



## Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

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# ABINGDON-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL

Wednesday 28 June 2023

## Draft minutes

### Present:

Cllr Gabby Barody

Cllr Elio Astone

Cllr Penny Clover

Cllr Margaret Crick

Cllr Neil Fawcett

Cllr Tom Greenaway

Cllr Murali Gunarajah

Cllr Jim Halliday

Cllr Pat Lonergan

Cllr Leo Midwinter

Cllr Lorraine Oates

Cllr Andrew Skinner

Cllr Victoria Walker

Deputy Mayor

### In attendance:

Andy Crick

Paula Lopez

Victoria Moore

Dan Sancisi

Democratic Services Assistant

Interim Town Clerk

Properties and Events Officer

Museum Manager

### T20/23 Prayers

Prayers were led by Rev'd Deacon Selina Nesbit.

### T21/23 Public participation

Ian Wiper from the Abbey Cinema was invited to speak to the meeting, which he did online.

T22/23 **Apologies**

Cllr Cheryl Briggs, the Mayor, Cllr Gwyneth Lewis, Cllr Oliver Forder, Cllr Rawda Jehanli, Cllr Colin Sanderson and Cllr David Williams.

T23/23 **Declarations of interest**

None.

T24/23 **Minutes**

It was **proposed** by Cllr Astone, **seconded** by Cllr Clover and **AGREED** that the minutes of the meeting of the town council held on 15 May 2023 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

Officers were asked to publicise the winners of the Mayor's awards in the Town Crier magazine.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Oates, **seconded** by Cllr Crick and **AGREED** that the minutes of the meeting of the town council held on 24 May 2023 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

T25/23 **Mayor's announcements**

The Deputy Mayor presented the engagements undertaken by the outgoing Mayor, the current Mayor and herself. A further event was noted: a leavers' celebration at Abingdon School on Saturday 24 June 2023 attended by the Deputy Mayor.

T26/23 **Oxfordshire County Council**

Cllr Neil Fawcett, who also sits on the county council, provided a verbal update.

20mph speed limit

The county council has agreed to the request for a 20mph speed limit for Abingdon. There is no precise date for implementation as a number of schemes are due to be actioned across the county and the Abingdon scheme is very large. Most of what was requested by the town council was approved, with some changes made, in particular following consultations with local bus companies. Exceptions are:

- Wootton Road, where the 20mph limit will start at Northcourt Road;
- Oxford Road, where the 20mph limit will start at Northcourt Road;
- Drayton Road, where the restriction will begin below the two roundabouts;
- Radley Road, where the 20mph limit will begin at Daisy Bank.

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Abingdon Liveable Streets were involved in the development of the 20mph proposals and may make further suggestions for related improvements in the town such as improved cycling provision or minor changes to some pavements.

Lodge Hill interchange.

This project is moving forward but an issue has arisen as committed government funding of £9m has been withdrawn, which has left a substantial gap. Funding from developers remains, as does county council Growth Deal funding. A further application has been submitted to Homes England, which contributes to infrastructure which supports housing. This bid has been submitted to the Treasury for consideration.

**T27/23 Vale of White Horse District Council**

Cllr Andrew Skinner, who also sits on the Vale of White Horse District Council, presented an update.

Toilets

The district council has introduced CCTV to target vandalism of public toilets at Abbey Meadows. It is hoped that issues with toilets will be resolved as well as vandalism. No update was available on the Charter car park toilets, which remain closed.

Waste services

The district council is conducting a survey on local household waste and street cleaning services which can be viewed at <https://southandvale.gov.uk/WasteSurvey>. The survey ends at 11.59pm on Monday 10 July 2023.

Recycling

Recycling rates published by DEFRA show that for 2021-22, the Vale of White Horse district was ranked as the fourth best council, with a recycling rate of 61.9 per cent of total waste. The national average in England is 44.1 per cent.

Air quality

A six week public consultation about Vale & South Air Quality Action Plan launches on 15 June 2023. This will be publicised shortly and the consultation can be viewed at <https://survey.southandvale.gov.uk/s/AirQualityActionPlan/>

**T28/23 Community Committee**

It was **proposed** by Cllr Fawcett, **seconded** by Cllr Gunarajah and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Community Committee meeting held on 23 May 2023 were **RECEIVED**.

Cllr Fawcett noted the discussion over a community infrastructure levy (CIL) grant and the need to clarify if the Community Committee should address all grants, not just community grants.

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A grant was received from the Friends of Abingdon Civic Society for the Heritage Weekend 2023. This grant has been agreed by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair and members of the committee and will be ratified by the next meeting of the Community Committee on 11 July 2023.

Cllr Halliday referred to the report on Fun in the Park and the Coronation Bun Throwing and proposed that the Mayor to write to all staff involved to thank them for their work. This was agreed.

**T29/23 Environment and Amenities Committee**

It was **proposed** by Cllr Barody, **seconded** by Cllr Halliday and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Environment and Amenities Committee meeting held on 13 June 2023 were **RECEIVED**.

Recommendation

E3/23 - The committee **RECOMMENDED** to the town council that standing order 3(f) be amended to state that 'non-members of the council may be co-opted to any standing committee' to allow Ann Smart to be co-opted as a non-councillor member to this committee.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Barody, **seconded** by Cllr Oates and **AGREED** that the terms of reference would be updated to allow non-members to be co-opted and that Ann Smart be co-opted to the Environment and Amenities Committee.

**T30/23 Town Infrastructure Committee**

It was **proposed** by Cllr Skinner, **seconded** by Cllr Greenaway and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Town Infrastructure Committee meeting held on 8 June 2023 were **RECEIVED**.

Cllr Skinner noted that he had met with Simon Hills, the Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, and Richard Eastham of FERIA Consultants to discuss the Neighbourhood Plan and they agreed that the Neighbourhood Plan would be completed by the end of 2024. This timescale would allow for all of the formal requirements of delivering the project to be addressed.

**T31/23 Finance, Governance and Asset Management Committee**

It was **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by Cllr Barody and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Finance, Governance and Asset Management Committee meeting held on 14 June 2023 were **RECEIVED**.

T32/23 **Hybrid Meetings**

The town council resolved on 24 May 2023 that future meetings, including standing committees, would be held in person, with virtual attendance by councillors in exceptional circumstances only. Minute T16/23 refers. The Town Clerk requested that the town council determines the meaning of 'exceptional circumstances only' and defines and sets this in writing so that these circumstances are not open to misinterpretation.

Cllr Halliday **proposed** and Cllr Clover **seconded** the following motion:

The town resolves that virtual attendance at council and standing committees be permitted if the council advises the Town Clerk in writing prior to the meeting that due to exceptional personal circumstances they will be unable to attend the meeting in person, exceptional circumstances agreed as follows.

Major personal life events:

1. Severe illness or death of a close relative or partner, recent birth or adoption of a child within a month or recent impact of unforeseen events such as trauma or accidents.
2. Medical reasons, including actual physical inability to attend a meeting in person due to recent surgery, concurrent major illness, physical incapacity and the need for isolation or another certified medical advice.

This guidance, as comprehensive as it is, may exclude other exceptional events. In such circumstances, attendance shall be decided by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Mayor. This decision shall be final.

Cllr Fawcett proposed and Cllr Lonergan seconded an amendment to include in exceptional circumstances those people who may have exceptional caring responsibilities. The amendment was accepted and Cllr Halliday undertook to prepare a form of words.

The amended motion was **AGREED**.

T33/23 **To Approve and Sign the Annual Governance and Accountability Report (AGAR) 2022-2023**

T33/23.1 Section 1 of the Annual Accountability and Governance Report 2022-23 was **APPROVED**, **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by Cllr Lonergan and **AGREED**. The Deputy Mayor **SIGNED** the report at the meeting.

T33/23.2 Section 2 of the Annual Accountability and Governance Report 2022-23 was **APPROVED**, **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by Cllr Lonergan and **AGREED**. The Deputy Mayor **SIGNED** the report at the meeting.

T34/23 **Tourist Signs**

The council considered a response from National Highways to a request to provide more tourist signs on the A34 for Abingdon. Minute T124/22, 22 March 2023 refers.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by Cllr Barody and **AGREED** to refer this item to the Town Infrastructure Committee. It was suggested that the response from National Highways be shared with the Abbey Buildings Trust as the Trust may consider including the cost of such signs in future bids for Heritage Lottery funding.

T35/23 **Future Agenda Items**

Governance Documents

T36/23 **Dates of future meetings**

2 August 2023  
4 October 2023  
15 November 2023  
17 January 2024  
20 March 2024  
15 May 2024

T37/23 **Exclusion of the Public, including the Press**

The Mayor moved and it was agreed 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 adjourned at 8.10pm and reconvened at 8.20pm

## **SECTION II (Confidential Agenda)**

T38/23 **Confidential appendix to the minutes of the Environment and Amenities Committee**

The draft CONFIDENTIAL appendix to the minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2023 was noted

T39/23 **Confidential appendix to the minutes of the Finance, Governance and Asset Management Committee**

The draft CONFIDENTIAL appendix to the minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2023 was noted.

T40/23 **Report on the museum lift**

The council considered a report from the Museum Manager on the existing lift at the museum. Please see the confidential appendix to the minutes.

T41/23 **Report on a new museum lift**

The council considered a report from the Museum Manager on a proposed new lift at the museum. Please see the confidential appendix to the minutes.

T42/23 **Abbey Cinema Lease**

The council considered reports from the Properties and Events Officer and the lease negotiator, Andrew Crease. Please see the confidential appendix to the minutes.

The meeting ended at 9.45pm