

**Minutes of the Council of the Town of Abingdon-on-Thames held on
Wednesday 29th June 2016 in the Roysse Room, Guildhall,
Abingdon-on-Thames**

Present

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|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 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 Jeanette Halliday | |
| Cllr Vicky Jenkins | |
| Cllr Sandy Lovatt | |
| Cllr Lorraine Oates | |
| Cllr Helen Pighills | |
| Cllr David Pope | |
| Cllr Andrew Todd | |

In Attendance

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|-----------------|--|
| 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 |

7 members of the public and the press.

SECTION I (Open to the Public Including the Press)

C14 Prayers

In the absence of the Mayor's Chaplain, Rev Paul Smith led the Council in prayer.

C15 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 seven questions and two statements. Questions were being asked and statements made in the order in which they were received.

To assist the Council the questions had been reproduced in a paper "Supplementary Papers for Meeting."

(a) Questions

All the following questions were to the Leader of the Council, Cllr Mike Badcock.

1. Question from Beverley Pagan: *The people of Abingdon voted for the outdoor pool to be refurbished by an 81% majority, but not a single penny of the budget is being spent on the pool. Whatever the views of council members on the consultation outcome, it is very concerning that the votes of Abingdon residents have been ignored. Is the democratic deficit deliberate? Could the town council ask the VOWHDC why Abingdon voters don't matter?*

(In the absence of Beverly Pagan the question was read by the Town Clerk).

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Mike Badcock, replied that whilst 81% of those who responded to the consultation favoured option 1, in relation to the pool, the number of consultation responses only equated to 7.5% of the population of Abingdon. Cllr Badcock stated that he had received advice from the Monitoring Officer at the District Council, of which the Town Clerk was aware. He had been advised that as the Abbey Meadow and the Pool were services provided by the District Council the question should therefore be addressed to that Council. He could make no further comment. This would apply to all the questions which followed in relation to this matter.

2. Question from Roland Sparling: *I have reduced mobility, and cannot use the Abbey Meadow Outdoor Pool because access is only via ladders. I don't see using the hoist as a viable alternative... I can walk but ladders are beyond me. Will the Town Council ask the VoWHDC to improve access to the Outdoor Pool by creating a gentle beach area?*

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Mike Badcock, responded that the Abbey Meadow and the Pool are services provided by the District Council and the question should therefore be addressed to that Council. He could make no further comment.

The Mayor, Cllr Alice Badcock, stated that with regard to the next question she understood that Emma Diffey was not a resident of Abingdon. The Town Council was the parish council for Abingdon itself and its policy was that only residents of the town could speak. However on this occasion the Mayor would exercise her discretion and without prejudice to any further decisions in this regard, allow the question to be asked.

3. Question from Emma Diffey: *Will the £24.50 per month per child from relocated swimming lessons from the leisure centre be ploughed into the Abbey Meadows pool fund?*

(In the absence of Emma Diffey the question was read by the Town Clerk).

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Mike Badcock, responded that he did not know the answer to that question; the Abbey Meadow and the Pool were services

provided by the District Council and the question should therefore be addressed to that Council. He could make no further comment.

4. Question from Paul Gibbons: *How will the cutting down of an attractive cherry tree and 'framing' (i.e. blocking) the view of the river to make way for a covered entrance (i.e. a tunnel) to the young children's play area make the meadow more attractive?*

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Mike Badcock, responded that the Abbey Meadow and the Pool were services provided by the District Council and the question should therefore be addressed to that Council. He could make no further comment.

5. Question from Georgina Hicks: *As a mother of an Autistic child in Abingdon, the nearest suitable playpark to us is in Cumnor, because it has a sensory play area. As Chair of Oxford Autism Society (OASIS), I know that I am not alone in having this difficulty. Would the town council support having a sensory play area included in the plans for Abbey Meadow so I can walk to a park with my child?*

(In the absence of Georgina Hicks the question was read by the Town Clerk).

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Mike Badcock, responded that the Abbey Meadow and the Pool were services provided by the District Council and the question should therefore be addressed to that Council and he could make no further comment. However if the question had related to one of the Town Council's play areas, the Council would consider this, subject to having funds available to do so.

6. Question from Andrea Bains: *Does the town council support that an over 10s play area should be PiPA* approved so children of all abilities can play together?*

** PiPA has been created to help Local Authorities, Landscape Architects, Planners as well as families with disabled children to create inclusive outdoor play areas as well as assessing installed play areas.*

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Mike Badcock, responded that the Abbey Meadow and the Pool were services provided by the District Council and the question should therefore be addressed to that Council. With regard to Town Council play areas these were inspected by RoSPA and the Council would take account of any changes in practice in relation to this matter.

7. Question from Helen Wiggington: *'Children are cutting their feet when using the outdoor pool. Will the Town Council recommend to the VoWHDC that the pool be relined? If not, exactly, how many injuries would be required before re-lining is deemed necessary by this council?'*

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Mike Badcock, responded that the Abbey Meadow and the Pool were services provided by the District Council and the question should therefore be addressed to that Council. He advised that any

concerns such as this should always be logged with the District Council. He could make no further comment.

(b) Statements by members of the public

Naomi Richardson had asked to make a statement in relation to the Abbey Meadows (sic) Consultation and a summary is detailed below.

Naomi Richardson stated that despite the wishes of those responding to the consultation, not a penny had been spent on the pool. People are not stupid. Hinksey Pool attracts 70,000 people a year because of the investment in refurbishing the pool. The Abbey Meadow area has many advantages, with good parking etc. However there is a missing piece and that is investment in the pool. It is feasible to refurbish the Pool. She accepted that this was a Vale issue but it was also a democratic issue and the results of the consultation had been ignored. Decisions on the area had been classified as “non-key decisions” and were made by a cabinet member who represented Wantage. Although the Pool was a Vale responsibility, this matter reflected badly on the Town Council as people will think it is the Town Council’s responsibility and the Council could make representations.

Dr Peter Harbour, Friends of Abbey Meadow Outdoor Pool had asked to make a statement in relation to Abbey Meadow and a summary is detailed below.

Dr Peter Harbour thanked the Council for giving him the opportunity to address the meeting. He stated that there was a long history of the Council supporting the outdoor pool, going back to the days of John Jones (former Freeman of the Town and Mayor of the Borough). The Friends had employed a consultant who had estimated that the cost of relining the pool would be £100,000. He stated that the Vale’s consultation had started well but was concerned that there had been negative briefing about the pool. It was necessary to have a discussion with the Vale regarding what work it would be reasonable to undertake on the pool. It was possible to raise grants. The Friends had identified £100,000 in funds in 2008 but this had not been taken up by the Vale. He considered that the Vale’s estimates regarding how much work needed to be undertaken in relation to the pool were inflated and there was no specification to back these up. He would encourage the Town Council to organise a meeting to take place as detailed in the motion being brought forward later in the meeting. He stated that he was not asking the Town Council to take responsibility but the pool was in Abingdon and the Councillors should act in their role as Abingdonians.

C16 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Brian Hedley, Angela Lawrence, Patrick Lonergan and Monica Lovatt.

C17 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Jeanette Halliday declared a non-pecuniary interest in all matters relating to the Guildhall as she is a resident who lives within the vicinity of the property.

C18 Approval of 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 23rd March and 9th May 2016.

C19 Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames

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

Further to the schedule of Mayor's engagements the Mayor, Cllr Alice Badcock, stated that she had been represented by the immediate Past Mayor, Cllr Helen Pighills, at the Evensong at St Nicolas' Church on 1st June 2016. This had taken place immediately prior to the Bun Throwing ceremony.

The Mayor asked that her thanks be recorded to all staff, especially the Works Team and the Community Services Officer, for the additional hours which they had worked for the various events which had taken place in June, specifically the Fun / Music in the Park and HM The Queen's 90th Birthday Celebrations.

The Mayor reported that her Ball which had taken place on Friday 24th June 2016 had been a huge success.

The Mayor thanked all those Past Mayors, including both current and former Councillors who had assisted her over the past few months and given lots of helpful hints and tips regarding her role as Mayor.

The Mayor stated that on Friday 1st July 2016 there would be a simple ceremony at the War Memorial to commemorate the commencement of the Battle of the Somme. She would be attending the War Memorial at 6.45am to lay a wreath at 7am. She would be accompanied by a contingent of four buglers from Dalton Barracks. This would be a simple and respectful ceremony and councillors were very welcome to attend.

