

ABINGDON-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL

Wednesday 30 March 2022

Minutes

Present in person:

Cllr Cheryl Briggs	Mayor (Chair)
Cllr Andy Foulsham	Deputy Mayor
Cllr Samantha Bowring	Leader
Cllr Charlie Birks	
Cllr Margaret Crick	
Cllr Neil Fawcett	
Cllr Jim Halliday	
Cllr Rawda Jehanli	
Cllr Helen Pighills	
Cllr Andrew Skinner	

In attendance in person:

Susan Whipp	Deputy Town Clerk / RFO
Paula Lopez	Committee Clerk (Locum)

In attendance online:

Cllr Grace Clifton
Cllr Alex Greenaway
Cllr Pat Lonergan
Cllr Lorraine Oates
Cllr Gabby Barody

Holly Freeland	Abingdon Integrated Youth Support Project
Roxy Elford	Abingdon Integrated Youth Support Project
Gary Hibbins	Abingdon Integrated Youth Support Project

C92. **Public Participation**

Holly Freeland, Roxy Elford and Gary Hibbins of Abingdon Integrated Youth Support Project gave a presentation to update the Council on the years' work, April 2021 to March 2022. They also thanked the Council for their ongoing support.

Cllr Barody thanked them and stated she was aware of increasing demand for these types of services for young people and would like to see more engagement with the council and asked how the council can help further. Cllr Fawcett on the point of intimidation stated this is a two-way issue and asked what could be done to help change this perception. Roxy Elford advised they had lots of intergenerational ideas such as door stop bingo and it would be great to work together on these.

The mayor thanked them for attending and for their presentation and they left the meeting.

C93. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllrs de la Harpe, Coveney, Maddison and Rowbottom.

C94. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

C95. **Minutes**

The draft minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 26 January 2022 were **AGREED** and would be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

There were no matters arising.

C96. **Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor's Engagements were **noted**.

C97. **Oxfordshire County Council**

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

Folly Bridge Oxford

Cllr Clifton advised that significant repairs have now started this week, which are similar to the bridge repairs in Abingdon and asked can Oxfordshire County Council explain how they prioritise such works as Abingdon has suffered a lane closure over the bridge since last year. It was **AGREED** to send a formal question in writing to Cllr Ley for him to respond.

Cllr Fawcett stated the bridge in Abingdon is in the same cycle as repair works for Folly Bridge. The river levels are currently too high to be able to fit the required pontoon and must wait until the river levels drop.

The report was **noted**.

C98. Vale of White Horse District Council

The meeting received and considered a report on the work of the district council from Cllr Helen Pighills.

Cllr Birks asked

1. Upper Reaches - Why is it that the Vale cannot issue a 215 notice under the Town and Country Planning Act? Section 15 of the Act enables a Local Planning Authority to serve a notice if they judge the condition of land or buildings to be harmful to the area. The Head of Planning wrote that in his view at this time it would not be an appropriate measure.
2. Central Abingdon Regeneration Framework (CARF) – There appears to be some contradiction here. It apparently will review three main areas, however it is already stated the Vale find it impossible to deal with the Upper Reaches. Abbey House is occupied. We have yet to hear in any meaningful report of what the problems are with the multi-story car park. How many reports will it take to make a decision on the Charter? It still stands as an underused resource.
3. Public Toilets -
Hayes Meadow – These have been inoperable for many months. Fixing a toilet door appears to be challenging.
Abbey Meadow – As of 16:00 on Tuesday, the circular window has been boded, the space for change is not operable, there is a faulty door lock that has been known about for some time.
Charter – As at 16:30 on Tuesday, there is no sign, the Radar key has not been removed and is operational.

Cllr Birks stated that what has not been addressed in this report is the abysmal state of some of our facilities. This is in stark contrast to Cherwell who appear to care for their citizens especially the most vulnerable.

Cllr Briggs responded that most of these issues related to her ward, and that of Cllr Pighills, and asked if Cllr Birks would put these questions in writing to themselves and they can they obtain a reply.

Cllr Bowring thanked Cllr Pighills for the report and expressed congratulations to the district council for such a speedy response to the Ukrainian refugee situation.

The report was **noted**.

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

C99. **Community Advisory Committee**

The notes of the meeting of the Community Advisory Committee held on 1 March 2022 were **proposed** by Cllr Foulsham, **seconded** by Cllr Briggs, and **APPROVED**.

Matters referred

C71. Grants

It was **RESOLVED** that the grants below recommended to council be awarded.

