



ABINGDON-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Meeting of the Council of Abingdon-on-Thames held on Wednesday 28 April 2021

Present

Cllr Charlie Birks	Mayor
Cllr Cheryl Briggs	Deputy Mayor
Cllr Samantha Bowring	
Cllr Grace Clifton	
Cllr Andrew Coveney	
Cllr Neil Fawcett	
Cllr Andy Foulsham	
Cllr Alex Greenaway	
Cllr Jim Halliday	
Cllr Eric de la Harpe	
Cllr Patrick Lonergan	
Cllr Lorraine Oates	
Cllr Helen Pighills	
Cllr Andrew Skinner	

In attendance

Anna Cheetham	Yellow Submarine
Andy Crick	Committee Clerk (Clerk to the meeting)
Rev Dr Charles Miller	
Cllr Alison Rooke	Oxfordshire County Council
Nigel Warner	Town Clerk
Susan Whipp	Deputy Town Clerk / Head of Administration and Democratic Services

C125 Prayers

The Rector, Rev Dr Charles Miller, opened the meeting with prayers. He left the meeting at 7.08pm.

C126 **Public Participation**

There was a presentation from Anna Cheetham, co-director of Yellow Submarine, about their work. The charity supports people with additional needs, primarily learning disabilities and autism. The charity is commissioned by the County Council to offer out of school activities in central, west and south Oxfordshire.

Yellow Submarine has been working in Abingdon since 2017, delivering youth clubs and school holiday playschemes and activities. The charity is scheduled to take over the ground floor of the Charter in Sept/Oct 2021. This had originally been planned for April 2021 but the building is currently being used as a vaccination centre.

The charity plans for the building to be transformed into a community hub to include partner organisations in Abingdon and surrounding villages, including SOFEA Community Larder and Dementia Friendly Abingdon, which whom it is hoped that coffee mornings will be set up. Other groups being approached include those working with looked after children, young people with parents in prison and the justice system as well as LGBT+ young people and their families.

The site will hopefully house a range of different projects and offer work experience. Yellow Submarine works with young people after they turn 18 to help them to have a valuable role in the community, including through paid employment. The charity has a traineeship scheme and social enterprise cafes. They are beginning to consider a broader volunteering offer to give young people greater options for meaningful activity.

The charity has been able to access funding from 'Meanwhile in Oxfordshire', a fund to convert disused buildings for community good, to help with work on the Charter. The Charter was previously a day centre so it is completely accessible throughout. The new site will help build connections in the community.

The Chair thanked Ms Cheetham for coming along and looked forward to the building being used as a community hub.

Ms Cheetham left the meeting at 7.15pm.

C127 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Barody, Cllr Crick, Cllr Fawcett and Cllr Rowbottom.

C128 **Declarations of Interest**

None were received.

C129 **Minutes**

It was **RESOLVED** that the draft minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2021 be adopted and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

C130 Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor presented a list of his engagements and noted two other appointments.

The Mayor joined the Deputy Lieutenant, the Town Clerk and the Town Crier in observing a minute's silence for HRH the Duke of Edinburgh in the Market Place on Saturday 24 April 2021.

The Mayor, Cllr Oates and the Town Clerk attended a zoom meeting with Argentan and had a very good meeting, hearing about the experiences of others in the town and with other towns twinned with Argentan.

C131 Oxfordshire County Council

The Council received and considered the report from Cllr Alison Rooke, County Councillor for Abingdon North Division, in relation to the above, as circulated ahead of the meeting (see Appendix 1).

Cllr Birks noted the comments re the Lodge Hill junction in the report and welcomed the attention of County Councillors to this proposed development, in particular with regard to cycling provision. Cllr Birks also mentioned issues for cyclists in Sugworth Lane. Cllr Rooke said that County Councillors in Abingdon and Radley have spoken to County Council officers about these issues and had expressed concerns.

Cllr Rooke thanked Cllr Birks and Cllr Briggs for their time as Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Abingdon.

The report was noted.

C132 Vale of White Horse District Council

Members received and considered the report from Cllr Helen Pighills, District Councillor for Abingdon Abbey Northcourt Ward, in relation to the above, as circulated ahead of the meeting (see Appendix 2).

Cllr Birks asked if the open-air pool could be opened earlier than planned. Cllr Pighills said that the pool never opens before May and it is not very well used outside of school holidays. The pool is smaller than many so social distancing is difficult. Cllr Pighills plans to speak to officers to see what can be done with the contractors.

Cllr Birks mentioned the cycle path crossing the Mill Stream and mentioned the bridge, which is in a very poor state. Cllr Pighills said the local councillors have spoken to County Council officers about repairs and this is being looked into as it is an important route. Ownership of the bridge is not certain: it may be the responsibility of Oxfordshire County Council or the Vale of White Horse District Council. Cllr Rooke noted that remedial repairs were being carried out in the past week and it will be kept under review.

The report was noted.

Reports (minutes) of Council Committees, for adoption

C133 Planning, Highways and Consultations Committee

It was proposed by Cllr Oates and seconded by Cllr Greenaway that the Council receive and consider the minutes of the Planning, Highways and Consultations Committee meeting held on 22 February 2021, 15 March 2021 and 6 April 2021.

It was **RESOLVED** that the draft minutes be approved.

Cllr Rooke left the meeting at 7.27pm

C134 Traffic Advisory Committee

It was proposed by Cllr Coveney and seconded by Cllr Briggs that the Council receive and consider the draft minutes of the Traffic Advisory Committee meeting held on 3 March 2021. Cllr Coveney noted that the community speedwatch scheme is now being piloted and he will look to get this introduced to Abingdon.

It was **RESOLVED** that the draft minutes be approved.

C135 Guildhall Committee

It was proposed by Cllr Greenaway and seconded by Cllr Briggs that the Council receive and consider the draft minutes of the Guildhall Committee meeting held on 4 March 2021.

It was **RESOLVED** that the draft minutes be approved.

C136 Community Services Committee

It was proposed by Cllr Foulsham and seconded by Cllr Halliday that the Council receive and consider the draft minutes of the Community Services Committee meeting held on 9 March 2021.

It was **RESOLVED** that the draft minutes be approved.

C137 Amenities and Recreation Committee

It was proposed by Cllr Halliday and seconded by Cllr Clifton that the Council receive and consider the draft minutes of the Amenities and Recreation Committee meeting held on 17 March 2021. Cllr Halliday reported that the footpaths at Chilton Close had now been resurfaced and one of the street lights there had been repaired.

It was **RESOLVED** that the draft minutes be approved.

C138 County Hall Museum Management Committee

It was proposed by Cllr Lonergan and seconded by Cllr Pighills that the Council receive and consider the draft minutes of the County Hall Museum Management Committee meeting held on 25 March 2021. Cllr Lonergan has looked into 3D photography for suitable items in the museum and will speak to the Museum Manager about introducing this.

It was **RESOLVED** that the draft minutes be approved.

C139 Finance and General Purposes Committee

It was proposed by Cllr Bowring and seconded by Cllr Halliday that the Council receive and consider the draft minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meetings held on 30 March 2021.

Cllr Bowring noted that the Covid Response Group has agreed to become a Covid Bounceback Committee to oversee and scrutinise the work of the Town Council in supporting the community over coming months. Cllr Bowring thanked the committee for agreeing to do this. Cllr Foulsham chairs the Covid Response Group and asked all Councillors to work with the committee to deliver support, given their local knowledge. The committee would welcome ideas.

The Council considered the following recommendation from the committee:

Minute F163: Covid-19 response

The committee was asked to make a recommendation to Full Council on how to proceed with Council meetings.

It was agreed that the Town Council must ensure that it abides by government rules but Councillors would favour hybrid meetings with a virtual facility to enable members and staff with concerns or clinical needs to participate. If the Town Council ends up running hybrid meetings it will be necessary to carefully consider how to ensure that all participants are equally involved.

This item was discussed under item C141, below.

It was **RESOLVED** that the draft minutes and the recommendation be approved.

C140 Green Advisory and Scrutiny Committee

It was proposed by Cllr Greenaway and seconded by Cllr de la Harpe that the Council receive and consider the draft minutes of the Green Advisory and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 20 April 2021.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes be approved.

C141 **Democratic Matters**

The Council received and considered a report from the Town Clerk.

1. Governance Review

It was proposed by Cllr Foulsham, seconded by Cllr Briggs and **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendation of the Town Clerk (1.9) that an additional fee of £500 be approved for LGRC in order to complete the Governance Review and that a briefing is held in May with a view to adoption during the next cycle of meetings, with amendments to Standing Orders tabled at the Council meeting in May and approved at the Council meeting in June.

2: Calendar of Meetings

It was proposed by Cllr Oates, seconded by Cllr Lonergan and **RESOLVED** to approve the calendar of meetings for 2021-22.

3. Meetings after 7 May 2021

The Town Clerk referred to a high court judgement which concluded that local authorities could not continue with virtual meetings after 7 May 2021. The Town Council is therefore obliged to hold decision-making meetings in person from this date.

Options for proceeding with Town Council business after this date were considered. The Town Clerk had discussed options with the Leader of the Council and proposed the following:

Online attendance at Council meetings is no longer legal but the council considers that there remains a serious risk to health when meeting in person indoors. Consequently the Council delegates its powers to an Urgency Committee.

Committees will meet online as advisory committees and will discuss business as usual. The recommendations and decisions will be advisory until they are ratified by the Urgency Committee, apart from the Planning, Highways and Consultations Committee, whose recommendations will be actioned immediately by the Town Clerk.

Members of the public can continue to attend the advisory committee meetings via the joining link and apply to participate in the public participation section of the meeting.

The decisions made by the urgency committee will be in accordance with the recommendations from the advisory committees and not changed without a material reason.

The time and frequency of Urgency Committee will depend upon the urgency of recommendations coming up through the advisory committees. Non-members of the Committee and members of the public may view the meeting

through the joining link but the provisions of the Council's public participation scheme will not apply.

The urgency committee will consist of five members. In accordance with standing orders the quorum will be three members and the provisions for substitute members will apply.

Meetings will take place subject to risk assessment and the Covid security precautions.

These arrangements will be in place until the Urgency Committee votes to change arrangements which will depend on legislation, guidance and health advice.

- 1. That with effect from 28 April 2021 any member who does not attend at least one meeting in a six-month period due to the risk to their health resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic has the requirements of Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 waived and the time limit extended.**
- 2. That the matter then be reviewed by the Urgency Committee every two months and if necessary a motion extending the time limit by a further six months be considered.**

Cllr Bowring recommended that the proposal be amended to allow for two members of staff to be present at the Urgency Committee to ensure that one member of staff is not placed under undue pressure. The Town Clerk commented that it would not be necessary to add numbers of officers to the motion as they are not members of the committee, they are in attendance.

Cllr Greenaway noted that the Town Council had a duty of care to employees and would like the Town Council to procure non-ventilated FFP2 face masks for staff attending meetings and for Councillors volunteering to attend the Urgency Committee to take lateral flow tests in advance. The Town Clerk thanked Cllr Greenaway for his suggestions and would be happy to work with him on this.

Cllr Foulsham noted the work of Town Council staff in managing virtual meetings over the past year. This was endorsed by the meeting.

It was proposed by Cllr Lonergan, seconded by Cllr Halliday and **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendation of the Town Clerk, above, as amended.

Urgency Committee

It was proposed by Cllr Lonergan, seconded by Cllr Coveney and **RESOLVED** that the membership of the Urgency Committee is as follows

Cllr Bowring
Cllr Birks
Cllr Briggs
Cllr Foulsham
Cllr Lonergan.

Mayor-making

The Mayor-making ceremony requires seven members to attend in person to be quorate. Officers are still working on attendance and ensuring the occasion is conducted appropriately. It was not necessary to vote on this item as the event is being conducted in accordance with new requirements.

4. Representation on outside bodies

Councillors considered invitations to appoint trustees to the Radley Lakes Trust and North-East Abingdon Community Association (NEACA).

It was proposed by Cllr Birks, seconded by Cllr Bowring, that the Town Council appoints a trustee to Radley Lakes Trust. The proposal was defeated.

It was proposed by Cllr Halliday, seconded by Cllr Skinner, that the Town Council appoints a trustee to NEACA. The proposal was defeated.

5. Radley Lakes Trust Master Plan

It was proposed by Cllr Oates, seconded by Cllr Halliday and **RESOLVED** to endorse the Radley Lakes Trust Master Plan.

C142 Corporate review of risks 2020-21

The Council received and considered a report from the Deputy Town Clerk on the corporate review of risks, including a summary of the risk register and the risk action plan.

It was proposed by Cllr Halliday, seconded by Cllr Bowring and **RESOLVED** to endorse the risk action plan. Cllr Bowring commended the competence of staff and mentioned how knowledge of health and safety and managing risk was being developed through additional staff training.

C143 Neighbourhood Plan

The Council received and considered a report from the Town Clerk to approve the designated area for the neighbourhood plan.

It was proposed by Cllr Clifton, seconded by Cllr Lonergan and **RESOLVED** to designate the neighbourhood plan area as coterminous with the town boundary.

C144 **Abingdon Covid recovery and lockdown easing**

The Council received and considered a report from the Town Clerk on plans to support the town as it moves out of lockdown. The Town Clerk noted that proposals had been considered by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the Covid Working Group.

Following the High Court judgement on future Council meetings, the Town Clerk asked the meeting to consider delegating decision-making responsibility to either the Town Clerk or the Urgency Committee and suggested that a budget of £15,000 be allocated from the Town Council's Covid recovery budget for projects identified.

