



Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

Royse Court Offices, Bridge Street, Abingdon, OX14 3HU

Cherie Carruthers, Town Clerk/Chief Executive

Telephone: 01235 522642

Email: enquiries@abingdon.gov.uk

Website: www.abingdon.gov.uk

Environment and Amenities committee

Tuesday 17 September 2024, 7pm

Old Magistrates Court

Draft minutes

These are draft minutes, subject to the approval of the committee and they may therefore change.

Present:

Cllr Tom Greenaway
Cllr Cheryl Briggs
Cllr Penny Clover
Cllr Margaret Crick
Cllr Jim Halliday

Cllr Leo Midwinter
Lucille Savin

Chair
Vice-Chair

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

In attendance:

Tim Badcock
Abigail Brown
Cherie Carruthers
Andy Crick
Tom Draper-Rodi
Dionne Freeman

Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager
Arts Development Officer, Vale of White Horse District Council
Town Clerk/Chief Executive
Democratic Services Officer (clerk to the meeting)
Abingdon Carbon Cutters
Arts Programme Lead and Community Development
Coordinator, MakeSpace

9 members of the public

SECTION I - Open to the public and media

E15/24 **Apologies**

Draft minutes, subject to the approval of the committee and they may therefore change.

The Mayor, Cllr Gabby Barody; Cllr Rawda Jehanli. Cllr Andrew Skinner did not attend the meeting.

E16/24 **Declarations of interest**

None.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Greenaway, **seconded** by Cllr Clover and **RESOLVED** to consider agenda item 13 after item 3 (now item E18/24).

E17/24 **Public participation**

Public art

Abigail Brown, Arts Development Officer from the Vale of White Horse District Council and Dionne Freeman, Arts Programme Lead and Community Development Coordinator from MakeSpace, attended to give a presentation on the request to install public art in South Abingdon, working with DAMASCUS. Examples of work with Thameside School were shared and the town council was asked for permission to create an artwork on Caldecott Rec. fencing. This would offer an opportunity to young people to contribute to their local area. This was considered at agenda item E19/24.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by Cllr Midwinter and **RESOLVED** to consider agenda item 12 after item 13 (now item E19/24), as resolved above.

Proposed garden at Austin Place

Tom Draper-Rodi, Abingdon Carbon Cutters (ACC) member, spoke on behalf of the residents proposing a community at Austin Place and shared details of the plans. In response to concerns over anti-social behaviour, the organisers proposed amending the current plans to remove seating. The site has good access from the surrounding area for residents to walk to participate. It is intended that the garden will be self-funding and maintained on a rota system. Insurance cover and financial management will be overseen by ACC. Dunmore Pre-School, which neighbours the proposed site, has offered backing for the project.

The garden proponents are committed to communicating with residents and taking their views into account. If approved, the project would improve biodiversity, reduce isolation and make good use of council assets. They were aware of some opposition, so they proposed a one year trial. This was considered at agenda item E18/24.

E18/24 **Proposal for Community Garden at Austin Place**

The committee considered a proposal for a community garden. If approved, officers endorsed the proposal to review it after one year. The town council will need to

Draft minutes, subject to the approval of the committee and they may therefore change.

consider how to measure success after a year. Suggested criteria included whether the area was well-maintained and whether the whole community was involved in the plan. It was noted that the information provided about the plan did not clarify the area proposed or the planned work. The town council would welcome more information on the area, the aims and the details.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by Cllr Greenaway and **RESOLVED** to ask officers to seek greater detail, consult and ask local councillors to speak to residents to gauge support and to bring a report to the next committee meeting. Officers were asked to consider the duration of the proposed trial.

E19/24 **Request to install fence art at Caldecott Recreation Ground**

The committee considered a proposal to create an artwork in South Abingdon, supported by the Vale of White Horse District Council and MakeSpace. Officers advised that any maintenance and tidying would be dealt with by the town council's Outdoor Services team, which visits the area regularly. It was suggested that if successful, this could become a regular project, with appropriate funding sought from the district council. Other locations in Abingdon might be considered in future years.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Greenaway, **seconded** by Cllr Midwinter and **RESOLVED** that the proposal be agreed in principle, with a report presented to a future meeting. The applicants were asked to provide detailed proposals for the scheme and the materials to be used.

E20/24 **Minutes**

It was **proposed** by Cllr Greenaway, **seconded** by Cllr Midwinter and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Amenities committee of 16 July 2024 be confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting, to be signed by the Chair.

