

**Draft minutes of the Council of the Town of Abingdon-on-Thames held on
Wednesday 24th January 2018 in the Roysse Room, Guildhall,
Abingdon-on-Thames**

Present

Cllr Jan Morter	Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames
Cllr Margaret Crick	Deputy Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames
Cllr Alice Badcock	
Cllr Mike Badcock	
Cllr Samantha Bowring	
Cllr Neil Fawcett	
Cllr Dennis Garrett	
Cllr Robert Hall	
Cllr Jeanette Halliday	
Cllr Brian Hedley	
Cllr Vicky Jenkins	
Cllr Angela Lawrence	
Cllr Patrick Lonergan	
Cllr Monica Lovatt	
Cllr Sandy Lovatt	
Cllr Lorraine Oates	
Cllr David Pope	
Cllr Andrew Todd	

In Attendance

Mr Nigel Luker	Macebearer
Mr Steve Rich	Assistant Town Clerk/ Head of Services
Mr Nigel Warner	Town Clerk (Clerk to the meeting)
Rev Mary Williamson	
Mrs Susan Whipp	Treasurer / RFO

16 members of the public and the press.

SECTION I (Open to the Public Including the Press)

C55 Prayers

Before Prayers, the Council stood during one minutes silence in memory of John Tamplin, former councillor from 1999 to 2003 and Mayor's escort to the late Audrey Tamplin (2002-2003) who died recently.

Rev Mary Williamson then led the meeting in prayer.

C56 **Public Participation**

a) **Presentation of Grant Cheques to Local Organisations**

The Mayor, Cllr Jan Morter, stated that the Council had awarded a number of local organisations grants through the Community Services Committee and the Finance and General Purposes Committee and was pleased to present cheques to those organisations as follows:

1. ATOM Festival of Science and Technology received a cheque for £1,000 towards the cost of the festival – cheque presented to James White.
2. Abingdon Freewheeling received a cheque for £800 towards the cost of the Abingdon cycling festival – cheque presented to Mark Bedford.
3. 2nd Abingdon Scout Group received a cheque for £2,000 towards a new floor in the scout hut, this being required due to water damage – cheque presented to Nigel Cribb.
4. Christ Church on Long Furlong received £125 towards a Christmas Lantern trail – cheque presented to Julie Kemp-Harper.
5. Be Free Young Carers received a cheque for £7,000 towards their children's services – cheque presented to John Tabor.

b) **Dr. Jim Halliday**

Dr Jim Halliday asked the following questions (answers given are shown in *italics*):

Question 1: Please could the Mayor give summary attendance statistics about the two recent Special Parish Meetings held on 15th and 22nd January 2018, including a) how many people attended each event, b) how many people spoke at each event, c) the number and names of all Councillors who attended each event?

Answer: The Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames, Cllr Jan Morter replied as follows:

- a) *On 15th January 2018 there were 99 people in attendance of whom 95 were residents of the parish and 4 were from outside of Abingdon. On 22nd January 2018 there were 114 people in attendance of whom 108 were residents of the parish and 6 were non-residents. Of the 114 a total of 13 people had also attended on 15th January 2018. Over the two meetings there were therefore 200 different attendees, of whom 191 were Abingdon residents and 9 were non-residents. These figures do not include the Mayor and the 4 staff who attended each meeting.*
- b) *On 15th January 2018 there were 21 people who spoke, 5 of these spoke twice (once to the matter of the Abbey Hall and once to the matter of the Guildhall). On 22nd January 2018 there were 24 people who spoke, 2 of these spoke twice (once to the matter of the Abbey Hall and once to the matter of the Guildhall) and 2 had spoken at the meeting of 15th. Therefore, in all, 43 different people spoke.*

c) *As you are aware both meetings referred to were not council meetings. All attendees, including councillors (with the sole exception of myself) attended as individual electors in a private capacity. The only councillor who was present in an official capacity was myself who as mayor convened and chaired both meetings.*

Question 2: At a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 19th December 2017 I asked a detailed question about the costs that might be incurred in re-opening the Abbey Hall (see Minute F38 part ii - on pages 97 and 98 of this Council's Agenda pack). In answer I was told "All the above costs are likely to be part of the report coming forward on the feasibility of bringing the Abbey Hall back into use at an early date." Please could the Leader advise me when it is expected this report will be completed and when it will be put into the public domain?

