



Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

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Environment and Amenities Committee

Tuesday 10 January 2023

DRAFT MINUTES

Present:

Cllr Gabby Barody

Chair

Cllr Jim Halliday

Vice-Chair

Cllr Cheryl Briggs

Cllr Rawda Jehanli

Cllr Samantha Bowring

Chair of the Finance, Governance & Asset Management
Committee – ex-officio

Anne Smart

non-councillor member

In attendance:

Tim Badcock

Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager

Andy Crick

Democratic Services Officer

Alan Rouse

Town Clerk/Chief Executive

In attendance online:

Paula Lopez

Locum Deputy Town Clerk

James Wigmore

Abibike

One member of the public joined the meeting at 7.32pm

SECTION I - Open to the public and media

E125/22. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Margaret Crick and Cllr Lorraine Oates

E126/22. **Declarations of interest**

None.

E127/22. **Minutes**

It was **proposed** by Cllr Barody, **seconded** by Cllr Briggs and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Amenities Committee of 15 November 2022 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

E128/22. **Matters arising**

There were none.

E129/22. **Statements and Questions from the Public**

There were none.

E130/22. **Forward Plan**

Community woodland – the proposed area has been agreed with the current tenant and planting will begin this month. A legal agreement is needed and is being worked on.

Cllr Bowring joined the meeting at 7.10pm

Tree survey – a report was tabled by the Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager with details of tenders for this service. The decision on the selection of the contractor would be taken by the Town Clerk and the Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager.

New cemetery – the working party met with the former Town Clerk and would report to a future meeting.

Plastic-free initiative – the Chair of the committee would speak to Chair of Community Committee to prepare a joint proposal for the next meeting.

Biodiversity plan – four priorities have been identified:

1. Form a five year plan
2. Devise a simple biodiversity map of Abingdon for residents and develop biodiversity walks
3. Continue with the biodiversity competitions
4. Promote active travel

E131/22. **Actions Register**

The actions register was reviewed.

E132/22. Finance Report

Management accounts

It was **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by Cllr Barody and **RESOLVED** that the [finance report](#) of the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) on the management accounts to 30 November 2022, including the statement of account, be **APPROVED**.

The committee requested that the RFO include descriptions of budget lines in future tables in reports for clarity

Budget report

Climate emergency

It was suggested that 'green small projects' be renamed 'green forum fund' to link it clearly with the forum. The Chair proposed renaming it and increasing the budget to £15,000.

The total budget for 'climate emergency' would thus be increased to £19,000. It was **proposed** by Cllr Barody, **seconded** by Cllr Jehanli and **AGREED** that unspent funds from the current financial year would be rolled over to the next financial year.

The committee asked if this budget would be held by the council to enable all committees to use the fund. The Town Clerk and RFO would look into this and advise the committee.

Play areas

Play areas to be discussed as an agenda item later on, so this item may need further review.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Barody, **seconded** by Cllr Halliday and **AGREED** that the [budget report](#) from the RFO, including draft budget estimates ([Appendix A](#)), as amended by this committee, be **APPROVED** and that the total budget for the committee for 2023-4 would be £198,000.

This is an increase of £16,270 on the net expenditure amount stated in the budget estimate report of the RFO and includes an additional £10,000 for Climate Emergency Green Small Projects and £7,270 for play area improvements.

It was noted that some budgets are carried forward and the committee requested that future reports state when funds are carried forward.

E133/22. **Green Forum**

Anne Smart provided an update on the work of the Green Forum. The forum has recently focused on home energy, to help residents reduce energy bills, keep warm and reduce carbon emissions. There is a plan to host further events around this topic.

An Oxford University student did an internship for a week in December and produced a leaflet on heat pumps. AS asked if the council could fund the printing of these leaflets.

The new topic for the forum is food. In January, the forum has focused on vegan food with events in the Climate Emergency Centre and Market Place.

An 'eco fair' is planned for 30 May 2023.

AS would like to review the forum with the Chair of the committee.

A future forum may be on active travel.

Officers were asked to clarify whether the Green Forum can apply to the town clerk for funds from the green forum fund. This was confirmed: the fund has a budget allocated for its work.

E134/22. **Report from the Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager**

The committee considered a report from the Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager.

Boardwalk

The proposal to replace a boardwalk at Boxhill Wood was agreed and could be funded from existing budgets.

General maintenance

It was **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by Cllr Briggs and **AGREED** to increase the footpath budget in 2023-4 to £10,000 and to allocate this to general maintenance and repair projects.

Fishing

The Thames Festival fishing competition organiser has requested that peg fees for the event be reduced as the organiser is required to pay a booking fee in addition. The committee considered the request and noted that the fees being charged were appropriate and would not be reduced. The fees would not be increased in the next year.

E135/22. **Review of play areas**

The committee considered a report from the Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager on proposals for improvements to play areas.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by Cllr Jehanli and **AGREED** that the improvement projects identified at items 6.2 (Caldecott Recreation Ground), 6.3 (Boxhill Recreation Ground), 6.4 (Masefield) and 6.5 (self-closing gates at all enclosed play areas) would be undertaken in the current financial year.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Barody, **seconded** by Cllr Briggs and **AGREED** that the major project for 2023-4 would be item 6.7 - installation of a multi-use games area and climbing frame at Caldecott Recreation Ground, with a total cost of £192,100.

Officers were asked to bring a report to the June 2023 meeting of the committee to provide proposals and designs for Caldecott Recreation Ground and to identify potential sources of funding.

E136/22. **Tree survey**

Discussed under Forward Plan.

E137/22. **Publicity**

Agreed work on play areas and timescales for the work.

It would be good to publicise the varied work of the outdoor services team generally. It was noted that a large number of people visit the cemetery on Christmas Day and the bins are emptied throughout the day by town council staff. This kind of behind the scenes work should be communicated to residents. The Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager was asked to take photos of the work of the team.

E138/22. **Future Agenda items**

The following items would be included on future agendas:

- Update from the Community Woodland Working Party
- Solar lighting
- Single use plastic policy
- New cemetery
- Fisheries

E139/22. **Dates of future meetings**

The dates for future meetings of the Environment and Amenities Committee were noted:

- 21 February 2023
- 6 June 2023

E140/22. **Exclusion of the public, including the press**

The Chair **moved**, Cllr Halliday **seconded** and it was **AGREED** 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.

John Killick was thanked for his contribution to the work of the committee.

Anne Smart left at 8.51pm

SECTION II – Confidential

E141/22. **New Cemetery**

The Town Clerk advised that a feasibility study was being prepared but was not ready for this meeting. It would therefore be deferred to the next meeting.

E142/22. **Fisheries**

Information on fisheries was not available, so this item would be deferred to a future meeting.

E143/22. **Property matters**

The Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager presented a proposal to sell a small area of land to a resident. It was **proposed** by Cllr Barody, **seconded** by Cllr Halliday and **RECOMMENDED** to the Finance, Governance and Asset Management Committee that the proposed sale be agreed.

Subsequent to the meeting, officers noted that any proposal for the sale of town council land would need to be considered by full council. The Finance, Governance and Asset Management Committee would therefore need to consider the matter and make a recommendation to the council.

E144/22. **Cemetery fees**

The Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager presented a proposal for fees for cemetery services. It was **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by Cllr Barody and **RECOMMENDED** to the Finance, Governance and Asset Management Committee that the proposed fees be approved.

The meeting closed at 9.07pm

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