

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

**Minutes of the Traffic Advisory Committee held on
Wednesday 7th November 2018 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 Chris Palmer	Vale of White Horse District Council
Cllr Catherine Webber	Vale of White Horse District Council
Mr Chris Hulme	Thames Valley Police
Mr Paul Townsend	Abingdon-on-Thames Chamber of Commerce

In Attendance:

Miss Louise Brown	Administrative Assistant
Cllr Angela Lawrence	Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council
Mr Lee Turner	Principal Officer, Traffic Schemes – Area Operations South
Mr Nigel Warner	Town Clerk (Clerk to the meeting)

T11 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Emily Smith (Oxfordshire County Council) and Cllr Monica Lovatt (Vale of White Horse District Council).

T12 Declarations of Interest

None.

T13 Public Participation

There were no members of the public present at the meeting to make representations although note that the Committee did consider an item submitted to the Town Clerk by a member of the public at Minute T15.

T14 **Minutes and Matters Arising**

The Committee received and considered the draft minutes of the meeting of 20th June 2018, as circulated with the agenda.

Resolved: That the draft minutes of the meeting of 20th June 2018 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising

Minute T5: Public Participation – St Amand Drive

Mr Lee Turner reported that he had visited this site on three occasions at different times of the day and did not identify any particular issues. Where cars were parked these tended to be the same cars.

Minute T7.1 - Abbey Close

Cllr Alison Rooke stated that there was a “no through road” sign in Abbey Close at its junction, being on the left hand side of the road. She stated that this needed to be given a clean.

Minute T7.6 – St John’s Road

There had been discussion at the previous meeting regarding parking issues and safety in relation to St John’s Road and the possibility that this could become a one-way road. It was noted that a survey had been proposed and Cllr Alison Rooke asked for an update. Mr Lee Turner reported that a survey had taken place. The road was not wide enough to accommodate both parked cars and two-way traffic and consequently the idea of making it one-way had been broached. The survey had revealed that the five-day average was that 936 cars had proceeded southbound along St John’s Road (ie from the Radley Road) compared to 339 vehicles proceeding northbound (ie from the Oxford Road).

In discussion Cllr Vicky Jenkins stated that she had spoken to a couple of people who had agreed that the principle of a one-way system was sound but that it could make traffic speed up. Mr Turner agreed. He had met with representatives of the school and also local residents and the survey had also revealed that there were no speeding issues in relation to the current road configuration, the 7am to 7pm northbound traffic averaging at 19mph (85% at 24mph) and southbound traffic averaging 20 mph.

Minute T7.9 – Bridge Maintenance

Cllr Vicky Jenkins stated that she understood that “Abingdon Bridge” (A415) was in a satisfactory condition but that some relatively minor repairs had been recommended.

Minute T7.10 - Parking

Mr Paul Townsend, representing the Chamber of Commerce, stated that a “straw poll” had been undertaken and that members of the Chamber had indicated that loading bays allowing for a 15-20 minute unloading / loading period would be considered adequate. In response, Mr Chris Hulme, Thames Valley Police, stated that 15 minutes seemed quite a short period. He acknowledged that loading bays are highly abused. If the period were reduced to 15 minutes the Police would not enforce if active loading was taking place. For information the current loading bays in Abingdon varied in terms of duration, some being 45 minutes, some one hour, some two hours. Mr Hulme also commented that reducing the period would, in effect, be a rod for the Police’s back as they would have to monitor the loading bays over a much shorter time period. Mr Lee Turner, Oxfordshire County Council, stated that if the loading bay durations were to be changed, someone would need to promote it. Oxfordshire County Council would have to charge £2,600 for an Order and £20 for changing each sign, which for Abingdon would amount to £500. This would have to be obtained through third party funding or a Section 106 agreement monies.

Minute T7.15 – Parking of commercial vehicles on residential roads

Further to the discussion at the previous meeting, Mr Chris Hulme reported that he had looked at the position in the Radley Road along the whole length of the road. He stated that the vans parked were mainly small transit type vans and that in these circumstances they were parked legally and so there was nothing that could be done in terms of enforcement.

Minute T7.20 – Traffic Surveys

In relation to traffic surveys being taken at unsuitable times, Cllr Alice Badcock, Chairman, reported that she understood a traffic survey had taken place in Ock Street during the Michaelmas Fair.

