



## **Abingdon-on-Thames Mayor Making 2026**

# **Mayor's Awards**

### **Business & Community Awards**

#### **Hilton Garden Inn Hotel, Abingdon**

An award is presented to Hilton Garden Inn Abingdon Oxford for their continued and generous support to the Mayor's Office over the years, including my own term. Their contribution to civic events, the provision of facilities, and generous donations, along with a consistently high standard of service, has been invaluable. This award is for the whole team, with special recognition to Keeley Dennyschene, Director of Sales, for her outstanding support and commitment. As she so warmly expressed, their support comes from a genuine passion for what they do and it truly shows.

#### **Crown & Thistle Hotel, Abingdon**

The second award is presented to the Crown & Thistle Hotel Abingdon in recognition of their ongoing support to the Mayor's Office and the wider community. Despite changes in business ownership, their commitment has remained steadfast, offering generous support, hospitality, and excellent service for civic and charitable events.

#### **Philip Bingham, Abingdon Food Bank**

Philip Bingham, Manager of Abingdon Food Bank, has an impressive leadership and management style. Under his guidance, the Food Bank has grown significantly from its early beginnings into a vital service supporting hundreds of families across our community. Philip manages both the charity and its team to an exceptionally high standard, ensuring support reaches those most in need while maintaining strong partnerships across the community.

#### **Martin Richards, Scouts**

Martin moved to Abingdon in 2012 and has been heavily involved in Scouts in the town and beyond. He ensures that Leaders have the right qualifications and risk assessments for the many adventurous activities undertaken by Squirrels aged 4-6, right up to the oldest Explorer Scouts aged 14-18 and the Leaders with them. Martin commits a great deal of his time to Scouting.

## **Holly Freeland, The Abingdon Bridge (TAB)**

Holly Freeland is an exceptional youth worker whose impact on young people in Abingdon is both profound and far-reaching. She brings a rare combination of skill, compassion and authenticity to her work, creating spaces where young people feel safe, valued and able to thrive. Holly has an extraordinary ability to connect with those who are often hardest to reach, empowering them to find their voice, build confidence and feel a genuine sense of belonging. Her dedication to helping young people not just cope but actively contribute and commit to their communities makes her a truly deserving recipient of this award. It is fantastic to see her work recognised in this way.

## **Mayor's Charities**

Please note that details are printed as supplied.

### **2025-26**

#### **Octopus – Oxford Colon Cancer Trust**

Founded in 2003 by consultants and former patients of Oxford University Hospitals, Octopus, or the Oxford Colon Cancer Trust charity, is a leading Inflammatory Bowel Disease and Colorectal Cancer charity. The charity pioneers new treatments for colorectal cancer, colitis and Crohn's and influences how they are treated across the NHS and funds breakthrough national and international research to improve patient outcomes and care.

Donations to the charity helps to fund research and innovation at the [Oxford Colorectal Surgery department](#) which has an international reputation and is leading the way in the management of colorectal diseases. It also funds UK wide research and training in IBD and colorectal cancer and the team have pioneered laparoscopic, keyhole and robotic surgery. The charity is chaired by Professor Sir Neil Mortensen who is a Professor of Colorectal Surgery, Nuffield Department of Surgery, University of Oxford.

### **2026-27**

#### **Abingdon Music Centre**

Abingdon Music Centre was founded 50 years ago, providing classes for babies and pre-school children. Since then, it has expanded greatly to fulfil its charitable objective of "music for everyone". Music has been found to improve mental health, boost brain development, aid memory and concentration and reduce social isolation. Anyone should have a chance to reap these benefits, regardless of their age or ability.

## Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council, Mayor-making 2026

For children they offer fun pre-school sessions, a guitar club and work with Music Flood partners to give primary school pupils the chance to play in an orchestra. Adults can join their community orchestra, guitar groups, recorder group or one of their three choirs, including ACCord their community choir. They often perform at community events and fund-raising events for other charities and do outreach work in care homes giving residents stimulation and fun.

Their office is based at Larkmead school but they hire venues across Abingdon for classes. They try to keep class fees as low as possible and reduce them for those who are on benefits etc. but also rely on donations and grants to support their work. "We are very grateful and excited that the Mayor has chosen us as his charity for the coming year and look forward to discussing how we might use the money to develop further".