The Mayor also drew members' attention to a number of events which would be taking place during her Mayoral year. There would be a Quiz Night to raise funds for the Mayor's Charities to take place at the Abingdon Rugby Club (provisional date Friday 2nd December 2016). Her Ball would be taking place on Friday 7th April 2017.

C20 Report from Oxfordshire County Council

Members received and considered a report from County Councillor Sandy Lovatt, which had been circulated earlier that day. Cllr Lovatt spoke in detail to his report, which is attached in June supplementary papers.

A member posed the question as to which model Cllr Lovatt favoured in relation to local government reorganisation. However the Mayor stated that there was no provision under this item for questions to be asked of the County Councillor.

The Mayor suggested, and it was agreed, that County Councillor Alison Rooke be requested to present a report to the next meeting, this on the basis that the opportunity should be rotated amongst the three County Councillors who represent Abingdon divisions. *(Note that subsequent to the meeting it was found that Cllr Rooke was unavailable and consequently Cllr Neil Fawcett was requested to give a report to this meeting, with Cllr Rooke scheduled to give a report to the January 2017 Town Council meeting.)*

C21 Questions under Standing Order 10

Question from: Cllr Sandy Lovatt.

To: Cllr Jeanette Halliday, Chairman of Planning, Highways & Consultations Committee:

1. *I congratulate Councillor Halliday on taking up the responsibility of Chairman of the Planning and Consultations Standing Committee. As such, under the terms of reference of this committee, she has the responsibility of coordinating the plans for the development Abingdon on Thames. She will also recall that at the Town Council's budget setting meeting in January, we set aside £10,000 for the production of a Community Led Plan for Abingdon on Thames. Please could she give some indication of the timetable for the creation and delivery of this plan?*

2. *The Chair of the Planning & Consultations Committee will no doubt be aware of the Independent Planning Inspector's interim letter concerning his findings regarding the Vale of White Horse DC's Local Plan 2031, Part 1 that has recently been published. In it, she is no doubt aware, the Independent Planning Inspector indicates his agreement with and support for the strategic housing sites for 1,000 houses along the Town's northern boundary. If the Town Council had a Neighbourhood Plan in place and the development was not started before the next parish elections in 2019, these developments would be worth £1.58 million to the Town Council in Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). In view of this and in the light of the fact that a Neighbourhood Plan is the only parish plan that carries statutory weight, does she therefore not consider, as I do, that the Community Led Plan is simply the first stage in the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan?*

3. *What steps is the Council taking to ensure that the strategic housing sites along the Town Council's northern boundary are ultimately included with the*

Abingdon on Thames parish boundary and not those of the Sunningwell and Radley parishes?

In response Cllr Jeanette Halliday, Chairman of Planning, Highways and Consultations Committee thanked Cllr Sandy Lovatt for his congratulations on her appointment. She would provide a written response to this question.

C22 County Hall Museum Management Committee

It was proposed by Cllr Dennis Garrett and seconded by Cllr Samantha Bowring that the Council receive and consider the draft minutes of the County Hall Museum Management Committee of 9th May and 19th May 2016.

Resolved that the draft minutes of the County Hall Museum Management Committee of 9th May and 19th May 2016 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C23 Amenities and Recreation Committee

It was proposed by Cllr Sandy Lovatt and seconded by Cllr Lorraine Oates that the Council receive and consider the draft minutes of the Amenities and Recreation Committee of 9th May and 25th May 2016.

Resolved that the draft minutes of the Amenities and Recreation Committee of 9th May and 25th May 2016 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C24 Community Services Committee

It was proposed by Cllr Andrew Todd and seconded by Cllr Neil Fawcett that the Council receive and consider the draft minutes of the Community Services Committee of 9th May and 17th May 2016.

A member noted that the Council's thanks had already been extended to the staff in relation to the various summer events but she also wished to extend the Council's thanks to all those companies from which equipment had been hired, the security company, the Police, the bands and the Army. The Town Band had been marvellous and the choir soloists had given a very special performance.

