

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Amenities and Recreation Committee held on Tuesday 9th June 2020 at 7.00pm.

*Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this meeting was held online in accordance with
The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local
Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020
("the 2020 Regulations")*

Present:

Councillor Jim Halliday	Chair
Councillor Andrew Coveney	Vice-Chair
Councillor Charlie Birks	
Councillor Samantha Bowring	
Councillor Grace Clifton	
Councillor Eric de la Harpe	
Councillor Robert Maddison	

In Attendance:

Mr Nigel Warner	Town Clerk
Mr Stephen Rich	Assistant Town Clerk & Head of Services (Clerk to the meeting)
Mr Tim Badcock	Cemetery and Works Supervisor

To commence the meeting there was a minute's silence held in memory of Councillor Jeanette Halliday, a longstanding Member of the Abingdon Town Council and of the Amenities and Recreation Committee, who died on 17th April 2020.

A1. **Apologies**

There were no apologies for absence.

A2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

A3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

It was **resolved** the Minutes of the previous meeting on 25th February 2020 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

A4. **Matters Arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda**

Minute A12 - Cremated Remains – the meeting was informed that the creation of a garden area to accept the scattering of cremated remains was in the programme of works for the Council to be carried out at a future date.

Minutes A15 – Roundabouts in Abingdon – There had been no further update on this matter and the Tesco and McDonald’s roundabout continued to look untidy and poorly maintained. Councillor Eric de la Harpe was asked to follow this up with the Leader of the District Council as the matter had now taken some considerable time to try and resolve. The Committee also asked that officers write to the Oxfordshire County Council requesting that the weeds on the roundabouts are cut down.

Minute A26 – Notice Boards – Members were informed that two notice boards had been delivered one for Stert Street and the other for Roysse Court. Due to the current pandemic restrictions it was not possible to install them at the present time.

The design for the proposed Market Place notice board had also been held up due to the pandemic restrictions.

Minute A42 – Abingdon In Bloom – Members were informed that the new planters and hanging baskets had been delivered and were now at various locations around the town.

Minute A47 – Spring Road Cemetery Grazing -The Meeting noted that the grazing of sheep and the installation of beehives is still scheduled to take place later in the year.

Minute A48 – Spring Garden Cemetery Lodge Shower – due to the pandemic restrictions this project has been delayed.

Minute A49 – Benches in St Helen’s Wharf – A new bench had been ordered and the Council were waiting for its delivery.

Minute A59 – Tree Survey and Planting – The Committee were informed that work on the tree survey had come to a temporary halt due to the nesting period for birds and the pandemic restrictions.

A request had been received to plant trees on the Caldecott recreation ground and install “picnic” style tables. The Committee heard from the Cemetery and Works Supervisor that, due to the level of vandalism in this area it would not be a good idea to plant trees as this would provide an area where people can collect and not be visible. However, there were some trees on the Caldecott recreation ground that needed replacement and also Boxhill recreation ground and this is a project where the involvement of children may be possible. The Committee requested that the Cemetery and Works supervisor contact the person making the request and inform them of the possibilities for work later in the year.

The Assistant Town Clerk stated that the Town Council's land holdings quite small and that all the areas were fully managed in respect of arboricultural work. There was little scope for further tree planting on Town Council owned-land.

Minute A64 – Bus Shelters – The Committee were informed that the installation of two new bus shelters, one in the Oxford Road and the other in the Vineyard, was on hold due to the pandemic restrictions.

Minute A66 – Bicycle Rack Outside Abbey Cinema – The Assistant Town Clerk informed the meeting that as a result of consultation with Members, there was not a clear majority in favour of either sets of bicycle racks to be placed outside the abbey Cinema. Consequently, the decision had been brought back to the Committee for a conclusion. It was **resolved** that the “loop the Loop” type racks be purchased.

