

# Ab.1

## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ABINGDON AREA COMMITTEE

HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, ABINGDON  
ON WEDNESDAY, 13TH JULY, 2005 AT  
7.00PM

### Open to the Public, including the Press

PRESENT:

MEMBERS: Councillor Grahame Ash, Mike Badcock, Mary de-Vere, Tony de-Vere, Gervase Duffield, Peter Green, Jim Halliday, Peter Jones, Monica Lovatt, Julie Mayhew-Archer, Alison Rooke and Roz Smith

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Lorna Edwards, Carole Nicholl and Toby Warren

NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 2

#### Ab.1 ELECTION OF CHAIR

*RESOLVED*

*that Councillor Julie Mayhew be elected Chair of the Abingdon Area Committee for the 2005/06 Municipal Year.*

#### Ab.2 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

*RESOLVED*

*that Councillor Jim Halliday be elected Vice-Chair of the Abingdon Area Committee for the 2005/06 Municipal Year.*

#### Ab.3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were recorded from Councillors Paul Bizzell, Richard Gibson, Janet Morgan and Laurel Symons.

#### Ab.4 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Abingdon Area Committee held on 30 March 2005 were adopted and signed as a correct record.

#### Ab.5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Interest were made as follows: -

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Type of Interest</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Reason</u>	<u>Minute Ref</u>
Mike Badcock	Personal and Prejudicial	Twinning Grant to Abingdon Town Council	Town Councillor	Ab.10(1)
Peter Green	Personal and Prejudicial	Twinning Grant to Abingdon Town Council	Town Councillor	Ab.10(1)
Peter Jones	Personal and Prejudicial	Twinning Grant to Abingdon Town Council	Town Councillor	Ab.10(1)

Monica Lovatt	Personal and Prejudicial	Twinning Grant to Abingdon Town Council	Town Councillor	Ab.10(1)
Julie Mayhew Archer	Personal and Prejudicial	Twinning Grant to Abingdon Town Council	Town Councillor	Ab.10(1)
Alison Rooke	Personal and Prejudicial	Twinning Grant to Abingdon Town Council	Town Councillor	Ab.10(1)
Alison Rooke	Personal	Peachcroft Christian Centre - grant application	Occasionally frequented the Church	Ab.10(2)
Tony de Vere	Personal	Peachcroft Christian Centre - grant application	All Saints Church was a trustee of the Centre and they were members of the Church.	Ab.10(2)
Mary de Vere	Personal	Peachcroft Christian Centre - grant application	All Saints Church was a trustee of the Centre and they were members of the Church.	Ab.10(2)
Roz Smith	Personal	Peachcroft Christian Centre - grant application	Mr Trinder the speaker was a personal friend.	Ab.10(2)
Julie Mayhew-Archer	Personal	Grant application – Mr Kirby	Acquainted with the applicant.	Ab.10(4)
Mike Badcock	Personal	Net Management – grant application.	County Councillor	Ab.10(8)
Roz Smith	Personal	Net Management –grant application.	County Councillor	Ab.10(8)
Peter Jones	Personal and Prejudicial	MS Centre – grant application	Sister in law used this centre	Ab.10(8)

Ab.6 URGENT BUSINESS AND CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

Ab.7 STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDER 32

It was noted that two members of the public had each given notice that they wished to make a statement at the meeting as follows: -

Mr Colin Trinder made a statement in support of a grant application from the Peachcroft Christian Centre. He explained that only £100,000 was needed to build the extension. He reported that with substantial grant assistance from the District Council it would be possible to secure a loan to complete the funds required and proceed with the work. He appreciated the financial position of the Council but emphasised the considerable benefit of the extension and hence improved facilities to all people in Abingdon. Finally, he advised that there was a family fun day on Saturday 16 July 2005, to which all Members were invited to attend.

Mr Allen made a statement in support of the grant application from the Child Contact Centre. He explained that the Contact Centre met in the Church Hall of the Baptist Church as this was a convenient place with suitable facilities. He explained the running of the Centre reporting that there were 24 volunteer helpers. The clients were various people from all cultures, usually where relationships had broken up. He commented on the safe, secure environment provided for children and outlined the operating arrangements in detail.

The Chair thanked Mr Trinder and Mr Allen for their statements.

Ab.8 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDER 32

None.

