



ABINGDON-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL

Nigel E. Warner, M.A.(Oxon)
Town Clerk
Telephone: (01235) 522642
Facsimile: (01235) 533112
Email: enquiries@abingdon.gov.uk
Website: www.abingdon.gov.uk

Royse Court,
Bridge Street,
Abingdon-on-Thames.
OX14 3HU

Environment and Amenities Advisory Committee Tuesday 8 March 2022 AGENDA

Date of agenda: 4 March 2022

To: All Members of the Environment and Amenities Advisory Committee

Cllr Gabby Barody	Chair
Cllr Jim Halliday	Vice-Chair
Cllr Charlie Birks	
Cllr Margaret Crick	
Cllr Rawda Jehanli	
Cllr Lorraine Oates	
Cllr Helen Pighills	
Cllr Cheryl Briggs	(<i>ex-officio</i> , Mayor)
Cllr Samantha Bowring	(<i>ex-officio</i> , Chair F and GP Committee, Leader)

To: all other Members for Information

Dear Member,

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **Environment and Amenities Advisory Committee** to be held on **Tuesday 8 March at 7.00pm.**

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the Town Council will hold this meeting online and not in person. **The meeting link will be sent out separately.** As agreed by the Town Council at its meeting on 29 September 2021, the recommendations of this advisory committee will be considered by the Town Council at its next meeting. Please see the note on governance at the end of this agenda.

The meeting ID will be forwarded to Members separately. Any members of the public who wish to attend should e-mail me at democratic@abingdon.gov.uk and you will be sent the relevant link on the day of the meeting.

The meeting will be conducted in the same way, as far as possible, as a meeting in person. Members of the public may view the meeting online and may, with notice, make representations, ask questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business at agenda item 5.

Should any Member be unable to attend and wish to appoint a substitute to the meeting, they should inform me at democratic@abingdon.gov.uk.

The agreed [terms of reference](#) for this committee can be viewed here.

Any queries on a report should be directed to the report author.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Warner

Nigel Warner
Town Clerk (signed electronically)

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council Our Vision

To develop an inclusive community so that Abingdon is the place where everyone wants to live and where the wellbeing of residents is prioritised. In developing this community, the town will be one which is environmentally sustainable, vibrant, resilient and safe.

Our key objectives

1. To respond effectively and speedily to the climate emergency.
2. To develop a resilient, sustainable town which will provide a home for residents now and in the future.
3. To manage the Council's assets efficiently and effectively to meet for the needs of the community now and in the future.
4. To work with community partners to support those who are vulnerable and in need and to create opportunities to increase social inclusivity.

SECTION I - Open to the public and media

1. **Apologies**

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. **Declarations of interest**

To receive any declarations of interest from Members in relation to any items to be considered at the meeting in accordance with the Local Code of Conduct.

3. **Minutes**

To sign as a correct record the draft notes of the meeting of the Environment and Amenities Advisory Committee of [11 January 2022](#).

4. **Matters arising**

To consider any matters arising from the minutes of these meetings not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

5. **Statements and Questions from the Public**

To receive any statements and questions. These should be submitted in writing by letter or post to the address above or by e-mail to democratic@abingdon.gov.uk no later than 5pm on Monday 7 March 2022.

6. **Forward Plan and Actions Register**

Actions Register

The Actions Register report can be found [here](#).

Forward Plan

1. Community Woodland (TB/NW)	
Jan to Mar 2021	Plan for community woodland
Jun 2021 review	Community Wood Project - report to Amenities 9.6.21. Carbon Cutters undertaking a site survey June 2021
July to Sep 2021	Consideration of business plan
Oct to Dec 2021	Site and draft plan agreed by committee November 2021
January 2022	Budget now needs to be agreed.
Update: February 2022	Landowner approached by council's agent; awaiting further advice
Apr to Jun 2022	Commence work
Oct to Dec 2022	Planting
2. Review of play areas (TB)	
Jan to Mar 2021	Review of play areas
Jun 2021 review	Review took place June 2021
Oct 2021 update	Quotes for play equipment received. Procurement should be completed in 2021 – report to committee 16 November 2021
Nov 2021 update	Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager updated meeting on quotes received. Work to proceed under delegation to officers.
January 2022 update	See action plan update
February 2022 update	Play area working group established – Doodle poll for meeting to be arranged for late March 2022. It is requested that any unspent sums from the current year play area improvement budget be carried over to 2022/23
3. Tree Survey (TB)	
Apr to Jun 2022	Commission tree report
Apr to Jun 2024	Commission tree report
February 2022 – contractors and staff continue to address the works identified. Contractors are behind schedule with 43% of work, by value, done. It is requested that any unspent sums from the current year tree works budget be carried over to 2022/23	
4. New Cemetery (NW>VM)	
Apr to Jun 2021	Land offer from VOWH - Key decision on proceeding
Jun 2021 review	Masefield Crescent site part of Vale Strategic Property review See Amenities Committee - 9.6.21 Recommended: 1) New Cemetery Working Group reappointed; 2) Sum of £20,000 released from the earmarked reserves towards work on the business case

