



Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

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ABINGDON-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL

Wednesday 17 January 2024

Minutes

Present:

Cllr Gwyneth Lewis	Mayor of Abingdon
Cllr Elio Astone	
Cllr Gabby Barody	
Cllr Penny Clover	
Cllr Margaret Crick	
Cllr Neil Fawcett	
Cllr Oliver Forder	
Cllr Mark Giddins	
Cllr Tom Greenaway	
Cllr Murali Gunarajah	
Cllr Jim Halliday	
Cllr Pat Lonergan	
Cllr Andrew Skinner	
Cllr Victoria Walker	

In attendance:

Andy Crick	Democratic Services Officer (clerk to the meeting)
Nigel Luker	Honorary Mace Bearer
Ron Spurs	Locum Town Clerk

Before the meeting commenced, Abigail Brown, Arts Development Officer at the Vale of White Horse District Council, gave a presentation to the meeting on public art in Abingdon. Ms Brown advised the town council about funds of £141,763 arising from developer contributions ('section106' money) which was available to spend in Abingdon for unique projects which could include street furniture. District council officers were keen to work with the town council on art projects in Abingdon and the community committee would be asked to consider whether a working group should be established.

The Mayor thanked Ms Brown for her presentation.

T134/23 **Prayers**

There were no prayers.

T135/23 **Public participation**

Daniel Scharf spoke to the meeting on behalf of One Planet Abingdon to thank the town council for its current support and to request further support for the coming financial year. Mr Scharf advised the meeting of the 'One Planet Living' event which would take place in Abingdon on 15 June 2024 and invited all councillors to join in.

T136/23 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Briggs, Cllr Jehanli, Cllr Leo Midwinter, Cllr Lorraine Oates and Cllr Colin Sanderson

T137/23 **Declarations of interest**

None.

T138/23 **Minutes**

It was **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by Cllr Astone and **RESOLVED** to adopt and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2023 as a correct record of the meeting.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Giddins, **seconded** by Cllr Gunarajah and **RESOLVED** to adopt and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2023 as a correct record of the meeting.

A number of actions were highlighted in the minutes and officers were asked to report to the next meeting:

- T120/23 Climate and Ecology Bill – councillors were invited to consider a motion to council
- T121/23 Honorarium for Honorary Archivist – officers asked to review this
- T122/23 Property maintenance – an annual report had been produced in recent years on energy consumption, officers asked to review this.

Re T131/23, motion re 'city of sanctuary' status, the Mayor has followed this up and noted that the criteria for qualification had changed. The Mayor continues to look into this.

T139/23 **Mayor's announcements**

The Mayor's Engagements were noted and the Mayor provided further updates.

Flooding

The Mayor commented on the recent flooding and commended the work of volunteers from 'Abibinit', including Cllr Greenaway and Cllr Walker. The Mayor would write to Abibinit to thank them for their work.

Events

The Mayor has organised events in support of charities addressing domestic abuse.

The Mayor's quiz has now sold out.

Abbey Cinema will provide a free showing of the film 'Gaslight' on 8 March 2024 in support of the Mayor's charities. The Mayor will host a discussion before the meeting on domestic abuse. Tickets will be free and will be promoted on the town council website. The Mayor asked councillors to invite residents.

Town twinning

The Mayor is involved in preparing a conference for town twinning partners in April 2024, with the Mayors and town clerks from twin towns all invited.

T140/23 **Oxfordshire County Council**

The town council noted the report from County Councillor Nathan Ley and welcomed Cllr Ley's work on addressing flooding in his division, in particular around Chilton Close.

Officers were asked to add information about free household waste recycling to the town council website.

T141/23 **Vale of White Horse District Council**

A report was not available from the district council. Cllr Forder would contact district council colleagues to encourage reports in future.

The town council was advised that the district council is considering an additional budget for the coming financial year to help accelerate the planned work on the redevelopment of the Charter. The district council is keen to work with the town council on this important project.

T142/23 **Community Committee**

It was **proposed** by Cllr Fawcett, **seconded** by Cllr Gunarajah and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Community Committee meeting held on 17 October 2023 be received.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Fawcett, **seconded** by Cllr Gunarajah and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Community Committee meeting held on 28 November 2023 be received.

T143/23 **Environment and Amenities Committee**

It was **proposed** by Cllr Barody, **seconded** by Cllr Greenaway and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Environment and Amenities Committee meeting held on 5 December 2023 be received.

T144/23 **Town Infrastructure Committee**

It was **proposed** by Cllr Skinner, **seconded** by Cllr Astone and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Town Infrastructure Committee meeting held on 7 December 2023 be received.

Cllr Clover raised a query with regard to minute IF68/23, Town Centre toilets, which would be addressed at the next meeting of the committee.

T145/23 **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 7 November 2023 be received.

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 9 January 2023 be received.

Recommendations from the Finance, Governance and Asset Management Committee

It was **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by Cllr Forder and **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the fees and charges for 2024-25 as recommended.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by Cllr Forder and **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the 2024-25 budget as recommended.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by Cllr Barody and **RESOLVED** to set the precept for 2024-25 fiscal year as recommended.

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The Chair of the committee, Cllr Halliday, noted that the town council has not increased the fees and charges for the coming financial year and had set new fees for the hire of rooms in the Guildhall, which were good value to encourage residents to use them.

The budget had increased funds for green projects by 25 per cent, had allocated funding for speed indicator signs, bicycle racks in the Market Place, bus shelters, roundabout maintenance and a community toilet scheme for the town centre. These areas had all been raised with the town council by residents and the town council had responded.

The precept increase would be 4.72 per cent, which was below the rate of inflation and which represented an increase for a band D household of £6.90 for the whole year, 57.5p per month.

The town council thanked the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) for her work to prepare the budget, including providing training for town councillors. Cllr Halliday was thanked for his contribution to the process and attention to detail on behalf of the town council.

T146/23 Committee membership

Cllr Giddins has been attending the North East Strategic Sites Combined Vale Landowner Development Hub and it was **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by Cllr Crick and **RESOLVED** that he be formally elected to this role.

It was noted that Cllr Giddins had not been appointed to a standing committee but that all councillors were welcome to attend any committee in a non-voting capacity. Cllr Giddins would be appointed to a standing committee at the annual council in May 2024.

Planning committee

Formal terms of reference for this new committee would be presented to the next town council meeting and its members would be appointed in May 2024.

T147/23 Radley Lakes Trust

The town council has received a request from Radley Lakes Trust (RLT) to nominate a representative. Officers were asked to prepare a report to advise on the frequency of meetings and the proposed status of the town council nominee.

It was noted that a policy for the appointment of town council representatives to outside bodies could be developed, to include length of time appointed, reporting back to the town council, and the benefit to the town council of each organisation.

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T148/23 Future Agenda Items

- Governance document review & policies
- Terms of reference for planning committee

T149/23 Dates of future meetings

20 March 2024
15 May 2024

The meeting closed at 8.04pm

Signed: _____

Date: _____