

THE ABINGDON GUILD OF HONORARY TOWN CRIERS

Report for the Parish meeting 26th March 2025

The purpose of THE ABINGDON GUILD OF HONORARY TOWN CRIERS is to provide a Crier upon request by the Town, for Charities within it, and for other occasions as agreed with the Council, including supporting the Mayor at events as required.

In 2024, The Guild advertised, attended, and cried 55 times on behalf of 36 events around the town, including locations such as the marketplace, the top of the museum, and down by the river.

The range of events we cover is extensive, and the following examples represent only a small selection, from modern to historical: the 1556 Boundary walk on New Year's Day, Mayor-making ceremonies for both the Town and Ock Street Morris Men, D-Day commemorations, Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day, St. George's Day, Shakespeare's birthday celebrations in Abingdon and Oxford, the ATOM Science Festival, Against Breast Cancer(Splash of Pink),as well as local markets, beer festivals, and craft fairs.

One notable event this year was the opportunity to cry for Swan Upping, an 800-year-old tradition dating back to the 12th century, which concludes its count of the King's Swans at The Nags Head in Abingdon. This aligns well with the Town Crying tradition formalized after the Norman Conquests in 1066, which dates to 776 BC in Greece.

Town Criers are depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry, appearing in scenes related to the events of 1066, such as the death of Edward the Confessor. Two figures, often identified as criers or heralds, are shown with bells at the bottom of one scene, highlighting their role in disseminating important news during that era.

We have seven active Town Criers in the Guild, all of whom are volunteers, both male and female, ready and willing to cover events in Abingdon. Please contact us via the Town Council if you would like us to advertise and attend an event you are arranging. Providing as much notice as possible would be beneficial to ensure we can accommodate your request, given our limited resources.

For commercial activities or special occasions such as weddings, we do request a nominal charge or donation, which is then contributed to the Mayor of Abingdon's Charity Fund.

Anyone interested in becoming a Town Crier is encouraged to contact our secretary, Patrick Bird, at patrickbird86@hotmail.com.

Patrick Bird

Secretary

10th March 2025