

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

Draft minutes of the meeting of the Amenities and Recreation Committee held in Royse Room, Guildhall on Wednesday 6th December 2017 at 7.00pm.

Present:

Councillor Alice Badcock	Chairman
Councillor Dennis Garrett	
Councillor Vicky Jenkins	
Councillor Helen Pighills	
Councillor Mike Badcock	ex-officio Chair of Finance & General Purposes Committee

In Attendance:

Mr Stephen Rich	Assistant Town Clerk & Head of Services (Clerk to the meeting)
Mr Timothy Badcock	Cemetery & Works Supervisor
Mr Chris Ford	Wick Farm Nurseries
Councillor Samantha Bowring	

A36. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jan Morter, Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames and Councillors Dennis Garrett, Robert Hall, Jeanette Halliday and Lorraine Oates.

A37. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest raised at the meeting.

A38. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

It was **resolved** the Minutes of the previous meeting on 6th September 2017 be accepted as a correct record.

A39. Matters Arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda

Minute A14 – Drainage on Community Land – Members were informed that White Horse Contractors had been to have a look at the area at the entrance to the Chilton Close play area with a view to eradicating the puddling that occurs during heavy rainfalls. However, because of new builds surrounding the area since it was installed and differing levels of land it was proving difficult to find a solution to the drainage problem. The contractors were therefore monitoring the situation over a period of months and would refer back to the Council.

The Committee resolved that delegation be made to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman of Amenities and Recreation to commission any remedial work subject to expenditure being no more than ten thousand pounds (£10,000).

Item A17 - Abingdon Fisheries – Members were informed that the District Council had now agreed new signage for the Thames at Abingdon and that the offer of financial assistance to pay for the signs if fishing regulations were included had not been taken up. Officers informed the Committee they would now look into separate signage for the corporate fisheries.

A40. Financial Report

The Committee received and considered the report of the Treasurer for the period from 1st April 2016 to 31st October 2017, as circulated with the agenda. The Committee **resolved** to approve the report.

The Committee considered the report of the Treasurer issued with the agenda concerning the 2018 / 2019 budget estimates. The Committee approved the estimates presented in the report and **recommended through the Finance and General Purposes Committee** that an increase of 5% be applied to cemetery charges for 2018 / 2019 for budget purposes excluding the Sanctum 2000 charges and tree plaques. The Committee also **recommended to the Finance and General Purposes Committee** that an increase of 3.9% be applied to the Allotment charges and Fisheries charges for 2018 / 2019.

It was **resolved** that the budget estimates for 2018 / 2019 be approved by the Amenities and Recreation Committee **recommended to the Finance and General Purposes Committee** for inclusion in the Council's estimates for 2018 / 2019.

A41. Cemetery and Works Supervisor's Report

The Committee received and considered the report of the Cemetery and Works Supervisor as circulated with the agenda. It was **resolved** to accept the report.

A42. Abingdon In Bloom

Mr Chris Ford of Wick Farm Nurseries was present at the meeting to discuss the floral displays for the summer of 2018.

It was decided that if possible a carpet bedding depicting a poppy would be placed in the Roysse Court garden bed to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the ending of World War One. The rest of the bedding in this area would be red as would be the floral displays at the War Memorial. The Market Place beds would be red and purple to celebrate the Wedding of HRH Prince Harry to Meghan Markle. The remaining floral displays would be vibrant in colour.

The octagonal flower container in Roysse Court garden will be removed to allow for repaving works to be undertaken. The container would be relocated to the Wootton Road roundabout and the container there placed elsewhere.

It was noted that planting in the Roysse court garden may have to be delayed slightly to allow for refurbishment works to be undertaken there.

The Committee thanked Mr Ford for all his hard work in preparing the floral displays and wished him well for the coming year.

A43. **New Cemetery**

There was nothing further to report on this matter.