Answer: Cllr Mike Badcock, Leader of the Council responded:

The next scheduled meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee is due to take place on Tuesday 27th March 2018. However, taking into account current concerns and timescales for reports coming forward I am intending to call a special meeting of the committee for Monday 26th February 2018 to discuss matters further. It is my intention at this stage that the reports referred to will be presented to that meeting, at which point they will be in the public domain, subject to any redactions for commercial and staff reasons.

c) Dr. Philip Kendrick

Question: The Mayor convened Special Parish Meetings on the 15th and 22nd January at which electors were invited to express opinions about the future of the Guildhall complex. The published agenda for the present meeting makes no reference to those events. Will the Leader of the Council please explain what information was gleaned from those meetings and when the issues raised will be discussed by the Council?

Answer: Cllr Mike Badcock replied:

We have committed to publish detailed narrative minutes of both meetings within two weeks of each of the meetings. These minutes will include many comments in relation to both the Abbey Hall and the Guildhall and some questions. The information gleaned from the meetings will be in these minutes and the issues raised will be referred to the relevant committees. As I have indicated a Finance & General Purposes Committee is likely to take place on Monday 26th February and a Guildhall Committee on Thursday 1st March.

d) Bobbie Nichols, Friends of Abingdon

Bobbie Nichols asked some questions on behalf of Hester Hand who was unable to attend the meeting:

Question 1: As we understand it from previous meetings, three reports have been commissioned to inform decisions on the Abbey Hall and Guildhall. The Asset Heritage Consulting report was due to be ready "early in the new year",

but I note that there is no Guildhall Committee meeting scheduled till 1 March. Please can you tell us the timescale and process for considering this report – and when it will be made public, as promised?

Answer: Cllr Mike Badcock responded:

I can confirm that a report will be submitted to the Guildhall Committee for its meeting on 1st March 2018. I anticipate that the Asset Heritage Consulting report will be a supporting paper to a report of the Town Clerk. It is my intention that these reports be made public at the Guildhall Committee subject to any redactions for commercial and staff reasons.

Question 2: Re the Abbey Hall, you asked for two reports to come back to the Town Council in time for the current cycle of meetings – one from Ridge & Partners on the practical considerations in bringing the Abbey Hall back in to use and one on the net additional costs of operating it alongside the historic rooms. Please can you tell us whether these reports have been received and are to be discussed tonight in Confidential session? If so, on what basis does each meet the criteria for confidentiality and when will their contents be made public? If not, what will be the timescale and process for considering them – and making them public.

As you know, many people are very concerned about the secrecy surrounding these matters and we urge you not to let this situation continue until the next cycle of meetings.

Answer: *I would confirm that as yet these reports have not been received and are not being discussed in confidential session this evening. They will come forward to a future meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, in the next cycle and they will be made public subject to any redactions for commercial and staff reasons.*

e) Susan Williams

Question 1: Can the Leader tell us anything more about the “exciting, once in a lifetime, opportunity” for the Abbey Hall that is now referred to on the council website, in particular:

- What will be its net impact on the public facilities available for the people of Abingdon i.e. is it a move of an existing facility or the creation of a new one?
- What is the anticipated time frame – if it is linked in to the County Council “places review” we understand that that is likely to take several years to come to fruition?

Answer: Cllr Mike Badcock replied:

Previously the Council has agreed to work with the County and District Councils to explore the potential for alternative community uses on the land occupied by the modern part of the Guildhall, i.e. the Abbey Hall. This is the Council’s policy. By working with the other authorities we can secure the long-term future of the Guildhall and provide better community services for the people of Abingdon. The County Council has placed on the public record this week their intention to work with the Town Council to develop a community hub in the building and the surrounding area and, as they state in their press release, Oxfordshire County

Council already runs services in Abingdon, including the Library and a Children and Families' Centre. As part of the agreement to work together the County Council will be looking at the best way to provide services in its existing public buildings. I believe this will be a positive move and is likely to involve the move of an existing facility and the creation of a new one. In terms of the anticipated timeframe however, I cannot comment in detail at this stage.

Question 2: Given the extent of public interest in this matter, please can the leader give us assurances that proposals for both the short and long-term use of the Abbey Hall will be subject to widespread public consultation in the spirit of "Abingdon for All"?