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	<p>3) Other potential sites in the town be explored cemetery infrastructure is already in place);</p> <p>4) Confirmation on suitability of Masefield Crescent site undertaking a desk top exercise;</p> <p>5) Valuation of the Masefield Crescent site;</p> <p>6) A business proposal be developed, as far as we are able, ahead of further information from DC;</p> <p>7) Dialogue with the District Council continue during this period so that proposals can be informed. Further meeting due with VWHDC June 21</p>
Dec 2021-Jan 2022	Town Clerk to prepare report. Meeting to be called once the report is prepared.
February 2022 update	Feasibility study scoped and contract awarded. Work on feasibility study taking place in April 2022 – see update on agenda for meeting of 8 March 2022
Oct to Dec 2023	Commence building work TBC
Jan to Mar 2025	Open new cemetery TBC

5. Infant Burial Area (TB)

January 2022	This project is ahead of schedule. The area has been planned by the Outdoor Services Manager and a quote has been obtained for the work
Apr to Jun 2022	Plan infant burial area
July to Sep 2022	Implement infant burial area
March 2022 update	It is requested that any unspent sums from the current year cemetery improvements budget be carried over to 2022/23

Potential projects for prioritisation and timetabling

- Rewilding and tree planting programme. January 2022 update: have identified sites for 30 replacement and additional trees. Identified 150 metres of council boundaries suitable for hedge planting. Town Council is not responsible for grass verges on the highway. March 2022 update – please see report at item 10.
- Annual programmes for: cemetery improvements, major arboricultural works (inc. date of next major survey), vehicles/equipment replacement dates, street furniture.

1. Green Projects

Oct to Dec 2020	Cllr Andrew Coveney & Anne Smart to liaise with takeaway establishments regarding climate emergency. Invite experts to discuss. met with all establishments Anne to update – theme of green forum
Oct to Dec 2021	Promote small financial awards programme for environmental initiatives especially in relation to schools, to include biodiversity initiatives (inc. competition) Biodiversity competition was

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	<p>launched over the summer, showcasing biodiversity in action from residents and organisations sharing gardens, shared spaces form residents. Judging to commence shortly, with the announcement of the winners and prize giving ceremony to be hosted by the Mayor in December at the County Hall Museum.</p> <p>Update March 2022: Plans being made for next competition, involving the schools. Abingdon Learning Trust planning an exhibition in the Guildhall in June – committee requested to consider paying for the room hire – approx. cost £150.</p>
Apr to Jun 2022	<p>Environmental Awareness Day – requires proposal for November 2021 meeting to include format, date, budget etc - To be included as a theme within the Green Forum. Update March 2022: being considered and taken forward by the Green Forum</p>
October 2021 update	<p>Cllr Cheryl Briggs to take over from Cllr Coveney (see Oct to Dec 2020 note) and work with Anne Smart in relation to work with “takeaway” establishments. Date of project to be put back to 2022.</p>
March 2022 update	<p>Anne Smart to update meeting on the survey which she undertook with Cllr Cheryl Briggs re survey on takeaway establishments</p>
2. Plastic-free town initiative	
Jan to Mar 2021	<p>Work with ACC regarding the plastic free town initiative with the objective that shop and market retailers use no plastic or polystyrene. Commence this work with an audit of retailers</p>
Apr to Jun 2021	<p>Agree and implement measures and incentives to achieve the objective that shop and market retailers use no plastic or polystyrene. Pop-up to promote reusable cups took place 29 May 21</p>
June 2021 review	<p>Cafes audited. Most retailers do not now use polystyrene. Work delayed due to Covid but next steps and proposal to be considered at July mtg</p>
October 2021 update	<p>Use of single use plastic in relation to activity on the Market considered by Community Committee (as service ctte), at its September 2021 meeting – The report of the Community Services and Events Officer on the single use plastics policy on the Market Place was noted. The Community Services and Events Officer noted the delay in rolling out the new policy due to the pandemic and health and safety concerns over reusing items. The policy was now being introduced in consultation with market traders. Report to a future meeting to consider the position regarding plastic-free initiatives beyond the Market Place</p>

3. Biodiversity plan	
Apr to Jun 2021	Commence work on a biodiversity plan for the town council.
June 2021 review	Plan discussed ctte April 2021 and rescheduled adoption. Link to the Green Spaces Plan (Neighbourhood Plan). Approach a volunteer to assist in this area
Jan to Mar 2022	Adoption of biodiversity plan
Oct 2021 update	Work has commenced and we should be able to keep to the timetable for a biodiversity plan to be adopted in March 2022. Report due to committee in November 2021.
January 2022 update	See report to meeting of EA Committee together with budget proposal.
March 2022 meeting	Member feedback on the plan requested for this meeting. Copy attached for Members.
Potential projects for prioritisation and timetabling	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure actions and decisions are in line with and partner the Neighbourhood Plan and relevant Local Plan work. - Be ready to be a pilot town for innovative green schemes which may emerge, noting that this will require flexibility in relation to this section of the Forward Plan. 	

7. Green Forum

To note the notes of the Green Forum of [6 January 2022](#), [20 January 2022](#), [3 February 2022](#) and [24 February 2022](#).

Report from Anne Smart, Chair of the Forum:

Financial request: for our Forum market stall on 29 January 2022, Carbon Cutters paid £15 for a gazebo; we wonder whether the Council could consider reimbursing this amount please?

Future meetings: our next meeting is on 10 March 2022, and then we have a market stall on 26 March 2022. This will mark the end of the first quarter's Forum.

The Second Quarter's Forum, from April through to June is themed in relation to Biodiversity; this will be co-ordinated by and chaired by Lucille Savin.

Policy

8. **Biodiversity plan**

8.1 To receive an update from John Killick in relation to the above.

8.2 At the meeting of 11 January 2022 the Committee received and considered the draft Biodiversity Plan which had been prepared by Cllr Gabby Barody, Chair of the Committee.

Members were asked to pass any comments on the proposed plan to the Chair and that any proposed changes or refinements be considered at the next meeting of the advisory committee. [A copy of the plan is attached](#). Members are requested to consider the plan further so that any comments can be incorporated.

9. **Allotments**

[Report](#) of the Town Clerk.

Operational

10. **Report from the Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager**

To receive a [report](#) from the Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager.

11. **New cemetery working party**

To receive an update from the Chair of the New Cemetery Working Party, Cllr Jim Halliday:

After the New Cemetery Working Party's report to the January meeting of this committee had been accepted, the Town Clerk worked with the Chair of the Working Party to draw up a detailed specification of what the Council wanted CDS to do. Given the current pressures on council staff, it was concluded it would make sense to set CDS a broad specification and in effect get them to write the bulk of the report that the Council will need before making an informed decision. The specification was also informed by reading other reports that CDS had prepared for other councils. In summary, the specification covered the following items:

1. Give details of the different projects which you have undertaken for other burial authorities (to establish the competence of CDS).

2. An assessment of the current capacity remaining in the Spring Road (new) cemetery for new burials and ashes interments - including consideration of expected population growth, a possible shift away from cremation, and the potential for an aquamation facility in Abingdon, plus any other factors they considered important.
3. An options appraisal for future cemetery provision, indicating the risk assessment of the following strategies : a) Do nothing; b) Review present cemetery space allocations (in both cemeteries) to see if there is additional space which could be found; c) Look for a new cemetery site; d) Work with a business partner to deliver cemetery services
4. Clarification of the powers and responsibilities of the district and town councils in relation to cemetery provision.
5. Carry out and report on a high-level review of possible sites in Abingdon. Seven possible sites were listed, as were a list of possible screening criteria. (We also listed Abingdon-specific criteria for a new cemetery, the potential for dual use of a site until it was needed, and possible ancillary uses e.g. another lodge, another works depot etc etc)
6. Description of the stages through which the town council will need to go if it develops a new cemetery, including a draft timetable and cost estimates. (we requested that the report should include firm data so that it can be used to support a business-case for a new cemetery.)

CDS supplied a very detailed response, and confirmed that : a) CDS could undertake the study we have specified; b) Their current workload means that they could not start the study until early April; and c) the fee would be £9,650 +VAT.

The Working Party members (Cllrs Halliday, Clifton and de la Harpe) and the Chair of the Environment and Amenities Committee, Cllr Barody, reviewed the reply from CDS and asked the Town Clerk to seek references from other councils about CDS, and then, subject to satisfactory references, to place a contract on CDS. This contract has now been placed by the Town Clerk under delegated powers.

12. **Publicity**

All meetings of the Council and its Committees are open to the press and the public and agendas, reports and minutes are published on the website. Members are requested to make suggestions to officers of items which may be publicised.

13. **Dates of future meetings**

The dates for future meetings of the Environment and Amenities Advisory Committee and items to be considered are:

- 14 June 2022

14. **Exclusion of the public, including the press**

The Chair will move:

That in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Documents in relation to these items will be forwarded for members only.

SECTION II – Confidential

15. **Confidential Actions Register**

To consider progress on confidential resolved actions from previous meetings of this committee. Members are advised to review the confidential actions register report on Sharepoint before the meeting.

The law allows members of the public and press to record meetings of the council and its committees. Should you wish to record at any meeting which is open to the public it is requested that you inform the Town Clerk of your intention to film or record before the day of the meeting, by emailing democratic@abingdon.gov.uk or telephoning 01235 522642.

For information, whilst this meeting is being hosted virtually using Microsoft Teams the Council will not be recording the meeting.

Note on Governance

On 29 September 2021 the Urgency Committee and the town council reviewed the emergency governance arrangements in place during the current phase of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The council's committees continue to meet on-line as advisory committees.

The recommendations of each advisory committee are then considered by the next meeting of the town council. The town council is conducted as a hybrid meeting with those members physically present at the meeting able to vote and make decisions but with the option also for members to attend on-line, in which case they can speak but not vote. The emergency arrangements will be reviewed regularly and at each council meeting.