



Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

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Museum sub-committee Wednesday 3 June 2026, 7pm Bear Room MINUTES

These are draft minutes, subject to the approval of the committee and they may therefore change

Present:

Cllr Penny Clover
Cllr Pat Lonergan
Cllr Leo Midwinter
Cllr Carol Dunne
Cllr Jim Halliday

Chair

Chair of the Finance, Governance & Asset Management
Committee – ex-officio

In attendance:

Dan Sancisi
Steven Purnell

Museum Manager (clerk to the meeting)
Representative of Abingdon Museum Friends

SECTION I - open to the public including the Press

M1/26 Apologies

Cllr Margaret Crick
Cllr Colin Sanderson
Cllr Andrew Skinner Mayor ex-officio

M2/26 Declarations of interest

Cllr Carol Dunne declared conflict of interest as employed member of One Planet Abingdon, Climate Emergency Centre, Volunteer Coordinator.

M3/26 **Statements and Questions from the Public**

None.

M4/26 **Minutes**

It was **proposed** by Cllr Halliday, **seconded** by Cllr Lonergan and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the sub-committee of 4 February be confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting, amendments to include the following, to be signed by the Chair.

Cllr Halliday pointed out that discussion was held regarding Museum visits of schools from outside Abingdon area, booked for education sessions, should be charged at least cost value of £75.00 per visit. Or to a maximum of £150.00 per visit at the discretion of Officers.

Cllr Halliday also identified a discussion about the Abingdon Museum Friends (AMF), that members appreciated the help they give, but realised they were having some issues with their membership. We were going to write an article for the Town Crier magazine. Having missed the summer edition, could a 200-word piece be written for the September issue, delegated to the Museum Manager and Secretary of AMF, to generate interest and recruit new members.

M5/26 **Report from the Museum Manager**

The sub-committee considered and noted the report from the Museum Manager.

Jurassic Marine Reptiles (JMR) Project Agreement: Progress is stalled pending a legal agreement with the owner of the specimens. A fundraising consultant advised securing this agreement first. The owner seems agreeable to a 20-year loan with reviews every five years. The committee authorized the preparation of a draft legal agreement, covering terms such as duration, succession (in the event of death of owner), valuation, insurance, conservation, and copyright. The Museum Manager proposed use of an in-house loan agreement template to save costs. The terms for the contract are to be prepared between July and September 2026.

Museum Centenary and Anniversaries: The museum's 100th birthday in 2027 will be marked with an exhibition planned for January. Broader publicity beyond the exhibition was suggested. The 400th anniversary of Christopher Kempster's birth (1627) was also noted for potential consideration.

Public Acknowledgment: Thanks were given to Steven Purnell (Friends of Abingdon Museum) for assistance with the Abingdon Abbey interactive display.

Feasibility of a New Lift: A 2022 report on installing a new lift was reviewed. Option 1 (modifying the existing lift) is favoured by Historic England but is costly (£1.4 million). Option 2 (a new lift in the undercroft) is more cost-effective but less

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favoured. A stairlift was noted as previously disallowed. The committee discussed pursuing planning permission and agreed to recommend to the Community Committee, an investigation into submitting DIY planning applications for two options (first floor only, and all floors). They would be drafted and submitted by the Museum Manager and Town Clerk, members recommended to Community Committee for consideration.

Fee and Annual Pass: The current fee (£2 adult, £1 child) has been unchanged for over 10 years. The committee favoured trialling a £10 adult annual roof pass for one year.

Visitor Numbers and Benchmarking: The committee agreed to research visitor numbers at comparable museums by checking public council reports and consulting the Oxfordshire Museums Council.

Friends of Abingdon Membership: The committee agreed to offer Friends of the Museum free access to the roof, to be noted on their membership cards.

Zip Tap Water Boiler: The committee voted not to replace the broken Zip Tap boiler (costing ~£3,000), as the cafe operator does not consider it essential and due to sustainability and running cost concerns.

Youth Engagement: Cllr Halliday recommended Officers attend a youth symposium on 5 June 2026 at Sophos. It was agreed to coordinate with the town council to send a representative to gather insights.

M6/26 To review the forward plan

The forward plan was reviewed.

M7/26 To review the actions register

The actions register was reviewed.

M8/26 Future Agenda items

Five Year Plan.

Jurassic Marine Reptiles exhibit.

Vote for Vice Chair of the Museum sub-committee.

M9/26 Dates of future meetings

9 September 2026

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

DRAFT