Answer: Cllr Mike Badcock replied:

Yes, the Council would consult prior to making final decisions.

f) Frank Watters and Rose Samways

Mr Watters stated that he had recently attended a meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee and asked questions in relation to the Abingdon Business Improvement District (BID). He understood that these questions had been forwarded to the BID for response. Since the meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee the BID had organised a meeting last Monday (15th January 2018). As yet he had not received the full accounts of the BID and he stated that he had now become a mouthpiece for the 30 plus traders who were not happy with the situation.

Rose Samways read from her notes following the meeting on 15th January 2018. It was understood that there only three board members. However it is our BID, it is there for us. She stated that nobody was in favour of the BID in the town and the BID Management had continually refused to organise an extraordinary general meeting despite the MP, Layla Moran, requesting such a meeting. They had also refused to disclose where £111,000 of expenditure had gone. It was understood that part of this had gone to repay the DCLG loan which had been taken out in setting up the BID but the analysis within the accounts of "an eventful town", "an attractive town" etc was not helpful. As BID payers we should know where the money has gone. It was understood that a £10,000 management fee had been paid to a company. She stated that the BID had another three and a half years to run and that most people were disgruntled with it. Matters were getting worse and worse.

Mr Watters stated that he had had sight of an email from the BID Manager to the Chairman of the BID stating "I ignore his emails". The "his" referred to was Mr Watters. He stated that the situation was farcical. He had had a one-to-one with the BID Manager which had lasted three and a half hours but it had taken three weeks to get an appointment. The BID Manager stated that she had answered all queries made by Layla Moran MP; this was not true. He was hoping to get some answers through the Town Council and the Vale of White Horse District Council. He wanted an AGM to be organised and to know where the money had gone. He stated that people were unhappy and the BID had refused to meet with the MP.

C57 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Helen Pighills.

C58 **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Sandy Lovatt declared a non-pecuniary interest in any matters relating to the Business Improvement District (BID), Cllr Lovatt is a representative of Vale of White Horse District Council on the BID. He stated that this position was of no material benefit to him and was not a prejudicial interest.

Cllr Jeanette Halliday declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to the matters in relation to allotments as a family member rents an allotment. from one of the allotment associations.

Minute C59 – Matters arising Finance and General Purposes Committee, Grant Children’s Centres. Cllr Samantha Bowring and Cllr Margaret Crick both declared non-pecuniary interests in relation to the above matter as both are trustees of Abingdon Carousel.

Minute C68: Members’ allowances: Under the Local Code of Conduct there is a general dispensation to allow for Members to remain in the meeting and to vote on this matter.

C59 **Minutes**

The Council received and considered the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 18th October 2017.

In relation to Minute C45 – Finance and General Purposes Committee, Property matters, the Abbey Hall (page 17 of the agenda) it was agreed that this should be amended, in order to be grammatically correct, from “*It was resolved that*” to “*it was resolved*” – Property Matters the Abbey Hall)

Resolved that subject to the above amendment, the draft minutes of the Council of Abingdon-on-Thames held on 18th October 2017 be adopted and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

Matters arising

Minute C45 - Finance & General Purposes Committee – Minute F27: Grant: Children’s Centres

A Member stated that he understood that the County Council had issued heads of terms to Abingdon Carousel in relation to the lease of premises at Caldecott School. He asked for confirmation from the Town Clerk as to whether the Town Council has a copy and whether this is a letter of intent. The Town Clerk responded that he had a copy of the heads of terms and that these heads of terms did show an intent by the County Council to enter into a lease with Abingdon Carousel.

Another Member commented that the Council had set aside £30,000 in its budget for children's centres during 2017/18 and as yet had not paid anything. The Leader of the Council, Cllr Mike Badcock, commented that until now no one had asked for the money.

Cllr Samantha Bowring and Cllr Margaret Crick both declared non-pecuniary interests in relation to the above matter as both are trustees of Abingdon Carousel.

Minute C46 – Community Led Plan Working Group

Cllr Alice Badcock, the Chairman of the Working Group, noted that all the information received via the Community Survey had now been “coded,” which had taken some time. It was important that survey comments did not include any comments which could identify individual councillors or members of the public and consequently some redactions had had to be made. She reported that the Working Group was taking a different approach to undertaking the Community Led Plan by turning it into a rolling action plan. Meetings would be held which would operate in many respects like scrutiny meetings. Experts from the responsible authorities would be requested to attend meetings so that they can be there to explain the current issues in relation to specific areas and the meeting would then be asked to consider matters and work out which actions could be taken by the community.

