

20 November 2019

To All Members of the **Amenities and Recreation Committee:**

:

Councillor Jim Halliday                    - Chairman  
Councillor Andrew Coveney            - Vice Chairman  
Councillor Charlie Birks  
Councillor Grace Clifton  
Councillor Eric de la Harpe  
Councillor Jeanette Halliday  
Councillor Robert Maddison

Chair of Finance and General Purposes Committee (ex-officio)

To: All other Town Council Members for information only

Dear Sir/Madam

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the Amenities & Recreation Committee to be held on **Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2019** at **7.00 pm** in the Roysse Room.

Should any Member be unable to attend and wish to send a substitute to the meeting, they should inform me at [nigel.warner@abingdon.gov.uk](mailto:nigel.warner@abingdon.gov.uk) and cc [enquiries@abingdon.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@abingdon.gov.uk)

Yours faithfully

N. E. Warner  
Town Clerk

## **AGENDA**

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

To receive any apologies for absence.

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

To receive any declarations of interest from Members in relation to any items to be considered at the meeting, in accordance with the Local Code of Conduct.

### **3 Minutes**

To sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2019 (previously circulated and approved by the Town Council as a report of the meeting; attached).

### **4 Matters Arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda**

To discuss any matters arising from the previous minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

Item A9 – Street Furniture – The two bus shelters ordered for the north end of the Oxford Road by the Peachcroft Roundabout have now been installed and are fully functional.

There has still been no response from advertising companies regarding bus shelter advertising and maintenance.

Item A12 – Cremated Remains – The creation of a garden area to accept the scattering of cremated remains is on the programme of the Works Team to carry out in the New Year.

Item A15 – Roundabout Islands – Members are reminded that Roundabouts in Abingdon are owned and maintained by the Oxfordshire County Council as the Highway authority. It was stated by an Oxfordshire County Council officer at the Traffic Advisory meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> November 2019 that there was a lack of resources and funding to administer sponsorship for roundabouts. This presumably also means maintenance. Councillor Emily Smith (VWHDC) offered to contact officers within the District Council with a view to finding a way forward. Members may wish to comment on this and instruct their officers accordingly

A23 – West End Allotment Site – The removal of materials from the West End allotment site has been completed and associations notified that the Council

does not expect certain materials to be allowed on to the sites in future and therefore will not be responsible for further removals.

Item A26 – Notice Boards – Orders have been placed for new notice boards at Bath Street (outside Stratton Lodge) and Roysse Court (outside the Town Council offices).

Officers have not been able to find a company to manufacture a purpose-built round heritage notice board. Members are requested to either reconsider this matter or allow further time to consult other manufacturers.

A27 – Bench Outside the Abbey Cinema, Guildhall - A bench has been installed outside the Abbey Hall cinema.

A28 – Planting of New Trees – There have been no recommendations from Members of where to plant trees as requested.

A29 – Happy To Chat Benches – signage has been placed on a bench in the Market Place and at St Helen’s Wharf. Permission from the District Council has not yet been received although they have asked questions about the scheme.

## 5 **Financial Report**

To receive and consider the financial report for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019 and the report of the Treasurer / Responsible Finance Officer.

Also, to receive the budget estimates for the year 2020/ 2021 and the report of the Treasurer / Responsible Finance Officer is attached. Members are asked to consider the report and respond to the decisions requested.

## 6 **Cemetery and Works Supervisor’s Report**

To receive a report from the Cemetery and Works Supervisor (to follow).

## 7. **Abingdon In Bloom**

Mr Chris Ford from Wick Farm Nurseries will be in attendance at the meeting to discuss and advise the Committee on the 2020 / 2021 flower displays in the town.

Members are asked to request any anniversary, commemoration or event that may require special planting and colours for consideration at the meeting.

Members requested that the plastic floral containers due to be replaced next year be located at the Reynolds Way shopping area, to experiment with the location for such displays. Members were asked to report back to this meeting regarding maintenance of the displays by the community for the 2020 season.

