

**Draft minutes of the Council of the Town of Abingdon-on-Thames held on
Wednesday 23rd January 2019
in the Roysse Room, Guildhall, Bridge Street, Abingdon**

Present

Cllr Margaret Crick	Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames
Cllr David Pope	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 Helen Pighills	
Cllr Andrew Todd	

In Attendance

Mr Steve Rich	Assistant Town Clerk/ Head of Services
Mr Nigel Warner	Town Clerk (Clerk to the meeting)
Mrs Susan Whipp	Treasurer/ Responsible Financial Officer
Rev Mary Williamson	Duty Associate Priest, Abingdon-on-Thames

14 members of the public and the press.

SECTION I (Open to the Public Including the Press)

C54 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Jan Morter.

C55 Prayers

Rev Mary Williamson led the meeting in prayer.

(Rev Williamson left the meeting following conclusion of this item).

C56 **Public Participation**

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

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

Name of applicant and person collecting cheque	Purpose of grant	Cheque for
Assisted Reading for Children – Jane Rendle, Development Manager	To support St Nicolas Primary School in Abingdon with their financial contribution towards the ARCh service	£1,000
Abingdon Passion Play – Dr Hazel Glennie, Treasurer	To increase publicity and advertising budget	£500
Be Free Young Carers - John Tabor, Director <i>Grant awarded by the Finance and General Purposes Committee from the Community Fund</i>	To continue the provision of practical and emotional support to carers in Abingdon	£7,000
Thrive South Abingdon – Jon Pape and Matt Warmington, Team Leaders	Launching a mentoring programme in South Abingdon	£1,000
Abingdon Music Festival Caroline King, Treasurer	Towards Abingdon Music Festival 2019	£1,000
Abingdon Damascus Youth Project – Roxy Elford, Senior Youth Worker	To support 10 young people in volunteering in the community	£2,500

b) There were presentations to the meeting by:

- John Bright, Director, South and Vale Citizens' Advice Bureau.

Mr Bright outlined the work undertaken by the Bureau, and current issues which it was dealing with. Mr Bright thanked the Town Council for its continued support along with the District Council and other town and parish councils and highlighted the fact that South and Vale CAB did not receive any government funding.

(Four members of the public left the meeting at this point, it being 7.15pm.)

- Felicity Dick DL, Deputy Lieutenant of Oxfordshire.

Mrs Dick stated that she was the local Deputy Lieutenant for Abingdon and reiterated her support for the town. She outlined what her role involved and stated that her role was an apolitical one. Part of her role was to recognise what was going on in the town and in this regard she mentioned the Good Neighbour Scheme. She stated that she had been very pleased that the Children's Centre had been re-established by Abingdon Carousel. She also stated that she was pleased to hear that the Mayor, Cllr Margaret Crick, was holding a Clubs and Societies Day on Saturday 16th March 2019.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Mike Badcock, thanked Mrs Dick on behalf of the Council, for all that she did for the town.

- c) Dr Jim Halliday addressed the Council and asked the following question to the Chairman of the Guildhall Committee, Cllr Dennis Garrett:

"I notice in the minutes of the last Guildhall Committee held on 13th December 2018 (page 86 of this agenda) that the Council is taking action to install high-speed Broadband into the Guildhall. Given my previously expressed concern about the lack of high-speed broadband in the town centre, may I ask for an update on the progress the Council has made with its investigations and/or procurement of high-speed broadband."

Cllr Dennis Garrett, Chairman of the Guildhall Committee, responded as follows:

As Dr Halliday states, this matter was discussed at the Guildhall Committee on 13th December.

With regard to the Guildhall and the Abbey Hall, I am pleased to report that we have put in place the necessary infrastructure for wi-fi coverage throughout the building, this including CAT6 wiring. This is a significant improvement on the previous modest wi-fi infrastructure.

We are aware that there is a lack of high-speed broadband in the town centre and the unfortunate reasons for it. This is of concern to us.

