

**Minutes of the Council of the Town of Abingdon-on-Thames held on
Wednesday 25th January 2017 in the Roysse Room, Guildhall,
Abingdon-on-Thames**

Present

Cllr Alice Badcock	Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames
Cllr Jan Morter	Deputy Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames
Cllr Mike Badcock	
Cllr Samantha Bowring	
Cllr Margaret Crick	
Cllr Neil Fawcett	
Cllr Dennis Garrett	
Cllr Robert Hall	
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 David Pope	
Cllr Andrew Todd	

In Attendance

Mr Nigel Luker	Macebearer
Mr Steve Rich	Assistant Town Clerk/ Head of Services
Mr Nigel Warner	Town Clerk (Clerk to the meeting)
Mrs Susan Whipp	Treasurer / RFO

12 members of the public and the press.

SECTION I (Open to the Public Including the Press)

C62 Prayers

In the absence of the Mayor's Chaplain, Cllr Patrick Lonergan led the Council in prayer.

C63 Public Participation

The Mayor, Cllr Alice Badcock, stated that it was Council policy that the Council set aside a total of 15 minutes prior to the commencement of full Council Meetings for residents of Abingdon-on-Thames or owners/managers of businesses in Abingdon-on-Thames to ask questions of the Mayor or Chairmen of the Standing Committees or to express views by way of making a statement. The Council had been notified of one statement.

Host Abingdon and More in Common: Adrian Rance-McGregor spoke in relation to “Host Abingdon – a Local Response to a National Crisis”. Emma Beacham then spoke to the Council regarding the work of the group “More in Common” which was related to the work of Host Abingdon.

The Leader of the Council reminded the Council that at the meeting which took place on 5th October 2016 the Council unanimously resolved:

“We are proud to live in a diverse and tolerant society. We believe that hate crimes have no place in our country, whether they are based on Race, Religion, Sexual Orientation, Age, Disability or Gender Identity. Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council condemns racism, xenophobia and hate crimes unequivocally. We will not allow hate to become acceptable. We reassure all people living in Abingdon-on-Thames that they are valued members of our community.”

Grant cheque presentations: The Mayor presented cheques to two local organisations who had been awarded grants by the Council:

- a) The Abingdon DAMASCUS Youth Project – a cheque for £2,784 towards a project to support 10 young people aged 13-16 in South Abingdon to participate in a bespoke Young Leader Scheme. The cheque was presented to Gary Hibbens, a youth worker in the project, together with a number of the young people who were involved with the project.
- b) South and Vale Young Carers – a cheque for £7,000 to support their core activities to support young carers in Abingdon. The Mayor presented this cheque to Mr John Tabor, the Manager of the organisation.

C64 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Jeanette Halliday.

C65 **Declarations of Interest**

None.

C66 **Minutes**

Resolved: that the Council adopt and the Mayor sign as a correct record the minutes of the Council of Abingdon-on-Thames held on 5th October 2016.

C67 **Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames**

The Council received the schedule of Mayor’s engagements and the Mayor’s announcements.

- PhAB Evening Challenge - Thursday 2nd February at 7pm;
- Mayor’s Charity Social and Race Evening – Friday 24th February at 7pm;

- Mayor's Spring Ball – Friday 7th April at 7pm;
- Annual Bowls Match vs Oxford. The Mayor explained that this usually took place in Abingdon but Oxford had suggested that the venue alternate between Abingdon and Oxford each year. Oxford had suggested that this year the match take place at Kidlington on Monday 5th August. The Mayor asked Members' opinions regarding this proposal and it met with the Council's approval.

C68 Oxfordshire County Council Report

Members received and considered a report from Cllr Alison Rooke, Oxfordshire County Councillor for the Abingdon East Division, as previously circulated.

C69 Questions under Standing Order 10

None.

C70 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 County Hall Museum Management Committee of 17th November 2016.