Item A67 – Water Drayton Road Allotments – The Assistant Town Clerk said he would inform Members by email when he had a response from the Allotment Association concerning water supplies.

Item A68 – Plaque to commemorate 50th Anniversary of Twinning with Schongau, Bavaria – A plaque for display in the town centre flower beds had been ordered but delayed due to the pandemic restrictions.

A5. **Financial Report**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Treasurer / Responsible Finance Officer for the period 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020 and 1st April 2020 to 30th April 2020 as circulated with the agenda. The Committee **resolved** to approve the report.

A6. **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.

The Committee were informed that the Works Team Chargehand, Mr Matthew Simmons, had resigned to concentrate on his landscaping business. The Committee wished him well and the Chair said he would like to write to Matthew Simmons thanking him for his work for the Council. It was **resolved** that the Chair write to Matthew Simmons.

A7. **Covid-19 Pandemic**

This was the first opportunity the Amenities and Recreation Committee has had to discuss the pandemic and the effects it was having on the services and works under the responsibility of this Committee. It was noted that the pandemic was having an impact on working arrangement and projects. The Council was also having to work to the regulations and guidance which had been published and was emerging regarding to its operations and Covid-19.

It was noted that due to the pandemic, actual expenditure may fall behind budget in relation to projects until such time as restrictions on activity were relaxed and suppliers were operating normally although there may be increased expenditure in other areas.

A8. **New Cemetery**

The Committee received a verbal report from the Assistant Town Clerk / Head of Services regarding the new cemetery project. It was noted that there had been no response from the District Council which was probably due to the current pandemic where their staff are redeployed on other matters.

A9. **West End Allotments**

[It was noted that a sum of £2,000 was allocated in the budget as a grant to each allotment association. The Committee considered a](#) request from the West End Allotment Association for an additional £1,000 having spent the £2,000 allowance already budgeted for this year. The original grant had been spent on fenceposts and a skip and the Allotment Association had requested the additional £1,000 towards clearing an area of land between plots 26 and 38 to allow the area to be used for allotments. It was noted that all plots were now rented out and there was a waiting list. The application stated that they Association were content for the Council to treat the additional grant as an advance against the 2021/22 grant allocation.

Recommended to the Town Council through the Finance and General Purposes Committee: that, in accordance with its powers under the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908, the request from West End Allotment be approved and that an additional grant of £1,000 be awarded for the purpose to improve land as set out in the application. The additional grant to be under by supplementary estimate, this sum to be treated as an advance against the 2021/22 grant allocation and the matter reviewed during the budget setting cycle.

A10. **Environmental Implications**

The Committee considered environmental implications in relation to matters on the agenda having regard to the Council's resolution on the Climate Change Emergency. Members felt that environmental matters had been fully considered during discussions on agenda items.

A11. **Publicity**

There were no items the Committee wished to publicise at this stage.

A12. **Items for Next Meeting**

Members were informed that they could email officers with items, with an appropriate narrative, for inclusion in future agendas of the committee.

A13. **Dates of future meetings**

Members were informed that the Amenities and Recreation Committee would next meet on the following dates:

- 8th July 2020
- 23rd September 2020
- 18th November 2020
- 20th January 2021
- 17th March 2021
- 9th June 2021

It was noted that there were more meetings scheduled for 2020/21 so that where decisions were required these could be obtained more swiftly. However, if a particular meeting was not required then it could be cancelled. It was **resolved** that, unless there was urgent business to discuss, the 8th July meeting would not take place.

A14 **Exclusion of the public, including the press**

The Chair moved:

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 discussed:

1. To receive the Confidential Appendix of the meeting held on 25th February 2020 and discuss matters arising therein. **Resolved:** that the confidential appendix to the meeting of the 25th February 2020 be approved as a correct record.
2. West end Allotments – Complaint
3. Cemetery matters.
4. Abingdon Fairs
5. Market Place

The meeting rose at 9.15pm.

Signed Date
Chair