We have investigated the possibility of a lease-line for the Guildhall, which would solve the problem for the Guildhall itself. The cost however is considerable, estimates from different sources between £400 and £844 per month. Despite the considerable savings we are making in relation to the Guildhall revenue budgets, we do not consider that this is the way to go; Abingdon town centre should have affordable, high speed broadband available to all residents and businesses. The Guildhall or any business or resident should not be expected to pay this sort of

money for high-speed broadband. It is a source of regret and some annoyance that BT decided, having received permission from this Council for the necessary cabinet to be placed on its land in Roysse Court, that it decided last July, that it was not commercially viable to proceed. The sorry story in this regard was summed up very well by Dr Halliday in the statement given on his behalf at the last Council meeting.

We are very willing to work with Dr Halliday, local residents and the Friends of Abingdon in trying to take matters forward with a view to making high speed broadband available to all in the town centre.

Since the December meeting of the Guildhall Committee, when I reported that with building works being concluded the Town Clerk would be in a position to look at how matters might be addressed, we have not as yet been in a position to progress matter. Whilst we are approaching the end of this phase of the Guildhall Project, the effort and time involved for the Council's staff in working with contractors to complete the building works, and work with the Regal to handover the building so the cinema would be open in time for Christmas was, as we knew it would be, considerable. It has, I am afraid, meant that certain tasks have had to be delayed, this being one of them. However having spoken with the Town Clerk we should now be in a position to meet with you and other interested parties to try to take matters forward and I hope to report further at the Guildhall Committee on 14th February. I am very pleased to report that we have discussed matters with the Regal; they too have had a very busy few months but are very keen to get involved.

To sum up: as a Council we have in place the infrastructure, for the first time, to deliver high-speed Wi Fi in the Guildhall and the Abbey Hall. We now need to get the high-speed Wi Fi in to the building. On a slightly pessimistic note, whilst it is clearly government policy to deliver high-speed broadband, I believe that working with the commercial broadband providers, BT, Virgin etc, to improve the situation for Abingdon town centre by either persuading them to change their position regarding its commercial viability or through another way such as a community fibre partnership, will likely be a long and involved process. However to finish on a more positive note this is where working in partnership with Dr Halliday, other residents, the Regal and the Friends of Abingdon can hopefully prove positive and help us all get what we want.

(Three members of the public left the meeting at this point.)

C57 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Alice Badcock stated that, having taken advice from the Monitoring Officer, if the matter of the proposed new cemetery was discussed then she would declare a non-pecuniary interest and leave the meeting during its discussion. This was on the basis that the Town Council was in negotiations with the Vale of White Horse District Council in relation to acquiring the land for a new cemetery; the decision in this regard would be made by the District Council's cabinet, of which she was a Member. However, noting that the budget included a proposal for funding towards a new cemetery, she had been advised by the

Monitoring Officer that it was in order for her to be present during the budget discussions and to vote in relation to the budget.

C58 **Minutes**

Resolved that the draft minutes of the Council of Abingdon-on-Thames held on 17th October 2018 be adopted and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

Matters arising

None.

C59 **Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames**

The Mayor, Cllr Margaret Crick, presented her schedule of engagements since the last meeting of the Council, as circulated with the agenda.

- Mayor's Charity Dinner, Friday 1st March, to be held at Cosener's House, ticket price £45;
- Clubs & Societies Day, Saturday 16th March, to be held in the Guildhall.

C60 **Oxfordshire County Council Report**

The Council received and considered the report from Cllr Emily Smith, County Councillor for Abingdon North division, in relation to the above. This had been circulated with the agenda.

Further to her report, Cllr Smith highlighted that the County Council had recently sent out a consultation in relation to the proposed pedestrian crossing in Dunmore Road. She also highlighted two other highway related matters. Firstly, as a member of the Performance Scrutiny Committee one of the Committee's recommendations to Cabinet for service improvements related to a need to improve communication in relation to roadworks. Secondly in relation to Fix My Street those reporting problems would in future be supplied with a named officer who is dealing with the matter.

Further to Cllr Smith's report there was discussion in relation to the decision to stop the free school bus from Drayton to Abingdon which it was understood was on the basis that the route for students from Drayton to Abingdon was now deemed to be safe and progress in relation to work at Lodge Hill (Diamond Interchange). A Member commented as to whether there was anything to be learned from the opening of a Diamond Interchange at Milton where the money for this development was found very quickly.

