

# Abingdon Town Council Community Committee

## Report to the Annual Parish Meeting 2023

### Introduction

Our work this year started and will end with royal celebrations. Alongside those, the committee has supported a wide range of local groups and projects through grant funding, has supported town vitality and has ensured that the Abingdon Museum continues to provide an excellent service to the town.

### Platinum Jubilee

We organised a well-attended and enjoyable Platinum Jubilee Meadow Festival during which thousands listened to a wide variety of music, attended the ATOM science festival, met local community groups and enjoyed a number of walks and talks.

Thanks to our staff team, who worked their socks off in the face of some major hitches, and to the large number of volunteers and community groups that joined in.

Other events included the Civic Service at St. Helen's Church, the lighting of the beacon, the planting of Jubilee trees at Caldecott Recreation Ground and, of course, the Jubilee Bun Throwing which drew a huge crowd.

### Supporting community groups

The Town Council made major grants to support the work of a number of important local groups. These include The Abingdon Carousel Family Centre (as lead funder), Oxfordshire South & Vale Citizens Advice, The Abingdon Bridge and Be Free Young Carers.

We also fund the **Abingdon Integrated Youth Support Project** which is a joint scheme between the Town Council, The Abingdon Bridge and the DAMASCUS Youth Project which aims to significantly increase support for young people in the town.

### Community Grants

As well as the major grants, we have given a number of smaller grants to local organisations to fund a wide range of activities and projects. This includes grants to: Albert Memorial Trust; Oxfordshire Play Association; ATOM Festival; Clean Slate; 30<sup>th</sup> Abingdon Scouts; Abingdon Racial Justice; Healthy Abingdon; Friends of Carswell School; and MyVision Oxfordshire.

### Museum

The Abingdon Museum has continued to promote a wide range of events and themed exhibitions. Visitor numbers have steadily picked up during the year and the team have been particularly successful at building the museum's digital reach.

The Jubilee exhibitions which highlighted previous royal links to the town were very popular. Our thanks to the magnificent museum team who provide such a brilliant service to the town.

## **Town Crier**

We have continued to publish the Town Crier magazine on a quarterly basis which is delivered via Royal Mail. We get very positive feedback from residents who tell us that they are pleased we keep them informed.

## **Bandstand**

The Committee has continued to work on plans for a town bandstand. During this year our working party has gone through the options for a potential site, have looked at costings and design options and have discussed the plans with the Vale of White Horse District Council (as the planning authority). Expect more news on this project soon.

## **Christmas Lights**

Following a lot of work by our staff, we were able to identify a new supplier for the town's Christmas Lights. The new style displays attracted a lot of positive comments. Our staff team re-utilised what they could of the previous stock, including the candles in the Market Place. A review of the display has been undertaken by our working group members and the results of that will influence next year's display.

## **Warm Spaces**

We agreed to set up a fund to help support local organisations offering warm spaces. This was welcomed by a number of organisations across the town and the warm spaces are being well used.

## **Coronation**

We are ending the year as we began, with more royal celebrations. The town council organised events following the sad death of Queen Elizabeth II and we are now turning our attention to the Coronation. There will, of course, be another Bun Throwing. This is currently scheduled for the evening of Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May. We are also looking to organize further events around that weekend. Please keep an eye out for more details as they come out.

## **Conclusion**

It has been a busy year, both due to royal events and to the emergence from COVID restrictions. As a town council we will continue to run our own services and facilities to support the community and the vitality of the town. We will also continue to work with the wide range of community organisations in the town to support their activities, working together for Abingdon.

Cllr Neil Fawcett  
Chair, Community Committee