

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

**Draft minutes of the Traffic Advisory Committee held on
Wednesday 6th March 2019 at 7.00pm
in the Roysse Room, the Guildhall, Abingdon-on-Thames**

Present:

Cllr Alice Badcock	Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council (Chairman)
Cllr Helen Pighills	Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Jeanette Halliday	Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council
Cllr Vicky Jenkins	Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council
Cllr Neil Fawcett	Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Alison Rooke	Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Emily Smith	Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Chris Palmer	Vale of White Horse District Council
Mr Chris Hulme	Thames Valley Police

In Attendance:

Cllr Robert Hall	Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council
Mr Lee Turner	Principal Officer, Traffic Schemes – Area Operations South
Mr Nigel Warner	Town Clerk (Clerk to the meeting)

2 members of the public

T18 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Monica Lovatt (Vale of White Horse District Council) and Cllr Andrew Todd (Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council)

T19 Declarations of Interest

None.

T20 Public Participation

No representations were made at this point of the meeting although at the invitation of the Chairman a member of the public did speak at Minute T21.3. Items submitted ahead of the meeting, in relation to parking issues in Harding Road.

T21 Minutes and Matters Arising

The Committee received and considered the draft minutes of the meeting of 7th November 2018, as circulated with the agenda.

It was agreed to make the following amendments to the minutes:

Minute T14 – Minutes and Matters Arising, Minute T7.10 – Parking: delete sentence “Mr Hulme also commented.”

Minute T15 – Items submitted to the Town Clerk, Members No. 2: final paragraph to read “Chris Hulme.”

Minute T15 – Items submitted to the Town Clerk, Members No. 4: delete final sentence.

Minute T15 – Items submitted to the Town Clerk, Requests from Residents sentence commencing “The advice to pedestrians....” to read: “The advice to pedestrians should be to take due care and attention.”

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of 7th November 2018, as amended, be agreed by the meeting and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

Matters Arising

Minute T14 / T7.1 – Abbey Close

Cllr Helen Pighills stated that the “no through road” sign in Abbey Close was at an angle which meant that it was difficult to read properly from the road. Mr Lee Turner, Principal Officer, Traffic Schemes (Area Operation South) stated that he would ask for this to be suitably adjusted.

Minute T15/1 – Faded Road Markings

Cllr Alice Badcock stated that she had been impressed by the speed at which the reported problem with the road marking outside the former Horse & Jockey public house in Bath Street had been addressed.

Minute T15/3 – The Sustrans Route 5

The Town Clerk referred to the discussions at the previous meeting regarding the East / northbound route of the Sustrans 5 route through the town centre. Having taken a look at the Council’s own records, walked the route and looked at the signage he confirmed that the route through the town centre going in an east / north direction was:

St Helen’s Wharf; West St Helen Street; left turn into Lombard Street, at the top “south end” of Lombard Street, dismount and then proceed on foot in an

easterly direction up East St Helen Street; cross the road at the junction with Bridge Street; and then to continue the route along Abbey Close and along the river.

In walking the route, the Town Clerk had noted that the right turn sign from West St Helen Street into Lombard Street was actually pointing in the wrong direction and the Town Council's works team would adjust this. He also commented that he thought the signage was not particularly clear in a number of places and that this would be particularly challenging for a visitor to the town.

In referencing the Town Council records, the Town Clerk stated that the introduction of a contra-flow route in East St Helen Street had been part of the AbITS (Abingdon Integrated Transport Strategy) proposals in the 2000s and that there had been considerable debate in this regard. The matter had eventually gone to public consultation early in 2010 but due to the rather short consultation "window" the Town Council had not expressed a corporate view; instead the Planning & Highways Committee, as it was known at the time, had outlined what it saw to be the advantages and disadvantages of introducing the proposed contra-flow route. In June 2010 a decision was made by the Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet Member for Transport to remove the contra-flow proposal from the AbITS implementation scheme, consequently the route had remained as detailed above.

Cllr Alison Rooke commented that she considered that the road was too narrow at the Wharf for a contra-flow cycle lane to work safely. It was hazardous for cyclists travelling southbound and negotiating the corner at the wharf with oncoming vehicular traffic.

Cllr Neil Fawcett asked whether it would be sensible for the area by the wharf and the bridge to become a 20-mph zone. He commented that some vehicles go too fast and also some vehicles go the wrong way over the wharf, against the prohibition on southbound vehicular traffic at this point.

Minute T16 – Report from the Principal Officer – Road Patching

Cllr Helen Pighills commented on the Oxford Road patch repairs and wondered how many times this would need to be done. Despite some recent repairs the road is still a problem and she wondered whether a full resurfacing, as had been undertaken at the Vineyard, would be necessary. Cllr Emily Smith stated that she would follow this up.