C61 **Questions under Standing Order 10**

None.

C62 Planning, Highways and Consultations Committee

It was proposed by Cllr David Pope 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 22nd October, 12th November, 3 December, 17th December 2018; and draft minutes of 7th January 2019, as circulated with the agenda.

The Chairman of the Committee, Cllr David Pope, commented that over the last five meetings there had been an increasing number of residents coming forward in the public participation sessions to make representations and he wished to thank them for their attendance and interest at the meetings.

Minutes of 22nd October 2018

Cllr Lorraine Oates stated that she was not listed as being present at the meeting but she had actually attended.

Meeting of 7th January 2019 – Minute 10, Reducing Flood Risk in Abingdon

Having regard to this matter, a Member wondered whether on reflection the Council should ask the Chairman, Cllr David Pope, to ask the Environment Agency to reconsider their decision “not to continue our work on the flood storage area at this time” or to look at other schemes to reduce flood risk. In response, Cllr Pope stated that he was very happy to do that on behalf of the Council and reiterated that it was good that the Environment Agency was keeping the Council informed in relation to matters.

Resolved that the minutes of the Planning, Highways and Consultations Committee of 22nd October, 12th November, 3 December, 17th December 2018; and draft minutes of 7th January 2019 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C63 Amenities and Recreation Committee

It was proposed by Cllr Alice Badcock and seconded by Cllr Vicky Jenkins that the Council receive and consider the draft minutes of the meeting of the Amenities and Recreation Committee held on 28th November 2018, as circulated with the agenda.

A42 – Market Place

A Member noted that there was a recommendation that a sum of £15,000 be included in the 2019/20 budget estimate for replacing bollards in the Market Place with those made from a man-made material. The Member whether these bollards would be terrorist / vehicle proof. The Chairman of the Committee, Cllr Alice Badcock, responded that Officers were looking at the various options available for consideration by the Committee.

Resolved that the minutes of the Amenities and Recreation Committee held on 28th November 2018 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C64 **Community Services Committee**

It was proposed by Cllr Vicky Jenkins and seconded by Cllr Andrew Todd that the Council receive and consider the draft minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 11th December 2018, as circulated with the agenda.

Resolved that the minutes of the Community Services Committee held on 11th December 2018 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C65 **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 13th December 2018, as circulated with the agenda

The Chairman of the Committee, Cllr Dennis Garrett, stated that he had received a message from Mrs Hester Hand, Secretary of the Friends of Abingdon, as follows:

“We had hoped to come to tonight’s Town Council meeting but are not able to make it, so I have been asked to write on behalf of the Friends of Abingdon to congratulate you on the (nearly completed) Guildhall refurbishment. We know that it has involved an enormous amount of work for Councillors and Officers, but from what we have seen so far the results look excellent and we hope that it will be well used. The hire rates offered for community groups look very reasonable and we are already encouraging out contacts to make use of it.

“We are of course also delighted to see the Abbey Hall back in use and being very much appreciated by those who have been there; and retaining the link between the old and new parts appears to be already proving useful.

“So, please pass on our congratulations to your colleagues.”

Cllr Jeanette Halliday wondered whether the Committee had considered installing a public defibrillator on the outside of the Guildhall. In response Cllr Dennis Garrett, Chairman of the Guildhall Committee, stated that he agreed that this was something which the Council should do and he would take this matter forward. The Council **resolved** accordingly.

(One more member of the public left the meeting at this point, it being 7.50pm.)

A Member asked that it be made clear that any comments, compliments and complaints in relation to the Abbey Cinema should be addressed to the cinema operators rather than the Town Council.

Resolved that the draft minutes of the Guildhall Committee of 13th December 2018 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C66 County Hall Museum Management Committee

It was proposed by Cllr Monica Lovatt and seconded by Cllr Dennis Garrett that the Council receive and consider the draft minutes of the meeting of the County Hall Museum Management Committee held on 13th December 2018, as circulated with the agenda.