T15 **Items submitted to the Town Clerk by members of residents ahead of the meeting (in alphabetical surname order)**

Members

1. Cllr Alice Badcock raised the issue of fading road markings and cited one which stated “KEE CLEA” outside the former Horse and Jockey Public House in Bath Street; this was not a patched part of the road. Mr Lee Turner stated that he would take a look at this. It was likely that statutory undertakers may have caused the damage and he reported that recently similar signing had been re-painted in Yew Tree Mews.

2. Cllr Jeanette Halliday requested a 20 mph zone and sign on Abbey Close from the Guildhall to the river (Abbey Close Car Park). She stated that it was her understanding that in order to get a reduced speed limit there needed to be have been an accident. She stated that houses and buildings have been driven into in the past. She was concerned that if an accident did take place it would likely involve multiple casualties and could include young children. She stated that Abbey Close at this point was a one-way lane and some vehicles will not give way. The matter needed to be considered seriously.

Cllr Alison Rooke stated that she had also looked at this matter. Abbey Close is used by lots of families but because it was so narrow, cars would often go up on the pavement.

Lee Turner stated that the County Council would support anyone who wants to promote a lower speed limit but that a survey would have to be paid for first and this would cost £100. The County would require external funding if such a survey was not related to accidents having taken place. His understanding that speeds in this area were generally below 20 mph.

Mr Hulme commented that Abbey Close had always been like this.

Cllr Helen Pighills stated that it would be good to encourage pedestrians to access the Abbey Grounds via the Abbey Gardens and it was suggested that Liz Hayden, the Community Safety Officer at the District Council, be approached to see if this could be done.

Cllr Neil Fawcett stated that the problem is the speed of the cars. He wondered whether any additional design features were required in Abbey Close. He stated that the route through the Abbey Gardens was not an easy one and that in effect we would be asking the wrong group of people to adjust their behaviour. He treated Abbey Close as a road on which you should proceed slowly, understanding the constraints. Cllr Alice Badcock noted these comments but stated that signage could still be considered.

Christ Hulme commented that a survey will give you an average speed which was likely much lower than 20 mph. However it would also highlight idiots who were going far too quickly.

3. Cllr Alison Rooke raised the issue of cyclists riding the wrong way up one-way streets. Cllr Rooke stated that in East St Helen Street, especially at the end of the street closest to St Nicolas' Church, cyclists come the wrong way up the street, against the flow of the one-way system. She stated that this could prove to be dangerous for pedestrians and asked that a sign be put up asking cyclists to dismount.

Cllr Helen Pighills stated that East St Helen Street was signed as a Sustrans route but that the cyclists who were proceeding against the flow of vehicular traffic were supposed to push their bicycles up the street. There was discussion amongst members regarding this matter and the Town Clerk was requested to write to Sustrans to clarify the actual route. Mr Chris Hulme stated that this matter had been contentious for years, some roads in Oxford do allow two-way cycling along the streets which are one-way for vehicles.

Cllr Neil Fawcett stated that with cyclists proceeding along West St Helen Street then turning right into Lombard Street the issue was for cyclists then proceeding along East St Helen Street against the flow of traffic. He stated that a change in design of the road layout in the stretch from Lombard Street to the junction with Bridge Street should be considered.

Cllr Angela Lawrence and Cllr Catherine Webber stated that there is contraflow cycling at the Iron Bridge (St Helen's Wharf) although Cllr Alice Badcock pointed out that this was with a dedicated cycle lane.

Cllr Catherine Webber stated that a cycle lane could be established for cyclists proceeding eastwards along East St Helen Street from its junction with Lombard Street to its junction with Bridge Street. Mr Chris Hulme pointed out that the situation at St Helen's Wharf is different because of the signs which are in place but noted that legislation does allow for the possibility for cyclists to cycle the one-way flow of vehicular traffic, subject to the necessary traffic orders and signage being in place.

4. Cllr Alison Rooke requested an update on where the Town Council was on continuing the agency agreement for Residents' Parking / administering the Residents' Parking Permit issue. She also requested for an update on proposals for civil parking administration (decriminalisation) as this was related to the administration of Residents' Parking.

The Town Clerk explained that a resolution by the District Council in July 2018 meant that there was now a possibility that Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) would be introduced in the area and therefore at its meeting in October 2018 the Town Council reviewed its previous position so that the termination date for the current administrative arrangements be postponed until March 2020. If CPE was introduced then the Residents' Parking Scheme would transfer to the District Council as the power had to be exercised by the one principal authority rather than one or more parishes within an area. The Town Council had therefore resolved:

- (i) The Town Council agree to continue to operate the scheme for a maximum period of an additional 14 months over its previously agreed position (previously agreed to terminate on 1st January 2019), ending on 31st March 2020;

(ii) Should CPE come into place before 31st March 2020 then the responsibilities for the Residents' Parking Scheme would transfer at that point to the District Council;

(iii) If before 31st March 2020 plans for CPE were cancelled then this scheme would revert to the County Council and the agency agreement would be terminated after a six-month notice period or at 31st March 2020, whichever was sooner;

(iv) The scheme continues to operate with one full time member of staff without the part-time (20 hours per week) attendant role.

Mr Lee Turner stated that Liz Hayden (Head of Housing and Environment, South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council) and Paul Necus (Interim Parking Manager Oxfordshire County Council) had met to discuss matters. He stated that in order to progress this matter Oxfordshire County Council needed to make a joint application with all the District Councils in those areas where parking offences had not been decriminalised, ie Cherwell, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils, as the Department of Transport would no longer allow for decriminalisation in relation to the remaining individual districts within a county.

Mr Turner anticipated that if matters progressed decriminalisation in the remaining districts could be in place by the end of 2019.

Requests from Residents

Mr Paul Hutton had requested a pedestrian crossing on Abbey Close between Old Station House and the back of Waitrose. Cllr Alison Rooke stated that she assumed that the requested crossing was in relation to the existing road hump.

Cllr Angela Lawrence stated that crossing on the hump was a natural route for pedestrians and she understood that this used to have some status as an advisory crossing. She noted that lots of cars do stop for pedestrians and stated that the request had received a lot of support on Facebook.

Mr Lee Turner stated that there was no history of accidents at this point and informed members that the costs of installing a zebra crossing would be approximately £20,000, much of the cost of which would relate to lighting.

Cllr Neil Fawcett stated that there were two raised tables along Abbey Close and queried whether anything could be done to improve the design although stated that there might not actually be a problem.

Cllr Helen Pighills stated that because the humps had been installed pedestrians often thought that this was a safe place to cross, a point which was also made by the Town Clerk.

Mr Paul Townsend stated that in order to get to this crossing point or any crossing point pedestrians would on their way often have to cross other roads without pedestrian crossings.

Cllr Alison Rooke stated that in her view a pedestrian crossing was not needed. The advice to pedestrians should be to stop, look and listen. The Council did not have £20,000 for this purpose. She did state that there were however sometimes hazards for pedestrians related to parked vehicles, particularly ambulances.

Cllr Neil Fawcett stated that if there is no record of an accident in this area a pedestrian crossing was not needed. He stated that it appeared that the need for a crossing was a perception that this was a hazardous place to cross.

The consensus of the meeting was that a pedestrian crossing was not required in Abbey Close.

T16 **Report from the Principal Officer, Traffic Scheme South Team, Oxfordshire County Council**

Mr Lee Turner updated the meeting as follows:

1. Progress made in relation to diamond interchange at Lodge Hill.
2. Road surface in Northcourt Road. Mr Turner stated that the scheme was just outside of the two year forward programme but if extra funding were to become available then this could be brought forward. In the near future it was anticipated that patch repairs would take place in the Oxford Road (by the traffic lights), Bridge Street approach to Stert Street, and the junction of Barrow Road and Faringdon Road. Drainage works were also due to take place in the Wootton Road.

Cllr Vicky Jenkins commented that the patch repairs on the Radley Road had been good.

3. Faringdon Road zebra crossing. This was proceeding. The technical design had been approved and a Section 278 agreement was with the legal section. It was anticipated that installation of the crossing would take place from 23rd April 2019, ie during the Easter Holidays.

T17 **Items raised by Members at the meeting**

Cllr Alison Rooke asked for an understanding of street light contract issues and raised the matter of a lack of footpath lighting in the Peachcroft area. She stated that footpaths around the Peachcroft Park were often pitch black and asked whether or not the County Council provides bollard lights. This would be on the agenda for the next meeting.

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Cllr Jeanette Halliday raised the issue of trees in Conduit Road and asked whether or not they belonged to Oxfordshire County Council. This would be on the agenda for the next meeting.

Mr Paul Townsend reported that vehicles often go against the one-way direction of Edward Street and Exbourne Road.

Cllr Alice Badcock asked that traffic issues in relation to schools and in particular buses be placed on the agenda.

One other item for the next agenda to be “Fix My Street.”

The meeting rose at 8.20pm