

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

**Draft Minutes of the Community Services Committee held on
Tuesday 3rd November 2020 at 7.00 pm.**

*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:

Cllr Neil Fawcett	Chair
Cllr Andrew Coveney	
Cllr Andy Foulsham	
Cllr Alex Greenaway	
Cllr Jim Halliday	
Cllr Rob Maddison	
Cllr Lorraine Oates	
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
Mrs Susan Whipp	Treasurer/RFO

CS25. Apologies for Absence

None

CS26. Declarations of Interest

None

CS27. Statements and Questions from the Public

None.

CS28. Minutes

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the meeting held on 15th September 2020.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 15th September 2020 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CS29. Matters Arising

Cllr Samantha Bowring asked for an update on the Single use plastic policy and it was confirmed that this will be an Agenda item on the next Green Scrutiny and Advisory Committee which will be taking place on Tuesday 10th November 2020.

CS30. Communications Review Working Group Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Communications Review Working Group held on 10th August 2020 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Cllr Jim Halliday asked for an update on the website and Miss Louise Brown confirmed this was to be considered in the confidential item of this meeting.

CS31. Grant Applications

The Committee discussed the general approach to Grants and discussed any potential changes to the grant process.

Cllr Andy Foulsham had previously produced an application scoring spreadsheet and provided the committee with an update on how this worked. The spreadsheet had been set up in a way that other priorities could be added in going forward if the priorities of the council changed.

Cllr Samantha Bowring was concerned about the same organisations applying every year and felt that the Grants system needed to be advertised more widely to encourage new initiatives and organisations to submit applications.

Cllr Jim Halliday agreed that publicising the grants more widely would be beneficial but he reminded the committee that where events had once been the responsibility of the Town Council and had since been passed to a particular organisation (as is the case with Heritage weekend which is now organised by the Friends of Abingdon), it was appropriate to award this an annual grant. Cllr Halliday felt that rather than discouraging regular applicants we should encourage more grant applications and increase the grant budget if need be.

Cllr Charlie Birks asked if there is currently a set of criteria that is provided to applicants. Miss Louise Brown confirmed there is and that this can be accessed on the Town Council website.

It was **RESOLVED** this would be an Agenda item on the next Community Services Committee agenda and that Cllr Andy Foulsham, Cllr Alex Greenaway, Cllr Andrew Coveney and Cllr Jim Halliday would bring a specific suggestion, regarding changes to the current process, to the next meeting.

CS32. Forward Plan

The Town Clerk provided an update on the Forward plan so far and asked the committee to consider what their key projects and areas for development are so that a firm Forward Plan can be established. Once the key objectives have been identified it would then be possible to establish the resourcing available and how these projects can be delivered.

Cllr Neil Fawcett felt the five suggestions from the report were correct and that reviewing the Grants policy should be added as a sixth project.

Cllr Samantha Bowring felt the suggestions in the report were all 'headline' projects and queried whether at this stage things needed to be considered on a smaller and more detailed level.

Cllr Neil Fawcett felt that the priority was to decide the main projects that would then go into the forward plan and that all the details did not need to be considered now.

The Town Clerk confirmed that what would be helpful when prioritising would be to decide on the big priorities which would then be passed to full council, but an idea on timescales and next steps for these projects would also be helpful.

It was **RESOLVED** that the six projects and areas of development are:

- (i) Youth strategy including potential for a youth council;
- (ii) Review of flag policy
- (iii) Completion and implementation of introducing environmentally friendly measures to address the climate emergency in relation to Market Place events.
- (iv) Completion of communications review including new website
- (v) Planning for Platinum Jubilee scheduled for 2022
- (vi) Review of Grants Policy

It was **RESOLVED** that the lead members on each project would be as follows:

<u>Project</u>	<u>Lead member</u>
Youth strategy	Cllr Samantha Bowring
Review of flag policy	Cllr Charlie Birks
Completion and implementation of introducing environmentally friendly measures to address the climate emergency in relation to Market Place events.	Cllr Alex Greenaway and Cllr Andrew Coveney
Completion of communications review including new website	Cllr Andrew Coveney
Planning for Platinum Jubilee scheduled for 2022	Cllr Samantha Bowring
Review of Grants Policy	Cllr Andrew Foulsham

CS33. **Financial Report**

The committee received and considered the report of the Treasurer / RFO.

The committee reviewed the management accounts for the period ending 30th September 2020. Cllr Bowring asked for some further explanation regarding a negative entry against Digital Media. The Treasurer /RFO explained this was an accounting adjustment reflecting an item in relation to the previous year. The committee noted the projected year end position, this being an underspend of £9,739. Cllr Bowring asked whether an underspend at year end could be transferred to an earmarked reserve to finance future year projects. The Treasurer / RFO replied that any underspends of particular spending committees would need to be considered in light of additional costs elsewhere in the Council, incurred due the Covid-19 pandemic.

It was **RESOLVED** that the management accounts for the period ending 30th September 2020 be approved.

The committee then considered the draft estimates for 2021-22. Members considered additional budget bids in light of the suggested projects discussed at the previous agenda item. Cllr Samantha Bowring proposed that an additional budget bid of £30,000 be put forward to fund the Youth Strategy initiatives, including the creation of a Youth Council. Regarding the proposed Platinum Jubilee project it was suggested by Cllr Jim Halliday that an additional budget bid of £5,000 be put forward, to allow for initial work / consultancy advice etc.

It was proposed by Cllr Neil Fawcett, seconded by Cllr Samantha Bowring, and **RECOMMENDED** to Finance and General Purposes Committee that:

- (i) A budget of £48,259 be agreed for 2021-22 for this committee, based on the existing services and events
- (ii) An additional budget bid of £35,000 be considered, this with the intention of £30,000 to fund Youth Strategy initiatives, and £5,000 to fund initial work in relation to the proposed Platinum Jubilee project.

Members considered fees and charges for 2021-22, noting that these require Full Council approval on an annual basis. The committee agreed that these would be considered more fully at the next meeting of this committee, to be held on 12th January 2021, and that the current intention was to minimise any increases in light of the hardship faced by local businesses due to Covid-19. Cllr Bowring reminded the committee of the changes to Market tolls which had already been agreed to encourage stall holders to be plastic-free, these changes had not yet been implemented due to the pandemic.

It was further **RECOMMENDED** to Finance and General Purposes Committee that consideration be given to options to receive payments and the use of EPOS (Electronic Point of Sale) card readers.

CS34. The Town Crier

Cllr Neil Fawcett provided an update on the success of the Town Crier magazine so far since its reinstation in October 2019 and asked for any suggestions and amendments going forward.

Cllr Andy Foulsham said he has received good feedback about the magazine and felt the layout was fresh and easy to read.

Cllr Samantha Bowring suggested that the Town Crier could point people in the direction of the website for further information if the Town Crier only permitted room for a small article.

Miss Louise Brown confirmed this would be done going forward.

Introduction of a youth council

Cllr Neil Fawcett confirmed that he felt a Youth Council was a good way of engaging young people and incorporating their views and that if this was a fully inclusive initiative, he supported the recommendation to full council.

Cllr Jim Halliday requested that officers contact The Vale of White Horse District Council regarding their youth council to ask for any advice and suggestions on this.

Cllr Jim Halliday felt that in order to assist them with budgeting skills Councillors could join them in meetings to help guide them and offer advice.

Cllr Rob Maddison agreed this was a good initiative to engage with the youth and suggested giving them a budget to spend would increase their financial skills and make them feel like they are able to make a difference. Cllr Madison felt though that as a starter they could be given several pre discussed options for the budget rather than complete free reign. He felt this would give them experience and responsibility in a safe and controlled way.

It was **RECOMMENDED to Full Council, through the Finance and General Purposes Committee** that a youth council should be established and then if this were agreed then there would be further work with the Abingdon DAMASCUS Youth Project and The Abingdon Bridge to take this forward.

CS35. Environmental Implications

This had already been covered in previous agenda items.

CS36. Publicity

It was resolved that as and when the youth council was approved this would be publicised.

CS37. Dates of next meeting

It was resolved that the dates of the next meeting are:

12th January 2021

9th March 2021

CS38 Website

The committee received and considered the confidential report of the Communications, Marketing and Events Officer in relation the website.

It was RESOLVED that the recommendations contained within the report be approved.

See the Confidential Appendix to the minutes.

The meeting rose at 8.51pm.

Signed.....

Date.....