

**Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council**

**Minutes of the Community Services Committee held on Tuesday  
20<sup>th</sup> August 2019 at 7.00 pm in the Roysse Room, the Guildhall,  
Abingdon-on-Thames**

**Present:**

Cllr Neil Fawcett - Chair  
Cllr Lorraine Oates - Vice Chair  
Cllr Alex Greenaway  
Cllr Robert Maddison  
Cllr Charlie Birks, Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames (Ex-officio)  
Cllr Samantha Bowring, Chair of F & G P Committee (Ex-officio)

**In Attendance:**

Miss Louise Brown Administrative Assistant (Clerk to the meeting)  
Mr Nigel Warner Town Clerk  
James, Jake and Roxy Representatives of DAMASCUS Youth Project team

**CS18 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Andy Foulsham.

**CS19 Declarations of Interest**

Minute Number CS27: Cllr Lorraine Oates declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to a section of the General Report of the Town Clerk; 'Twinning and Twin Town Conferences' as she is the Town Council's Twinning representative on the Abingdon & District Twin Towns' Society.

**CS20 Statements and Questions from the Public**

Three members of the DAMASCUS Youth Project team (James, Jake and Roxy) came to speak about Grant Application number 6. They gave the Committee an overview of the work they carry out and the aim of the specific project they are requesting a grant for. There was an opportunity for the members to ask questions regarding the organisation generally and the new project.

### CS21 Minutes

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2019

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2019 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### CS22 Matters Arising

None.

### CS23 Grant Applications

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk relating to the above.

It was **resolved** that the grant applications be determined as follows:

	<b>Name of Applicant</b>	<b>Purpose of grant, as summarised in the grant application</b>	<b>Grant awarded</b>
1	Abingdon Church Twinning (b)	To host the two groups of visitors that Abingdon receives each year	£150
2	Abingdon Flower Club (a)	Towards the cost of a Flower Festival during Heritage weekend	£150
3	Abingdon Music Centre Trust (a)	To purchase a digital projector & the necessary speakers, cabling & fixtures	£440
4	Autism Family Support Oxfordshire	To help establish the County's first centre for Autism based in Abingdon	Deferred; more Information requested regarding the organisation and their project.

5	Cardiac Risk in the Young (b)	Towards the cost of a cardiac screening held in Abingdon to allow young people to be screened free of charge	£750
6	Damascus Youth Project (b)	Towards the cost of the Young Peoples Legacy Project	<p>£1000 awarded from the community grants budget.</p> <p>The grant application was in the sum of £5,000.</p> <p>The Committee referred the grant application to the Finance and General Purposes Committee for consideration under the Community Fund, with a recommendation <i>“that the remainder of the grant applied for, or a large proportion of the remainder of the grant applied for, be funded from the Community Fund.”</i></p>
7	Enrych Oxfordshire (b)	To help support the increasing number of referrals they are receiving	£500
8	St Johns Ambulance (b)	To raise money for a medical crisis manikin	£750
9	Trinity Church (g)	<p>To improve access to the Conduit Centre for the disabled etc.</p> <p>To relocate for ease of access, and improve toilet facilities. To improve safety of staircase to 1st floor</p>	£1000

Note that the above grants were made in pursuance of the Council's powers, as noted in column one, as follows (resolved accordingly):

- (a) Local Government Act 1972, section 145;
- (b) Local Government Act 1972, section 137;
- (c) Local Government and Rating Act 1997, part III, section 31;
- (d) Local Government Act 1972, section 144;
- (e) Local Government Act 1972, section 142 (2A);
- (f) Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, section 19;
- (g) Local Government Act 1972, section 133;
- (h) Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, section 19.

**CS24 Summer Events Sub Committee**

The Committee received and considered the draft minutes of the Sub-Committee meetings of 23rd July 2019.

It was noted that in the minutes the Sub-Committee felt that with their experience of Fun and Music in the Park it was well equipped to organise events. The Town Council would continue to agree what events should be organised and would set the budgets, but it was suggested that the actual organisation would be led by the Summer Events Sub-Committee and they requested the Community Services Committee to consent to this change to the terms of reference of the Sub-Committee. This would include the VE Day commemoration in May 2020 and Platinum Jubilee in June 2022.

**Resolved:** that the terms of reference of the Summer Events Sub-Committee be extended as detailed above.

It was **resolved** that the draft minutes of the Sub-Committee meetings of 23rd July 2019 be approved together with any recommendations contained therein.

**CS25 Communications Review Working Group**

The Committee received and considered the draft notes of the Communications Review Working Group meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019.

The Committee decided they were content with the general direction the working group was taking.

It was noted that subsequent to the Council's previous decision, a "Town Crier" magazine was being prepared for publication in October 2019. Cllr Neil Fawcett and Louise Brown would be the leads on the publication.

It was **resolved** that the draft notes of the Working Group meeting of 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019 be approved together with any recommendations contained therein.

Subsequent to the Working Group meeting, Cllr Andy Foulsham had drafted a Communications Strategy for the Council. This had been circulated to all Members, see attached appendix to these minutes. **Resolved:** that the Communications Strategy be approved.

## **CS26 Financial Report**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Treasurer/ RFO in relation to the above, as circulated with the agenda.

Cllr Neil Fawcett commented that the Abingdon Pride event had been organised very well and that the surplus finances left over was a credit to the organisational skills involved with the event.

It was noted that all direct costs borne by the Council in relation to Abingdon Pride had been met by the budget set aside and income. At its meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> May 2019 the Committee had approved a budget of £1,000 for the event, funded from the Summer Events budget. In addition the Council had received a contribution of £500 from Achilles Information Limited, raffle ticket sales amounted to £349, sales of flags generated £144 and donations amounted to £123, making a total of £1,117. Direct costs amounted to £1,530. The surplus of budget and income over expenditure was £588.

It was **resolved** to transfer the surplus detailed above (£588) to the emerging Abingdon Pride organisation as a start-up grant towards the planned 2020 event subject to that organisation being properly constituted and, in the meantime, holding this amount against a new earmarked reserve which could then be used in future years. It was noted that this would be in the context of the Council having budgeted for the event in 2019 at £1,000. The surplus was generated as a result of donations and the raffle which were not required to defray all direct cost for 2019 and therefore could be transferred to support the event in 2020.

**Resolved:** That the Committee approve the financial report.

## **CS27 General Report of the Town Clerk**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk in relation to the above. The first part of the report considered a number of areas which had been raised by Members and which had been discussed by the Leader and the Town Clerk.

The Leader, Cllr Samantha Bowring, stated that whilst the council's priorities will be decided at the upcoming strategy day, the report was to highlight areas for consideration.

The Committee ran through the various headings and gave the members a chance to comment on any of the areas as outlined below:

### Environmental implications of events

The Committee discussed the Environmental implications of events including those on the Market Place and ways to improve matters, such as reducing the use of single use plastic at these events.

It was suggested consulting directly with the market traders to get their opinions on ways to improve this.

### Events Strategy

Cllr Samantha Bowring explained to the members that whilst we currently put a lot of resources into Town events we need to consider what we are hoping to achieve through these events, be it increased footfall or enhancing the community feel or targeting specific areas of the public that may need it the most.

Cllr Neil Fawcett explained he had been approached by Mark Thornton who runs the ATOM festival who had expressed an interest in working together on town events. He also felt that free events should be encouraged as much as possible in order to include everyone.

Cllr Lorraine Oates provided some feedback on the over 70's party and it was agreed that Cllr Charlie Birks would work with the officers to incorporate this feedback into this year's event.

### Grants Strategy

The Committee agreed this would be a good topic to consider at the upcoming strategy day.

The Town Clerk confirmed there is an earmarked reserve for Environment Specific projects.

### Youth Strategy

Cllr Samantha Bowring expressed concerns over the cuts made by the County Council concerning Youth Funding and the importance of us focusing on this area. Cllr Bowring felt it was important to include young people in these discussions.

### Official Guide

The Committee **agreed** the proposed publication date of November 2019 and that Cllr Neil Fawcett and Louise Brown would work together to ensure there was limited overlap between this publication and the Town Crier.

### Matters for decision

#### Hot Food Vendor

The Committee considered the above and the suggestion that the closing time of the hot food van should be the same for both the Town Council permit and the Premises Licence.

**Resolved** that subject to further consultation with Thames Valley Police and the District Council's Environmental Health team, that authority be delegated to the Town Clerk to extend the closing time of the food van on the Market Place on Fridays and Saturdays from 1.30am to 2.45am, subject to a further condition that the van should then leave the Market Place by 3.00am on those days.

#### Fun and Music in the Park

The latest income and expenditure figures for the event which took place in June 2019 were **approved**.

Cllr Samantha Bowring confirmed that going forward the committee would need a clearer understanding of staff time at this event in order to be able to consider the cost implications in the overall financial figures of the event.

#### Twining and Twin Towns Conference

There was a discussion around our current level of involvement with the Twining towns and the pros and cons of increasing this.

Following the Schongau Twin Towns Conference, the Council had been approached by St Niklaas to enquire whether the Town Council would be willing to host a conference in 2020 as it was thought that Abingdon was "next in line." However the Council in Sint-Niklaas recognised that this is not in the Town Council's plans and that we have had elections and therefore had stated that they are content to organise the conference if Abingdon did not wish to.

It was **resolved** that authority be delegated to the Town Clerk to advise the civic authorities in St Niklaas that the Town Council is currently considering its position on twinning, make a statement as to this Council's general approach to twinning, state that the Council is not in a position to organise a conference for 2020 but will seek to consider matters and any necessary budget so that its position is clear in this regard ahead of any conference which may take place in 2021.