Ab.9 CAPITAL FUNDING

The Committee received and considered an agenda item which advised that at the last meeting of the South East Area Committee, Members had requested an update on the availability of capital funding if applicants could show that this would significantly increase their chances of lottery or environmental trust funding. A briefing note prepared by the Strategic Director (Finance) was considered.

*RESOLVED*

*that the agenda report be received.*

Ab.10 COMMUNITY GRANTS

The Committee received and considered report 50/05 of the Head of Innovation and Enterprise which set out the budget position in respect of community grants for 2005/06 and invited Members to determine grant applications.

The Committee considered each of the applications in detail having regard to the statements made earlier in the meeting as appropriate.

In considering the applications, Members were mindful of the Committee's current budget, noting that there were less funds to allocate than had been the case previously. Furthermore, Members concluded that further guidance on appropriate levels of funding, including appropriate percentage levels together with advice of how other area committees allocated their grant funds would be helpful. To this end it was agreed that the concerns of this Committee should be flagged up to the Executive, with the Chair of the Informal Working Group reviewing the grants criteria being encouraged to complete the review as soon as possible.

(1) Twinning Organisations in the Abingdon Area

(Councillors Mike Badcock, Peter Green, Peter Jones, Julie Mayhew-Archer, Monica Lovatt and Alison Rooke had each declared a personal and prejudicial interest in part

of this item and in accordance with Standing Order 34 they withdrew from the meeting).

Councillor Jim Halliday, the Vice-Chair took the Chair for this part of the item.

Members queried the content of the Service Level Agreements (SLA). It was noted that the Officer had drafted the SLA which had been sent to the Drayton Twinning Association for consideration.

It was reported that having talked with the Abingdon and District Twin Town Society, the Officers needed to clarify both with the Town Council and the Society what their relationship would be and how they would work in partnership. Until the Officers were satisfied with any proposals, they would not be recommending that an SLA be entered into.

In response to a question raised it was noted that several parishes were involved in twinning and that the Abingdon and District Twin Town Society covered the whole of the Vale in respect of the Vale twin towns Colmar and St Niklaas.

(2) Peachcroft Christian Centre

(Councillors Alison Rooke, Mary de Vere, Tony de Vere and Roz Smith had each declared a personal interest in part of this item and in accordance with Standing Order 34 they remained in the meeting during its consideration).

Members supported the awarded a grant in view of the valuable facilities that were offered to the community.

(3) Abingdon Child Contact Centre

One Member suggested that a Service Level Agreement (SLA) should be entered into with the Centre although this was not supported in view of the amount of grant awarded and the hidden costs of Officers' time in preparing an SLA.

In response to a question raised, the Officers explained the level of grant aid sought and confirmed that the centre provided a service for residents across the whole of the Vale and that it might be appropriate to refer the application to the Executive. However, this was not supported.

(4) Tree Preservation Grant - Mr Kirby, Sympson Close, Abingdon

(Councillor Julie Mayhew-Archer had declared a personal interest in this item and in accordance with Standing Order 34 she remained in the meeting during its consideration).

Further to the report, it was noted that a Tree Preservation Order was in place.

One Member referred to the benefit to the public in supporting this application compared to other applications and commented that the level of grant award should be less comparably. However, other Members considered that the level of grant should be higher.

(5) Abingdon Marathon

Further to the report it was noted that the Town Council had offered a grant of £300 and that any profits were donated to charity.

Some Members expressed concern that in effect some, or all, of the grant award from the Council was being routed through the marathon to a charity. However, it was reported that the organisers had substantial costs which they needed to cover and that any excess only was given to charity.

Members spoke in support of awarding a grant noting that the event encouraged people into the Town. It was suggested that further information was needed, but in view of the timing of the event it was not practicable to request this. It was thereupon suggested that a guarantee against any loss to a maximum amount could be offered and on being put to the vote this was supported by the majority of voting Members.

(6) Abbey Sailing Club

The Committee supported the application.

(7) Historic Building Grant - Pusey Cottage Drayton

Further to the report it was noted that the applicant had resided in the property for in excess of 3 years.

Members commented that some guidance on the level of grant which would be appropriate to award was needed. It was commented that in awarding a grant, the Council could stipulate the style of the thatch, ensuring that it was appropriate for the area. Whilst understanding the desire for thatching to be in keeping with the traditional style for this area, one Member highlighted that there were many historic buildings in the Town centre.

