

ABINGDON-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL

Wednesday 26 January 2022

Draft Minutes

Present in person:

Cllr Andy Foulsham Deputy Mayor (Chair)
Cllr Gabby Barody
Cllr Samantha Bowring Leader
Cllr Grace Clifton
Cllr Jim Halliday
Cllr Eric de la Harpe
Cllr Lorraine Oates

In attendance in person:

Nigel Warner Town Clerk
Susan Whipp Deputy Town Clerk / RFO

In attendance online:

Cllr Charlie Birks
Cllr Cheryl Briggs
Cllr Margaret Crick
Cllr Neil Fawcett
Cllr Rawda Jehanli
Cllr Pat Lonergan
Cllr Helen Pighills
Cllr Ulrike Rowbottom
Cllr Andrew Skinner

Andy Crick Committee Clerk (clerk to the meeting)
Katherine Doherty Community Safety Team Leader, Vale of White Horse District Council
Alastair Fear
Hester Hand Friends of Abingdon Civic Society
Philip Kenrick
Bobbie Nichols
Olga Senior Dementia Friendly Abingdon

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Before the meeting began, the Deputy Mayor advised the meeting of the death of former Mayor Ewart Hemmings and a minute's silence was observed in his memory.

C75. Public Participation

Olga Senior of Dementia Friendly Abingdon made a short presentation

Dementia Friendly Abingdon is a group of volunteers seeking to support people with dementia and mild cognitive impairment (MCI), which is normally a precursor to dementia, as well as family or friends living with people thus affected. Support services are provided through Dementia Oxfordshire, part of Age UK but those with mild symptoms have no access to services. Dementia Friendly Abingdon has worked with local businesses and services to help them to understand and support people with dementia and MCI. The group would be willing to provide training to town council staff and members and asked the town council to support the group with services such as room bookings or printing.

The Deputy Mayor thanked Ms Senior for attending and the group was advised to consider applying for a community grant from the town council. Online meetings were suggested for people who are wary of attending meetings in person under current circumstances.

Ms Senior was asked to send the Dementia Friendly Abingdon newsletter to the town council to be circulated to staff and members. Ms Senior would contact the Community Services and Events Officer to raise awareness at the town council and would consider submitting an article for the Town Crier publication.

Ms Senior was thanked for attending the meeting.

Katherine Doherty, Community Safety Team Leader, Vale of White Horse District Council

Katherine Doherty provided an update on actions taken by the district council to address anti-social behaviour at the Upper Reaches Hotel site.

The Property Team at the district council have been working with the tenant to secure the site to prevent trespassing, as this is the tenant's responsibility. There have been some improvements but people are still trespassing so further action is needed.

The district council is looking into getting a Community Protection Notice (CPN) under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 to require the tenant to make the necessary changes. A CPN can be used to tackle unreasonable behaviour which is having a persistent and detrimental effect on the quality of life of the local community.

The CPN process has two stages: a warning letter, followed by a notice which it is a criminal offence to breach. Action may involve a fixed penalty notice or prosecution. A CPN must be supported by robust information on the problem and a clear statement of

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what the tenant is required to do. The Community Safety Team is currently establishing exactly what the tenant needs to do to secure the site to inform the CPN. Ms Doherty asked that any anti-social behaviour continues to be reported to Thames Valley Police to enable the police to provide a suitable response and to gather evidence for future action.

Ms Doherty was thanked for her presentation on anti-social behaviour and asked to request that district council colleagues provide an update on the long-term future of the site.

Ms Doherty would provide a written report of her presentation to circulate to Councillors.

The Town Clerk advised the meeting that he had spoken to senior officers at the district council about the issues at the Upper Reaches and had requested information on the future plans for the site. It was noted that commercial issues existed which could not be shared in the public domain at this current time.

The Deputy Mayor thanked Ms Doherty for attending the meeting.

Katherine Doherty left the meeting at 7.41pm

C76. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Coveney, Greenaway and Maddison.

C77. Declarations of Interest

Cllrs Bowring and Crick are trustees of Abingdon Carousel, which receives an annual grant included in the council's recommended 2022-23 budget.

Cllr Barody volunteers with The Abingdon Bridge, which receives an annual grant in the council's recommended 2022-23 budget.

C78. Minutes

It was resolved that the draft minutes of the council of Abingdon-on-Thames held on 1 December 2021 be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

Matters arising

C71 – Motions: the town council had asked the Town Clerk to write to the Chief Executive of the Vale of White Horse District Council for an update on the closure of the Charter Car Park and the Town Clerk was asked for an update. The Town Clerk reported that he had met with the Head of Property and the Deputy Chief Executive and had received a report from the district council which advised that the lower levels of the Charter Car Park were open but levels 3 and above were closed due to structural and fire safety concerns.

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The district council has undertaken to provide a further update to the meeting of the town council on 30 March 2022.

The Town Clerk was asked to request that the district council puts notices around the Charter to update residents on the current situation.

C79. Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor's Engagements were noted.

C80. Oxfordshire County Council

The meeting received and considered a report on the work of the county council from Cllr Neil Fawcett.

Lodge Hill

Cllr Birks asked about Lodge Hill junction with the A34 and Cllr Fawcett advised that the proposal has been changed significantly to address the needs of cyclists and pedestrians but not as much as was hoped by the town council. The Highways Agency would not allow any changes which might cause traffic to back up on to the A34. The changes to the proposed junction will link in with existing cycle and pedestrian paths.

Cllr Fawcett noted that it is anticipated that the Lodge Hill junction will open in December 2023 but cautioned that the process could take longer.

Traffic cameras

Cllr Clifton had looked at the information about enforcement of traffic restrictions and noted that all cameras are sited in Oxford. The consultation invited suggestions for other locations and she has submitted suggestions for some locations in Abingdon. Cllr Fawcett noted that the cameras are being sited where there are traffic problems and more may be added in due course.

The report was noted.

C81. Vale of White Horse District Council

The meeting received and considered a report on the work of the district council.

District councillors were asked about plans for community groups to move into the Charter. This is awaiting the end of the vaccination process, after which the building will then be refurbished to allow the community groups to move in. Grant funding is being sought for this process.

The report was noted.

Olga Senior left the meeting at 8.09pm

Minutes of Council Advisory Committees for adoption as a report of their proceedings (not accuracy) and recommendations for approval

C82. Community Advisory Committee

The notes of the meeting of the Community Advisory Committee held on 21 December 2021 were proposed by Cllr Oates, seconded by Cllr Foulsham and approved.

Matters referred

The budget recommendation under item C51 would be dealt with under the budget recommendation from the Finance, Governance and Asset Management Advisory Committee so it would not be considered separately.

Grants

C52. It was resolved that a grant of £550 be awarded to Abingdon Joint Schools Carnegie Forum.

It was resolved that a grant of £3,250 be awarded to Radley Lakes Trust.

Platinum Jubilee Working Group

C53. It was resolved that:

- the estimated budget of £52,410 for the Platinum Jubilee be approved;
- the 2021-22 net expenditure budget for the Platinum Jubilee of £14,584 be rolled over to 2022-23 in the form of an earmarked reserve, which could then be used to offset the costs incurred in 2022-23;
- a 2022-23 budget be set at £37,826.

C83. Environment and Amenities Advisory Committee

The notes of the meeting of the Environment and Amenities Advisory Committee held on 11 January 2022 were proposed by Cllr Barody, seconded by Cllr Halliday and approved.

Matters referred

The budget recommendation under item EA43 would be dealt with under the budget recommendation from the Finance, Governance and Asset Management Advisory Committee so it would not be considered separately.

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Play area improvements working group

EA43 It was resolved that a small task-based working group be set up to work on play area improvements with the Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager, the membership to be agreed by the town council.

The membership of the working group was proposed and approved as:

Cllr Barody
Cllr Bowring
Cllr Halliday
Cllr Oates

Biodiversity plan

EA44. It was resolved that the report and recommendations therein be agreed. Cllr Barody was thanked for her work on these matters.

C84. Town Infrastructure Advisory Committee

The notes of the meeting of the Town Infrastructure Advisory Committee held on 13 January 2022 were proposed by Cllr Clifton, seconded by Cllr de la Harpe and approved.

Matters referred

20mph zone working group

T38. It was resolved that the Town Clerk write to the county council to request a blanket 20mph limit across Abingdon and a 30mph limit on the peripheral roads – Audlett Drive, Twelve Acre Drive, Dunmore Road, Copenhagen Drive and Colwell Drive.

Fingerpost signs

T40. It was resolved that the town council adopts the finger posts in the town installed by the former Joint Environmental Trust (JET) and that the Town Clerk takes appropriate action to maintain them.

Cllr Halliday noted that he had completed a survey to pass to the Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager.

Budget 2022-23

The budget recommendation under item T41 would be dealt with under the budget recommendation from the Finance, Governance and Asset Management Advisory Committee so it would not be considered separately.

C85. Finance, Governance and Asset Management Advisory Committee

The notes of the meeting of the Finance, Governance and Asset Management Advisory Committee meeting held on 18 January 2022 were proposed by Cllr Bowring, seconded by Cllr Barody and approved.

Matters referred

Management accounts

FG52. It was resolved that the management accounts for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 November 2021 be approved.

Finance report

FG53. It was resolved that the list of payments made between 1 November 2021 and 31 December 2021 be approved.

2022-23 Estimates

FG54. It was resolved:

- (i) That the year-end projections as set out in paragraphs 6.1 to 6.3 and appendix A of the report of the Deputy Town Clerk/ RFO, be noted;
- (ii) That the fees and charges as set out in paragraph 6.4 and appendix B the report be approved subject to amending the charge to commercial markets including the regular Monday market (but excluding the Farmers' Market) for 2022/23 to £12.00 per 10ft pitch, to reflect the increased management costs incurred by the town council as a result of duties transferring from the traders to the council;
- (iii) That the report of the district council remuneration panel dated December 2020 and received 11 January 2022, be noted;
- (iv) That Members' allowances for 2022/23 be approved as follows:
 - (a) £1,117 per member, resulting in an overall budget of £21,223, this being based on 20% of a district councillor's basic allowance as in previous years;
 - (b) That travel and subsistence expenses be payable to members in relation to duties incurred outside the parish, payable at the national HMRC rates;
 - (c) That a mayoral allowance of £3,500 be paid, noting that by local arrangement the mayor allocates £500 of this allowance to the deputy mayor to recognise duties undertaken on their behalf;

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- (v) That estimates for 2022/23 as detailed in the report from paragraphs 6.10 to 6.23 and in the associated appendices be noted and that the net expenditure requirement for the council for 2022/23 be agreed as £1,807,313 (this including all the items detailed in paragraph 6.11) plus the following amendments recommended by the town infrastructure advisory committee to that committee's draft budget, which was considered on 13 January 2022):
- (a) Support for CCTV in Abingdon – £8,346
 - (b) Speed indicator devices – £15,000

The revised net expenditure requirement is £1,830,659.

- (vi) That the net expenditure budget for 2022/23 be funded as follows:

Precept	£1,755,659
Grant funding and use of CIL	£75,000

- (vii) That subject to the above the report of the Deputy Town Clerk/ RFO, be approved.

Investment Strategy

FG55. It was resolved that the investment strategy as contained in appendix B of the report be approved.

Documentation retention and disposal policy

FG57. The recommendation as stated in the minutes of the Finance, Governance and Asset Management Advisory Committee was amended as follows (amendment in bold):

'It was recommended that the document, information and data retention and disposal policy be adopted, **with authority delegated to the Town Clerk to make amendments to the policy as required in consultation with the town council archivist**'.

The amendment was proposed by Cllr Halliday, seconded by Cllr Clifton and agreed.

The amended recommendation, as proposed and seconded by the Finance, Governance and Asset Management Advisory Committee, was approved and it was resolved that the policy be adopted.

Community governance review

FG58 It was resolved that:

1. The report of the town clerk be noted.
2. The district council be thanked for consulting the town council in relation to the community governance review and be advised that the town council requests that the review considers the distribution of the council's 19 members across the wards to reflect the change in the number or distribution of the electors which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when the review starts.

C86. Governance during the Covid-19 pandemic

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

The Town Clerk proposed:

- (i) that the current arrangements remain in place during the February/ March cycle of meetings
- (ii) the matter be reviewed at the council meeting on 30 March 2022.
- (iii) that, having due regard to the continued Covid-19 pandemic and high infection and hospitalisation rates, the arrangements set out by the Town Clerk be continued for an additional six months.

The Town Clerk further proposed that in accordance with the provisions of section 185 of the Local Government Act 1972, the requirement to attend meetings in person is waived until 31 July 2022 for Cllr Rob Maddison and Cllr Ulrike Rowbottom for the reason that both are unable to attend meetings in person for personal and health reasons and for reasons of the ongoing pandemic and that this matter be reviewed by the council prior to 31 July 2022.

The recommendations were proposed by Cllr Foulsham, seconded by Cllr Bowring and approved.

C87. Motions under Standing Order 8

The following motion was proposed by Cllr Barody, seconded by Cllr Bowring and approved:

Abingdon Council to Support the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill

The Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill is a private members' bill with cross-party support of over 150 Parliamentarians (MPs and Peers across all political parties) and over 100 local councils around the UK.

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It would enshrine in law a commitment to deliver policy and action in line with the latest science - and with our Government's own ambitions. It is the only proposed legislation which addresses the interconnected crises in climate and nature, with annual legally-binding targets to keep us on track.

This will also contribute towards preserving the future of children, young people and in essence, generations to come.

Abingdon also acknowledges the work the town and residents are already doing with support from local organisations and the newly formed Climate Emergency Centre

This Council resolves to:

1. Support the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill;
2. Inform our town, the residents and our local MP (Layla Moran) of this action through our website and social medial forums
3. Inform the local media (press) of this decision;
4. Write to Zero Hour, the campaign in support of the CEE Bill (joinus@ceebill.uk), and to the Zero Hour Oxfordshire (ceebillalliance.oxford@gmail.com), the Oxfordshire campaign in support of the CEE Bill, expressing our support

C88. Exclusion of the Public, Including the Press

The Deputy Mayor moved 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.

Cllr Rowbottom left the meeting at 9.03pm

SECTION II (Confidential Agenda)

C89. Community Advisory Committee

The confidential appendix to the notes of the meeting of the Community Advisory Committee held on 21 December 2021 was noted.

C61. The recommendation was resolved.

C90. **Town Infrastructure Advisory Committee**

The confidential appendix to the notes of the meeting of the Town Infrastructure Advisory Committee held on 13 January 2022 was noted.

The Town Clerk commented that civil parking enforcement is working well and that outstanding issues in Abingdon have now been addressed thanks to the changes.

Additional item: FGAM update from Town Clerk under Community Governance review.

Please see the confidential appendix to these minutes.

C91. **Civic matters: Freedom of Abingdon**

The town council received and considered a report from the Town Clerk.

Please see the confidential appendix to these minutes.

The meeting closed at 10pm.