Cllr Lorraine Oates, the town council representative on the Abingdon & District Twin Towns' Society, would feed this back to their next meeting.

#### Designation of markets

The Committee considered the market applications and it was **resolved** that they be approved as follows:

1. Local Excellence Markets: Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> February, 30<sup>th</sup> May, 29<sup>th</sup> August and 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020 (organiser: Abingdon-on-Thames Chamber of Commerce).
2. Local Excellence Craft Markets: Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June and 5<sup>th</sup> December 2020 (organiser: Abingdon-on-Thames Chamber of Commerce).
3. Christmas Extravaganza: Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2020 (organiser: Abingdon-on-Thames Chamber of Commerce).

It was also noted that officers were aware that there may be other applications for Markets prior to the next Committee meeting. In these circumstances **resolved** authority be delegated to approve such applications be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair of the Committee.

#### National VE Day Commemoration

Cllr Samantha Bowring suggested that this event should be one focussed on 'reflective commemoration,' recognising the sacrifices made. There should also be a focus on 75 years of relative peace.

Cllr Neil Fawcett agreed that he would like an event that represented every perspective and it was **resolved** that plans would be finalised closer to the time.

### **CS28 Environmental implications**

As per minute CS27 the Committee agreed to consider the environmental implications of all future events and where possible reduce the use of single use plastic.



**CS29 Publicity**

The Committee discussed publicising the Grants Scheme and the awarded Grants more. There was a suggestion to potentially present some of the bigger Grants at Mayor Making.

**CS30 Dates of next meeting**

The calendar of meetings for 2019/20 municipal year were noted as follows:

- Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2019 (subsequently postponed to 17<sup>th</sup> December 2019);
- Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

The meeting rose at 9.15pm.

**Signed**.....

**Date**.....

**Appendix to 20<sup>th</sup> August Community Services Minutes**

# **Abingdon on Thames Town Council**

## **Communications strategy**

18<sup>th</sup> August 2019

Cllr Andy Foulsham

### **Introduction**

As a product of the Communications Review working group meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019, I agreed to produce a draft communications strategy. This is the first draft – it is not intended to replace the minutes of the meeting, but to draw various threads together to stimulate further discussion.

### **Analysis of target audience**

Our key audience is the residents of Abingdon.

We have several subsidiary audiences: visitors to Abingdon, local businesses and residents of nearby areas.

### **Analysis of key messages**

Our key messages is what the Town Council does and how best to access these services. Part of this message is the need to explain what services are delivered by the Town Council and which are provided by the District Council or the County Council.

We have subsidiary messages which include acting as a source of information on the history of Abingdon, and information for visitors to Abingdon.

## **Communication media**

In recent years the communications strategy has been to concentrate on the website as the repository for information relating to the Council and services offered by it. It was also intended to act as a “portal” for information from other organisations relating to Abingdon. The use of printed material for general distribution has been reduced. There is also some limited use of social media, including Facebook and Twitter, with areas of good practice such as by the Museum staff. The objective of providing all public Council papers on the website and giving details of Council services has been achieved.

The principle of concentrating all messaging on the website is perceived to be less than optimal. It excludes some parts of our target audience, and the concept of a “portal” website is now seen as dated, as the barrier to establishing a website is so low today that even the smallest of organisations are able to do so if they so wish. The website is also seen as needing an overhaul to address issues of usability (by staff for updating it) and to refresh its look and feel.

The “Town Crier” publication has a history of providing a usable, accessible method of communicating with every household in Abingdon, but was discontinued several years ago. After examination of the possibility of including it within another publication (such as the Abingdon Magazine or Round & About) it was felt that a standalone publication was more cost effective and flexible.

The Visitor and Community Information Centre (now relocated to the ground floor of Roysse Court) provides a very useful source of local information and details about forthcoming events. It needs to be stressed that it does not provide “Tourist Information Centre” type facilities such as booking accommodation or event tickets.

Town Council noticeboards and noticeboards provided by community organisations are another mode of communication, and it is important that they are provided with regularly updated material, although the Town Council should not be responsible for printing material supplied by third parties. There is also the possibility of using electronic noticeboards if suitable locations can be identified, although there is a cost of purchasing and installing such systems and a suitable means of updating them needs to be identified.

## **Short-term priorities**

More use will be made of social media to signpost to forthcoming events, building on the good practice of shown by the Museum. An Instagram account will be set up to showcase Abingdon at its best.

Website provision will be reviewed and tenders from a range of web companies for a new content management system and design. The existing provider will be asked to tender for the work as well.

A revamped Town Crier will be published in the autumn as a standalone publication, as a vehicle for information about Town Council activities, future events and to enable consultations to take place in when required.

The distribution of agendas, minutes and meeting papers electronically will be reviewed as part of the brief of the IT working group.