



## Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

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# ABINGDON-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL

## Wednesday 12 March 2025

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

Present:

Cllr Gabby Barody

Cllr Rawda Jehanli

Cllr Elio Astone

Cllr Cheryl Briggs

Cllr Penny Clover

Cllr Margaret Crick

Cllr Mark Giddins

Cllr Tom Greenaway

Cllr Murali Gunarajah

Cllr Jim Halliday

Cllr Gwyneth Lewis

Cllr Pat Lonergan

Cllr Leo Midwinter

Cllr Lorraine Oates

Cllr Colin Sanderson

Cllr Andrew Skinner

Cllr Victoria Walker

Mayor

Deputy Mayor

In attendance:

Cherie Carruthers

Andy Crick

Dawn Hodson

Father Jamie McGrath

Town Clerk/Chief Executive

Democratic Services Officer (clerk to the meeting)

Reducing the Risk

Our Lady and St. Edmund's Catholic Church

### **Act of Reflection**

An opening reflection was led by Father Jamie McGrath from Our Lady and St. Edmund's Catholic Church).

T79/24 **Public participation**

Dawn Hodson from Reducing the Risk attended to make a presentation on their work to support victims of domestic abuse, to promote the support offered among residents, to peer-review the work being undertaken and to conduct research into addressing the problem of domestic abuse. Reducing the Risk is working with local groups including The Abingdon Bridge and Abingdon Carousel and intends to launch a charter for Abingdon later in the year. It is expected that Abingdon will be named the first 'torchbearer' town in June 2025. The presentation was introduced by Cllr Gwyneth Lewis.

Cllr Oates commended Cllr Lewis and Ms Hodson for their work to establish Reducing the Risk. The Mayor thanked them and noted the work of Cllr Lewis in spearheading the project.

T80/24 **Apologies**

Cllr Neil Fawcett, Cllr Oliver Forder.

T81/24 **Declarations of interest**

None.

T82/24 **Minutes**

T71/24 - paragraph one, the second sentence refers to 'insurance costs': this should be 'national insurance costs' and would be amended.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Giddins, **seconded** by Cllr Gunarajah and **RESOLVED** to adopt and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2025, as amended, as a correct record of the meeting.

T83/24 **Mayor's engagements**

The council reviewed the Mayor's announcements. The Mayor commented on how many engagements she and the Deputy Mayor had attended and she thanked the Deputy Mayor for her work through the year.

T84/24 **Oxfordshire County Council**

There was no report from County Councillors

T85/24 **Vale of White Horse District Council**

The council considered a report from District Councillors.

T86/24 **Community committee**

The draft minutes of the Community committee meeting held on 4 February 2025 were received.

T87/24 **Town Infrastructure committee**

The draft minutes of the Town Infrastructure committee meeting held on 13 February 2025 were received.

T88/24 **Environment and Amenities committee**

The draft minutes of the Environment and Amenities committee meeting held on 18 February 2025 were received.

T89/24 **Finance, Governance and Asset Management committee**

The draft minutes of the Community committee meeting held on 3 March 2025 were received.

**Matters arising**

F71/24, VE/VJ Day: Cllr Clover updated the meeting on plans for the events being organised by the Royal British Legion.

F77/24, display sign during twinning conference: the Town Clerk advised that officers are looking into whether this can be achieved in the time available before the conference.

**Recommendations**

F74/24, Committee structure: it was **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by Cllr Astone and **RESOLVED** that the proposed new committee structure and meeting calendar be adopted, subject to the town council agreeing to the Town Clerk and Chair of FGAM bringing a full proposal to the town council in May 2025. The saving in councillor and officer time which would result from the reduced number of town council meetings was highlighted as a benefit to the town given the expected saving in officer time and costs.

T90/24 **Planning committee**

The minutes of the Planning committee meetings held on 13 January 2025 and 3 February 2025 and the draft minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2025 were received.

## **Recommendation**

Re item P151/24, it was **proposed** by Cllr Giddins, **seconded** by Cllr Midwinter and **RESOLVED** that:

1. the town council would request an urgent meeting with representatives of Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board to:
  - explain the difference between the response they submitted on the application for a care home in North Abingdon ([P23/V/2861/O](#)) and the responses received from local suppliers of the care;
  - request that representatives of Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board attend the town council meeting in June 2025 to explain their rationale for care in Abingdon;
2. the MP for Abingdon would be invited to attend the Parish Meeting.

The Chair of the Planning committee hopes to invite representatives of the care board to speak at the town council meeting in June 2025.

### **T91/24 Town council strategy**

It was **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by Cllr Giddins and **RESOLVED** that the town council confirms that its four corporate objectives remain as described in its Strategic Plan and requests that the Town Clerk brings a draft of the Strategic Plan 2025-2029 to the annual meeting on 12 May 2025.

### **T92/24 Election of Mayor**

It was **proposed** by Cllr Oates and **seconded** by Cllr Giddins that Cllr Rawda Jehanli be nominated as Mayor for the 2025-26 civic year. The Mayor will be elected at the annual meeting.

### **T93/24 Election of Deputy Mayor**

It was **proposed** by Cllr Lonergan and **seconded** by Cllr Midwinter that Cllr Andrew Skinner be nominated as Deputy Mayor for the 2025-26 civic year. The Deputy Mayor will be elected at the annual meeting.

### **T94/24 VE Day commemoration**

The council considered a report on whether the town council should organise a Bun Throwing to mark the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day on 8 May 2025. This item was referred by the Finance, Governance and Asset Management committee on 3 March 2025. This proposal was not supported due to pressure on staff time and council resources given the number of events which are already planned through the year.

T95/24 **Twining conference celebration**

This item was discussed above under item T89/24.

T96/24 **Future agenda items**

- Governance document review & policies

T97/24 **Dates of future meetings**

12 May 2025 – Monday

T98/24 **Exclusion of the public, including the Press**

The Mayor **moved**, Cllr Midwinter **seconded** and it was **RESOLVED** 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.

T99/24 **Motions under Standing Order 8**

A proposal to grant the freedom of Abingdon was proposed by Cllr Jim Halliday and seconded by Cllr Crick. Names put forward at this meeting stand adjourned until the next ordinary or special meeting of the town council, which will be asked to confirm the proposal.

The meeting closed at 7.44pm

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_