Resolved that the draft minutes of the County Hall Museum Management Committee of 17th November 2016 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C71 Community Services Committee

It was proposed by Cllr Andrew Todd and seconded by Cllr Vicky Jenkins that the Council receive and consider the draft minutes of the Community Services Committee of 22nd November 2016.

Resolved that the draft minutes of the Community Services Committee of 22nd November 2016 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C72 Amenities and Recreation Committee

It was proposed by Cllr Sandy Lovatt and seconded by Cllr Robert Hall that the Council receive and consider the draft minutes of the Amenities and Recreation Committee of 7th December 2016.

Resolved that the draft minutes of the Amenities and Recreation Committee of 7th December 2016 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C73 **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 Guildhall Committee of 13th December 2016.

Resolved that the draft minutes of the Guildhall Committee of 13th December 2016 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C74 **Planning, Highways and Consultations Committee**

It was proposed by Cllr Margaret Crick and seconded by Cllr Mike Badcock that the Council receive and consider the minutes of the Planning, Highways and Consultations Committee meetings held on 3rd October, 24th October, 14th November, 5th December and 19th December 2016; and the draft minutes of the meeting held on 9th January 2017.

Resolved: the minutes of the Planning, Highways and Consultations Committee meetings held on 3rd October, 24th October, 14th November, 5th December and 19th December 2016; and the draft minutes of the meeting held on 9th January 2017, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C75 **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 minutes of the meeting held on 13th December and the draft minutes of the meeting of 10th January 2017 and approve any recommendations contained therein.

Minute F130 – Matters referred from other Committees: Community Services Committee meeting of 22nd November 2016 – Minute CS27

It was **resolved** by 9 votes in favour, 0 against and 9 abstentions that the recommendation of the Community Service Committee that the Town Crier magazine not be published during 2017/18, be endorsed. *(Cllr Samantha Bowring and Cllr Helen Pighills asked that their abstentions in relation to this recommendation be recorded.)*

Minute F131 – Financial Report and Estimates 2017/18

The Council considered the recommendations of the Finance and General Purposes Committee in relation to the budget estimates for 2017/18.

The Liberal Democrat Group's proposed amendments to the estimates for 2017/18 had been circulated with the agenda and were proposed by Cllr Samantha Bowring and seconded by Cllr Helen Pighills.

The Council debated the proposed amendments.

The Leader of the Conservative Group, Cllr Mike Badcock, requested an adjournment of the meeting so that the Conservative Group could consider matters. The adjournment was agreed, it being 7.57pm.

Following the adjournment the meeting, the meeting then reconvened at 8.10pm.

Cllr Mike Badcock stated that his group would make a proposal to earmark a sum of £30,000 in the budget towards grant funding for Abingdon Children's Centres for each of the next three years, 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20 subject to the Council receiving and approving a sustainable business plan for the future of the children's centres and also receiving quarterly reports in relation to activity and use of the grant during the three-year period. He would look to propose that this be met by an additional increase in the precept amounting to £2.50 on a Band D property.

Following consideration of the above, Cllr Samantha Bowring withdrew her amendment, with the consent of the Council.

Cllr Mike Badcock proposed and Cllr David Pope seconded an amendment to the budget that a sum of £30,000 be included in the Council's budget estimates towards grant funding for the Abingdon Children's Centres for each of the next three years, 2017/18, 2018/19, and 2019/20, release of the grant being subject to the Council receiving and approving a sustainable business plan for the future of the Abingdon Children's Centres and quarterly reports in relation to activity and use of the grant during the three year period.

It was further proposed that this be funded by way of an additional sum on the precept equivalent to a Council Tax of £2.50 per Band D property.

The amendment was then debated and prior to being voted on, the requisite number of members asked a named vote to be taken.

For the Amendment:

Cllr Alice Badcock
Cllr Michael Badcock
Cllr Samantha Bowring
Cllr Margaret Crick
Cllr Neil Fawcett
Cllr Dennis Garrett
Cllr Robert Hall
Cllr Brian Hedley
Cllr Vicky Jenkins
Cllr Angela Lawrence
Cllr Patrick Lonergan
Cllr Monica Lovatt
Cllr Sandy Lovatt
Cllr Jan Morter

Cllr Lorraine Oates
Cllr Helen Pighills
Cllr David Pope
Cllr Andrew Todd

Consequently there were recorded 18 votes in favour of the amendment with none against and therefore the amendment was approved.

It was then **resolved** unanimously that:

- (i) All recommendations included within the Treasurer's Report regarding fees and charges be approved;
- (ii) The draft budget estimates for 2017/18, as amended (above) be approved in the sum of £1,475,771 (net expenditure);
- (iii) The total net spending provided in the estimates for 2017/18 amounting to £1,475,771 be funded by way of precept;
- (iv) The Council request the District Council to levy a precept, for Town Council purposes, amounting to £1,475,771 for the financial year 2017/18.

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 13th December 2016 and the draft minutes of the meeting of 10th January 2017 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C76 **Motions under Standing Order 8**

Motion which had stood adjourned from the meeting of 5th October 2016

It was noted that at the meeting of 5th October 2016 the following motion had been proposed by Cllr Margaret Crick and seconded by Cllr Samantha Bowring:

“Should Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council designate any land owned by Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council to be developed to include the building of residential units, it shall retain the freehold and work with developers to provide residential accommodation for local people at affordable rents which remain in the council's ownership. Any profits will be used to invest in further affordable accommodation.”

The motion had been referred to the Finance and General Purposes Committee under Standing Order 21 (Financial Matters).

It was reported that the Committee had considered the motion together with the report of the Town Clerk in relation to the motion. The Committee had **recommended** approval of the motion subject to the motion being amended at the meeting of the Town Council through the addition of the words underlined:

“Should Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council seek to designate any land owned by Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council to be developed to include the building

of residential units, it shall retain the freehold and work with developers to provide residential accommodation for local people at affordable rents which remain in the council's ownership. Any profits will be used to invest in further affordable accommodation. In implementing this policy the Council would require a report from the Town Clerk in relation to the financial implications of any proposed land transaction, including a quantification of any "undervalue disposal" having taken necessary valuation advice. Following consideration the Council would, should it wish to proceed with an "undervalue disposal" either proceed on the basis that it is relying on the General Disposal Consent (notifying the external auditor accordingly) or seek consent from the Secretary of State."

Following the report from the Finance & General Purposes Committee, Cllr Margaret Crick agreed to alter her Motion in line with the recommendation of that committee and with the consent of the seconder, Cllr Samantha Bowring. In accordance with Standing Order 16, the Council agreed to the alteration of the Motion.

On being put to the vote, it was **resolved** unanimously that:

"Should Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council seek to designate any land owned by Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council to be developed to include the building of residential units, it shall retain the freehold and work with developers to provide residential accommodation for local people at affordable rents which remain in the council's ownership. Any profits will be used to invest in further affordable accommodation. In implementing this policy the Council would require a report from the Town Clerk in relation to the financial implications of any proposed land transaction, including a quantification of any "undervalue disposal" having taken necessary valuation advice. Following consideration the Council would, should it wish to proceed with an "undervalue disposal" either proceed on the basis that it is relying on the General Disposal Consent (notifying the external auditor accordingly) or seek consent from the Secretary of State."