T22 **Items submitted to the Town Clerk by members or residents ahead of the meeting (in alphabetical surname order)**

1. Traffic issues in relation to schools and, in particular, buses

(Matter raised by Cllr Alice Badcock)

Cllr Alice Badcock stated that at the end of the school day there was parking of buses outside John Mason School all the way down the road, often a total of six buses. There was a similar problem in the Oxford Road in relation to buses waiting to pick pupils up from Our Lady's Abingdon School. Cllr Badcock was concerned that she had seen a number of accident "near misses" and wondered whether there was anything which could be done to avoid the buses laying over on the highway. She understood that whereas at Larkmead School there was a layby for buses there was nowhere else for the buses to go at the above locations but specifically in relation to John Mason school she noted that often the buses were there well before 2.45pm.

In discussion Mr Chris Hulme, Thames Valley Police, stated that this was a historic, long term problem and ultimately this came down to the fact that the buses had nowhere else to pull in.

Cllr Alice Badcock stated that she felt that the problem could be alleviated somewhat if the buses arrived closer to the end of the school day, thus reducing the amount of time that they would be laying over.

Cllr Neil Fawcett stated that there should be a safer way for this matter to be managed. He stated that a potential solution was for the buses to layover further up the Wootton Road where the road was wider, there was a cycle path and therefore fewer visibility issues.

Cllr Alice Badcock added that a related issue was that the buses had on occasion parked so that residents' cars were blocked in at Fleur de Lys.

Cllr Emily Smith stated that would speak to the school and also the relevant officer at Oxfordshire County Council in relation to this matter.

2. Trees on Conduit Road

(Matter raised by Cllr Jeanette Halliday.)

Cllr Jeanette Halliday thanked Mr Lee Turner for the pollarding of the trees in Conduit Road by Oxfordshire County Council. The local residents were highly delighted with the work.

3. Parking in Harding Road

(Matter raised by Cllr Monica Lovatt.)

Cllr Chris Palmer raised this matter on behalf of Cllr Monica Lovatt, who had given her apologies for the meeting. He stated that there had been a longstanding problem with parking by pupils at St Helen & St Katherine School in Harding Road and the surrounding area which had caused problems for local residents and wondered what could be done.

The Chairman, Cllr Alice Badcock, asked the members of the public who were attending to meeting, who she had earlier noted had an interest in this matter, whether or not they wished to comment. One of the members of the public stated that the main area affected by parking was Harding Road but in total there were five roads affected by this issue. A survey had been undertaken and that had revealed that 80% of local residents had concerns regarding the parking. Yesterday she (the resident) had counted 30 vehicles parked in Harding Road and these were “nose to tail” along the road, including on a blind bend, on hashed lines and on white lines. The parking made access difficult for residents and the speaker had witnessed two minor accidents. The school had been approached but their position was that the vehicles were being parked legally. She was therefore requesting assistance with looking to see what restrictions could be placed on parking in the area.

Cllr Jeanette Halliday stated that she had spoken to the Bursar at St Helen and St Katherine School and despite her best efforts regretted that she had no progress to report; the school did not propose any substantive action.

Cllr Alison Rooke suggested that parking restrictions from, say, 9am to 3pm, should be considered.

Mr Lee Turner, Oxfordshire County Council, stated that he would be meeting with the residents on Monday 11th March. He stated that in looking to address this issue it needed to be remembered that if waiting restrictions were placed on the local roads then these would apply to everyone. He also stated that when waiting restrictions are placed on roads this often moves the problem on elsewhere. The County Council targeted its resources into areas where there had been injuries, accidents / collisions. Consequently in this case, should restrictions be considered and implemented, then it would be local residents who would have to fund the work. Initially there would need to be local consultation and from April 2019 the cost of the necessary traffic regulation Order should restrictions be put in place (i.e double or single yellow lines) was £3,100. In addition there would be the cost of the lines themselves and the necessary signage. Enforcement of any restrictions would then rest with Thames Valley Police.

Mr Chris Hulme, Thames Valley Police, reported that he had visited the site on the afternoon of 5th March 2019 and had counted 32 cars parked along Harding Road in three separate blocks. The first block totalled 11 cars and at that point the road was quite wide, enabling cars to pass on both sides. The road got

narrower further up. However the parking was compliant and there had been no vehicles parked illegally. He also commented in relation to potential restrictions that enforcement of parking restrictions had become less and less of a priority for the Police over the years.

The Chairman asked that a report come back to the next meeting of this Committee in relation to this matter.

4. Footpath lighting in the Peachcroft Area

(Matter raised by Cllr Alison Rooke)

Cllr Alison Rooke reported that the problems with three consecutive lights in a particular footpath area on Peachcroft had now been fixed with new brighter LED lights. However she noted that the matter had taken three months to resolve.

(The two members of the public left the meeting at this point, it being 7.28pm.)

5. Update on Lodge Hill

(Matter raised by Cllr Emily Smith.)

Mr Lee Turner, Oxfordshire County Council, stated that he had received an update in relation to this matter from a colleague in Highways Strategy and this was read out by the Town Clerk as follows:

*“We are continually working on the scheme.
Land purchase negotiation on going.
We have not yet been able to undertake necessary surveys on the A34
(ground investigation etc) as the legal agreement with Highways England
(HE) to allow us access has not yet been agreed.
We are working on required departures from standards with HE at an early
stage, to help expedite the scheme delivery.
Once transport modelling has been agreed by, HE we will arrange a public
consultation on the scheme.”*

Mr Turner understood that “required departures from standards with HE” probably and principally referred to the length of the slip roads.

Cllr Emily Smith stated that the original public consultation in relation to this matter had been due in spring 2018 so it was a year over time and she felt that the matter was somewhat precarious. There had been discussion regarding the impact of the proposed Oxford Cambridge Expressway but she had been assured by County Council Officers that this should make no difference to the work in relation the A34.

Cllr Alison Rooke commented that in January 2018 she had been told that the Diamond Interchange should be open by the end of 2020; she thought, from what was being said, that this looked unlikely.

6. Update on Civil Parking Enforcement

(Matter raised by Cllr Emily Smith)

Cllr Emily Smith stated that she understood that there was money in budgets for a feasibility study for the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement in the District Council areas of Vale of White Horse, South Oxfordshire and Cherwell.

Mr Lee Turner, Oxfordshire County Council, stated that the likely timescale for implementation was 18 months.

7. Safety for cyclists and pedestrians on Wootton Road

(Matter raised by Cllr Emily Smith)

Cllr Emily Smith expressed concern regarding safety for cyclists and pedestrians on Wootton Road, north of the Wootton Road roundabout, noting that in recent months there have been separate accidents with vehicles involving a pedestrian and a cyclist. She has asked the County Council if it could look to see if improvements could be undertaken. The main problem was that there was no cycle track in place and she felt that this was a necessary improvement which ought to be bid for through Section 106 monies. She also noted that the Wootton Road was also a “safe route to school” although she further qualified this by stating that she understood that safe routes to school were only defined in terms of walking and did not include cyclists.

Mr Lee Turner, Oxfordshire County Council, stated that in relation to safety of the Wootton Road, specifically in relation to Dunmore Court / Farm, the five-year history showed five injury accidents. As a consequence it maybe that the road safety budget could assist in undertaking improvements.

The Chairman asked that an update be brought forward for the next meeting.

Concerns that vehicles often go against the one way direction of Edward Street and Exbourne Road

(Matter raised by Mr Paul Townsend of Abingdon Chamber of Commerce)

Mr Lee Turner stated that he will visit site to look at signage and road markings although Cllr Neil Fawcett stated that his view was that they were fairly good in this area. A report will come back to the next meeting.

8. Fix My Street

Cllr Emily Smith reported that an enhancement to the Fix My Street reporting system was that when matters are reported members of the public will now be receiving a named officer who is dealing with the matter.

In relation to Fix My Street Cllr Vicky Jenkins stated that recently she had reported problems with two overgrown hedgerows and that these had been dealt with.

T23 **Report from the Principal Officer, Traffic Scheme South Team, Oxfordshire County Council**

Mr Lee Turner, Oxfordshire County Council, stated that the majority of items had been dealt with already at the meeting but he gave the following additional updates:

- Road markings and signage. With the new financial year commencing 1st April 2019 there are budgets in place for these and he requested that should members have any specific areas where, for instance, road markings were faded, then if these were reported it may be that these matters can be addressed. It was **resolved** that the Town Clerk email all members to ask for their suggestions in this regard and these would then be passed onto the County Council. Cllr Emily Smith asked that if the matter had already been logged on Fix My Street would it be considered automatically by the County Council? Mr Lee Turner, Oxfordshire County Council, stated that the answer was yes.
- In relation to road markings and signage Cllr Alison Rooke requested that a good thorough look at the markings and signage at the junction of Bridge Street, Stert Street and High Street is undertaken. She also raised the issue of the condition of road surfaces in East St Helen Street and Stratton Way where she felt that more patch repairs were necessary.
- Cllr Jeanette Halliday stated that the "No Motor Vehicles except for access" sign at the entrance to Thames Street had been cleaned but was only partially visible due to its position next to the Broad Face, especially when the flowers were up. As a result HGVs did not see the sign and so enter and then reverse out of the street. Cllr Halliday requested a second sign on the other side; this would be more visible, reducing the current problems.

The meeting rose at 7.50 pm.