Resolved that the draft minutes of the County Hall Museum Management Committee of 13th December 2018 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C67 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 15th January 2018, as circulated with the agenda.

Page 103: Minute 41

Resolved

- (i) All recommendations included within the Treasurer's Report regarding fees and charges be approved (by 18 votes in favour and 0 against);
- (ii) A Members Allowance equal to 20% of the District Council basic allowance be awarded for 2019/20 (by 18 votes in favour and 0 against);
- (iii) The authority to pay travel and subsistence expenses for duties outside of the parish be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the RFO, and considered on a case by case basis (by 18 votes in favour and 0 against);
- (iv) A Mayor's Allowance of £3,270 be awarded for 2019/20 (by 18 votes in favour and 0 against).

In discussing the Mayor's Allowance a Member stated that she had been dismayed that the Mayor had not had use of her Parlour for several months now. Another Member stated that the Council should have found alternative accommodation during this period. The Leader of the Council, Cllr Mike Badcock, stated that he regretted that the Mayor had not had use of her Parlour and apologised to her on behalf of the Council.

- (v) The draft budget estimates for 2019/20 be approved in the sum of £1,549,607 (net expenditure) (by 11 votes in favour, 0 against and 7

abstentions). In discussing the draft budget estimates the following points were made:

- It was noted that there were revenue savings in relation to the operation of the Abbey Hall. Where has this money gone?
 - The Council should look at the cost of photocopying. For instance the Museum budget included a sum of £2,000 in relation to this matter. In response it was stated that a significant proportion of this cost related to copying publicity material, leaflets etc which were now produced “in-house” but had previously been printed by a professional printer at a higher cost.
 - A Member pointed out that the Council had set aside monies to obtain tablets for Members which may save on copying. They queried the progress in relation to this matter. The Leader of the Council stated that as yet there had been no agreement on what type of tablet needed to be purchased.
 - A Member queried the sum of £75,000 being put into the budget in relation to the new Cemetery and the progress in relation to this matter. In this regard the Leader of the Council reported that land had been identified off Mill Road. This land was in the ownership of the Vale of White Horse District Council and negotiations were ongoing; there was no specific plan for this land at present. Following clarification it was estimated that the current Cemetery would become full in approximately 10 years’ time. In response to criticism that the Council was saving money without an adequate plan, a Member stated that in order to undertake the project it had always been known that a substantial amount of money would be required and pointed out that it was in fact the Liberal Democrat Opposition who had started the new Cemetery fund.
- (vi) The total net spending provided in the estimates for 2019/20 amounting to £1,549,607 be funded by way of precept (by 18 votes in favour and 0 against);
- (vii) The Council request the District Council to levy a precept, for Town Council purposes, amounting to £1,549,607 for the financial year 2019/20, resulting in a Band D Council Tax for parish purposes of £126.33, the same as for 2018/19 (based on the draft Council Tax base) (by 17 votes in favour, 0 against and 1 abstention).

Minute F43 – Draft Calendar of Meetings 2019/20

The Council received and considered the draft calendar of meetings. Subject to a change of dates in relation to Planning, Highways and Consultations Committee from September through to December 2019, it was **resolved** that the calendar of meetings for 2019/20 be approved (as attached to these minutes).

Page 104 – Minute F44 Guildhall and Abbey Hall Improvement Project

Resolved (unanimously)

That the Council endorse the resolutions of the Finance and General Purposes Committee in relation to the Guildhall Project:

- (i) The revised budget estimates in relation to the Guildhall Project, both capital and revenue (appendices A and C of the Report contained within the agenda papers), including the transfers between the budget lines as reported, be noted and endorsed;
- (ii) The financial update and the funding position in relation to the Guildhall related projects – the Abbey Hall / cinema and Roysse Court (appendices B and C of the Report contained within the agenda papers) be approved;
- (iii) The use of £100,000 of the deferred grant (received from Vale of White District Council) for the Abbey Hall project be approved;
- (iv) The financial update in relation to the building project / contract with Inside Out Developments (appendix D of the Report contained within the agenda papers), and all related variation in the project to date, be noted and endorsed.