There were three meetings which were organised to consider specific topics and these were as follows:

- Monday 5th March 2018 – Transport
- Tuesday 20th March 2018 – Planning, Housing and Flooding
- Monday 16th April 2018 – Town Retail, Town Centre Development & Parking

(Note the meeting topics detailed above reflect the actual topics for the meetings; originally parking issues were intended to be discussed at the meeting of 5th March 2018.)

C60 Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames

The Mayor, Cllr Jan Morter, presented her schedule of engagements since the last meeting of the Council (as circulated with the agenda). The Mayor thanked her deputy, Cllr Margaret Crick for standing in for her on occasions and also Cllr Dennis Garrett for attending an event on her behalf. She thanked her husband for accompanying her to some events.

The Mayor announced the following dates for the diary:

Saturday 27th January 2018 – Race Night. A fundraising event at Loose Cannon Brewery, Abingdon at 7pm. £5 entry fee with net proceeds to the Mayor's chosen charities.

Saturday 3rd February 2018 – Choir Concert, St Helens Church. Tickets at £10 with net proceeds to the Mayor’s chosen charities.

Saturday 7th April 2018 – The Mayor will be hosting her end of term Ball, a “Festiball”, at Peachcroft Tithe Barn, Peachcroft Farm, Abingdon.

C61 Oxfordshire County Council Report

The Council received and considered the report from Cllr Alison Rooke in relation to the above. This had been circulated with the agenda. Cllr Neil Fawcett agreed to answer any questions but none were asked. The report was noted by the Council.

C62 Questions under Standing Order 10

Cllr Sandy Lovatt asked the following two questions. The Mayor, Cllr Jan Morter responded to Cllr Lovatt, her responses are shown after each question in italics.

1. After the recent public meetings concerning the use of Abbey Hall, when will this Council be given the opportunity to consider what members of the public said and discuss their implications on the Guildhall project?

Minutes of both meetings will be published on the website within two weeks of those meetings. As you will know from my response to Dr Jim Halliday there were many contributions made at both meetings, mostly in the form of comments but some questions. Many issues were raised but these included the potential to reopen the Abbey Hall at an early date for community use, the offer from the Regal Cinema in Evesham for cinema use, the potential for an indoor market and the knocking down and rebuilding of the facility. All these matters need to be considered by the responsible committees in this next cycle, and they will then make any necessary recommendations.

2. The next Council meeting is not until 25th April 2018, which is only just before the Council’s Annual Mayor-making meeting. The Agenda for the 25th is therefore likely to be very full. Will the Mayor agree to calling a special meeting of the Council to discuss some of the urgent issues currently confronting us? The intention behind this question is to avoid the Council being presented with a fait accompli.

In the first instance the offer from the Regal Cinema Evesham will be discussed at the Special Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee of 26th February 2018. Following that meeting I will call a Special Council Meeting if it is considered to be necessary. We do need everyone’s views in relation to this matter and to understand the depth of feeling and the many statements and questions which were asked at the Special Parish and Public Meetings.

Cllr Patrick Lonergan asked whether it was likely that there would be some recommendation from the special meeting of Finance and General Purposes

Committee planned for 26th February 2018 which would require a special meeting of the council. The Mayor said this was possible but there are also some matters which were not specifically in relation to the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee which the Council may be required to consider.

Cllr Mike Badcock, as Leader of the Council, expressed his disappointment of the treatment of Cllr Jan Morter at both the special parish meeting and the public meeting (held on 15th and 22nd January). The conduct of some members of the public had been deplorable, with people shouting on her face and pulling her chain. He stated that if younger people had done this they would likely have been arrested. He wished to apologise to Cllr Morter on behalf of the town. Cllr Morter thanked Cllr Badcock for his kind words.

C63 **Planning, Highways and Consultations Committee**

It was proposed by Cllr Margaret Crick and seconded by Cllr Mike Badcock that the Council receive and consider the minutes of the meeting of the Planning, Highways & Consultations Committee held on 23rd October, 13th November, 4th December, 18th December 2017 and draft minutes of 8th January 2018, as circulated with the agenda.

Regarding planning application P17/V3026/FUL 68 Mill Road, the Town Clerk informed the Council he had received a question from the resident on planning issues in relation to this site and that he will be reporting further to the next meeting of the Planning, Highways and Consultations Committee to be held on 29th January 2018.

Cllr Alice Badcock requested that the Town Clerk write to the bus companies regarding the impact on the services from Abingdon to JR Hospital site in Headington when the proposed roadworks on Headley Way begin. It was understood that these roadworks will mean there will be no direct bus service to the Hospital and users will need to travel into Oxford city centre and then change buses.

Resolved that the minutes of the Planning, Highways & Consultations Committee held on 23rd October, 13th November, 4th December, 18th December 2017 and draft minutes of 8th January 2018 be approved.

C64 **Community Services Committee**

It was proposed by Cllr Vicky Jenkins and seconded by Cllr Alice Badcock that the Council receive and consider the draft minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 28th November 2017, as circulated with the agenda.

Cllr Jenkins updated the Council on minute CS32, in relation to the recommended grant to Be Free Young Carers. The Community Services Committee had recommended a grant of £5,000 be made but this was subsequently increased by the Finance and General Purposes Committee to

£7,000, and the cheque for that value had been presented earlier in the evening.

Resolved that the draft minutes of the Community Services Committee of 28th November 2017 be approved.

C65 **Amenities and Recreation Committee**

It was proposed by Cllr Alice Badcock and seconded by Cllr Lorraine Oates that the Council receive and consider the draft minutes of the meeting of the Amenities and Recreation Committee held on 6th December 2017, as circulated with the agenda.

Cllr Jeanette Halliday referred to minute A43 and expressed her frustration that there was nothing more to report of the plans for a new cemetery. She asked if something could happen soon regarding the proposals. Cllr Alice Badcock explained that it is dependent on decisions to be made by the Vale of White Horse District Council in their Local Plan Part 2.

Cllr Patrick Lonergan asked for an update on the time scale and financial estimates regarding a new cemetery. The Head of Services, Mr Steve Rich, replied that it is estimated that the current cemetery has sufficient burial spaces for 9 more years and it would likely take about 5 years to deliver a new cemetery. The anticipated cost of setting up a new cemetery is significantly higher than the amount currently held in the earmarked reserve.

Cllr Alice Badcock updated the Council on progress being made in relation to the replacement bridge at Ock Valley Walk. Officers are awaiting a meeting with a company to demolish the existing bridge and to install the new one. Oxfordshire County Council had been very helpful. Progress would be made as soon as possible subject to these matters being resolved. Installation could not take place if the river was too high.

Resolved that the draft minutes of the Amenities and Recreation Committee of 6th December 2017 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C66 **Guildhall Committee**

It was proposed by Cllr Dennis Garrett and seconded by Cllr Mike Badcock that the Council receive and consider the draft minutes of the meeting of the Guildhall Committee held on 7th December 2017, as circulated with the agenda.

Cllr Dennis Garrett informed the Council that work has now started on the refurbishment, in particular the removal of the ramp in the car park.

In discussing matters the following points were made:

- In relation to the proposed installation of a lift and the rebuilding of the staircase in the Guildhall a member stated that she was not against

installing a lift, what she was against was taking away important features of a listed building.

- A member stated that any decision to install the lift and remove the staircase should be discussed by full Council.

Resolved that the draft minutes of the Guildhall Committee of 7th December 2017 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C67 **County Hall Museum Management Committee**

It was proposed by Cllr Monica Lovatt and seconded by Cllr Lorraine Oates that the Council receive and consider the draft minutes of the meeting of the County Hall Museum Management Committee held on 21st September 2017, as circulated with the agenda.

The Chairman, Cllr Monica Lovatt, stated that she was pleased to report that the Museum Committee was operating within its budget.

Resolved that the draft minutes of the County Hall Museum Management Committee of 21st September 2017 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C68 **Finance and General Purposes Committee**

It was proposed by Cllr Mike Badcock and seconded by Cllr Dennis Garrett that the Council receive and consider the draft minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 3rd October 2017, as circulated with the agenda.

