

## **The Albert Memorial (Abingdon) Trust – application for funding from the Abingdon Joint Environmental Trust (JET)**

### **Background to the Albert Memorial (Abingdon) Trust (the Trust)**

1. The Trust was established in 1999 with the objective “to preserve and administer” the Albert Memorial. The Memorial is in the Albert Park, Abingdon. The Park itself is part of the Albert Park Conservation Area. The Albert Memorial was built between 1863 and 1864 as a memorial to Queen Victoria’s late husband, Prince Albert and was built by public subscription.
2. However its ownership was in doubt for many years and by the 1980’s it required substantial repairs to avoid it falling in to disrepair. There then followed two years of discussions, during which the repair costs increased. Eventually in 1984 a funding plan was put in place with funding coming from the Abingdon Joint Environmental Trust (a joint Town and District Council committee) and Christ’s Hospital. In the 1994 a specialist survey reported that repairs were again needed, again there was a period of discussion lasting several years during which the costs increased. In 1997, Christ’s Hospital, the Town Council, and the District Council agreed to both fund the repairs and set up a tri-partite Trust which would receive a small sum each year from each body, carry out minor incidental repairs, insure the memorial, and build up a fund which could pay for future repairs. The Albert Memorial (Abingdon) Trust was subsequently formed in 1999.
3. There are three parties to the Trust, these being: Abingdon Town Council, Christ’s Hospital of Abingdon and the Vale of White Horse District Council. These bodies all have a legal obligation to ensure that the objective of the Trust is met and each year they make a contribution towards the Trust in order to achieve the objective; this is currently £800 each. This is used to pay for inspections, architectural advice and other professional services, insurance, maintenance and repairs.
4. Major works were undertaken in the 1998/1999 as the Trust was being established. Since then there has been an inspection of the Memorial every five years - this has resulted in an action plan for repairs and maintenance, with a view to keeping the Memorial in good order and to avoid it the major expenditure required previously.

### **Works for which a grant application is being made**

5. In 2016 the survey of the Albert Memorial identified some repair work to be undertaken. Whilst none of this was of an urgent nature it was recognised that it would need to be done eventually and so tenders were invited for the works. When tenders were received these were considerably higher than originally anticipated and so the works were deferred. A major element of costs related to prelims and scaffolding, which were a significant proportion of the cost of a number of relatively minor works which were, nonetheless, cumulatively expensive.

6. The matter was reconsidered in 2019. At the meeting of Trustees in September 2019 the outgoing Chair, Mr Tom Ayling (Christ’s Hospital), reported that he and the Clerk had met with Oliver Wilson of Andrew Townsend Architects. Mr Wilson had reiterated that although the works would need to be done eventually, they were not urgent and therefore there were three options:
  - a. Undertake the full works.
  - b. Reduce the scope and work at lower level, therefore reducing costs and the amount of scaffolding.
  - c. Defer the works for now.

No decision was taken at that meeting and the matter was then delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic. However regular inspections revealed no further deterioration of the Memorial.

7. In July 2022 the Chair, Councillor Jim Halliday (Abingdon Town Council) met with the Clerk and Oliver Wilson at the Memorial, to review the matter. Mr Wilson stated that the Memorial remained in a similar condition as in the last survey and that the works were not urgent. Mr Wilson subsequently contacted the lowest tenderer, J B Kerr, and then forwarded Mr Kerr’s revised tender on 25 October 2022. Mr Wilson has commented: *“The revised tender of £25,010.42 broadly represents an increase of just over 3% for most clauses, apart from scaffolding which has increased by just over 16%. Overall, the total tender has increased by 7.7% since February 2020, which is relatively modest in the current climate.”* In further discussions with Mr Wilson he has stated that if the contractor undertook the works, he is confident that no additional works would be identified and so the tender sum can be considered as fixed.
8. At its meeting of 24 January 2023 the Trustees decided that the works should be undertaken so that the Memorial is restored to an excellent condition. The Trust were advised that works are best undertaken during the period March to September 2023, which Mr Kerr confirmed in December 2022 that he could do if an order was placed soon.

9. The costs of undertaking the work w:

Works per J B Kerr tender	£25,010
VAT on the works	£5,002
Professional fees – architect	£5,000
VAT on fees	£1,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£36,012</b>

(Note: in relation to the VAT input tax on the works and professional fees, unfortunately these cannot be reclaimed and must be borne by the Trust).

10. The Trust has already been allocated a grant from the Abingdon Joint Environmental Trust funds ; the Town Council minutes of 29 January 2020 record an award of “a

*grant of up to £5,000 to The Albert Memorial (Abingdon) Trust, to fund expenditure in excess of £24,500, for repairs to the memorial following its periodic inspection.”*

11. The funds held by the Albert Memorial (Abingdon) Trust are insufficient to allow the work to be commissioned without obtaining further funding. At 31 December 2022 the amounts available for the works are as follows:

Balance of accounts	£28,957
Grant from Joint Environmental Trust	£5,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£33,957</b>

### **Abingdon Joint Environmental Trust and the application for a further grant**

12. The Joint Environmental Trust (JET) was a joint committee of the Vale of White Horse District Council and Abingdon Town Council which included some co-opted members who sometimes represented other local organisations. The JET was established in the 1980's but came to an end in May 2011 following the decision by the District Council to cease funding it. The remaining funds were transferred to the Town Council on condition that they were used for the same purposes as the JET had previously supported, “to enable Abingdon Town Council to fund environmental improvement schemes which will enhance and sustain the vibrant market town.” The Trust understands that the JET funds are conditionally awarded by the Town Council but that before any grants can be made the Town Council must consult with the district councillors representing Abingdon wards.
13. The Trustees of the Albert Memorial (Abingdon) Trust are grateful for the support of the JET which enabled the memorial to be repaired in the 1980's and in 1998/99, and also for the latest grant which has been allocated from the JET. However as noted above if the work is to take place this year then additional funding is required and therefore at its meeting of 24 January the Trustees asked the Clerk to approach the Town Council for an additional grant of £3,000 towards the costs of the work. The Trust is confident that if the grant is awarded and the works take place then further works will not be required for a considerable number of years.

**Nigel Warner**  
**Clerk to Albert Memorial (Abingdon) Trust**  
**30 January 2023**