Page 105: Minute F44 Recommendations in relation to a water fountain

Resolved (unanimously)

- (i) A public drinking water fountain be installed in the wall at Roysse Court Gardens;
- (ii) A budget of £10,000 be approved for this work;
- (ii) The Town Clerk write to Abingdon ward members of the Vale of White Horse District Council seeking their consent to release of monies from the former Joint Environmental Trust Fund to cover the cost.

Page 107, minute F46 – report of the Town Clerk

Resolved (unanimously)

That the Council note and endorse the resolutions in relation to Council insurance:

- (i) the renewal with Zurich Insurance should be accepted based on the five-year agreement, at a cost of £33,322 per annum.
- (ii) A tendering exercise should commence after three years of this new arrangement to ensure sufficient time to complete.

Page 108: Minute F47 Recommendations in relation to the Old Magistrates' Court

In relation to the charges which would be made to the Regal in relation to the proposed use of the Old Magistrates' Court, a Member stated that he would anticipate that it should be higher than the revenue which had been obtained under the previous lease agreement.

Resolved (unanimously)

- (i) The proposal made by the Regal Evesham in relation to use of the Old Magistrates Court be approved in principle;
- (ii) Authority be delegated to the Town Clerk to make necessary applications for premises licence/ planning change of use to enable the implementation of the proposal;
- (iii) Authority be delegated to the Guildhall Committee to approve the details of any resulting agreement with the Regal Evesham, with direction to the Committee to consider the balance between community and cinema use, and the charges to the Regal in relation to use of the Old Magistrates' Court.

Resolved that the draft minutes of Finance and General Purposes Committee of 15th January 2018 be approved, together with any recommendations (as amended) contained therein.

C68 Motions under Standing Order 8

Members considered the following motions:

Motion 1

1. Motion proposed by Cllr Mike Badcock
Seconded by Cllr Andrew Todd

“This Council requests the responsible Government Minister and Highways England urgently consider the implementation of sealable fuel tank linings for all Heavy Good Vehicles (HGVs). The cost and effect on the area served by the A34 by diesel fuel spillages and the increasing regularity of delays caused is unacceptable. The national cost must be unacceptably high and this Council resolves accordingly that the Town Clerk writes to the responsible Government Minister and Highways England expressing these views.”

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

“This Council requests the responsible Government Minister and Highways England urgently consider the implementation of sealable fuel tank linings for all Heavy Good Vehicles (HGVs). The cost and effect on the area served by the A34 by diesel fuel spillages and the increasing regularity of delays caused is unacceptable. The national cost must be unacceptably high and this Council resolves accordingly that the Town Clerk writes to the responsible Government Minister and Highways England expressing these views.”

2. Motion proposed by Cllr Jeanette Halliday
Seconded by Cllr Neil Fawcett

“The residents of Abingdon are rightly very proud of the Albert Park, which is included in Historic England's National Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest”. In order to protect the area from inappropriate developments the Town Council requests the Vale of White Horse District Council to ensure that a Conservation Area Appraisal is completed for Albert Park Conservation Area as soon as possible, and suggests the book "Celebrating 150 years of Albert Park" recently produced by the local residents association contains much of the evidence required for such an appraisal.”

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

“The residents of Abingdon are rightly very proud of the Albert Park, which is included in Historic England's National Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest”. In order to protect the area from inappropriate developments the Town Council requests the Vale of

White Horse District Council to ensure that a Conservation Area Appraisal is completed for Albert Park Conservation Area as soon as possible, and suggests the book "Celebrating 150 years of Albert Park" recently produced by the local residents association contains much of the evidence required for such an appraisal."

C69 **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)

C70 **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 13th December 2018.

Resolved that the draft confidential appendix to the minutes of the Guildhall Committee held on 13th December 2018 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C71 **Confidential Motions**

Two confidential motions were proposed and seconded in relation to civic matters. In accordance with established procedure discussion and determination in relation to these matters was adjourned to the next meeting.

The meeting rose at 8.55 pm.

.....

Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames