



Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

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Finance, Governance and Asset Management committee

Monday 3 March 2025

Minutes

Present:

Cllr Jim Halliday
Cllr Elio Astone
Cllr Neil Fawcett
Cllr Tom Greenaway
Cllr Gwyneth Lewis
Cllr Colin Sanderson
Cllr Gabby Barody

Chair
Vice-Chair
Chair of the Community committee
Chair of the Environment and Amenities committee

Chair of the Town Infrastructure committee
Mayor (ex-officio)

In attendance:

Cherie Carruthers
Cllr Penny Clover
Andy Crick

Town Clerk/Chief Executive

Democratic Services Officer

SECTION I (open to the public, including the press)

F67/24 Apologies

Cllr Oliver Forder

F68/24 Declarations of interest

None.

F69/24 Public participation

None.

F70/24 **Minutes**

It was **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by Cllr Lewis and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance, Governance and Asset Management committee of 16 December 2024 be confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting, to be signed by the Chair.

Matters arising

F60/24: the Town Clerk has written to the Abbey Buildings Trust to confirm the support offered and set out the conditions for this support.

F71/24 **Finance report**

It was **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by Cllr Fawcett and **RESOLVED** to accept the management accounts and associated reports to 31 January 2025.

Matters arising

The committee considered whether it should organise any events to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day and whether funding was available for this, outside of grant applications from other organisations. It was noted that the Royal British Legion (RBL) was expected to submit a community grant application to support its planned events, including a commemoration and use of the precinct and Market Place for various activities including exhibitions and a concert at St Helen's Church, and that consideration of this proposal could be made under delegated powers by the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Community Committee. The town council was asked to consider a Bun Throwing and it was noted that this had previously been arranged in 2015 to mark the 70th anniversary of VE Day. The committee agreed to refer the proposal to the town council, as a Bun Throwing would be a significant project to organise and deliver in the timescale available.

F72/24 **Internal audit**

The committee noted the interim audit for 2024-25.

F73/24 **Members' allowances**

It was **proposed** by Cllr Lewis, **seconded** by Cllr Sanderson and **RESOLVED** that the allowance for town councillors for 2025-26 is £1,675.

F74/24 **Committee structure**

The Town Clerk and Chair of FGAM have discussed the committee structure and proposed that the number of committees be reduced from five to four and the number of committee cycles in each year be reduced from five to four. Proposed new committees: FGAM; Community; Environment, Amenities and Infrastructure; Planning.

Notes

- The non-councillor member of the Environment and Amenities committee could continue to attend if co-opted in accordance with the standing orders.
- There would be a museum sub-committee which could meet before the community committee to save councillor and officer time.
- It was recommended to have the Chair of the Personnel sub-committee appointed to FGAM as a fixed role.

The proposed new structure was agreed in principle and would be added to the town council agenda as a recommendation. The Town Clerk would draft revised proposals based on the discussion at the committee.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by the Mayor, Cllr Barody, and **RESOLVED** to recommend the adoption of the proposed new committee structure and meeting calendar, subject to the town council agreeing to the Town Clerk and Chair of FGAM bringing a full proposal, including a scheme of delegation and updated standing orders, to the town council meeting in May 2025.

F75/24 **Museum update**

To committee considered a report from the Museum Manager. The committee noted the cost of the replacement lift door and asked the Town Clerk to refer this back to the committee if the cost of repair or replacement exceeds the delegated amount of £5,000.

F76/24 **Cemetery polytunnel**

The committee considered a report from the Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager on whether to apply for a certificate of lawful development for the polytunnel being erected at Spring Road Cemetery. This was referred by the Environment and Amenities committee (minute E43/24). It was **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by Cllr Greenaway and **RESOLVED** to ask the Town Clerk to apply for the certificate of lawful development.

F77/24 **Display sign**

The committee considered a proposal for a budget to fund the purchase of a new projector display for the 'VE80' commemoration for the town centre. This item was referred by the Environment and Amenities committee (minute E41/24).

It was **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by Cllr Greenaway and **RESOLVED** that the town council purchase a VE/VJ Day 'Gobo' display, with further displays considered on their merits.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Astone and **seconded** by Cllr Sanderson that the forthcoming twinning conference be marked with a commemorative 'Gobo' display. The proposal was withdrawn by Cllr Astone but officers were asked to explore the feasibility of this and report to the next town council meeting.

F78/24 **Publicity**

Suggested items which may be publicised:

- recycling of used Chrome books. The Mayor plans to hand them over to The Abingdon Bridge next week.
- start of remediation work in Abbey Hall.
- new Museum undercroft lights

F79/24 **Forward plan**

The forward plan was reviewed.

F80/24 **Actions Register**

The actions register was reviewed and updated.

F81/24 **Future Agenda items**

- Governance documents and policies
- Equality and diversity policy
- Green energy: to consider options for adding green energy generation on town council buildings, such as the depot and cemetery office. Item referred from Environment and Amenities committee as responsibility sits with this committee.
- Museum lift options appraisal – from Forward Plan, committee needs to resolve further action.

F82/24 **Dates of future meetings**

- 9 June 2025

F83/24 **Exclusion of the public, including the Press**

The Chair **proposed**, the Mayor, Cllr Barody **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. The committee moved into confidential session.

F84/24 **Property update**

The committee considered a confidential report on a commercial property matter from the Cemeteries and Outdoor Services Manager. It was **proposed** by Cllr Fawcett, **seconded** by Cllr Halliday and **RESOLVED** to agree in principle to the proposal from officers, subject to further investigations including legal and property investigations.

The meeting closed at 7.55pm

Signed: _____

Date: _____