Minute F56 Confidential Report of the Treasurer

It was **resolved** (unanimously) that:

- (i) In accordance with the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended), the Members' allowance for Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council for 2018-19 remain at 20% of the basic member's allowance of Vale of White Horse District Council, consistent with previous years;
- (ii) In accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended), section 26 (1), members may claim travel and subsistence for travel outside the parish, and any such claims shall be authorised by the Town Clerk, in consultation with the RFO, and considered on a case by case basis;

It was further proposed by Cllr Mike Badcock (seconded by Cllr Monica Lovatt) that in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, sections 15 (5) and 34) (5), a Mayor's Allowance be awarded for 2018-19 in the sum of £3,270. This was agreed by all members.

Note: Under the Local Code of Conduct there is a general dispensation to allow for Members to remain in the meeting and to vote in relation to Members' Allowances.

Minute F50 Financial Report and Estimates 2018/19

The Council considered the recommendations of the Finance and General Purposes Committee in relation to the estimates for 2018/19.

- Fees and Charges.

It was **resolved** that all recommendations included in the Treasurer's report regarding fees and charges be approved. (Resolved by eleven votes in favour, zero against and seven abstentions.)

- Proposed Reserve Movements

It was **resolved** that all recommendations included within the Treasurer's report regarding proposed reserve movements be approved. (Resolved by eleven votes in favour, zero against and seven abstentions.)

- Draft Budget Estimates for 2018/19

Council was requested to consider the recommendation that the draft budget estimates for 2018/19 be approved in the sum of £1,533,499 (net expenditure).

Cllr Mike Badcock proposed an amendment to this recommendation, seconded by Cllr Dennis Garrett, that:

"Additional expenditure item of £30,000 be added to the budget as a contribution towards the cost of the bus service from South Abingdon area to the town centre."

"This would be funded by way of unspent 2017/18 budget (largely related to the Guildhall) and would therefore mean no increase in the precept or council tax for Abingdon residents."

"It was therefore recommended that:

- *The draft budget estimates for 2018/19 be approved in the sum of £1,563,499 (net expenditure) [£30,000 more than in F&GP Minute F50 of 9th January 2018]*
- *£30,000 net expenditure included within this budget be funded from the general reserve balances.*
- *The remaining £1,533,499 be funded by way of precept (same as in F&GP Minute 50 of 9th January 2018)."*

Council then discussed the proposed amendment.

A Member queried whether the £30,000 expenditure in relation to bus services specifically related to the South Abingdon loop or would apply across the whole town. Cllr Mike Badcock stated that initially this was to reinstate the service in South Abingdon where there are areas of deprivation. The Council would be looking to see what it could get for the money. A Member asked whether the service provided would be a regular timetable service or one which you would have to phone up in order to order. Cllr Mike Badcock stated that he would be taking advice in relation to this matter but hopefully the service would be timetabled.

A Member stated that she wished a service to include Wootton Road, Fitzharris estate and Copenhagen Drive to be considered.

The Mayor then took the above proposed amendments to the vote and they were approved unanimously.

These amendments then became part of the substantive motion in relation to the draft budget estimates and the precept for 2018/19.

Cllr Neil Fawcett stated that the amendments just approved illustrated the point of his group in relation to process. If his political group proposed such an amendment it is deemed to be "on the hoof" when they suggest support for what is a County Council service. He would try to give advance notice of their amendments but the ruling group had proposed a verbal amendment at the meeting. There was no supporting budget and overall the Council had not really set a budget. Matters should be properly worked through. The section on the Guildhall had quoted the same figures for three years and he could not support a budget like this, it is not a proper estimate of expenditure. Consequently he indicated that he would continue to abstain in relation to these matters. In further debate the following matters were raised:

- The Council is setting aside a sum of £75,000 per year for a new cemetery and on 13th December 2016 was promised more specific costings. Have we got these yet?
- On page 24 at budget line 499/4841 a sum of £25,000 had been set aside for computers. It was understood that the full budget had not yet been spent.
- Cllr Samantha Bowring stated that in the past her group had requested a longer term budget and a forward plan. This was some two years ago and despite positive conversations only the Museum Committee had attempted a forward plan. However this had been thwarted by discussions in relation to the Guildhall. There were many potential savings and improvements which could be made. Other places had looked at how to make efficiency improvements, for example making better use of new technology, energy use and working practices. The Council's total expenditure of £1,900,000 was a lot of money. She was not sure that the budget reflected our priorities, for instance in was not tackling weeds or potholes. She was interested in a budget that does right by the town and making money work as hard as possible. The budget for the Guildhall had been set at the same level for the last three

years, as had the Cemetery Improvement Fund. She could not support this budget.

- The Leader of the Council, Cllr Mike Badcock, stated that the budget had been considered very carefully. The opposition group had their opportunities through the committee system to move amendments and had not done so. The Town Clerk was in contact with the Vale Chief Executive in relation to proposals for the new cemetery. Matters in relation to the management of the office were for the Town Clerk to deal with. Weeds and potholes are not the responsibility of the Town Council. The criticisms of the budget by the opposition were unfounded and he would protect the £75,000 which the Council was setting aside for a new cemetery.

The Mayor then put the recommendations to the vote and the budget was agreed by eleven votes in favour, zero against and seven abstentions.

C69 Community-Led Plan Working Group

Cllr Alice Badcock, the Chairman of the Working Group, had already reported in relation to this matter at C59 Minutes - Matters Arising, Minute C46. However, she added that those who had volunteered to become involved in the process had received an email with the dates of the various meetings and had been invited to join in the work.

C70 Motions under Standing Order 8

Members considered the following motion proposed by Cllr Sandy Lovatt and seconded by Cllr Samantha Bowring that:

“In the light of the proposal that has been put to the Town Council by the Regal Cinema, Evesham and the public demand for the Abbey Hall in the Guildhall complex to be brought back into use at the earliest opportunity, this Council wishes to enter into discussions with the Regal soonest. To this end, this council wishes to appoint a working group comprising nominations put forward at this meeting.”

The mover and seconder of the motion then proposed an amendment to delete the final sentence and replace it with a sentence stating: *“to this end, the Council requires the Finance and General Purposes Committee to call a Special Meeting to expedite this matter soonest.”*

The Council accepted this amendment without discussion and it then became part of the substantive motion.

Following discussion it was **resolved** (unanimously) that:

“In the light of the proposal that has been put to the Town Council by the Regal Cinema, Evesham and the public demand for the Abbey Hall in the Guildhall complex to be brought back into use at the earliest opportunity, this Council

wishes to enter into discussions with the Regal soonest. To this end, the Council requires the Finance and General Purposes Committee to call a Special Meeting to expedite this matter soonest.”

C71 Exclusion of the Public, Including the Press

The Mayor moved:

“That in accordance with section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted as summarised below.”

SECTION II (Excluding the public and the press)

C72 **Confidential appendix to the minutes of the meeting of the Council 18th October 2017**

Members received and considered the draft confidential appendix to the minutes of the meeting of the Council of Abingdon-on-Thames held on 18th October 2017, as circulated with the agenda.

Resolved that the draft confidential appendix to the minutes of the meeting of the Council of Abingdon-on-Thames held on 18th October 2017 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C73 **Confidential appendix to the minutes of the Guildhall Committee**

Members received and considered the draft confidential appendix to the minutes of the meeting of the Guildhall Committee held on 7th December 2017, as circulated with the agenda.

Resolved that the draft confidential appendix to the minutes of the Guildhall Committee held on 7th December 2017 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C74 **Confidential appendix to the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee**

Members received and considered the draft confidential appendix to the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on 19th December 2017, as circulated with the agenda.

Minute F56: Confidential Report of the Treasurer

The recommendation in relation to this minute was discussed at minute C68 (above).

A Member queried why this matter had been discussed in confidential session as it related to Members' Allowances which he considered would normally be an item discussed in open session. The recommendation of the Committee was a reasonable one and he considered that the discussion should have taken place in public session. Confidential matters should be restricted to items such as staffing and items which might involve disclosing a business' confidential information.

The Town Clerk stated that town and parish councils have wide powers to exclude the public and the press and, on this occasion, in consultation with the Leader, it had been decided that the report from the District Remuneration Panel should be discussed under confidential session but the recommendations should be minuted and then discussed as necessary by the Town Council in open session.

Minute F57: Civic matters.

It was **resolved** that A bun throwing ceremony be held on Saturday 10th November 2018 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War.

Resolved that the draft confidential appendix to the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 19th December 2017 and 9th January 2018 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

The meeting rose at 9.30 pm.

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Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames

DRAFT