

ABINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

Report to	Community committee
Meeting date	19 November 2025
Report author	Victoria Moore
Agenda item	10

REPORT OF THE PROJECT MANAGER: PROPERTY AND PLACE ON MICHAELMAS FAIR

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To review the 2025 Abingdon Michaelmas Fair.

2. Summary

2.1 Abingdon Michaelmas Fair took place from 16:00 Sunday 5th October to 23:00 Tuesday 7th October 2025. This report serves as a review of the event.

3. Action required

3.1 To note point all points under Item 6.

4. Link to strategic plan and objectives

KO2 To develop a resilient, sustainable town which will provide a home for residents now and in the future.

KO3 To manage the Council's assets efficiently and effectively to meet for the needs of the community now and in the future.

KO4 To work with community partners to support those who are vulnerable and in need and to create opportunities to increase social inclusivity

5. Key information and options

5.1 A sensitive note for concern was received draw attention to the poor organisation and chairing by the Project Manager Place and Property in relation to the pre fair multi agency meeting held on the 31st of July 2025. The concern and its contents were noted.

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- 5.2 The 2025 pre fair multi agency meeting was held on 31st July at 14.30 in the OMC. The original date was arranged for the 1st of July. Due to a date clash to a pre-arranged ATC event some ATC Cllrs could not attend. The meeting was re-arranged for 31st July.
- 5.3 Stakeholders involved at the pre fair meeting are ATC, VWHDC, OCC Highways, OCC Parking, Abingdon sorting office, Oxford Bus Company and the emergency services. Out of these agencies the only attendees were representatives from the VWHDC parking team and a TVP Sargent. Other invitees either forgot or did not respond. The attendance at the pre meeting by all agencies was very poor. It should be noted that although stakeholders are invited to the pre fair meeting, representatives are not formally required to attend.
- 5.4 The stakeholders contact list for the pre fair meeting had not been updated since pre covid and it was apparent at this year's meeting. Since the meeting held in July this year, the correct contacts have now been sought from all involved stakeholders, and the contacts list has been updated. The lead Officer will ensure that an Outlook invitation and an agenda is sent to stakeholders well ahead of the meeting for 2026. If a response is not received, the contact details will be double checked to ensure that the invitation has been received by the correct person.
- 5.5 Before the opening of Abingdon Michaelmas fair at 16:00 on Sunday 5th October, arrangements were made by the Project Manager Place and Property to carry out a pre fair H&S (health and safety) walkthrough on Sunday 5th October at 13:00. The H&S walkthrough was to ensure all H&S, emergency access route and road closures were in place in line with current legislation. The walkthrough was carried out by the ATC Project Manager Place & Property, ATC Outdoor Services Manager, Mr William Wilson (Bon Wilson's Funfairs Ltd), Oxford Security Services and DGC Consultancy Limited (independent H&S officer commissioned by Mr Wilson).

The Abingdon Sorting Office manager and Abingdon Fire station sent their apologies in attending the walkthrough at 13:00 due to urgent work matters requiring their attendance. The Abingdon Sorting Office manager confirmed he was happy with the access arrangements via telephone. The Abingdon Fire officer confirmed he was happy with emergency access routes through the fair. Abingdon Fire station would carry out daily drive throughs of the fair in the fire engine. The Project Manager Place and Property, Outdoors Services manager and Mr. Wilson conducted a second walkthrough on Monday 6th October and Tuesday 7th October to ensure all access routes and remained clear accessible and checked all roadblocks were in place.

- 5.6 The new manager of the Abingdon Sorting Office had been contacted, and very kindly re-scheduled the last postal lorry delivery to 17.50 on Monday and Tuesday. From 17:50 no vehicular access was permitted anywhere along Ock Street in line with the forthcoming Martyn's Law which comes into effect in 2027. Parked vehicles were stationed at all four road closures to prevent any moving vehicle entering the crowds attending the fair. Thanks are given to Abingdon Sorting Office for their assistance and cooperation in this year's Abingdon Michaelmas Fair.
- 5.7 DGC Consultancy Ltd (commissioned by Mr. Wilson) carried out an inspection of all

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rides, equipment and access and produced a signed report to state H&S of the fair was satisfactory. A report was given to Bob Wilson Funfairs Ltd and the Project Manager Property and Place for ATC records.

6.8 WDHC Environmental Health Officer informed the Town Council that she would be carrying out inspections of street vendors of Abingdon restaurants selling food on the street during the fair. There was no further contact, so can presume all vendors were compliant in terms of food Health and Hygiene.

5.8 The 2025 fair service was held at the later time of 15:30 on the carousel in the Market Place. The fair service was attended by an even larger number of residents than previous years. Residents whom I spoke to enjoyed the service, especially the free ride with councillors on the carousel to mark the fairs opening.

5.9 Complaints were received from residents being unhappy with parking restrictions along Bostock Road. Resident complaints were highlighting the lack of signage informing residents of parking restrictions and cars parking illegally. Parking enforcement teams were contacted to request a parking warden attend and rectify the illegally parked cars. The complaints were noted and improved signage will be planned for next year's fair.

5.10 A complaint was received from Idlewild hair salon in relation to noise and base music causing structural damage to the property. The same complaint was received last year and the salon was informed that the council would certainly look into this if they salon commissioned and shared a structural surveyor's report identifying the music/base as the cause of any structural damage. No further communication was received until the same complaint this year. The council has not received a surveyor's report to date.

5.11 No further complains in relation to any other matting involving the fair we received.

5.12 In a bid to save money the numbers of security working the fair this year were reduced. The reduction was positive and did not impact the security or order of the fair. It was noted from Bob Wilson Fairs Ltd the number of security personnel was too high and could be reduced by half. Thames Valley Police (TVP) ensure a very large police presence - more than 20 officers - are available during the fair and with the addition of 10 plus security it was deemed 'excessive'. In comparison to fairs such St Giles and Banbury security numbers are much lower. Security numbers for next year's fair will be investigated and discussed in the 2026 stakeholders' fair meeting.

6. **Climate change/green implications**

None.

7. **Financial/budget implications**

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7.1 Appendix 1, finance report attached to this report. Savings were made on lowering security.

8. **HR implications**

None.

9. **Supporting papers and appendices**

No additional supporting document are attached to this report.

Victoria Moore
Project Manager Place & Property.
November 2025