

ABINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 28 JULY 2021

ITEM 8: REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK

Two updates are provided for members, both for noting:

1. Meetings of the Council and its committees.

We are reviewing our arrangements in relation to the requirements for the Council in law and the ongoing pandemic. I will be coming forward with proposals mid-August for implementation in September, which may simply be a continuation of the current temporary arrangements but may involve a move to combined in-person and online meetings. We welcome any comments from political groups, individual members and staff and will as part of the process consult.

2. Review of open spaces/ land holdings.

Further to my report to the Amenities & Recreation Committee of 9 June, your officers have held meetings with Vale officers regarding local arrangements. They are currently undertaking a strategic property review (SPR) for the whole of the Vale. As part of this there is likely to be an approach to parish councils to take on responsibilities from the district council. As part of this SPR they are looking at the Masefield Crescent site as a potential site for a new cemetery. The timescale the Vale are working to indicates that they will come to the parishes in the third quarter of this year. This would then lead on to negotiations on the proposals. At ATC, the following work has been taking place

- (i) The outdoor services manager is reviewing our land holdings in the light of previous work so we are clear on ownership. He has, as part of this, identified our areas which he considers have little or no amenity value and so are surplus to requirements;
- (ii) The New Cemetery Working Group will be convening in August to review the business plan and to meet a potential consultant to review the work done so far, potential sites (inc. Masefield Crescent), budget and timescale. It is important that much of this work is ready for when the Vale potentially come forward with proposals;
- (iii) There is a considerable resource implication in relation to these matters, much of which will fall on the Properties Officer and so we are keen that Abbey Hall and Guildhall property-related matters are concluded during the summer so that time can be released from the Properties Officer's schedule to allow matters to progress. I will report back further in the next cycle.

Nigel Warner
Town Clerk
28 July 2021