Members are asked to make an allowance in the 2020 / 2021 budget for replacement containers which cost as follows:

Airlie Planter 1200 x 1200 x 930mm @	£1,113
Lettering "Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council 2020"	£122.45
Basket Tree BT4	£394
Total	£1629.45 plus VAT each

To replace 9 plastic fountain planters would cost £15,610.05 including delivery plus VAT plus the cost of new hanging baskets at approximately £1,280

Ideally to replace and upgrade areas we would need 12 at a cost of £19,113.20 including discount for bulk, delivery plus VAT plus the cost of new hanging baskets at approximately £1,920.

The planters are located as follows:

- Bath Street outside Masons and Challenors (2)
- Stratton Way - Bus stops
- Broad Street (3)
- Spring Garden Cemetery
- Oxford Road (entry to Abingdon)
- Marcham Road (entry to Abingdon)
- Drayton Road (entry to Abingdon)
- Culham Road (entry to Abingdon)
- War Memorial

Members are asked to discuss and make recommendations to the Finance and General Purposes Committee for inclusion in the 2020/2021 budget.

## 8 **Tree Survey**

The Tree Survey undertaken earlier this year has now been reported to the Town Council. The survey covered the stock of Town Council trees and resulted in work being recommended over the following periods with an indicative cost of:

- Urgent £600
- 3 Months priority £40,950
- 6 Month Priority £43,545

- 12 Month Priority      £4,880

The urgent work has been carried out.

There is currently £18,868 In this year's budget left to spend on arboriculture and another £20,000 in earmarked reserves. Members will wish to take note of the Treasurer's / RFO's comments in the budget estimates for 2020 /2021.

The report has only just been received by the Town Council and your officers are currently studying it to see what can be carried out "in-house". This will then leave an amount of work to be undertaken by a contractor for which we will go out to tender and, it is anticipated that a reduced figure could be obtained.

A copy of the report is in the office for Members to view or can be emailed on request. Members are asked to consider the matter and instruct their officers accordingly.

#### 9. **Bus Shelters.**

A Member has requested that a seat is provided in the Bus shelter travelling south towards the town centre on the Oxford Road, near the Boundary House.

The shelter is an old construction and has been repaired many times and needs so again. To fix a seat to the construction would possibly result in the construction either becoming unsafe or the seat not actually surviving long.

To fix a stand-alone seat in the shelter would seriously affect the space in which the public can pass along the pavement, especially with push and wheel chairs.

Members are therefore requested to consider replacing the bus shelter with a new construction with an integral seat. The cost of a new shelter and installation will depend on the type required.

A request from a member of the public has also been received for a new shelter to be installed in the Vineyard, near the convenience store, for those travelling towards Oxford. This is a well-used stop and Members are asked to consider this request and what type of shelter will be required, a fully enclosed or a cantilever construction.

The new shelters in the Oxford Road were £8831 for the large one and £7015 for the smaller one. A Cantilever one would be slightly less.

The budget for street furniture is 2019 / 2020 is £20,000 of which £1,300 has been spent and another £16,222 invoice is expected shortly for the new bus shelters that have been installed in the Oxford Road recently. There is an earmarked reserve of £40,000 which the Committee may request the Finance and General Purposes Committee to use.

Members are asked to instruct their officers accordingly on the two requests.

#### 10 **Stratton Way Land**

The Town Council is responsible for a piece of land behind the subway on Stratton Way which has no use for the Council except for some cycle racks which are poorly or seldom used.

The area backing on to Yew Tree Mews is very secluded and encourages those using alcohol and other substances to use the area for illicit purposes as they cannot be seen from the road or surrounding properties.

Most of the area is covered by paving slabs which are constantly having to be relaid due to tree roots pushing them up from below. The land has very little value in terms of community use and, although there is very little access to the area, the Council may realise the area for other uses.

Your officers are therefore requesting Members to consider what purpose the land could be used and may wish to take professional planning advice as well as having it valued.

Members are asked to discuss and make any recommendations to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

#### 11 **New Cemetery**

To receive the Minutes of the New Cemetery Working Group Meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

#### 12. **Spring Road Cemetery Grazing**

Situated within the Spring Road cemetery is an area set aside for the more eco conscious burial. This area is maintained as a wild flower meadow with occasional trees left over from the original Victorian landscaping.

The area is mapped for 100 burials but over the years we have incorporated a wider area which has added to this valuable nature resource.

Although “wild” it does require some maintenance namely annual cutting. This is carried out, in part, with machinery and then manually raked which is labour intensive and somewhat wasteful.

Officers have been in discussion with a local small holder who is known to the Council through working with a local funeral director for many years. We propose to have a handful of sheep grazing the above area in a controlled manner over a short period in the late summer. Officers will, of course, risk assess the proposal and signage informing the public will be put in place.

There would be no income for this as, in fact, it will be a saving on manpower time and fuel for the Council.

Members are asked to consider the proposal and instruct their officers accordingly.

If Members approve the above proposal your officers are also looking in to the prospect of installing bee hives in the Spring Road Cemetery, which would be another step of enriching our biodiversity within the cemeteries. Members are asked to comment on this before officers proceed with any meaningful proposal.

### 13. **Spring Garden Cemetery Lodge Shower**

During the refurbishment of the Spring Gardens Cemetery Lodge a few years ago the shower within the bathroom was taken out. The shower was never replaced which was an oversight which has just come to light. Showers are considered a more economical way of bathing in terms of water savings and officers are requesting that Members consider replacing the shower forthwith along with fittings.

There is funding within the Cemetery Improvement budget for this matter.

Members are asked to consider this matter and instruct their officers accordingly.

### 14. **Benches in St Helen's Wharf**

The Council are responsible for 5 benches in St Helen's Wharf which are now in a poor state of repair due to vandalism and wear and tear. The Council has already replaced two with recycled plastic benches at a cost of £875.04 plus VAT.

To replace the other damaged benches and to keep uniformity it is proposed to replace the other 3 benches with the same recycled material at a cost of £1,312.56 plus VAT.

Again the budget for street furniture is 2019 / 2020 is £20,000 of which £1,300 has been spent and another £16,222 invoice is expected shortly for the new bus shelters that have been installed in the Oxford Road recently. There is an earmarked reserve of £40,000 which the Committee may request the Finance and General Purposes Committee to use.

Members are asked to consider the above and instruct their officers accordingly.

14. **Margaret Brown Garden**

The following has been received from a Member who has been contacted by a local resident to the Margaret Brown Garden in Wilsham Road.

*Concern has been raised that because of the overhanging trees and high hedges this has created a hidden area which fosters antisocial behaviour including drug related issues. I have also been told that there was a mugging at knife point in the garden. Can we consider whether we should cut greenery back, either specific to this garden or in general terms about our land. In MBG the requests include reducing the height of the hedge and trimming the willow tree There has also been a request for lighting. Can we consider having some low energy, perhaps solar powered lighting in Margaret Brown Garden.*

Members are requested to consider and instruct their officers accordingly.

15 **Environmental Implications**

The Committee is requested, if it has not already done so, to consider the environmental implications in relation to matters on the agenda, in particular having regard to the Council's resolution in relation to the Climate Change Emergency. Note that this matter will be further addressed at all future meetings.

17. **Publicity**

The Committee is requested to consider any items on the agenda which would benefit from publicity.

18. **Items for Next Meeting**

Members are requested to consider items to be included on the agenda of the next meeting of the Amenities and Recreation Committee. This will enable

officers to explore future items with a view to giving some guidance at future meetings.

19. **Date of Next Meeting**

The dates for future Amenities and Recreation Committee meetings will be on:

- 25<sup>th</sup> February 2020
- 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020

20. **Exclusion of the Public, Including the Press**

*If necessary, due to confidential matters being introduced to the Committee's deliberations, the Chair may move a motion for the approval of the Committee, to exclude the public including the press:*

*"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."*

Items to be discussed:

1. Cemetery Matters – to receive information regarding legal cemetery matters.