In presenting the minutes, the Chairman, Cllr Andrew Todd, stated that at minute CS9, Grant Applications, the Committee had been quite generous. However, it had been unable to offer a grant to "Clean Slate" because their organisation was not Abingdon based and the case for the benefit to Abingdon residents was questionable. This was important because the funding for all these grants came wholly from Abingdon residents. At minute CS12, Digital Media plans for next year, he noted that the matter of the purchase of small devices to enable councillors to access documents electronically had been discussed. Whilst it appeared that there was some

demand for this, he did not consider that most councillors wanted to have additional devices.

Resolved that the draft minutes of the Community Services Committee of 9th May and 17th May 2016 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C25 **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 9th and 12th May (reconvened on 23rd May) 2016.

Resolved that the draft minutes of the Guildhall Committee of 9th and 12th May (reconvened on 23rd May) 2016 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C26 **Planning, Highways and Consultations Committee**

It was proposed by Cllr Jeanette Halliday and seconded by Cllr Mike Badcock that the Council receive and consider the minutes of the Planning, Highways and Consultations Committee of 29th March, 18th April, 16th May and 6th June 2016 and the draft minutes of 9th May 2016.

The Mayor, Cllr Alice Badcock, noted that the County Council was due to undertake resurfacing works in relation to the B4017 Drayton Road, northwards from the junction with Sutton Wick Lane. She expressed concern regarding the timing of the work, particularly in the context of the diversion routes being offered for traffic affected by the works. Earlier in the month, a Traffic Regulation Notice had been issued for the works to take place for five days from 5th July 2016. It was then understood that work had been postponed and it would take place during the school holidays when roads were much quieter. However now it was understood that the work had been moved back further, to 13th September 2016, when the roads were much busier. In addition, the diversion route, via the A34, would greatly add to journey times and would become even more of a problem should there be any issues in relation to the A34.

Cllr Neil Fawcett, as County Councillor for the Abingdon South Division, stated that he had no additional information to add to that which had been outlined by Cllr Badcock but he would be taking this matter up with officers at the County Council, as it was clearly more preferable for this work to be undertaken during the school holidays.

It was **agreed** that the Chairman of the Planning, Highways & Consultations Committee, Cllr Jeanette Halliday, write to Oxfordshire County Council to raise this issue with them. It was also noted that the Town Council had not been consulted on this matter by the County Council. Although the works were outside the parish of Abingdon, they would greatly impact on the town. This lack of consultation had happened on a number of previous occasions and members asked that this also be brought to the attention of the County

Council as consultation with all affected parishes is very important and the local knowledge which could be brought through the consultation would often assist the County Council in achieving desired outcomes.

Resolved that the minutes of the Planning, Highways and Consultations Committee of 29th March, 18th April, 16th May and 6th June 2016 and the draft minutes of 9th May 2016 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C27 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 held on 9th May 2016 and approve any recommendations contained therein.

Resolved that the draft minutes of the meeting held on 9th May 2016 be approved, together with any recommendations contained therein.

C28 Completion and Approval of Annual Governance Statement

The Council received and considered the Treasurer / Responsible Financial Officer's report in relation to the above, as circulated with the agenda.

It was proposed by the Mayor, Cllr Alice Badcock, and seconded by the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Jan Morter, and

Resolved that the Council approve the report of the Treasurer / RFO and approve the Annual Governance Statement as detailed in the report

C29 Approval of Annual Return and Financial Statements

The Council received and considered the Treasurer / Responsible Financial Officer's report in relation to the above, as circulated with the agenda.

The Treasurer reported that subsequent to the agenda being sent out, the internal auditor had visited and signed off the Internal Audit Report for 2015/16, with the report stating that the internal control objectives of the Council had been met.

It was proposed by the Mayor, Cllr Alice Badcock and seconded by the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Jan Morter and

Resolved that the report of the Treasurer and Responsible Financial Officer, the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2016 and the financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2016 be approved.

C30 Motions under Standing Order 8

- (a) Motion proposed by Cllr Sandy Lovatt
Seconded by Cllr Andrew Todd

“This council is very much aware of the obligations its owes to the Armed Forces community as enshrined in the Armed Forces Covenant, to which the Council is a signatory; and that the Armed Forces community should not face disadvantage in the provision of services and that special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given the most. This includes serving regular and reserve personnel, veterans, and their families.

Consequently, this council moves to affirm that we consider the members of the armed forces stationed at Dalton and Brook Barracks to be an integral part of the Abingdon community.”

Cllr Helen Pighills moved immediately an amendment to the motion which she believed would add some clarity in a number of areas. Her amendment was to the effect that the motion should now read:

“This Council is very much aware of the obligations it owes to the Armed Forces Community as enshrined in the Armed Forces Covenant to which the Council is a signatory.

“The Council believes that the Armed Forces Community should not face disadvantage in the provision of services and that, in some cases, special consideration is appropriate. These considerations extend to serving regular and reserve personnel, veterans and their families.

“Notwithstanding the fact that the Barracks lie outside of Abingdon on Thames in a neighbouring parish, this Council moves to affirm that it considers members of the Armed Forces stationed at Dalton Barracks and Edward Brooks Barracks and their families to be an integral part of the Abingdon community.”

The amendment was accepted by the proposer, Cllr Sandy Lovatt; the seconder, Cllr Andrew Todd and the Council.

In proposing the motion, Cllr Sandy Lovatt stated that it had been prompted by a grant application which had been considered by the Community Services Committee at its meeting of 17th May 2016. The grant application had been made by the Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association and related to a play and activity day taking place at Dalton Barracks. It was noted that there had been discussion as to whether the Council could agree to such a grant as Dalton Barracks is outside the parish boundary. However whilst it was considered that the grant would be to the benefit of the town and its inhabitant he felt that the Council should make it very clear that the armed forces stationed at Dalton and Edward Brooks Barracks are an integral part of the Abingdon community. In seconding the motion, Cllr Andrew Todd emphasised, in

relation to the grant awarded, that the children of families in the armed forces need particular support because their families move around a lot.

In discussing this matter the following points were made by members:

- This motion is very much in line with the Covenant already adopted by the Council and therefore it was helpful that Cllr Lovatt had explained the context of bringing this motion forward. The Community Services Committee did support the Play Day and considered Dalton Barracks to be part of the community but there was a suggestion that a neighbouring parish should also be approached.
- Fully support this motion. The army supported the Council at Fun in the Park / Music in the Park although unfortunately some contrary views had been expressed in this regard.

It was then **resolved** unanimously that:

“This Council is very much aware of the obligations it owes to the Armed Forces Community as enshrined in the Armed Forces Covenant to which the Council is a signatory.

“The Council believes that the Armed Forces Community should not face disadvantage in the provision of services and that, in some cases, special consideration is appropriate. These considerations extend to serving regular and reserve personnel, veterans and their families.

“Notwithstanding the fact that the Barracks lie outside of Abingdon on Thames in a neighbouring parish, this Council moves to affirm that it considers members of the Armed Forces stationed at Dalton Barracks and Edward Brooks Barracks and their families to be an integral part of the Abingdon community.”

- (b) Motion proposed by Cllr Lorraine Oates
Seconded by Cllr Neil Fawcett

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council will convene a public meeting and invite the relevant councillors and officers from the Vale of White Horse District Council to discuss plans for the Abbey Meadow area and outdoor pool.

In proposing the motion, Cllr Lorraine Oates stated that it was not her intention that the Town Council should be seen to be taking sides in any discussions between the District Council and members of the public. She wanted to see a fair discussion and simply for the Town Council to convene a public meeting and invite the relevant councillors and officers from the District Council to discuss their plans for the Abbey Meadow area and the outdoor pool.

In seconding the motion, Cllr Neil Fawcett stated that he had found the answers given by the Leader of the Council to the questions posed by members of the public earlier in a meeting to be very interesting. He stated

that Cllr Mike Badcock was correct in that the Abbey Meadows pool was owned and operated by the District Council. However, there was a role for the Town Council here and a risk that the Town Council would be associated with this matter if things go wrong. He stated that in the consultation process a large number of people had come out in favour of a full refurbishment of the pool and despite the good proposals for improvements around the pool, a refurbishment of the pool itself did not appear to be part of the proposals. A number of local residents felt strongly on this matter and the Town Council should seek to give them a voice. He emphasised that there was no intention for the Town Council to take responsibility of the pool, it was simply proposed that the Town Council invite the District Council to come and discuss matters so that the residents' can put forward their views and get answers. He was seeking for the Town Council to facilitate a meeting.

The matter was then opened up for debate by the Mayor and the following points were made by members:

- This is not a matter for the Town Council, it is not fair for the Town Council to convene and chair such a meeting as we have no control over these matters.
- The Town Council is in the best position to convene a meeting. The Council has resources and communications to make sure that all sections of the community could be engaged. We can convene matters independently. This is a matter of concern for local residents. A meeting should be convened as soon as possible as the plans for the Abbey Meadow are at a concept stage.
- We know that this matter is a District Council responsibility. However, initially the pool had been built to save lives, to discourage children from swimming in the River Thames and potentially drowning. The motion does not ask for money but simply to facilitate a meeting. We are residents who don't understand the decision which the District Council has come to.
- It is not our job to manage the pool. The Town Council once subsidised the pool in the region of £45,000 per year. However the new leisure contract with GLL means that it can be supported from the revenue now being returned to the District Council from that contract, approximately £2 million per year. The District Council's consultation showed that 81% of people had opted for Option A. When their answers were analysed, the top five items mentioned in relation to Option A were: new picnic tables; refurbishment of changing rooms; play equipment for those over the age of 10; an enhanced splash pad; and a coffee kiosk. There would be further consultation to come. However it is not our place to start a meeting and to order the Vale what to do.
- Agree with the above comments. The Vale will be undertaking further consultation and we will have a strong voice.

In summing up the matter, Cllr Lorraine Oates stated that the Town Council did have an interest in this matter and it would be valuable for the District Council to talk to local residents and answer their questions. She stated that she did not wish to see the area in the position in 2024 that

improvements had been made to the area, such as an enhanced coffee facility, but that there was no open air swimming pool operating.

Cllr Mike Badcock then suggested a possible way forward for the Council. He stated that there was a general consensus that the Town Council had an interest in this matter as the parish council for Abingdon but the Abbey Meadow and the pool were the responsibility of the District Council. Consequently, he suggested that rather than the Town Council convene a meeting it would be more appropriate that the request be made to the District Council itself to convene a public meeting to include relevant councillors and officers from the District Council to discuss plans for the Abbey Meadow area and outdoor pool. Following due consideration, and with the unanimous consent of the Council, the proposer and seconder of the motion agreed that it could be withdrawn and the Council then **resolved** that a letter be sent to the District Council asking it to convene a meeting in accordance with the motion detailed above.

- (c) Motion proposed by Cllr Neil Fawcett
Seconded by Cllr Samantha Bowring

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council will increase the community fund by up to £60,000 to help fund Children's services in Abingdon that would otherwise disappear when Oxfordshire County Council reduces funding. This will partly funded by efficiency savings across Town Council service areas.

The Mayor, Cllr Alice Badcock, stated that under Standing Order 21 any motion which was moved otherwise than in pursuance of a recommendation of the Finance and General Purposes Committee or of another committee after recommendation by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and which, if carried, would increase the expenditure upon any service which is under its management by more than £1,000 should, when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council. Standing Orders then stipulated that any committee affected by the motion should then consider whether it desired to report thereon and the Finance and General Purposes Committee should in any case report on the financial aspect of the matter.

Consequently the Mayor ruled that the motion should be referred to the Finance and General Purposes Committee and should therefore, as far as the Council was concerned, stand adjourned without discussion until the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

- (d) Motion proposed by Cllr Samantha Bowring
Seconded by Cllr Neil Fawcett

"Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council source a rainbow flag to fly from County Hall in conjunction with Oxford Pride."

In proposing the motion Cllr Samantha Bowring stated that she had seen the Rainbow Flag flown at half-mast to show respect to those who had recently died in the nightclub shooting in the United States and she also noted that the

flag was being flown around the world to celebrate Pride events. The motion to fly the flag was not seeking to promote lifestyles but to show respect and understanding. It was seeking to make a statement which would be understood by those who know what the Rainbow Flag means. Flying the flag would be saying: you are accepted and valued as part of our community. We would be joining other Councils who already fly the flag and flying the Rainbow Flag was now more important than ever. A councillor's personal views on issues of sexuality were not relevant to this matter.