Name of Applicant	Purpose of grant, as summarised in the grant application	Grant awarded
Abingdon Band Concert (a)	Seeking up to £500 towards the cost of new musical scores for the band to play and perform in concerts in 2022.	£500
ATOM Festival (d)	The grant will help fund part of the insurance costs, part of the cost of the Jubilee celebration Family Science Day and part of the Market Square event.	£1,200
Oxfordshire Play Association (OPA) (d)	To help deliver another Play & Activity Day on Saturday 9th July.	£1,000
The friends of Abingdon Civic Society (d)	To help create a more comprehensive Abingdon Walks Collection as an online resource with a limited number of print copies specifically printed in time for the Jubilee.	£1,500

C73. Noticeboards

- (i) It was **recommended** to the council **that** the new noticeboard be installed near R & R Cafe, subject to consultation with local groups for blind and partially sighted.

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Cllr Bowring suggested that this needed consultation and asked that the recommendation be amended to include consultation with the market place businesses and users.

Cllr Jehanli advised she had received a letter from the owner of R & R Café his concerns. Cllr Jehanli shared a map of the location of the outside tables and chairs of the café and explained that the location of the proposed notice board is not blocking the footpath any more than the post box. Cllr Jehanli suggested that the colour of the notice board should be considered after consulting with the visually impaired organisations.

It was agreed to vote on the original proposal.

The votes were tied, the Chair, Cllr Briggs exercised the casting vote, and the proposal was **not carried**. This will now go back to the next Community Advisory Committee meeting for consideration. Cllr Fawcett suggested some informal consultation with businesses.

- (ii) Bus shelter notice boards – it was **RESOLVED** that the two bus shelter noticeboards be replaced.

C75. Museum service update

It was **RESOLVED** that the museum's Forward Plan 2022-2026 and the Key Aims Action Plan appendix FP1 2022 be approved.

C100. Environment and Amenities Advisory Committee

The notes of the meeting of the Environment and Amenities Advisory Committee held on 8 March 2022 were **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by Cllr Skinner, and **APPROVED**.

Matters referred

EA59. Actions Register and Forward Plan

It was **RESOLVED** that the council pay for the room hire for the exhibition by Abingdon Learning Trust in the Guildhall, (Royse Room), in June 2022 in the sum of £150.

Use of plastic by food establishments – the recommendations were **APPROVED**.

It was **RESOLVED** to send a further letter to the Environment Agency regarding the problem of abandoned boats on the Thames in Abingdon. The letter to be copied to the local MP.

Financial matters – It was **RESOLVED** that any unspent sums from the current year budgets in relation to play areas improvements, tree works, and cemetery improvements be carried forward to the earmarked reserves and that the committee be advised of the amounts carried forward at its next meeting.

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EA60. Green Forum

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council pay £155 to meet the costs of the 'high viz' covers for backpacks and waistcoats for the school's competition.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council would reimburse the £15 cost for the stall operated by the Green Forum at the market on 29 January 2022.

C101. Town Infrastructure Advisory Committee

The notes of the meeting of the Town Infrastructure Advisory Committee held on 17 March 2022 were **proposed** by Cllr Skinner, **seconded** by Cllr Jehanli and **APPROVED**.

Matters referred

T51. Forward Plan and Actions Register

It was **RESOLVED** that the size of the Planning Panel be increased from three to five members.

It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Grace Clifton be appointed to serve on the planning panel.

It was **RESOLVED** that the memorial bench policy be approved in principle and that the policy be published on the website together with an explanatory article.

T55. Corporate identification on Town Council-funded infrastructure

It was **RESOLVED** that authority be delegated to the Cemetery and Outdoor Services Manager to utilise funding from the street furniture budget to incorporate appropriate corporate identification on street furniture at his discretion.

T57. Public convenience provision in Abingdon

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk write to the district council to ask for,

1. an update in relation to the toilets in Hales meadow,
2. State that the toilets in the Abbey Meadow require urgent repair specifically the Changing Spaces facility; and those in the Charter are dilapidated – what are the Vales intentions.
3. To request that the district council review all their signage in relation to the public toilets and keep them up to date.
4. In recognition of fact that any works in relation to the public toilets will take some time to complete and that the town council requests a contribution from the district council amounting to 50% of the costs incurred by the town council in operating the 'Space for Change' in the Guildhall.

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T59. Stratton Way - underpass

It was **RESOLVED** that,

- a) the Town Clerk seeks approval from the relevant Oxfordshire County Council department to permit the town council to repair and repaint the murals in the Stratton Way underpass.
- b) that once permission has been obtained the town council commissions a local artist, (ideally to be aided by pupils of Abingdon schools), to undertake repairs to the existing murals in the underpass and install a new Platinum Jubilee mural on those parts of the underpass which currently do not feature a mural, and,
- c) the committee delegates approval of the contracting arrangements to the Town Clerk in consultation with the committee chair.

T60. Joint Design Guide

It was **RESOLVED** that authority to respond to the consultation be delegated to the Town Clerk taking into account points brought forward.

C102. Finance, Governance and Asset Management Advisory Committee

The notes of the meeting of the Finance, Governance and Asset Management Advisory Committee held on 22 March 2022 were **proposed** by Cllr Bowring, **seconded** by Cllr Briggs, and **APPROVED**.

Matters referred

FG71. Management accounts

It was **RESOLVED** that the management accounts from 1 April 2021 to 28 February 2022 be **APPROVED**.

It was **RESOLVED** that the list of payments made between 1 January 2022 and 28 February 2022 be **APPROVED**.

FG72. Community Infrastructure Levy

It was **RESOLVED** that the council continue to receive its share of CIL monies from the Vale of the White Horse District Council in two half-yearly instalments.

FG72. Strategic Risk Register

It was **RESOLVED** that the strategic risk register be **APPROVED**.

FG75. Consultation Policy

It was **RESOLVED** that the draft consultations policy be **APPROVED** subject to presentation at the next Finance, Governance and Asset Management Advisory

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Committee to consider any amendments deemed necessary, after amendment to be an agenda item at the next appropriate full council meeting for approval.

FG80. Write offs

It was **RESOLVED** that the unpaid invoice of £204.00 as contained in the confidential report be written off as irrecoverable.

FG81. Abbey Hall

It was **RESOLVED** that the officer request as per section 3.4 of the confidential report be **APPROVED**.

FG82. Surplus land review

Cllr Birks asked that discussions on this be delayed until such time that all councillors be present. This was discussed further in the confidential section of the meeting (see minute C107).

C103. Governance and democratic matters

Report from the Town Clerk

3.1 It was **RESOLVED** to return to face-to-face meetings for committees.

3.2 It was **RESOLVED** to waive the requirements of Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 for Council, committees, sub-committees, working parties and working groups due to the risk of health resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Consideration specifically given to individual members to whom this might apply. This was **AGREED** for Cllr Coveney.

3.3 Calendar of meetings for 2022/23 – Cllr Halliday questioned as to why the calendar was presented so late. The Deputy Clerk advised that draft calendar had been shared with the Leader of the council at the beginning of the month and there had been some delays due to staff absences and vacancies in issuing to all members. Members stated it was important to know the date the Annual meeting, (Mayor making), would take place. The Deputy Clerk agreed to advise the date as soon as possible. The draft calendar of meetings was noted, and it was agreed this to be taken to the Annual meeting for approval when the new Mayor was expected to be Cllr Andy Foulsham, and the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Gabby Barody.

C104. Motions under Standing Order 8

The following motion was proposed by Cllr Foulsham, seconded by Cllr Birks, and **APPROVED**:

(This was seconded by Cllr Birks as Cllr Barody was not present in person at the meeting).

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Council notes

- That the four GP practices that cover Abingdon have worked tirelessly to continue to provide primary healthcare to our residents throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
- That this commitment to serving our residents has placed a great deal of additional strain on doctors, other healthcare professionals and their support staff.
- The new housing that is being built on the northern side of Abingdon will require additional healthcare provision.
- This requirement was acknowledged by the developers and provided for in the plans which were approved by the District Council's Planning Committee.
- The planned satellite surgery has not yet received approval by the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group.
- The funding provided by the s.106 agreement with the developer was (at the request of the Clinical Commissioning Group) specifically for a satellite surgery on the North Abingdon development.
- That the role of the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group is being taken over by the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West Integrated Care System.

Council believes

- That all our residents are entitled to high quality primary healthcare, and that this should be easily accessible to them on "fifteen-minute neighbourhood" principles.
- That the existing four surgeries have insufficient capacity to accommodate patients from more than 1,000 new households, and little or no space to expand on their current sites.

Council requests

- That the Leader of the Council writes to the Senior Partner of each GP practice expressing the grateful thanks of the Town Council for the hard work and self-sacrifice shown by them, their partners and staff throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
- That the Leader of the Council writes to the Chief Executive of the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and its successor body the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West Integrated Care System to express our concern that there will not be adequate primary healthcare provision serving North Abingdon once the new homes are occupied.

In addition, it was further **RESOLVED** to write to pharmacists who also worked tirelessly to provide a service.

C105. Exclusion of the Public, Including the Press

The 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.

The meeting was adjourned at 9.19pm and resumed at 9.30pm.

SECTION II (Confidential Agenda)

C106. Community Advisory Committee

The confidential appendix to the notes of the meeting of the Community Advisory Committee held on 1 March 2022 were noted.

C81. The recommendation was **APPROVED**.

See the confidential appendix to the minutes.

C107. Finance, Governance and Asset Management Advisory Committee

The confidential appendix to the notes of the meeting of the Finance, Governance and Asset Management Advisory Committee held on 22 March 2022 were noted.

FG81. The recommendations were **APPROVED**.

FG82. It was agreed to amend the recommendation after which this was **APPROVED**.

The meeting closed at 10pm.

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