C77 Motions under Standing Order 34, to permanently vary standing orders

The following motion was proposed by Cllr Mike Badcock and seconded by Cllr Dennis Garrett:

It is noted that the "Model Standing Orders" issued by the National Association of Local Councils do not list Council Standing Committees, these usually being part of the separate "Council Committee Terms of Reference" document and therefore it is proposed to delete standing order 38 (1) and replace it with the following:

38. Committees

(1) *The Council may, at its Annual Meeting, appoint standing committees and may at any other time appoint such other committees as may be necessary, and:*

- (a) Shall determine their terms of reference;*
- (b) May permit committees to determine the dates of their meetings;*
- (c) Shall appoint and determine the term of office of councillor or non-councillor members of such a committee (unless the appointment of non-councillors is prohibited by law) so as to hold office no later than the next annual meeting;*
- (d) Shall at each annual meeting appoint a Finance and General Purposes Committee;*
- (e) Membership of Committees and Sub-Committees shall take into account the spirit of the provision of Section 15 (4) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, concerning the allocation of places between representatives of any political groups.*

For information: Standing Order 38.1 currently reads:

38 List of Committees

(1) *The following committees shall be the Standing Committees of the Council and shall consist of the number of members stated below each committee:*

(a) *Finance and General Purposes*

Chairmen of the five other Standing Committees plus five other members. The Chairman of Finance and General Purposes Committee cannot be Chairman of any other Standing Committee. The Chairman of Finance and General Purposes Committee shall also act as Leader of the Council.

(b) *Planning, Highways and Consultations*

Nine members

Where a member is unable to attend a meeting of this Committee they may nominate a substitute member provided that the nominating member informs the office of the Town Clerk prior to the commencement of the meeting.

(c) *Amenities and Recreation*

Seven members.

(d) *Community Services*

Seven members.

(e) *County Hall Museum Management*

Seven members

*(f) Guildhall
Seven members*

Membership of Committees and Sub-Committees shall take into account the spirit of the provision of Section 15 (4) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, concerning the allocation of places between representatives of any political groups.

Having been formally moved and seconded the motion, in accordance with Standing Order 34 (3), stood adjourned without discussion until the meeting of the Town Council on 29th March 2017.

C78 Community Governance Review

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

Following discussion it was proposed by Cllr Mike Badcock, seconded by Cllr Dennis Garrett and **resolved** (unanimously):

That authority be delegated to the Town Clerk to request that the Vale of White Horse District Council undertakes a Community Governance Review of the parish of Abingdon under its powers as set out in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, specifically in relation to:

- i. The boundaries of the parish;
- ii. The warding arrangements;
- iii. The number of parish councillors.

It was further **resolved** that the Council's proposals be detailed in the request to the District Council as follows:

Proposals in relation to the parish boundary (see also attached map)

- i. Boundaries with Radley and Sunningwell.
Areas A and B on the attached map relate to land north of the Abingdon peripheral road (Dunmore Road and Twelve Acre Drive) and south of the A34. These areas are currently in the parishes of Radley and Sunningwell respectively and the request is that these areas be transferred to Abingdon. Both areas are allocated for housing within the 2031 Local Plan (Part 1) and should the housing developments take place as indicated within the Local Plan then the residents in would look to Abingdon. The neighbourhood planning areas for both Radley and Sunningwell Parish Councils do not include these areas.
- ii. Boundary with Sutton Courtenay.
The area marked D on the attached map relates to land which is currently within the parish of Sutton Courtenay. It is to the east of the South Town Park and the sewage works and the Council believes that it is logical for this area to be

part of the parish of Abingdon. It was noted that this matter was discussed by the Planning, Highways & Consultations Committee at its meeting of 3rd October 2016 when the Committee objected to its inclusion within the Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Plan Area. It was understood that the designation of the Sutton Courtenay Neighbourhood Plan Area was currently being considered by the District Council.

iii. Boundary with St Helen Without – Abingdon Common.

The area marked C on the attached plan relates to land which is currently within the parish of St Helen Without and comprises Abingdon Common. Abingdon Common is owned by Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council and whilst the area covered by the Common does not include any dwellings or residents, Members considered that the Common, owned by the Town Council and with an allotment site which belongs to the Town Council, should be within the parish of Abingdon.