In seconding the motion, Cllr Neil Fawcett stated that for anyone who was not aware, flying the Rainbow Flag was a sign of inclusivity, that every member of the community should be valued. It had been flown in London for 43 years including recently at Portcullis House. There were many pride events round the country. Many organisations showed their support by flying the Rainbow Flag. The Royal Academy at Sandhurst had projected the flag on its building. This had followed on from the decision in 2000 to allow LGBT men and women to serve in the military and Lt Gen Sir James Everard, Field Commander, the British Army, was quoted regarding the need for the Army to demonstrate its links with the Army. Flying the Rainbow Flag was an important statement for any organisation to make. Since the vote for "Brexit" (leaving the European Community), there was an unpleasant minority of people telling others to "get out." Cllr Fawcett stated that he knew that no-one in the room was saying that but unfortunately a climate had been created where this was now happening. As a Council we could either say it is nothing to do with us or to stand for equality. All people should be treated equally and flying the flag showed that. He hoped that the Council would be comfortable with the motion to fly the flag. The suggestion was that this be flown for Oxford Pride was because this is the Pride event for the whole of Oxfordshire and one which was attended by Abingdon residents.

The Mayor, Cllr Alice Badcock, then invited the Council to debate the motion. The following points were made:

- Do not require a motion to fly the rainbow flag to show that we are open to inclusivity and equality. Gender, race and sexual orientation are not indicators. This party (the Conservative Party) has Councillors locally who are gay. Being gay has ceased to be a crime and it is a right of individuals to express their sexuality. However Gay Pride does not always accord with our social policies as Conservatives. Happy to support a statement in relation to equality but do not agree that the flag should be flown and will not support the motion.
- The Council has a flag flying policy which governed what flags we fly. The flags which are flown are the Union Flag, the Flag of St George and the Town Flag. We also fly the Armed Forces Day and the Commonwealth Flags as part of national initiatives and the appropriate Royal Standard in the case of a royal visit. We did not fly the Belgian, Turkish or US flags at half-mast following recent atrocities. This would set a precedent. For instance, if the English Defence League had an event in Oxford, would we be then expected to fly their flag? We have to treat groups equally. If there was a Pride event in Abingdon itself, would happily fly the flag from a flag pole on the Market Place. Have

no problem with people being openly gay but cannot support this motion.

The Mayor, Cllr Alice Badcock, then invited the proposer to sum up. Cllr Samantha Bowring stated that she had not expected this matter to be so contentious. She would not accept a flag on the Market Place, the flag should fly with pride from the Museum. She had been advised that this was a matter for the full Council, which makes policy. This was an inexpensive proposal and the flag flies from public buildings in places such as West Sussex, Gloucestershire, Oxford City, Westminster and Sandhurst without controversy. There would be no harm or offence from flying the flag. She had been in town this afternoon and had witnessed a racist incident in the town which meant measures like this were important. The motion is harmless, it is about a flag and we should get on with it. Any proposals for future flags should then come to the Council for decision.

The Mayor then put the motion to the vote. There were recorded six votes in favour, with seven against and two abstentions. Consequently the motion was not adopted.

C31 Motions under Standing Order 34, to permanently vary standing orders

- (a) Motion proposed by Cllr Jeanette Halliday
Seconded by Cllr Helen Pighills

Council notes that substitute members may attend meetings of the Planning, Highways and Consultations Committee and wishes to extend this provision to all other committees and sub-committees.

It therefore proposes the following change to standing orders:

Standing Order 38 (1) to be changed from:

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

To

(1) The following committees shall be the Standing Committees of the council and shall consist of the number of members stated below each committee: Where a member is unable to attend a meeting of a committee or sub-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.

Standing Order 38(1) (b) to be changed from

(a) 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.

To

(b) Planning, Highways and Consultations

Nine members.”

In accordance with Standing Order 34 (3), the Motion then stood adjourned without discussion until the next ordinary meeting of the Council

C32 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)

C33 Confidential appendix to the minutes of the Council

Resolved: that the Council adopt and the Mayor sign as a correct record the confidential appendix to the minutes of the Council of Abingdon-on-Thames held on 23rd March 2016.

C34 Confidential appendix to the minutes of the County Hall Museum Management Committee

Resolved that the draft confidential appendix to the minutes of the County Hall Museum Management Committee of 19th May 2016 be approved.

C35 Confidential appendix to the minutes of the Guildhall Committee

Resolved that the draft confidential appendix to the minutes of the Guildhall Committee of 23rd May 2016 be approved.

The meeting rose at 8.40 pm.

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Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames

