

**Draft Minutes of the Council of the Town of Abingdon-on-Thames held on
Wednesday 26th June 2019
in the Roysse Room, Guildhall, Bridge Street, Abingdon**

Present

Cllr Charlie Birks	Mayor
Cllr Cheryl Briggs	Deputy Mayor
Cllr Gabby Barody	
Cllr Samantha Bowring	
Cllr Grace Clifton	
Cllr Margaret Crick	
Cllr Neil Fawcett	
Cllr Andy Foulsham	
Cllr Alex Greenaway	
Cllr Patrick Lonergan	
Cllr Robert Maddison	
Cllr Lorraine Oates	
Cllr Ulrike Rowbottom	
Cllr Andrew Skinner	

In Attendance

Mr Derek Kemp	DCK Accounting Solutions Limited
Mr Nigel Luker	Macebearer
Rev Dr Charles Miller	Rector, Mayor's Chaplain
Mr Steve Rich	Assistant Town Clerk / Head of Services
Cllr Alison Rooke	Oxfordshire County Council, Abingdon East Division
Mr Nigel Warner	Town Clerk (Clerk to the meeting)
Mrs Susan Whipp	Treasurer/ Responsible Financial Officer

15 members of the public and the press.

SECTION I (Open to the Public Including the Press)

C20 **Prayers**

Rev Dr Charles Miller led the meeting in prayer.

(Rev Dr Charles Miller left the meeting following conclusion of this item).

C21 Public Participation

a) Presentation of Grant Cheques to Local Organisations

The Mayor, Cllr Charlie Birks, 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	Purpose of grant, as summarised in the grant application	Grant awarded and collected by
Home Start Southern Oxfordshire	To cover the costs of recruiting more volunteers so they do not have to turn away referrals.	£500 Doreen McNulty and Fay Golding-King
Make Music Abingdon	Towards the cost of the Festival Make Music Day on 21 st June 2019	£450 Hanne Fahl
Abingdon Eagles Basketball Club	AEBC would like to run junior tournaments throughout the off season at A&W college for under 11's.	£400 Alison Goodhall
The Friends of Abingdon Civic Society	Towards Abingdon Heritage Weekend	£900 Alastair Fear

Note that the Council had also awarded the following grants, funding for which had already been released:

Oxfordshire Play Association	Towards the cost of the South Abingdon Play Day 2019	£400
Rotary Club of Abingdon Vesper (d)	Towards the cost of Abingdon Food and Drink Festival	£750

b) Alastair Fear made the following statement and addressed questions to the Leader of the Council, Cllr Samantha Bowring:

Traffic on the Drayton Road is as bad as ever. Driving north out of South Abingdon continues to be a big issue for residents. People say they have to allow a lot of time for things like going to the Doctor's surgery.

Talking to people in the Caldecott Ward, during the recent election campaign, I was told by a number of people that they, and their children, would use their bikes more

and cars less if cycle ways were safer. Is there a forum or working party where suggestions for improving cycle safety can be looked at, and taken forward and funded? Ideas I would like to put forward, that people suggested include:

- * widen the cycle lane at the chicanes on Preston Road, by using a little of the grass verge;*
- * restrict parking near certain junctions to improve visibility of cyclists;*
- * build a more direct pedestrian / cycle route from the new Morland Gardens development into Abingdon via Kensington Close*
- * restrict parking on the Wilsham Road on the Sustrans Cycle Route*

Could I add, on a related matter, that it is essential that we keep the Abingdon Town Bus service (the 41) or introduce a smarter, on demand, bus service if that will be more cost-effective and convenient. The service is mostly used by the elderly and helps them get into town and to the Community Hospital. It is currently funded by Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council because Oxfordshire County Council cut back on all subsidised bus services.

Cllr Samantha Bowring, Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee responded as follows:

Thank you for your statements and questions in relation to traffic on the Drayton Road, cycling and the Abingdon Town Bus Service.

In relation to the Drayton Road I am aware of the longstanding problems, particularly in relation to congestion, that affect the Drayton Road and anyone living in or passing though that area of the town. Whilst you have not asked a question in relation to the Drayton Road, and highways is a responsibility of Oxfordshire County Council, the Town Council is here to represent and lobby on behalf of the residents of Abingdon. The problems in relation to the Drayton Road are longstanding and not easily resolvable but this is something which this Council will be looking to work with the other local authorities on in order to improve matters for residents.

In your statement you mentioned that people would use their bikes more and cars less if cycleways were safer and you make a number of suggestions as to how improvements could be made. There are some very good ideas here, including building a more direct pedestrian / cycle route from the new Morland Gardens development into Abingdon via Kensington Close. You ask if there is a forum or working party where suggestions for improvements for improving cycle safety could be looked at, and taken forward and funded.

In relation to cycle improvements there are currently two existing bodies which are relevant. First of all, the Town Council is, together with the other local authorities and the police, part of a Traffic Advisory Committee which meets three times a year. A meeting of this committee took place last week and the next meeting is due on 13th November 2019. The terms of reference include cycling and pedestrian matters and last week the meeting was addressed by James Wigmore of local cycle group, Abibike. Discussion of cycling related matters was continued later in the meeting. In relation to the Traffic Advisory Committee it is important to note that the two primary agencies in relation to highways and transport, the County Council and Thames Valley Police, are represented at that meeting. Members of the public are also able to address the advisory committee on matters within its responsibility. You mentioned in

your question the matter of funding. As you know funding for local authorities has for some years been something of a challenge and will continue to be a challenge. In this regard it will be for the Councils to think creatively regarding their priorities but also, when development takes place, to ensure that appropriate developer contributions are made in relation to these matters.

The Council also has a Planning, Highways and Consultations Committee which meets every three weeks. As part of its terms of reference it can consider all matters relating to highways, footpaths and bridleways and make representations to other authorities regarding these matters. It may also consider all matters relating to transportation and car parking issues. Much of the work of this committee has in the past been reactive and concentrated on planning applications. However the committee welcomes input from members of the public and at its meeting on Monday it was addressed by Robin Tucker, the Chair of the Oxfordshire Cycling Network, Secretary of Cycling UK Oxfordshire and a member of the Abingdon group Abibike. James Wigmore, who addressed the Traffic Advisory Committee last week was also present at that meeting.

You should be assured that the Council takes these matters seriously. I am a mother of children who cycle and until my own circumstances changed I used to cycle in to Oxford for work each day. I am very aware of the paucity of provision for cyclists in Abingdon.

This Council has declared a climate emergency and one of its priorities going forward will be reducing its carbon emissions with a backstop date of 2030. Clearly the reduction in the use of motorised vehicles and the increase in cycling and pedestrian will be an important part of this. In terms of progressing this work you will be aware that unfortunately the town does not currently benefit from a Neighbourhood Plan. We believe this to be a serious omission and something which needs to be addressed in order that we can more effectively guide future developments in the town and ensure that the needs and priorities of residents are met. I anticipate that the neighbourhood planning process which the Council will be prioritising will be an important part of taking cycling matters forward.

Finally you have made comment in relation to the Abingdon Town Bus Service (number 41) and stated that it is essential that we keep this service or introduce a smarter, on demand bus service which will be more cost effective and convenient. This matter was discussed at our meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee last week, the 18th June, when it was agreed that a working group be set up to consider the current arrangements, to consider the need for the bus service, potential changes / expansion of route and any alternative approaches to providing a service. In progressing this work we will be consulting with the public and with bus service providers and it is intended that the working group consists of representatives of all levels of local authority.

In my response I have only been able to touch on some of these matters, they are important and they are matters which this new administration will be seeking to address.

C22 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Andrew Coveney, Jeanette Halliday, Jim Halliday, Eric de la Harpe and Helen Pighills.

C23 **Declarations of Interest**

None.

C24 **Minutes**

Resolved that the draft minutes of the Council of Abingdon-on-Thames held on 20th March 2019, the Annual Meeting held on 13th May 2019 and the Special Meeting of the Council held on 21st May 2019 be adopted and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

Matters arising

Cllr Neil Fawcett stated how good it had been to see the Rainbow Flag flying from the County Hall. He stated that Abingdon Pride, which took place on Saturday 22nd June 2019, had been an enjoyable and successful event and he thanked all those involved in the organisation of the event, including Town Council staff, Dawn and all the volunteers. The Council unanimously supported this vote of thanks.

C25 **Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames: Engagements and Announcements**

The Mayor, Cllr Charlie Birks, presented his schedule of engagements since the last meeting of the Council, as circulated with the agenda.

C26 **Oxfordshire County Council Report**

The Council received and considered the report from Cllr Alison Rooke, County Councillor for Abingdon East Division in relation to the above, as circulated ahead of the meeting and attached to these minutes. Cllr Rooke talked Members through her report.

The report was noted.

Cllr Alison Rooke left the meeting following this item, it being 7.46pm.

C27 **Vale of White Horse District Council**

Members received and considered the report from Cllr Helen Pighills, District Councillor for Abingdon Abbey Northcourt as circulated ahead of the meeting and attached to these minutes.

The report was noted.

C28 **Reports from Outside Bodies**

Friends of Abingdon

Members received and considered the report from Cllr Jeanette Halliday, Town Council representative to the Friends of Abingdon.

The report was noted.

C29 **Completion and Approval of Annual Governance Statement**

The Council received and considered the Annual Governance Statement for the year ending 31st March 2019, which was contained in section 1 of the Council's Annual Return, together with the report of the Treasurer / Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).

It was proposed by Cllr Samantha Bowring, seconded by Cllr Andy Foulsham and

Resolved (unanimously) (i) that the report of the Treasurer/RFO be approved (ii) that the Council approve the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31st March 2019, answering "Yes" to questions 1 to 8 of section 1 of the Annual Return (question 9 not being applicable) and (iii) that the Mayor and the Town Clerk sign the statement on behalf of the Town Council.

C30 **Approval of Annual Return and Financial Statements**

The Council received and considered the report of the Treasurer/ RFO in relation to the above, together with the Annual Return and the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2019. Mr Derek Kemp, from DCK Accounting Solutions Limited, who assisted with year- end close down and drafted the year-end financial statements. Mr Kemp explained that he had made an accounting error in relation to fixed assets in the 2017/18 accounts and that this had resulted in an understatement of the Council's general reserve balances at 31st March 2018. This had been corrected in the 2018/19 annual return and financial statements by restating the affected balances as at 31st March 2018.

(i) It was proposed by Cllr Samantha Bowring, seconded by Cllr Lorraine Oates and

Resolved (unanimously) that the report of the Treasurer/RFO, the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2019 be approved and signed on behalf of the Council by the Mayor.

- (ii) It was proposed by Cllr Samantha Bowring, seconded by Cllr Margaret Crick and

Resolved (unanimously) the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2019 be approved and signed on behalf of the Council by the Mayor.

Mr Derek Kemp left the meeting following this item, it being 7.58pm.

C31 **Questions under Standing Order 10**

None.

C32 **Planning, Highways and Consultations Committee**

It was proposed by Cllr Lorraine Oates and seconded by Cllr Patrick Lonergan that the Council receive and consider the minutes of the Planning, Highways and Consultations Committee meetings held on 1st April, 23rd April, 13th May and 14th May 2019 and the draft minutes of 3rd June 2019, as circulated with the agenda.

Resolved that the minutes of the Planning, Highways & Consultations Committee held on 1st April, 23rd April, 13th May and 14th May 2019 and the draft minutes of 3rd June 2019 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C33 **Amenities and Recreation Committee**

It was proposed by Cllr Grace Clifton and seconded by Cllr Samantha Bowring that the Council receive and consider the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities and Recreation Committee held on 13th May 2019 and the draft minutes of the meeting of 11th June 2019 as circulated with the agenda.

Cllr Margaret Crick stated that she wished to speak in relation to Abingdon-in-Bloom. She proposed a vote of thanks to Mr Chris Ford of Wick Farm Nurseries. She explained that Mr Ford supplied all of the Council's flowers and created the floral displays. Cllr Crick made special mention of the polyanthus in the Roysse Court gardens, which were stunning. She asked that a letter conveying the Council's thanks be sent to Mr Ford and that the matter be given publicity for example, in the Town Crier.

The vote of thanks was seconded by Cllr Patrick Lonergan and approved unanimously.

Resolved that the minutes of the Amenities and Recreation Committee held on 13th May 2019 and the draft minutes of the meeting of 11th June 2019 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C34 **Community Services Committee**

It was proposed by Cllr Neil Fawcett and seconded by Cllr Lorraine Oates that the Council receive and consider the draft minutes of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 13th May 2019 and the draft minutes of the meeting held on 21st May 2019, as circulated with the agenda.

Cllr Fawcett drew attention to the Communications Review Group which had been established by the Committee and asked whether any other members wished to serve on this group.

Resolved that the minutes of the Community Services Committee held on 13th May 2019 and the draft minutes of the meeting held on 21st May 2019 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

Council appointments – Christ’s Hospital of Abingdon

It was reported that Cllr Lorraine Oates had resigned as a Council nominative governor of Christ’s Hospital, thus creating a vacancy in relation to the position.

It was proposed by Cllr Lorraine Oates, seconded by Cllr Margaret Crick and **resolved** (unanimously) that Cllr Cheryl Briggs be appointed as a Town Council nominative governor of Christ’s Hospital of Abingdon.

C35 **County Hall Museum Management Committee**

It was proposed by Cllr Patrick Lonergan and seconded by Cllr Samantha Bowring that the Council receive and consider the minutes of the meeting of the County Hall Museum Management Committee held on 13th May 2019 and the draft minutes of the meeting held on 6th June 2019

Resolved that the draft minutes of the County Hall Museum Management Committee of 13th May 2019 and the draft minutes of the meeting held on 6th June 2019 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C36 **Guildhall Committee**

It was proposed by Cllr Margaret Crick and seconded by Cllr Grace Clifton that the Council receive and consider the draft minutes of the meeting of the Guildhall Committee held on 13th May 2019 and draft minutes of the meeting held on 30th May 2019.as circulated with the agenda.

Resolved that the draft minutes of the Guildhall Committee of 13th May 2019 and draft minutes of the meeting held on 30th May 2019 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C37 **Finance and General Purposes Committee**

It was proposed by Cllr Samantha Bowring and seconded by Cllr Ulrike Rowbottom that the Council receive and consider the draft minutes of the

meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 13th May 2019 and the draft minutes of the meeting held on 18th June 2019, as circulated with the agenda.

Minute F10: Personnel Sub Committee

The appointment of the Personnel Sub-Committee had been referred to the Council for resolution. It was **resolved** that the following members be appointed to serve on the Personnel Sub-Committee:

Cllrs Charlie Birks, Samantha Bowring, Alex Greenaway, Jim Halliday, Patrick Lonergan and Ulrike Rowbottom.

Minute F11: Matters referred Amenities and Recreation Committee 11th June 2019

It was **resolved** that three bus shelters be purchased, for the locations identified, and up to £10,000 of the street furniture earmarked reserve be used. (*Locations: the Oxford Road, see Amenities and Recreation agenda and draft minutes for further details*). Note also that the Amenities and Recreation Committee would also be utilising an additional sum of £5,000 from the current year street furniture budget.

It was **resolved** that the new cemetery project be transferred back to within the responsibility of Amenities and Recreation Committee.

Minute F12: Finance Report

Member training

It was **resolved** that a budget of £5,000 be set aside for member training by way of supplementary estimate.

Banking arrangements

It was **resolved** that:

- (i) The approval (and payment) of all invoices up to £2,500 be delegated to the Town Clerk and RFO, with listings of such payments being presented to the next ordinary meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee;
- (ii) Invoices for £2,500 or more continue to be approved by two members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee;
- (iii) Payments approved by the Town Clerk and RFO be made by cheque;
- (iv) Payments approved by two members be paid either by electronic banking transfer, or cheque, depending on individual requirement;
- (v) It be delegated to the Town Clerk and RFO to set up an additional bank account to enable the issue of cheques signed only by the Town Clerk and RFO.

Minute F14: General Report of the Town Clerk

One Public Estate

A report had been considered by the Finance and General Purposes Committee regarding the above. The County Council's consultants, Cushman and Wakefield, was currently finalising its review of the sites and determination of existing user's future requirements for the OPE Partnership. However the feedback which had been received was that the Guildhall (Abbey Hall) was not large enough or suitable for the shared service hub and would not be one of the sites which they would be recommending to take forward in that regard. This had been noted.

It was **resolved** that the Abbey Hall be transferred back to the responsibility of the Guildhall Committee.

Bus service no 41

It was noted that the Finance and General Purposes Committee had discussed the number 41 bus service which had commenced in October 2018. The Committee had agreed that a working group be set up to consider the current arrangements. The purpose of the working group would be to consider the need for a bus service, potential changes / expansion of the route, and any alternative approaches to providing the service. This work would involve consultation both with the public and with the bus service providers. The Finance and General Purposes Committee had referred the membership of the working group to the Town Council, with the group being structured to consist of at least one County Councillor, one District Councillor and two Town Councillors.

It was resolved that the following be appointed to the Bus Services Working Group:

Town councillors Gabby Barody and Lorraine Oates
District councillor Mike Pighills
County councillor Alison Rooke

Report of the Town Clerk in relation to matters which relate to the work of the Committee, referred from the Committee meeting of 18th June 2019: Guildhall and Abbey Hall Improvement Project

The Council received and considered the report of Town Clerk in relation to the above.

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

- (i) Approve the financial update and revised budget estimates in relation to the Guildhall Project, both capital and revenue (appendices A and C), including the transfers between the budget lines as reported and funding from the deferred grant from the District Council, Town Council earmarked reserves and revenue budgets as detailed above.

- (ii) Approve the financial update and revised budget estimates in relation to the to the Guildhall-related projects – the Abbey Hall / cinema and Roysse Court - both capital and revenue (appendices B and C), including the transfers between the budget lines as reported and funding from the deferred grant from the District Council, Town Council earmarked reserves and revenue budgets as detailed above.
- (iii) Approve the financial update and the funding position in relation to the Guildhall-related maintenance items and funding from the current year revenue budgets as detailed above (see also appendix C).
- (iv) The Council was requested to note and approve the financial update in relation to the building project / contract with Inside Out Developments as detailed in Appendix D and all related variations in the project to date.
- (v) That subject to the above the Council is requested to **approve** the report of the Town Clerk.

Minute F17: IT Infrastructure

The Council considered the problem that the Guildhall and the Roysse Court Offices were not served by high speed broadband. The Leader of the Council, Cllr Samantha Bowring, asked that the Town Clerk write to British Telecom with the Council's concerns in relation to this matter, the fact that substantial parts of the town centre did not benefit from high speed broadband and that the planned improvement works which had been due to take place in 2018 had been cancelled by British Telecom because they considered that they were no longer commercially viable. She also asked that the Town Clerk also write to Layla Moran MP to ask her to resume her enquiries in relation to this matter.

Cllr Andy Foulsham had been appointed to serve on the IT Working Group and he reported that he had considered the report from the Council's IT provider. This was a very thorough report and a key issue flagged in the report was that the Council needed to address the problems with slow internet connectivity as a matter of urgency. If the Council and the Guildhall did not benefit from high speed broadband then this would limit the options in relation to upgrade of IT facilities.

Cllr Patrick Lonergan stated that he did not consider that the Council could wait for the broader solution of delivery of high speed broadband across the whole of the town centre; the Council's primary responsibility was to ensure that the internet connectivity was sufficient to support its own services. Consequently it was proposed by Cllr Patrick Lonergan, seconded by Cllr Andy Foulsham and **resolved** (unanimously) that the Council make arrangements as soon as possible to install high speed broadband for the Guildhall and the Roysse Court Offices, which would include the installation of a dedicated lease line if the broadband service was not generally available, so that the other IT improvements could be made. It was further proposed and **resolved**

(unanimously) that the costs of installation / line rental be funded as necessary from the Council's existing equipment budget.

The Leader, Cllr Samantha Bowring, stated that she had checked to see whether or not Virgin offered high speed broadband in the vicinity and confirmed that this service was not available in Bridge Street or Abbey Close.

Resolved that the minutes of Finance and General Purposes Committee of 13th May 2019 and the draft minutes of the meeting held on 18th June 2019 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C38 **Motions under Standing Order 8**

Members considered the following motion, proposed by Cllr Samantha Bowring and seconded by Cllr Charlie Birks:

“The Town Council is requested to consider the wearing of robes by councillors and the occasions when robes should be worn. Councillors are then requested, by way of amendment to this motion, to resolve the occasions on which robes should be worn.”

In introducing the motion, Cllr Samantha Bowring stated that there were no right or wrong answers as to when robes should be worn. At present the Council wearing of robes was on a “custom and practice basis.” She stated that the start of the new Council it was the right time to review when robes should be worn ie for civic occasions and for council meetings.

In debate the following points were made:

- If we do not robe for meetings we are losing something of our history and heritage. We should retain the current convention.
- If we do not robe for Council meetings what is the significant gain? What is broken at present?
- Believe robes should be worn at civic ceremonies but not at ordinary meetings of the Council as this sets us apart from the general public.
- Agree that robes should be worn at ceremonial occasions but not at full council.
- Agree that robes should be worn on civic occasions but not at the Town Council where they are often quite uncomfortable.
- Should be worn for the Civic Service but everything else at the Mayor's discretion.
- The robes act as our badge of office as councillors.
- If we do not robe at meetings we are not properly legitimising our deliberations.
- Oxford University is a modern, progressive organisation and they still wear their ceremonial robes.
- Continue with the current convention for a year and then review.

- The wearing of robes adds to the occasion of a council meeting, for instance when groups pick up a grant cheque it makes it more special to come to a council meeting where robes are being worn.
- Almost withdrew from standing for the council when found out that robes should be worn and aware that this has put off some candidates. Robes are not appropriate for a working environment.
- Part of tradition and heritage.
- If we do not robe what next?
- Specifically in the Caldecott Ward, residents would not generally see the wearing of robes as being relevant. It could be seen as being part of being a liberal elite. There is no evidence that by and large many other councils wear robes for meetings. Ordinary council meetings are for managing policy and resources and robes are not relevant.

As a procedural point, it was noted that the motion was brought to the Town Council to enable debate and resolution into the wearing of robes and therefore amendments were then brought forward in relation to this matter.

In relation to the wearing of robes on civic occasions, it was proposed by Cllr Samantha Bowring, seconded by Cllr Neil Fawcett and **resolved** (unanimously) that the Council robes for important civic occasions.

In relation the wearing of robes at full council meetings it was proposed by Cllr Rob Maddison, seconded by Cllr Patrick Lonergan and **resolved** (by eight votes in favour and six against) that Council robe for all ordinary full council meetings.

The Council then considered this substantive motion, as amended, and it was **resolved** by eleven votes in favour with three abstentions that:

“The Council considered the wearing of robes by councillors and the occasions when robes should be worn. The Council agreed that the occasions on which robes should be worn should be: important civic occasions and ordinary meetings of the full council.”

For the avoidance of doubt it should be noted that the above motion confirmed that the current practice in relation to the wearing of robes should continue.

C39 **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)

C40 **Guildhall Committee**

Members received and considered the confidential appendix to the minutes of the Guildhall Committee of 30th May 2019.

Resolved that the confidential appendix to the minutes of the Guildhall Committee of 30th May 2019 be approved.

The meeting rose at 9.06 pm.

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Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames

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Date

COUNCILLOR REPORT TO ABINGDON ON THAMES TOWN COUNCIL

26 JUNE 2019

CLLR ALISON ROOKE – ABINGDON EAST DIVISION

Lodge Hill Interchange

OCC is continuing its design work, though delayed responses from Highways England have greatly extended the estimated completion date. The current completion date being quoted is Summer 2021. Negotiations with land owners are continuing.

Other Transport issues

I requested extra attention be paid to the road surfaces of Bridge Street, East St Helen Street and Stratton Way. Unfortunately, the County team have confirmed that these roads do not meet their criteria (other than standard patching) to be included in their coming 12-month resurfacing programme. Road markings at the junction of Stert, Bridge and High Streets, and Stratton Way cycle marking have been repainted.

I encourage anyone noting highway/ pavement etc problems to report them online to 'fix my street'.

The following has been sent from OCC's cabinet member for local communities re the 'refreshing' of the network of Parish Transport Representatives (PTRs):

'The PTR was established some time ago to give communities an opportunity to discuss local transport issues and find out more about transport in Oxfordshire. The County Council administer the PTR network and meetings are held in County Hall three times a year.

However, due to the withdrawal of bus subsidies and the subsequent disbandment of the bus services team, the number of PTRs attending the meetings has declined and the meeting has become less effective over recent years.

Clearly with my interest in Community Transport, and transport as a whole, I would like to breathe new life into this role and these meetings. I am therefore asking if you can put the feelers out as you attend parish council meetings to encourage them to appoint someone as PTR (if they don't currently have one), particularly if your division is not well represented (see attached list of current PTRs).

It is not a requirement that a PTR is a parish or town councillor, but they should be appointed by the local council. Someone who would be effective as a PTR would be someone who has an interest in public transport services and a desire to help identify and address the transport needs of their community.

As well as the meetings, there are also a 'surgery' sessions beforehand where PTRs have an opportunity to talk directly to Council officers about their specific transport concerns.

I have attached a handbook that was provided to PTRs and last updated in 2012. Much of this handbook is outdated, particularly with the withdrawal of subsidies, however there is some useful information here that describes the role of a PTR.

*The next PTR meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, 3rd July 2019** at County Hall.*

Please contact Shirley McAneny (shirley.mcaneny@oxfordshire.gov.uk) for more information and to notify any changes.'

I see from the attached list of members of the PTR that there doesn't appear to be a member from Abingdon Town Council – it might be something that ATC wishes to consider?

Other news from the county

Rob MacDougall has been appointed as Oxfordshire County Council's new Director of Community Safety and Chief Fire Officer. Rob is currently Assistant Chief Fire Officer and will replace Simon Furlong, who is retiring from the post later this year.

Ansaf Azhar has been appointed as Oxfordshire County Council's new Director of Public Health, following the retirement of Jonathan McWilliam. Ansaf was the Interim Director of Public Health for Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council in the West Midlands and will take up his new post in August.

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT TO ABINGDON TOWN COUNCIL JUNE 2019

Vale Election Results

Following the May elections there has been a big change to the political balance of the Vale District Council. We now have 31 Liberal Democrats, 6 Conservatives and 1 Green.

Emily Smith, Botley and Sunningwell Ward, was elected Leader and, following elections within the Lib Dem group, she appointed the following cabinet:

Debby Hallett – Deputy Council Leader & Corporate Services

Andy Crawford – Finance

Helen Pighills – Community Services

Neil Fawcett – Legal & Democratic

Bethia Thomas – Development & Regeneration

Catherine Webber – Planning Policy

Judy Roberts – Partnership & Insight

Ruth Molyneaux – Housing & Community Safety

Jenny Hannaby – Environmental Services

Planning

I recommend that Town Councillors sign up to receive Vale planning alerts for applications in your ward. Every time a new planning application is received you will get an email with a link to the full application details on the Vale website.

Anyone can register for these updates, not just councillors.

Sign up by visiting www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk and under **News and events** look for “Keep me informed”

If residents approach you about planning applications, you should remind them that while the Town Council is a consultee for all Abingdon applications, it is the District Council that makes the final decision on whether to approve a scheme.

Anti-Idling Campaign

On Thursday 20th June (Clean Air Day) the Vale council launched an anti-idling campaign. There was a stall in Abingdon last Thursday afternoon and on Monday, Market Day. One of the targets of the campaign will be around schools.

Abbey Meadow Pool

The Abbey Meadow Pool is now open for the summer. I have asked officers to look into whether the opening hours and/or season could be extended. I understand that the pool is already open for longer than the original hours contracted with GLL at their expense, so extra opening may incur extra expense for the Vale – but I am waiting for the outcome of the investigation.

Next Vale Council Meeting

The next Vale Council Meeting will be on Wednesday 17th July 7pm at The Beacon, Wantage. One of the motions will be concerning the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway. All welcome to attend

Helen Pighills

21/6/19