

Report from the Community Committee to the 2022 Parish Meeting

The Community Committee is responsible for many different aspects of the Council's activities: including Community Grants, Markets, Communications, Events, Christmas Lights, the Guildhall Historic Rooms, the County Hall Museum, and other services. This brief report is therefore an overview of some of the activities undertaken during the past busy year.

Community Grants:

Annual grant recipients – Total Amount Awarded: £65,300

- Abingdon Carousel
- Be Free Young Caters
- Christ's Hospital (Albert Park)
- Citizen Advice Bureau
- The Abingdon Bridge
- The Albert Memorial Trust
- Youth Strategy partnership -The Abingdon Bridge & Abingdon DAMASCUS

The committee also had a budget of £20,000 to support Abingdon community groups and organisations, and to work in partnership with them. Financial support was targeted to those who are most vulnerable and to create opportunities to increase social inclusivity. Requests for financial support have dropped this year - most likely because of the effect of Covid-19, particularly, as due to the restrictions, the decrease in the number of volunteers and that the ability to organise public activities and meetings was very limited. Our committee's aim was always to direct the available money towards maximising the added benefit to Abingdon residents.

In summary: Organisations that were funded were those supporting young people, music, sport, older people, and other community activities. 15 grants were awarded this year compared to 20 last year. One of the grants awarded was to support the Radley Lakes Trust's activities as the committee felt that many people who live in Abingdon benefited from Radley Lakes especially during the Covid lockdowns.

Organisation	Total Amount Awarded: £15,045
Church Twinning Society	£100
Enrych	£1,000
Friends of Abingdon Civic Society	£900
Healthy Abingdon	£145
Oxfordshire Association for the Blind	£1,000
Inspiring Minds	£1,000
Trinity Learning	£900
Abingdon Street Pastors	£1,500
Churches in Abingdon	£500
Abingdon Joint Schools Carnegie Forum	£550
Radley Lakes	£3,250
Abingdon Band Concert	£500
ATOM Festival	£1,200
Oxfordshire Play Association (OPA)	£1,000
Friends of Abingdon Civic Society	£1,500

Markets:

Our Monday market continues to thrive, despite the effect of Covid, though the number of stalls is less than before the pandemic.

The Hot Food Vendor Licence has been renewed for a further year.

Events:

- **Abingdon Pride:** A successful event was held on 11th September 2021
- **Fair:** Whilst we were in the middle of a pandemic, the Government removed virtually all legal restrictions and therefore the organisers prepared risk assessments, which the Council staff and delegated councillors reviewed. They recommended that the Fair should be held. The councillors who carried out the review of the Risk Assessments recommended that attention needs to continue to be paid to this aspect in future years. Negotiations of a long-term Fair Agreement are being carried out – factors being considered include the costs incurred by the Council, the fee payable and the length of the contract.
- **Music in the Park:** This was cancelled in 2021 because of Covid restrictions. In 2022 it will be combined with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations at Rye Farm.

Communications:

The Town Council already makes some use of social media to promote town information and events, but we aim to increase our social media presence as it is a very cost-effective way of getting our message across.

Town Crier: This has continued to be published during the past year and delivered by Royal Mail to every house in the town. The feedback we have received is that it is well-regarded and a useful source of information for residents. The Council intend to continue publishing it during the forthcoming year.

Noticeboards: Discussions have been held with the Friends of Abingdon Civic Society regarding their very welcome offer to help update noticeboards in the town at regular intervals.

Integrated Youth Support Project:

The Committee have been pleased to support this very worthwhile project.

Christmas Lights:

Once again, the Christmas lights and Christmas tree were a credit to the town and were complimented on by residents.

Guildhall Management Arrangements:

The existing Guildhall Historic Rooms management agreement has been extended and bookings are slowly starting to pick up after the pandemic closures.

Bandstand working group:

The Committee have set up a small working party to assess the potential to build a "Queen Elizabeth Bandstand" in the town.

Museum service:

The Museum staff have worked hard during the year and provided online activities when the museum was closed to the lockdown. These includes virtual workshops and exhibitions. It is pleasing that attendance figures have returned to "normal."

Planet Abingdon - Climate Emergency Centre:

A highlight of the year was to facilitate the setting up of a Climate Emergency Centre in the Museum basement by "One Planet Abingdon."

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff of the Town Council who have worked hard to implement the decisions of the Committee during the last year - often in the very difficult working conditions due to the Pandemic.

CLlr Rawda Jehanli
Chair of the Community Committee 2021-2022