The objection of St Helen Without Parish Council to a previous proposal that this area be included in a Neighbourhood Planning Area for Abingdon, was noted.

iv. Boundary with St Helen Without – Shippon and Abingdon Station.

The Town Council also requested that consideration be given to amending the boundary with St Helen Without so that land which is currently within the parish of St Helen Without, specifically in relation to Shippon and also Abingdon Station (the airfield and Dalton Barracks) is transferred to Abingdon. Members were aware of the Ministry of Defence's intention to sell off land at Dalton Barracks and considered that should this eventually result in significant development of housing adjacent to / close to the parish of Abingdon then it was likely that these developments would functionally be part of Abingdon and look towards the town in terms of services and infrastructure.

Members noted the correspondence with St Helen Without Parish Council in relation to Abingdon Common and recognised that such a proposal would represent a major change to the parish boundaries and also one which could prove to be controversial. However, it was considered that if the Town Council was requesting the District Council to undertake a Community Governance Review of its boundaries, then it would be logical to consider scoping this into the review.

Warding Arrangements for Abingdon

The Town Council believes that the parish should continue to be warded. Therefore it follows that if consideration is being given to the alteration of the parish boundaries then the Council should also request that the District Council gives consideration to consideration of revised warding arrangements for the town.

Number of Parish Councillors to serve Abingdon

The Town Council also request that alongside consideration of alteration of the parish boundaries, consideration should also be given to the number of parish councillors to serve the town of Abingdon.

C79 **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)

C80 **Confidential appendix to the minutes of the Amenities & Recreation Committee**

Resolved that the draft confidential appendix to the minutes of the Amenities and Recreation Committee held on 7th December 2016 be approved.

C81 **Confidential appendix to the minutes of the Guildhall Committee**

Resolved that the draft confidential appendix to the minutes of the Guildhall Committee held on 13th December 2016 be approved.

C82 **Confidential appendix to the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee**

Minute F138 – Matters referred: Guildhall Development Project

It was noted that the Finance and General Purposes Committee of 10th January 2017 had amended the recommendation referred to it by the Guildhall Committee.

An amendment to the recommendation of the Finance and General Purposes Committee was proposed by Cllr Samantha Bowring and seconded by Cllr Patrick Lonergan to the effect that the Council should revert back to the original recommendation made by the Guildhall Committee. The wording of the amendment, as required by standing orders was:

- a. Recommendation (i) be amended to delete the words [redacted names of two companies as added in by the Finance and General Purposes Committee];
- b. Words be added as follows at recommendation (ii): "That the Council's quantity surveyor be asked to advise [names of the companies detailed in the original recommendation by the Guildhall Committee] that the current scheme is being reviewed, but that in the interim they would ask that the tenders be kept open until 31st March 2017, subject to any terms and conditions that the contractors may place on that, e.g. in relation to buildings inflation."
- c. That the numbering of the other two recommendations then be changed accordingly for (ii) to (iii) and from (iii) to (iv).

On being put to the vote there were 7 votes in favour of the amendment, 10 votes against and 1 abstention. The amendment was therefore lost.

The recommendation as detailed in the confidential appendix to the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee was then put to the vote. There were recorded 10 votes in favour, 4 against and 4 abstentions. The recommendation was therefore approved and it was **resolved**:

- (i) That following receipt of tenders, the Council's quantity surveyor be advised to decline the tenders from [names redacted].
- (ii) That the Town Clerk be instructed to advise the County and District Councils that this Council would wish to explore the potential for alternative community uses on the land occupied by the modern part of the Guildhall (*the Abbey Hall*) and would wish to be part of the County Council's Place Review which is due to take place early in 2017.

It was further **resolved**

- (iii) That the public statement and press release (attached) be approved.

Resolved that the draft appendix to the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 10th January 2017 be approved together with the recommendations contained therein.

The meeting rose at 9.10 pm.

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 Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames