



Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

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ABINGDON-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL

Wednesday 1 October 2025

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

Present:

Cllr Elio Astone
Cllr Penny Clover
Cllr Neil Fawcett
Cllr Oliver Forder
Cllr Mark Giddins
Cllr Tom Greenaway
Cllr Jim Halliday
Cllr Gwyneth Lewis
Cllr Pat Lonergan
Cllr Leo Midwinter
Cllr Lorraine Oates
Cllr Colin Sanderson
Cllr Andrew Skinner

Deputy Mayor

In attendance:

Nichola Cayley
Andy Crick

Deputy Town Clerk
Democratic Services Officer (clerk to the meeting)

One member of the public.

The Deputy Mayor, Cllr Skinner, chaired the meeting.

Act of Reflection

The Deputy Mayor led the act of reflection.

T37/25 **Public participation**

None.

T38/25 **Apologies**

The Mayor, Cllr Rawda Jehanli; Cllr Gabby Barody; Cllr Cheryl Briggs; Cllr Margaret Crick; Cllr Murali Gunarajah; Cllr Victoria Walker

T39/25 **Declarations of interest**

None.

T40/25 **Minutes**

It was **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by Cllr Lonergan and **RESOLVED** to adopt and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2025 as a correct record of the meeting.

Matters arising

Re minute 32/25, the town council wrote to the Environment Agency to request that the Abingdon Weir be opened and it was noted that the weir had opened for September, to close in October for continued repairs. The action of the town council in highlighting this closure had contributed to the temporary re-opening of the walkway and this should be publicised.

T41/25 **Mayor's engagements**

A report on the Mayor's engagements was reviewed by the meeting. The Deputy Mayor commented that the Mayor had been very busy attending a large number of events. The meeting expressed its appreciation for the work of the Mayor.

The Deputy Mayor mentioned that the Rotary Club was considering restarting the Dragon Boat competition.

T42/25 **Oxfordshire County Council**

The town council received an update from county councillors.

Cllr Neil Fawcett

- Consultation on the redesign of the junction on Bridge Street/East St Helen's Street has gone live and county councillors are publicising this. Town councillors were encouraged to look at the consultation and offer feedback. The initial design came from Abingdon residents and county councillors supported the final design.

- Work on the A34 Lodge Hill interchange is going ahead. The work will take longer than originally planned to minimise the times the road will need to be closed.

Cllr Tom Greenaway

- Recent consultations on parking proposals in central Abingdon have now closed and were being reviewed. It was understood that that all the parking restriction schemes bar one had been withdrawn following the consultations.
- The county council Cabinet has supported a temporary congestion charge for Oxford, which is now live.

Local government reorganisation

County councillors were asked for an update on proposals for future unitary authorities. Detailed proposals for competing models are being prepared, to be submitted to the government in the next three months, after which there will be a public consultation on the different options. The government will make a final decision in 2026 but consultation is included.

The town council was advised that the Finance, Governance and Asset Management committee had set up a working party to consider this matter and would meet on 8 October 2025.

T43/25 Vale of White Horse District Council

A written report was provided on the work of the district council.

- District councillors are meeting in local clusters to advocate for their areas. Abingdon councillors are seeking progress on the Charter, the Upper Reaches, and the outdoor pool.
- The Chief Executive of the district council has stepped down and the process of recruitment of a replacement is due to begin.
- Draft Local Plan 2041: government inspectors have asked for the draft plan to be withdrawn as they do not consider that the district council has undertaken its duty of cooperation with Oxford City Council on the provision of new housing.
- The proposed Chilton Close trash screen to address the flooding risk continues to be developed by the EA in consultation with the UKAEA, with a delay in part due to permits not being issued.

T44/25 Environment, Amenities and Infrastructure committee

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2025 were received. The Deputy Chair of the committee, Cllr Astone, provided a verbal update.

The outdoor services team now has a dedicated member of staff whose job is to clean and maintain bus shelters. Cllr Astone offered the council's thanks for the improvements which have been made and it was noted by others that the state of bus shelters had improved noticeably. The work of the outdoor services team in keeping the town clean in general was also acknowledged.

The monk sculpture has now been removed from the roundabout on Marcham Road. The town council was not involved in this action.

The cemetery chapel has been renovated and looks very good and councillors recommend that the chapel be promoted for hire on noticeboards in the cemetery and more widely. The chapel is consecrated so it is available for weddings and funerals. All council buildings should be promoted for widespread use as they belong to the town.

The committee had considered applying for a grant from the Police and Crime Commissioner fund for improvements to the Stratton Way underpass and it was recommended that funding be explored from other sources.

The committee had resolved to organise a replacement bus stop in the High Street and for the pavement to be improved at the site and an update was requested. EA would investigate and report back.

T45/25 Community committee

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2025 were received. The Chair of the committee, Cllr Fawcett, provided a brief update.

- **Fun and Music in the Park:** the committee thanked the Project Manager: Business and Community Engagement for her work organising a successful event. The Chair met with officers to discuss marketing for next year and was very encouraged by the work done already.
- **Town Crier:** it was agreed to continue with four editions a year and a clear process for distribution, planning future editions and the editorial process were confirmed. A small increase in the budget would be proposed.
- Cllr Halliday advised that he had met with **One Planet Abingdon** to discuss fundraising and the town council grant awarded to support this was welcomed. The fundraising grant is being used positively.
- **Michaelmas fair:** officers had contacted the fair organiser to raise the issue of loud music outside residential properties on Ock Street. The town council was advised that a wooden bridge over the River Ock at the end of Tower Close had holes in it and considered whose responsibility this was. If no resolution was found before the fair, it was hoped that town council staff could make it safe for the event. Cllr Fawcett would ask officers to advise.

T46/25 Finance, Governance and Asset Management committee

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2025 were received.

The Chair, Cllr Halliday, mentioned the small amount of funding from general funds for the freedom ceremony for the town council's honorary archivist, Jackie Smith. The Chair asked the town council to formally thank the Project Manager: Business and Community Engagement and Rose Hilsdon for their work on the event. The Deputy Town Clerk would pass on the thanks of the meeting.

T47/25 Planning committee

The minutes of the meetings held on 9 June 2025, 30 June 2025, 21 July 2025, 11 August 2025, 1 September 2025 were received.

The Chair, Cllr Giddins, commented on a number of matters considered at the meetings:

- There is still a need to resolve the progress of **roadworks on Oxford Road**, which may complete behind the roadworks on Lodge Hill. The Chair is in consultation with David Wilson Homes and county councillors to seek to resolve this. The Chair is also seeking to consult with Thames Water on whether issues exist with services on Oxford Road.
- **Proposed new reservoir**: a request to include South Abingdon in environmental assessments has not been accepted by the Planning Inspectorate, which agreed on this with Thames Water. This decision was made a year ago and not notified to the town council. The Chair of Planning has contacted the office of Layla Moran MP to seek a joint approach to Thames Water to discuss progress with the reservoir.
- The **Neighbourhood Plan** has been reviewed and revisions suggested by a number of parties. The revisions are being collated by the Chair of the steering group, Simon Hills and it is hoped that an update can be presented to the next planning meeting to advise on timelines after revisions are made.
- The Chair of Planning attended a meeting regarding **Dalton Barracks** and was informed that traffic assessments for the proposed development will take place in the next three to four months and will be separate to those for the proposed new reservoir. The traffic assessments will take place during school terms.
- The next planning meeting will consider amendments for **Culham Number 1 site**, including traffic assessments.

T48/25 Future agenda items

Report from Abingdon PCSOs to town council (NF)

T49/25 Dates of future meetings

14 January 2026
18 March 2026
Monday 18 May 2026
24 June 2026

The meeting closed at 7.50pm

Signed: _____

Date: _____