It was proposed by Cllr Halliday, seconded by Cllr Lonergan and **RESOLVED** to delegate decision-making responsibility and the recommended budget to the Town Clerk. It was noted that the Town Clerk could refer matters to the Urgency Committee as appropriate.

C145 **Civil Parking Enforcement**

Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) is due to be introduced by the Vale of White Horse District Council in November 2021. Members were asked to consider how they wish to approach this matter and ensure that improvements are suggested and implemented which will accord with the Council's key strategic objectives. CPE is a matter for the principal authorities but the Town Council may wish to assist in publicising what is happening and with consultation.

It was proposed by Cllr Bowring, seconded by Cllr Briggs and **RESOLVED** that the Town Council would:

1. Offer to assist the Vale of White Horse District Council with publicity and consultation;
2. Assist any local members who wish to consult their local residents;
3. Feed back ideas and suggestions to the Vale of White Horse District Council.

C146 **Election of Mayor**

It was proposed by Cllr Pighills, seconded by Cllr Bowring and agreed that Cllr Briggs be elected as Mayor for 2021-22.

C147 **Election of Deputy Mayor**

It was proposed by Cllr Bowring, seconded by Cllr Pighills and agreed that Cllr Foulsham be elected as Deputy Mayor for 2021-22.

Exclusion of the Public, Including the Press

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.”

The meeting adjourned at 8.55pm
The meeting reconvened at 9.00pm

SECTION II (Confidential Agenda)

C148 Confidential appendices to the minutes of meetings

The confidential appendices to the minutes of the following committees and the recommendations contained therein were agreed:

- (i) Guildhall Committee meeting of 4 March 2021
- (ii) Amenities and Recreation Committee 17 March 2021

C149 Fees and charges

The Council received and considered a confidential report from the Town Clerk and the recommendations contained therein were approved.

After the formal business ended, Cllr Bowring thanked the Mayor for his work for the past two years, especially during the current period of Covid-19.

The meeting rose at 9.10pm.

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Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames

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Date

ABINGDON-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 28 APRIL 2021

AGENDA ITEM 7: REPORT TO ABINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

CLLR ALISON ROOKE, ABINGDON EAST DIVISION, OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

ROADS AND TRANSPORT

Planned Highways Programme

The following improvements are planned for Abingdon:

Micro-Asphalt treatment in Burton Close, Francis Little Drive, Chauntrell Way, Gordon Drive, Foster Road, Hanson Road and Shephard Gardens.

Footway reconstruction in Sellwood Road

Footway Slurry in Hogarth Place, Gainsborough Green, Cotman Close and The Hyde

Street Lighting in Audlett Drive, Oxford Road, Radley Road, Dunmore Road, Wootton Road, Marcham Road, Drayton Road, Copenhagen Drive and Twelve Acre Drive, replacing a total of 507 units. This will considerably reduce electricity consumption.

I have been in communication with county council officers, having requested a 20mph speed limit throughout the town centre. This will improve road safety for all vehicles, cycles and pedestrians, and air quality for all town residents and visitors alike. Budget allocation decisions are awaited.

Lodge Hill New south facing slip roads for A34 at Lodge Hill, North Abingdon

As with many council-related works, there have been some additional delays with this project due to the pandemic. The latest information I have is:

The online consultation has concluded, and the results are being analysed by county council officers. They will publish a report shortly showing an analysis of the consultation. There has been a lot of feedback to us from local residents that the proposed design is very unfriendly for cyclists. We have asked the county officers to raise this issue with Highways England with the aim of ending up with a significantly more cycle-friendly design than the initial proposals."

The planning application is expected to be submitted in summer 2021. This is slightly delayed from my previous report due to the potential need to have further conversations with planners and Highways England following any tweaks that may be needed as a result of the consultation findings after their analysis. On this timeline, it is hoped that onsite work will commence in spring 2022 with completion in autumn/winter 2023. I have received assurances that, on this timeline, work will be completed on the interchange in line with planning requirements for the new housing planned for the area.

COUNCILLOR PRIORITY FUND

Abingdon Foodbank, Be Free Young Carers, Maggie's Oxford (cancer support), Earth Trust, Harvest @ Home, Abingdon Bridge, Highway safety improvements and monitoring, Oxford Care Leavers Assoc, the Archway Foundation, SOFEA (Abingdon Community Fridge), Citizens Advice, FarmAbility, 2nd Abingdon Scout Group, Laptops for local school pupils, St Nicholas School, Nature Recovery Network and Abingdon Carousel have all received monies totalling £44,874.35 from the Abingdon county councillors' priority fund budgets. The remaining £125.65 from the £45,000 total budget has been requested to go towards buying school laptops within Abingdon.

ABINGDON'S VARIOUS COUNCILS AND OCC MEETINGS INFORMATION

Links to view all county council virtual public meetings can be found on the [meeting details](#) page on the county council website –click on each meeting in the calendar to view the link. For those requesting to speak, committee officers will make the necessary arrangements for them to attend the meeting. Recordings can be viewed after each meeting.

There have been cases where some members of the public are unaware of which local council is responsible for which services. The following links are useful pointers to exact lists of the three councils' responsibilities:

www.abingdon.gov.uk

www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

I would refer you to the Vale of White Horse District council for any queries regarding issues involving their purview (which aren't county council issues) such as Old Abbey House (the Vale is the planning authority) or the Upper Reaches, which is a privately owned leasehold property. Of course, as you will know, any problems with graffiti should be forwarded to the Vale of White Horse DC.

I am pleased to say that Abingdon library is now open again following its temporary closure due to the Covid situation. I am, however, very sad to report that despite repeated lobbying the county council has failed to build new and larger, or structurally improved, library provision in Abingdon. This is despite the already inadequate library size being soon worsened by increased population levels.

The county council is responsible for social care, liaising with healthcare provision (though, of course, not responsible for direct healthcare itself, that being an NHS function). The county council is planning on issuing new contracts to companies providing domiciliary care (care at home) giving them less overall payment for their work and making it highly likely that some companies will have to withdraw from providing the service. You should be made aware that, as a direct result of this, it could well be harder for those in need of care to find adequate provision.

ABINGDON-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY 28 APRIL 2021
AGENDA ITEM 8: REPORT TO ABINGDON TOWN COUNCIL
CLLR HELEN PIGHILLS, VALE OF WHITE HORSE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LEISURE FACILITIES

At the March Vale Council meeting the council agreed to offer a financial support package to GLL, the leisure contractor that manages leisure facilities across both Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire, subject to formal agreements being made.

The leisure industry has been hit hard by the pandemic with facilities closed or running at limited capacity for most of last year. Ensuring that residents have access to facilities and opportunities to stay healthy and active is a priority for the council and it is important that our leisure facilities remain open. Council is continuing to push government for additional financial support for the leisure industry to ensure long term sustainable operation across the district

Following government advice, leisure centres started to reopen from 12th April. A phased reopening approach has been agreed with leisure contractors GLL. Each leisure centre has been assessed in line with Covid guidelines to determine how they can safely open and they are all operating at a much reduced capacity.

In line with government restrictions, a phased approach will be taken to reopening the outdoor pool at Abbey Meadow. Normally this would be open from May until the end of the school summer holidays but it remained closed last year because of the lockdown restrictions. The current plan is to open the pools for the summer season, but this is subject to continued progress towards the government's roadmap out of lockdown. It expected that the exact opening dates for the pool and the splash pad will be confirmed in the next few weeks.

Some council outdoor activities such as Nordic walking have also resumed following strict covid-safe rules.

JOINT LOCAL PLAN

At their March council meetings Vale and South Oxfordshire councils agreed to develop a joint Local Plan for the area which will meet the districts' common needs for carbon reduction, affordable housing and improved infrastructure.

A Joint Plan would benefit residents of Abingdon as the town is adjacent to the boundary separating the two districts. There will also be cost savings in producing one plan as there would be one set of evidence studies, one local plan examination and one Planning Inspector instead of two.

PUBLIC COVID 19 TESTING

Everyone over the age of 18 can now get free twice-weekly at home Covid tests. Everyone is encouraged to take a regular test, even if they have been vaccinated. The tests are now available by the following routes:

- Workplace testing programmes, on site or at home
- School or college testing on-site or at home.
- Community testing at The Beacon, Wantage

Collection of home test kits at community testing sites or any of almost 100 pharmacies across the county

Online ordering of tests by post.

Full details are on the county council's [website](#) or [gov.uk](#).

WHITE HORSE COMMUNITY LOTTERY

This summer we will be launching a new community lottery for the Vale. This follows a very successful lottery that is already running in South Oxfordshire.

Voluntary and community organisations are being invited to register their interest in getting involved. It is a great way to raise funds with 60% of ticket sales going to good causes.

Any organisations wanting to register should email communityenablement@southandvale.gov.uk

HELEN PIGHILLS

Cabinet Member for Healthy Communities

Vale Councillor for Abingdon Abbey Northcourt ward

April 2021