced at the beginning of the meeting.

The meeting rose at 9.35pm.