



ABINGDON-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL

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Minutes of the Meeting of the Council of Abingdon-on-Thames held on Wednesday 30 June 2021

Present

Cllr Cheryl Briggs	Mayor
Cllr Andy Foulsham	Deputy Mayor
Cllr Gabby Barody	
Cllr Charlie Birks	
Cllr Samantha Bowring	
Cllr Rawda Jehanli	
Cllr Patrick Lonergan	
Cllr Andrew Skinner	

In attendance in person

Andy Crick	Committee Clerk (Clerk to the meeting)
Nigel Warner	Town Clerk

In attendance online

Cllr Grace Clifton
Cllr Margaret Crick
Cllr Alex Greenaway
Cllr Jim Halliday
Cllr Eric de la Harpe
Cllr Lorraine Oates
Cllr Helen Pighills

Rita Atkinson	Trustee, Abingdon DAMASCUS Youth Project
Holly Freeland	The Abingdon Bridge
Roxy Elford	Youth Worker, Abingdon DAMASCUS Youth Project
Susan Whipp	Deputy Town Clerk / Head of Administration and Democratic Services

C8 Prayers

The Rector, Rev Dr Charles Miller was unable to join the meeting.

C9 Public Participation

There was a presentation from Roxy Elford, Youth Worker at Abingdon DAMASCUS Youth Project (ADYP) and Holly Freeland from The Abingdon Bridge (TAB). Both youth groups are working with the Town Council to develop support across Abingdon. The charities have prepared a proposal for the project which will be submitted to the Town Council. A copy of the presentation delivered to the meeting can be found here.

Rita Atkinson, Roxy Elford and Holly Freeland left the meeting at 7.27pm.

C10 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Coveney, Cllr Fawcett, Cllr Maddison and Cllr Rowbottom.

C11 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

C12 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** that the draft minutes of the meetings held on 28 April 2021 and 19 May 2021 be adopted and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

Cllr Bowring reported from Cllr Fawcett that civil parking enforcement for Abingdon had been approved by the government and would be coming to Abingdon by the end of 2021.

C13 Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor presented a list of her engagements.

C14 Oxfordshire County Council

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

Cllr Lonergan mentioned online parking services as a possible model for adoption in Abingdon.

C15 Vale of White Horse District Council

The Council 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 below). The report was noted.

C16 Report of the Internal Auditor

It was proposed by Cllr Bowring, seconded by Cllr Foulsham and **RESOLVED** that the report of the Internal Auditor be approved.

C17 Completion and Approval of Annual Governance Statement

It was proposed by Cllr Bowring, seconded by Cllr Birks and **RESOLVED** that the Council answers 'yes' to questions 1-8 and that the Annual Governance Statement be approved and signed by the Chair and Town Clerk.

C18 Approval of Annual Return and Financial Statements

It was proposed by Cllr Bowring, seconded by Cllr Lonergan and **RESOLVED** that Section 2 of the Annual Return and the Statements of Account be approved.

C19 Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group interim report was presented to the Council.

It was proposed by Cllr Foulsham, seconded by Cllr Lonergan and agreed that the Council receive the interim report, acknowledge the key principles outlined and authorise the Steering Group to proceed with public engagement.

Cllr Halliday noted that the work on the Neighbourhood Plan had been carried out by volunteers, supported by consultants and asked the Council to offer a vote of thanks to the volunteers for their work. This was proposed by Cllr Birks, seconded by Cllr Barody and agreed.

C20 Motions under Standing Order 8

The motion presented by Council by Cllr Halliday and Cllr Skinner was formally proposed by Cllr Foulsham and seconded by Cllr Skinner, both of whom were present in person at the meeting.

Cllr Halliday welcomed the work of County Council officers in identifying the problems and implementing necessary traffic restrictions so quickly. He also welcomed the report

from Cllr Nathan Ley which had addressed the matters raised in the motion, in particular air quality and traffic monitoring. Cllr Skinner endorsed the comments of Cllr Halliday and commended the work of the County Council.

Cllr Lonergan suggested that the widening of the pedestrian and cycle pathway across the bridge might stop at Nag's Head Island as the bridge widens at this point. This might help to reduce congestion.

The motion was agreed by the Council.

The meeting closed at 7.38pm.

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Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames

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Date

ABINGDON-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 30 JUNE 2021

AGENDA ITEM 7: REPORT TO ABINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

CLLR NATHAN LEY, ABINGDON NORTH DIVISION, OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

ELECTION RESULTS

County Council Elections – 6 May 2021

In May the County Council elections in Oxfordshire resulted in a change of administration, with the Conservatives losing control of the Council. An alliance of Liberal Democrat, Green and Labour Councillors now form the administration, including the three Abingdon-based Councillors, myself (Nathan Ley), Alison Rooke, and Neil Fawcett.

The individual members of the Oxfordshire's Fair Deal Alliance Cabinet and responsibilities can be viewed at the link below:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/council/about-your-council/oxfordshire-councillors/cabinet>

ROADS AND TRANSPORT

Abingdon Bridge

In May, motorists were warned that traffic restrictions would be placed on Abingdon Bridge in after concerns were discovered during a routine inspection. Stonework to the eastern side of the northern arch of the bridge has become displaced, reducing the bridge strength in this area. Temporary traffic signals have been put in place to enable vehicles up to 44 tonnes to continue to use the bridge safely by avoiding the weakened area. The introduction of the temporary traffic signals required the pelican crossing to the north to be turned off, together with the Market Place traffic signals at the junction of Bridge Street and High Street.

The repairs will require the use of a specialist subcontractor and advice from Historic England, due to this being a scheduled monument, and the Environment Agency, as access will be required from the River Thames below.

The timescales for this repair work have still not yet been fully established, but it is likely to be at least six months before work can start and possibly more than a year before a satisfactory repair is completed and the temporary traffic signals can be removed.

<https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/temporary-traffic-restrictions-in-place-on-abingdon-bridge/>

In the meantime Cabinet Member for Highways Management, Tim Bearder, is exploring options to temporarily reallocate road space along the length of the bridge and provide more room for pedestrians and cyclists to safely transit across the river – especially vital for the busy summer months with large flows of people along the narrow footpath. A week-long trial period is likely to be initiated imminently, monitoring the effect on traffic flows and air quality, with a view to providing a solution for the duration of the works, and possibly beyond.

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

There are no further updates since those given by Alison Rooke on 28 April 2021. We still await publication of a report shortly following the 'virtual exhibition'. An update on the project is expected at the next Abingdon Locality Meeting on 5 July 2021.

Cabinet Member for Highways Management – Forward plan and future business

Items identified from the Forward Plan for Forthcoming Decision: 29 July 2021.

- Larkhill Road - Proposed Waiting Restrictions. To seek approval of the proposals.

20 mph Scheme Rollout

A streamlined, county-wide scheme for approval of 20 mph zones for residential streets and town centres is in development but is likely to take some time to come to fruition. At the moment there is a lot of push back from officers on legal aspects of unilaterally placing in 20 mph schemes, which need to be worked through. Currently the county Council has a laborious and expensive multi-stage process, led by the County Councillor/and or Parish Council with local issues resolved worked through as best they can.

As a result, OCC are looking at ways to streamline the process and achieve savings through bulk processing some of those stages. The aim is to develop a two-page document that outlines the process, commitments, and the costs to parish and town Councils. Following this OCC will then take expressions of interest and schedule/prioritise the work. For now, Cllr Bearder has signed of £50,000 for five villages to test various concepts so OCC has the evidence base for pushing back against any possible legal challenges.

Consultation on Proposed Virtual 'Pay & Display' Parking Tickets

Views are being sought on the proposal to give the option to allow payments for on-street parking without the need to pay at a machine and displaying a parking ticket on a vehicle within Abingdon. Specifically, a 'Virtual Parking Ticket' will be able to be obtained by means of connectivity to the internet or an appropriate application ('App') via a mobile phone, or similar method (without the need to display a ticket) but which then gives the same rights and responsibilities as the issue of a ticket for display. Enforcement officers will have access to the relevant information to perform their duties (charges for parking remain unchanged).

Details are available to view on the Council's consultation pages:

<https://consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/OxfordSouthOxonVirtual/consultationHome>

COUNCILLOR PRIORITY FUND

The Councillor Priority Fund, supporting Councillor priorities in their local areas, is now open to new applications. The fund will be at the discretion of the individual county Councillors to award. Councillors each have £15,000 for the two-year period 2021-2023. For more information and to apply please visit <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/community-and-living/thriving-communities/councillor-priority-fund>

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

ABINGDON-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 30 JUNE 2021

AGENDA ITEM 8: REPORT TO ABINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

CLLR HELEN PIGHILLS, ABINGDON ABBEY NORTHCOURT WARD

LEISURE FACILITIES

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

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. Negotiations are still continuing between both parties and this has impacted on the opening date of the Abbey Meadow Outdoor Pool this year. It has always been the Council's intention that the pool would open this year, however GLL had decided to keep facilities that do not make money closed until the formal agreement was finalised.

GLL have now agreed to open the pool from 12th July, although it will be at a reduced capacity to allow social distancing while Covid-19 restrictions are still in place. GLL have announced the new opening hours and bookings may be made via the Better website or app.

GLL have listened to residents' suggestions and are now opening earlier on weekdays to allow early morning and late afternoon swimming sessions. In previous years there were around 600 swims per week in termtime and there were around 3000 per week in during school holidays.

The Abbey Meadow splash pad will reopen on 19th July, assuming government Covid-19 restrictions are lifted then. GLL and the Council do not believe that social distancing can be managed on such a small area. In addition, the splash pad has not been in operation for nearly two years so will need cleaning and testing before it can be used again.

WASTE COLLECTIONS

Over the last few weeks there have been various problems and disruptions to waste collections. These have been mainly due to staff shortages, mainly drivers, affecting our waste contractor Biffa. There have been a number of contributing factors including travel restrictions on foreign workers due to Covid-19 and Brexit, drivers switching to work such as delivery, 13 months of disrupted driving tests for conversion of operators to drivers and the high cost of living in this area.

Biffa is managing the situation as best they can by providing extra weekend overtime – but this is not sustainable long term and the Vale council is actively calling for more drivers to join the teams.

WHITE HORSE COMMUNITY LOTTERY

The White Horse Community Lottery has now been officially launched. The lottery enables people to support causes that they care about and helps good causes to connect with their supporters.

Players can choose which causes they want to support when they buy their tickets. Tickets are £1 each with 60p from every ticket going to support charities and community groups.

It is free for organisations to join – see more details on the Vale website or email communityenablement@southandvale.gov.uk

It would be great if all councillors could think about the voluntary groups and charities in their wards, make sure they are aware of the lottery and encourage them to join.

HELEN PIGHILLS

Cabinet Member for Healthy Communities

Vale Councillor for Abingdon Abbey Northcourt ward

June 2021