



## Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

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## Environment and Amenities Committee

Tuesday 20 February 2024, 7pm

Old Magistrates Court

### Minutes

Present:

Cllr Gabby Barody

Cllr Cheryl Briggs

Cllr Penny Clover

Cllr Margaret Crick

Cllr Tom Greenaway

Cllr Jim Halliday

Cllr Lorraine Oates

Anne Smart

Chair

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

non-councillor member

In attendance:

Tim Badcock

Cherie Carruthers

Andy Crick

Michael Huth

Ros Woodhead

Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager

Town Clerk/Chief Executive

Democratic Services Officer (clerk to the meeting)

Abingdon and Witney College

Abingdon Carbon Cutters

## **SECTION I - Open to the public and media**

### E72/23 **Apologies**

Cllr Gwyneth Lewis. Cllr Jehanli did not attend the meeting.

### E73/23 **Declarations of interest**

None.

**E74/23 Public participation**

Ros Woodhead attended the meeting on behalf of Abingdon Carbon Cutters to provide an update on [Draughtbusters](#).

Michael Huth, Net Zero Skills Hub Manager from Abingdon and Witney College attended the meeting to speak on sustainability.

The Chair thanked them for attending.

**E75/23 Minutes**

It was **proposed** by Cllr Oates, **seconded** by Cllr Crick and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Amenities Committee of 5 December 2023 be confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting, to be signed by the Chair.

**E76/23 Finance Report**

It was **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by Cllr Greenaway and **RESOLVED** that the management accounts to 31 January 2024 be approved. The increased use of the cemetery chapel was welcomed and officers were encouraged to continue to promote this facility.

**E77/23 Green forum**

The committee received a verbal report from Anne Smart, who was thanked for her continued work.

**E78/23 Report from the Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager**

The committee considered a report on the work of the outdoor services team. The report was noted and the outdoor team were thanked for their work, in particular in the recent poor weather.

Councillors noted the positive feedback from residents over work done, in particular the new path at Hillview Park. Officers were asked to publicise the work on the website and to consider temporary signs on the path to notify residents that the town council had done the work.

E79/23 **Report on signage**

The committee considered a report from the Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager on the design for new signage on town council-owned land. Additional signs would be ordered so that the outdoor team would have spares for possible vandalism or installation in new areas.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Greenaway, **seconded** by Cllr Oates and **RESOLVED** Team that old signs be replaced as needed with new signs as appropriate. Officers would order twelve signs, six to say 'owned', six to say 'managed', to encompass areas the town council may manage but not own.

E80/23 **Land on Austin Place**

This item was considered in the confidential part of the meeting.

E81/23 **Play area improvements**

The committee considered a report from the Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager on proposed work for the coming financial year.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by Cllr Clover and **RESOLVED** to:

- undertake work on exercise equipment and equipment for young children at Chaunterell Way;
- install a net climbing frame and sheltered seating at Masefield Close;
- review the popularity of the new equipment to be installed at Masefield Close to enable a decision to be taken on further equipment in coming years;

The proposed improvements would come from the 2023-24 revenue budget of £87,000.

Improvements to play areas at Boxhill and Caldecott would be deferred as significant work has been done in these areas recently.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Greenaway, **seconded** by Cllr Oates and **RESOLVED** to install a container at Chaunterell Way play area to store flooding equipment to enable it to be quickly distributed if flooding occurs in this area. The Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager would consult with Ock Valley Flood Group on how best to use the container. Officers would spend up to £5,000 from budget 201/4602, green projects.

**E82/23 River Close trees maintenance**

The committee considered a report from the Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager on planned work. The report was noted. Officers were asked to publicise the planned work on the town council website.

**E83/23 Publicity**

Items suggested for future publicity:

- Hillview footpath
- Caldecott Rec MUGA
- River Close trees maintenance work plans
- Infant burial area
- Chapel at the cemetery

**E84/23 Forward Plan**

The forward plan was noted.

**E85/23 Actions Register**

The actions register was reviewed and updated

**E86/23 Future Agenda items**

- Biodiversity plan
- Green energy: to consider options for adding green energy generation on town council buildings, such as the depot and cemetery office.
- Plastic-free initiative – May 2024
- Green areas and conservation: to consider how the town council might manage green areas including verges to improve and encourage biodiversity
- Ock Valley Walk replacement. Money from CIL funding, e.g. all the new houses.

**E87/23 Dates of future meetings**

The date of the next meeting was noted: 21 May 2024.

Proposed dates for meetings of the committee in 2024-25 were noted. The dates would be confirmed by the town council on 20 March 2024.

E88/23 **Exclusion of the Public, including the Press**

Cllr Oates moved, Cllr Cheryl Briggs seconded 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.

E89/23 **Community woodland**

The committee received an update from the Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager on progress with the community woodland. The town council's land agent has consulted with the landowner and are awaiting further contact. The Town Clerk will contact the land agent to request an update.

E90/23 **Ock Valley Walk**

The committee considered a report from the Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager on a proposal to resurface Ock Valley Walk. This matter is being considered in confidence as it concerns commercial decisions.

The Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager has received a quote for work, which is urgent due to significant weathering of the path. The work is linked to health and safety requirements which obviate the need to obtain three quotes. It was **proposed** by Cllr Crick, **seconded** by Cllr Greenaway and **RESOLVED** to carry out the work as quoted up to a limit of £21,000 plus VAT. The project would be funded using the town council's Community Infrastructure Levy funds.

Officers were asked to advise the Vale of White Horse District Council about the planned work as the district council owns half of the path.

E91/23 **Land on Austin Place**

The committee considered a proposal from a resident for the use of town council-owned land at Austin Place. A report was provided from the Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager.

Officers were asked to prepare a proposal for the Finance, Governance and Asset Management committee on all possible options for the land. The Chair of the committee would visit the site with the Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager and the Town Clerk. The resident who enquired will be contacted to advise them that further investigations will take place.

Environment and Amenities Committee, 20 February 2024  
Minutes

The meeting closed at 9.01pm. Cllr Oates thanked the Chair, Cllr Barody, for her work over the year.

Signed.....

Date.....