E21/24 **Finance Report**

It was **proposed** by Cllr Clover, **seconded** by Cllr Briggs and **RESOLVED** that the management accounts to 31 August 2024 be approved.

The committee was reminded of the budget process. The next meeting of the committee is on 19 November 2024, which is too late to properly address budget bids. The Town Clerk therefore requested that any budget bids are presented to the committee Chair by 31 October 2024.

The committee received a list of earmarked reserves (EMRs) for the committee. It was noted that the EMRs for play equipment are large but the cost of repair and installation of equipment is high so the budgets for this are prudent. The

Draft minutes, subject to the approval of the committee and they may therefore change.

Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager was asked to report on play areas to be refurbished so that committee members can consider this in advance of the budget process.

E22/24 **Green forum**

Lucille Savin reported on the work of the green forum. The latest green forum considered biodiversity, including many activities for young people. There was a display on biodiversity in the One Planet Abingdon (OPA) Climate Emergency Centre and a talk on biodiversity in human environments at John Mason School. Members of the forum gave a demonstration of hydroponic vegetable growing, and the repair cafes continued. Apple pressing is planned for the end of September.

An active travel stall was provided the recent Abingdon Healthfest and OPA is organising travel censuses on major streets in Abingdon.

The next green forum from October to December 2024 will focus on the climate and biodiversity impacts of newbuild housing.

The Town Clerk advised Ms Savin of a budget available for the green forum and requested that the green forum identify plans so that future funding can be confirmed.

The Chair thanked Ms Savin for her report.

E23/24 **Report from the Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager**

The committee received a report on the work of the Outdoor Services team. The team has recruited a new member of staff to start shortly and another temporary team member has joined permanently.

The committee was asked about appointing a voluntary fisheries officer following a request from a resident who has suggested this to help manage the town's fisheries. A one year trial was recommended, as was a DBS check for the individual concerned. A small leaflet was recommended advising fishers of the rules, as was an ID badge for the person.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by Cllr Greenaway and **RESOLVED** that officers investigate the practicalities of appointing an honorary water bailiff, that the person is given appropriate support and training and that they are asked to complete a DBS check.

The report was noted.

E24/24 **Outdoor services storage**

The committee considered a [report](#) from the Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager on future storage and garden nursery provision. The committee was advised that the outdoor storage issue may be resolved as the landlord of the town council's current storage in Shippon will be able to provide additional storage on-site which would be within the current budget. The Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager would look into this and report to a future meeting.

No polytunnel storage is available but the Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager advised that the team is now at full complement and would be able to deal with this. It was **proposed** by Cllr Greenaway, **seconded** by Cllr Clover and **RESOLVED** that polytunnel storage be erected in the cemetery behind the depot. Officers were asked to inform residents in neighbouring properties of the plan.

E25/24 **Active travel map**

The committee had a standing action to review the active travel map, introduced in 2023. This action was agreed by the committee at its meeting on 12 September 2023 (minute E45/23). The map was noted and no changes were suggested.

The Abingdon blog includes a map of benches in the town and it was suggested that this could be linked to from the town council website.

E26/24 **Signage**

Re E63/23, the committee was asked to review the installation of town council signage at council-owned sites across the town. It was noted that all signage had been installed and no feedback received.

E27/24 **Tree planting**

The committee considered working with Trees for Streets to increase the canopy in Abingdon. The Chair, Cllr Greenaway, asked if the town council could contact the organisation to request help with planting more trees and to contact the district and county councils to encourage them to plant more trees. The Chair would liaise with officers on further action.

E28/24 **Publicity**

- Cemetery improvements and Letter to Heaven postbox
- Outdoor Services team report and images
- Caldecott Rec. MUGA
- Hillview footpath

The Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager was asked to speak to the Project Manager: Community and Business Engagement with ideas for publicity from his team.

E29/24 **Forward Plan**

The forward plan was reviewed. It was agreed to remove 'allotments' as this can be raised as a new action when a new cemetery is approved.

E30/24 **Actions Register**

The actions register was reviewed.

E31/24 **Future Agenda items**

- Biodiversity plan – plan adopted in 2022, to review and update as needed. The plan has no agreed review date.
- Plastic-free initiative
- Swift and bat roosting boxes

E32/24 **Dates of future meetings**

- 19 November 2024
- 18 February 2025
- 3 June 2025

The meeting closed at 8.44pm

Signed: _____

Date: _____