

**Minutes of the Council of the Town of Abingdon-on-Thames held on  
24<sup>th</sup> June 2015 in the Council Chamber, Guildhall, Abingdon-on-Thames**

**Present**

Cllr Helen Pighills	Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames
Cllr Alice Badcock	Deputy Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames
Cllr Michael Badcock	
Cllr Samantha Bowring	
Cllr Margaret Crick	
Cllr Neil Fawcett	
Cllr Dennis Garrett	
Cllr Robert Hall	
Cllr Vicky Jenkins	
Cllr Angela Lawrence	
Cllr Monica Lovatt	
Cllr Sandy Lovatt	
Cllr Jan Morter	
Cllr Lorraine Oates	
Cllr David Pope	

**In Attendance**

Mr Nigel Luker	Macebearer
Rev Dr Charles Miller	Mayor's Chaplain
Mr Steve Rich	Head of Service Delivery
Mr Nigel Warner	Town Clerk (Clerk to the meeting)
Mrs Susan Whipp	Treasurer

Six members of the public and press.

**SECTION I (Open to the Public Including the Press)**

**C16 Prayers**

The Mayor's Chaplain, Rev Dr Charles Miller led the meeting in prayer.

*(Rev Dr Charles Miller, Mayor's Chaplain, left the meeting at this point).*

**C17 Public Participation**

None.

**C18 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Jeanette Halliday, Cllr Brian Hedley, Cllr Patrick Lonergan and Cllr Andrew Todd.

C19 Declarations of Interest

None.

C20 Minutes of the meetings held on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015 and 13<sup>th</sup> May 2015

(a) Approval of minutes:

**Resolved** to adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Council of Abingdon-on-Thames held on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015 and 13<sup>th</sup> May 2015, subject to the following amendments regarding accuracy:

Meeting of 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015:

List of those in attendance: Ms Heather Brown, Community Services Officer, was not at the meeting.

Minute C74 – Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames: Replace “Hippy House” with “Hippy Haze.”

Minute C80 Finance and General Purposes Committee, F88 – Residents’ Parking Scheme: replace “Lawrence, Mayor: ABSTAIN” with “Lawrence, Angela: ABSTAIN” in the two lists of recorded votes.

Meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> May 2015:

Minute 10: Membership of Council Committees, Sub Committees and Working Parties: Community Grants Sub-Committee is duplicated in the appendix to this item (page 51 in the agenda pack).

(b) Matters arising

None.

C21 Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames

The Council received the schedule of Mayor’s engagements and the Mayor’s announcements. The Council noted the following amendments:

- Mayor’s attendance at meetings of Christ’s Hospital to be added on to list;
- Deputy Mayor attended the Fun and Music in the Park events;
- The Mayor started the first race at the Abingdon CARnival (motorsports) event which took place on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2015 and was in aid of Stowford House and the Army Benevolent Fund (ABF).

The Mayor expressed her wish to be referred to as either Mr Mayor or Madam Mayor.

The Mayor explained there is now a dedicated email address which can be used to email invitations to the Mayor, it is [mayor@abingdon.gov.uk](mailto:mayor@abingdon.gov.uk). She

requested that if Members became aware of any events which individuals or organisations wished her to attend, Terry Atkinson (Community Services Officer, [terry.atkinson@abingdon.gov.uk](mailto:terry.atkinson@abingdon.gov.uk)) should be e-mailed as well as [mayor@abingdon.gov.uk](mailto:mayor@abingdon.gov.uk)

The Mayor announced that she would be organising a number of functions as follows:

Charity Quiz	Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2015
Christmas Concert	Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> December 2015
Over 70's Christmas Party	Friday 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2015
Civic Dinner	Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> February 2016

“Save the date” cards had been produced but any suggestions for recipients of these cards would be appreciated, to ensure the widest circulation.

The Mayor invited all those present to join her for refreshments in the Mayor's Parlour following the meeting.

C22 Questions under Standing Order 10

There were no questions under Standing Order 10.

C23 County Hall Museum Management Committee

It was proposed by Cllr Monica Lovatt and seconded by Cllr Lorraine Oates that the Council receive and consider the minutes of the County Hall Museum Management Committees held on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

Minute 6: Report of Museum Officers, Current Exhibition Schedule: It was noted that the minute referred to “Bun Throwing linked to the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday on 21<sup>st</sup> April and her official birthday on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2016. “ A Member stated that this was a matter for the full Council to determine and that as yet no date had been set or agreed for a Bun Throwing. However it was likely that any Bun Throwing would take place for the official birthday in June 2016.

**Resolved** that the minutes of the County Hall Museum Management Committees held on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C24 Community Services Committee

It was proposed by Cllr Alice Badcock and seconded by Cllr Monica Lovatt that the Council receive and consider the minutes of the Community Services Committee held on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2015.

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Community Services Committee held on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2015 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C25 Amenities and Recreation Committee

It was proposed by Cllr Alice Badcock and seconded by Cllr Jan Morter that the Council receive and consider the minutes of the Amenities and Recreation Committee which took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2015.

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Amenities and Recreation Committee, held on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2015, be approved together with any recommendations contained therein.

C26 Planning and Highways Committee

It was proposed by Cllr Michael Badcock and seconded by Cllr Margaret Crick that the Council receive and consider the minutes of the Planning and Highways Committees of 7<sup>th</sup> April; 27<sup>th</sup> April; 18<sup>th</sup> May and 8<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Planning and Highways Committees, held on 7<sup>th</sup> April; 27<sup>th</sup> April; 18<sup>th</sup> May and 8<sup>th</sup> June 2015, be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C27 Guildhall Committee

It was proposed by Cllr Dennis Garrett and seconded by Cllr Michael Badcock that the Council receive and consider the minutes of the Guildhall Committees which took place on 28<sup>th</sup> April and 11<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Guildhall Committees, held on 28<sup>th</sup> April and 11<sup>th</sup> June 2015, be approved together with any recommendations contained therein.

C28 Finance and General Purposes Committee

It was proposed by Cllr Sandy Lovatt and seconded by Cllr Mike Badcock that the Council receive and consider the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

Minute F16 Property matters: Mayor's Robe

It was noted that on this occasion the Council was commissioning the new Mayor's robe from a dressmaker, whose work was known and trusted to the Council, but that no alternative quotations were being obtained. In response to a question from a Member regarding the position under the Council's Standing Orders, the Town Clerk responded that this was allowed under Standing Orders, the threshold for quotations being £5,000 and the Standing Order being as follows: "*For expenditures of between £5,000 and £50,000 the Chairman of the spending committee or the appointed Vice-Chairman together with the Town Clerk shall have executive power. Three quotations are recommended in such circumstances but the Town Clerk and the Chairman/Vice Chairman of the relevant committee shall have absolute discretion to waive this recommendation if deemed to be necessary.*"

Members agreed that the new robe should include faux fur rather than real fur and that when samples are obtained these should be reviewed by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor who would choose which faux fur should be used in the new robe.

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 16th June 2015 be approved, together with the recommendations contained therein.

C29 Approval of Annual Return and Financial Statements

It was proposed by Cllr Sandy Lovatt and seconded by Cllr Mike Badcock that the Council approve the report of the Treasurer, the Annual Return for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 and the financial statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015. The Council asked that their thanks be conveyed to the officers in relation to this matter.

**Resolved** that the report of the Treasurer, the Annual Return for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 and the financial statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 be approved.

*(Mr Nigel Luker, Hon Macebearer, left the meeting at this point)*

C30 Exclusion of the Public, Including the Press

The Mayor moved and it was **resolved**:

*“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)

C31 Confidential appendix to the minutes of the Council of Abingdon-on-Thames

The Committee received and considered the confidential appendix to the minutes of the Council of Abingdon-on-Thames held on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015.

**Resolved** to adopt the confidential appendix to the minutes of the Town Council held on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015 and that they be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

C32 Confidential appendix to the minutes of the County Hall Museum Management Committee

It was proposed by Cllr Monica Lovatt and seconded by Cllr Lorraine Oates that the Committee receive and consider the confidential appendix to the Minutes of the County Hall Museum Management Committee held on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

**Resolved** that the confidential appendix to the minutes of the County Hall

Museum Management Committee held on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015, be approved.

C33 Confidential appendix to the minutes of the Guildhall Committee

It was proposed by Cllr Dennis Garrett and seconded by Cllr Michael Badcock that the Committee receive and consider the confidential appendix to the Minutes of the Guildhall Committee held on 28<sup>th</sup> April and 11<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

**Resolved** that the confidential appendix to the minutes of the Guildhall Committee held on 28<sup>th</sup> April and 11<sup>th</sup> June 2015, be approved.

C34 Confidential appendix to the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee

It was proposed by Cllr Sandy Lovatt and seconded by Cllr Michael Badcock that the Committee receive and consider the confidential appendix to the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

Minute F103: Matters referred from other committees – Guildhall Committee 11<sup>th</sup> June 2015

Members considered that whilst to date the recent discussions and recommendations regarding the Guildhall development had been detailed in confidential session due to reasons of commercial sensitivity and in particular the need to protect the commercial interests of those who had submitted bids to the Council, following a decision by the Council the resolutions could be published in to the public domain, subject to appropriate redactions.

It was noted that the following points had been made at the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting:

- The recommendation not to accept any of the tenders was not simply due to lack of enough investment coming forward, but that the proposals, to varying degrees but particularly in relation to the one tender which was the preferred one at the meeting of 28<sup>th</sup> April 2015, were incompatible with the community use of the building.
- Need to consider a more economic way of securing wheelchair access e.g. internal platform lifts.
- The Council should have a press release ready for issue after the Council meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> June.
- The order of works at recommendation 2 is not in priority order.
- Entry at street level may work out expensive but it should be fully considered as it would improve matters significantly.

The Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, Cllr Sandy Lovatt, stated that the recommendations of the Committee intended to put right some building deficiencies in the historic rooms and then provide a mechanism for a comprehensive improvement scheme for the newer buildings.

The Council **resolved** (unanimously):

1. That following the tender exercise undertaken earlier in the year, the bidders be advised that, having reviewed the tenders, the Council will not be taking their proposals forward. This is because (i) the levels of capital investment were not sufficient for the Council to be able to afford the project without a loan which the Council considers to be an unreasonable cost against future budgets and (ii) the proposals in terms of ownership, management and operation were such that these are not compatible with the continued operation of the facility as a public and community asset and facility.
2. That the Council commission the necessary architectural, surveying and quantity surveying work in order to deliver an alternative proposal based on the following priorities:
  - a. Improvements to the Abbey Hall, including installation of cinema projection equipment and screen, retractable seating and soundproofing;
  - b. Creation of entry to the modern part of the Guildhall at street level;
  - c. Access improvements with a view to enhance access for the whole building;
  - d. Improvement of toilet facilities;
  - e. Replacement of boilers / heating system (as necessary) and relocation of boiler room.
3. That it be noted that the current plans are designed in a modular manner and that the rescope project will be building on and represent a development of the work already undertaken. That the architects therefore be asked to ensure that any amended designs, in so far as is possible, do not impede the Council's ability to implement its previous plans should funding or other opportunities arise in the future.
4. That the Council set aside a sum of £250,000 to undertake work which was not previously scoped into the Phase Two development and in particular to include:
  - a. Kitchen improvements;
  - b. Installation of Wi-Fi and hearing loop systems in the historic rooms;
  - c. New carpeting;
  - d. Removal of access ramp to the rear of the building, subject to satisfactory agreement of disabled access and fire strategy.
5. That all necessary architectural, engineering and costing work be funded from the budget set aside at (4) above.

It was **noted** that the Finance and General Purposes Committee had resolved:

6. That a working group of four Members be appointed to consider the detail of this work and to bring back proposals through the Guildhall Committee. That authority be delegated to this Group to incur expenditure in relation to paragraph (4) above. That these Members be appointed as follows: Councillors Michael Badcock, Neil Fawcett, Dennis Garrett and Jan Morter.

The Council **resolved** (unanimously):

7. That authority be delegated the Leader and the Deputy Leader to make urgent contact with the Leader of the Vale of White Horse DC to update him on the Council's plans and suggestions for provision of dedicated cinema at another site within the town.
8. That the works detailed at paragraph 4 (above) be financed as follows:
  - (i) Pooled property budget 2015/16: £25,000;
  - (ii) Capital improvement sum (District Council deferred grant): £225,000.
9. That in relation to the capital improvement sum, that the Town Clerk be authorised to write to the Vale of White Horse District Council to inform it of this Council's intention to undertake the works set out in paragraph 4 (above) and to seek its confirmation that it views those works as being within the definition of Capital Improvement Works, as set out in the contract for the sale of the Guildhall and transfer of management functions, dated 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011. The Town Clerk to further advise that the Council is likely to come forward with further proposals in this regard during the current financial year.
10. To commission necessary advice, which may involve quantity surveying, architectural work and general surveying, to commence work on the proposals and costings in relation to the work previously not fully scoped into the Phase Two development, as outlined in recommendation 4 above. In addition, that the group (named at paragraph should also be given authority to commission such advice so that it can come forward with firm proposals to the likely shape of the alternative proposals outlined in paragraph 2. In this regard, a sum of £30,000 was allocated at this stage.

*(Mr Steve Rich and Mrs Susan Whipp left the meeting at this point, it being 7.50pm.)*

The Council **resolved** to approve the changes to the management structure as recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee as follows:

- (i) Post of Treasurer be redesignated as Treasurer and Responsible Financial Officer (part-time, 30 hours per week) and that the post holder Susan Whipp be appointed as the Council's Responsible Financial Officer under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- (ii) That the post of Head of Services be redesignated Assistant Town Clerk and Head of Services and that (i) responsibility for Community Services as head of service be transferred from the Town Clerk to this post and that (ii) this post deputise in the absence of the Town Clerk. It was noted that the post holder was Mr Steve Rich.

**Resolved** that the confidential appendix to the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2015, be approved.

The meeting rose at 8.00 pm.

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Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames