



ABINGDON-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL

Annual meeting, Monday 18 May 2026, 6.30pm

Minutes

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

Present:

Cllr Andrew Skinner
Cllr Victoria Walker
Cllr Elio Astone
Cllr Gabby Barody
Cllr Penny Clover
Cllr Neil Fawcett
Cllr Mark Giddins
Cllr Murali Gunarajah
Cllr Jim Halliday
Cllr Rawda Jehanli
Cllr Gwyneth Lewis
Cllr Pat Lonergan
Cllr Leo Midwinter
Cllr Colin Sanderson

Mayor
Deputy Mayor

In attendance:

Cherie Carruthers

Town Clerk/Chief Executive

T1/26 **Election of Mayor**

It was **proposed** by Cllr Lonergan **seconded** by Cllr Gunarajah and **RESOLVED** that Cllr Andrew Skinner be elected as Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames for the civic year 2026-27.

T2/26 **Election of Deputy Mayor**

It was proposed by Cllr Halliday and seconded by Cllr Giddins that Cllr Victoria Walker be elected as Deputy-Mayor for the civic year 2026-27. There were no other nominations, and the election of Cllr Walker was **AGREED** unanimously.

T3/26 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Crick, Cllr Dunne, Cllr Forder, Cllr Greenway and Cllr Oates.

T4/26 **Public participation**

None.

T5/26 **Declarations of Interest**

None.

T6/26 **Minutes**

It was **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by Cllr Barody and **RESOLVED** to adopt and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2026, as amended, as a correct record of the meeting. The Mayor abstained as he had not been present at that meeting.

T7/26 **Governance**

It was **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by Cllr Lewis and **RESOLVED** to adopt the following governance documents:

- i. Standing Orders
- ii. Scheme of delegation and terms of reference
- iii. Code of conduct
- iv. Financial regulations

T8/26 **General Power of Competence**

The freedom of the General Power of Competence is available to local councils that meet two criteria for eligibility. The Localism Act 2011 s1 – s8 sets these out in a statutory instrument known as the *Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012* that came into force in April 2012.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by Cllr Giddins and **RESOLVED** that the town council meets the following criteria:

- (i) the number of members of the council that have been declared to be elected, whether at ordinary elections or at a by-election, is equal to or greater than two-thirds of the total number of members of the council;
- (ii) the clerk to the parish council holds the Certificate in Local Council Administration.

T9/26 **Membership of council committees and representation on outside bodies**

It was **proposed** by Cllr Astone, **seconded** by Cllr Clover and **RESOLVED** to appoint members to town council standing committees and sub-committees as set out in the report to the town council.

It was **proposed** by Cllr Giddins, **seconded** by Cllr Astone and **RESOLVED** to appoint the members to outside bodies as set out in the report to the committee. Councillor Lewis offered to substitute for the currently appointed Councillor Crick at the Earth Trust.

The council decided to wait for confirmation from Councillor Crick and, if she declined the role, to revisit the appointment at the June meeting.

T10/26 **Motions to Council**

- i) The Council received and considered the following motion proposed by Cllr Halliday and seconded by Cllr Lonergan: -

Under Section 85(1) Local Government Act 1972; Cllr Jim Halliday wishes the Council to consider whether the waiving the requirements of S85(1) of the Act for Cllr Margaret Crick for the period from 15th June 2026 to 15th December 2026 inclusive on the grounds of ill-health.

All members voted in favour and the motion **PASSED**.

- ii) The Council received and considered the following motion proposed to be noted by Cllr Halliday: -

The Town Council **notes** that;

- Christ's Hospital of Abingdon has applied to the Charity Commission to change their governing status. They propose to change from an unincorporated charity to a not-for-profit Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG). They state that this will reduce the liability of

Governors in any legal proceedings that may be brought against the Charity.

- The company will be composed of two ex officio governors, namely the Mayor of Abingdon-on-Thames and the Rector of Abingdon-on-Thames, one nominative governor from the Town Council with the rest being co-optative governors recruited from the community.
- If this change takes place, then the Council's nominative Governors will reduce in number from three to one.

The council noted the ongoing governance review process at Christ's Hospital, which was currently with the Charity Commission. The council had appointed Cllrs Astone, Clover, and Barody as representatives but agreed to take no further action until the process is complete.

- iii) The Council received and considered the following motion proposed by Cllr Jehanli and seconded by Cllr Gunarajah: -

Abingdon-on-Thames is a town that welcomes and values the diversity of all who live and work here. The Town Council is concerned by reports of incidents of racial abuse affecting members of our community.

We strongly condemn all forms of discrimination and stand in solidarity with those affected. We urge Thames Valley police to ensure that sufficient resources are made available to investigate thoroughly all race crime incidents reported to them and to take appropriate action to bring perpetrators to justice so that minority communities can continue to have confidence in the police.

To ensure meaningful and constructive action, the Council resolves to:

1. Establish a Community Safety & Inclusion Working Party

Establish a Working Party, comprising councillors and, where appropriate, community representatives and partner organisations, to:

- Review concerns raised by residents
- Gather evidence and community feedback
- Identify practical and proportionate actions within the Council's remit

2. Engagement and Partnership

The Working Party will engage with relevant organisations and authorities, including policing and community partners, to better understand concerns and explore appropriate responses.

3. Awareness and Reporting

The Working Party will consider how best to improve awareness for residents on:

- How to report incidents
- What support is available locally

4. Community Listening

The Working Party will explore opportunities to hold a community listening forum, providing a safe and respectful space for residents to share experiences and build trust.

5. Reporting and Recommendations

The Working Party will report back to Full Council with clear, practical, and deliverable recommendations.

All members voted in favour and the motion **PASSED**.

This initiative stemmed from resident's concerns at a recent parish meeting. The working party's role was clarified not as an investigative body, but as a flexible "hub" to listen to resident concerns (including those related to racial incidents), create awareness, and liaise with community groups and authorities like the police to foster integration and safety.

It was proposed and agreed that the working party would have an interim membership consisting of Councillors Jehanli, Astone, and Gunarajah, with the Mayor and Chair of FGAM, Cllr Halliday, serving as ex officio members. The membership would be formally reviewed at the June meeting.

T11/25 Dates of future meetings

17 June 2026

7 October 2026

20 January 2027

24 March 2027

17 May 2027 – Annual Town Council Meeting

23 June 2027

A discussion took place regarding the date of the next council meeting, scheduled for June 17th. Due to a scheduling conflict, it may be moved to Monday, June 22nd, or Tuesday, June 23rd.

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council Annual meeting 18 May 2026
Minutes

The new Mayor clarified the policy on wearing ceremonial robes. It was decided that robes will be worn for the annual council meeting and for formal public events such as Mayor Making, Remembrance Sunday, and the Christmas Extravaganza. For all other regular council meetings throughout the year, robes will not be worn. The Mayor noted this was his prerogative but reserved the right to change his mind in the future.

The meeting closed at 7pm

Signed: _____

Date: _____