A44. **Play Areas**

The Committee were shown two pieces of play equipment for possible installation in Hill View and Elizabeth Avenue play areas. Officers reported to the meeting that they were waiting for another quote and it was **resolved** that delegation be given to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman of the Amenities and Recreation Committee to approve the new play equipment and installation within the allocated budget for 2017 / 2018.

A45. **Cemetery Improvements**

The Council had agreed to set aside this's budget allocation of £27,000 to go towards the tarmacking and upgrade of the Spring Road Cemetery. It was **resolved** that a surveyor now be instructed to draw up specifications for a tender exercise.

A46. **Trees**

(a) The following motion was approved at Town Council on 18th October 2017:

“Abingdon on Thames Town Council believes that trees make a positive contribution to the environment of our town, but also considers that the trees would benefit from a programme of pro-active maintenance.

Council asks the Town Clerk to consult the District Council and County Council with a view to setting up an agency agreement whereby all publicly owned trees in Abingdon (except for those in public parks) would maintained by a qualified agency. This contract would be administered by the Town Council on a cost recovery basis from the respective owning councils. The Town Clerk is requested to report back on the feasibility of this arrangement to the next meeting of the Amenities and Recreation Committee for consideration prior to setting the budget for 2018-19”

A reply had been received from the District Council saying they already pro-actively manage and maintain their trees and could therefore see no reason to change this or any benefit from entering into a cost recovery type agency agreement at this time.

A response from the County Council was still awaited.

Members noted the response received.

(b) Officers reported that an email had been received from a resident of Riverview Terrace along with a Tree report commissioned by them from The Whole Tree Company.

The Committee in considering the request to have the trees removed reiterated their view, made at previous meetings, that the area has been designated a natural area by the Town Council. The Council had also been approached by another local resident who requested that the trees be left in situ as they enjoy the natural area as viewed from their residence. The Committee **resolved** to deny the request to have the trees felled in the Ock Valley Walk opposite Riverview Terrace and would continue to undertake its survey of its stock of trees every four years on which its schedule of works is based.

A47. **War Memorial**

The Committee were informed that the War Memorial was showing signs of erosion and required some restoration work and cleaning. Having been awarded Listed Building Status this year any work on the Memorial should use a conservation-accredited professional advisor.

It was **resolved** that Andrew Townsend Architects be asked to undertake an inspection and produce a schedule of defects, photographic record and recommendations for repair and costings. The cost of this survey being £600 plus VAT.

A48. **Ock Valley Walk Bridge**

Members were reminded that the Ock Valley Walk bridge, leading from St Helen's Court had to be closed in November on advice from an engineering report regarding its safety. Members were informed that a new bridge had been identified and that contractors to install the bridge were being sought. Members requested that the Environment Agency be contacted to ensure no flood alleviation work was planned for this area and that the work could go ahead without any problems.

The Committee **resolved** that delegation be passed to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman of Amenities and Recreation Committee to purchase and install a new footbridge across the River Ock at St Helen's Court.

A49. **Publicity**

The Committee requested that publicity be given to the new bridge over the River Ock when it was installed.

A50. **Items for Next Meeting**

Members had no items for the next agenda of the Amenities and Recreation Committee and the Chairman asked them to inform officers, in writing, in advance of the next meeting if they wanted to request an agenda item to be added.

A51. **Date of next Meeting**

Members were reminded of the dates of future meetings of the Amenities and Recreation Committee:

- Wednesday 7th February 2018

A52. **Exclusion of the public, including the Press**

The Chairman Cllr Alice Badcock, 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.

Item under discussion: To agree the confidential minutes of the Amenities and Recreation Committee held on 7th September 2017.

A53. **Confidential appendix to the minutes of the meeting of 7th September 2017**

The Committee received and considered the confidential appendix to the minutes of the meeting of 7th September 2017, as circulated with the agenda.

Resolved that the confidential appendix to the minutes of the meeting of 7th September 2017 be approved as a correct record.

The meeting rose at 7.55pm.

Signed Date