Again one Member compared the amount of grant being proposed for a single person compared to that offered to an organisation benefiting many people.

It was noted that the West Area Committee had decided that in view of the limited funding available it would not offer grant aid towards tree works or thatching.

One Member commented that the Committee should be consistent and that it would not be fair to give a big grant towards one building and not another. It was further suggested that the Committee could be setting a precedent for other such applications.

Reference was made to the suggested level of grant proposed in the report. It was noted that this had been put forward by the respective officers dealing with grant applications based on the existing criteria. Members considered that there should be no grant suggestions in future reports, it being considered that applicants might expect this amount.

The possibility of deferring the application pending a resolution on the criteria was discussed, but deferral was considered unfair to the applicant.

(8) Net Management Committee

(Councillors Mike Badcock and Roz Smith had each declared a personal interest in this item and in accordance with Standing Order 34 they remained in the meeting during its consideration).

In response to a question raised, the contributions from other organisations were highlighted. In addition the number of people benefiting from the service was outlined.

One Member compared the level of grant proposed to be awarded in this case, which would benefit many people and the grant awarded to an individual earlier in the meeting commenting that this was unfair. She emphasised that clearer guidelines of levels of award were needed.

One Member questioned whether there was an element of duplication with another organisation, although it was noted that there appeared to be two distinct schemes.

Furthermore, it was commented that in view of the number of young people with problems more than one scheme would be needed anyway.

The Committee supported the application, but welcomed a report back providing further information.

(9) Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre (Oxford)

(Councillor Peter Jones had declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item and in accordance with Standing Order 34 he left the meeting during its consideration).

The Committee noted that the West Area Committee had not awarded a grant as Members had considered that the application from the Centre should be considered by the Executive as a Vale wide application. This Committee concurred with that view.

(10) Parish Cleansing Grant Bids

The Committee supported the bids noting that they equated to 50% of the overall cost.

**RESOLVED**

(a) *that it be noted that the Committee's approved budget total for 2005/06 is £38,849.12 (including £8,231.12 carried forward from 2004/05), which is apportioned as follows: -*

<i>Environmental Agenda (35%)</i>	<i>£10,716.30</i>
<i>Social Agenda (35%)</i>	<i>£10,716.30</i>
<i>Economic Agenda (10%)</i>	<i>£3,061.80</i>
<i>Discretionary (20%)</i>	<i>£6,123.60</i>
	<i>plus</i>
	<i>£8,231.12</i>

(b) *that it be noted that grants totalling £3,000 are to be awarded to the following two twinning organisations in the Abingdon Area, as directed by the Executive on 6 August 2004, subject to the completion of a service level agreement: -*

<i>Abingdon Town Council</i>	<i>£2,500</i>
<i>Drayton Twinning Society</i>	<i>£500</i>

# Ab.7

- (c) *that this Committee reviews at its next meeting, the final service level agreements in respect of Abingdon Town Council and the Abingdon and District Twin Towns Society to ensure that they are compliant with each other and in accordance with previously agreed conditions; and*
- (d) *that following negotiation with Abingdon Town Council, the Head of Innovation and Enterprise report to the next meeting on whether there is any overlap in respect of twinning between the Abingdon Town Council and the Abingdon and District Twin Towns Society;*
- (e) *that the recommendations made by the Executive and the subsequent decision taken by the Council in respect of funding towards the cost of extending the Peachcroft Christian Centre, Abingdon be noted and that the application be considered again in the light of this (see (d) below);*
- (f) *that the grant applications be determined as follows: -*

<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Scheme</u>	<u>Grant/Decision</u>
<i>Peachcroft Christian Centre</i>	<i>Contribution towards the cost of a community facility.</i>	<i>£15,000 –being £8,231 - carry forward budget and Access Priority and £7,639 - Social Agenda and Access Priority. (Proposed by Councillor Tony de Vere, seconded by Councillor Alison Rooke and agreed by 11 votes to nil, with 1 abstention).</i>
<i>Abingdon Child Contact Centre</i>	<i>Contribution towards running costs for the next five years.</i>	<i>£600 with the Centre being advised that the Committee will not consider any application for grant aid for 2 years - Social Agenda, Access Priority. (Amendment proposed by Councillor Jim Halliday, seconded by Councillor Tony de-Vere and agreed by 6 votes to 2 with 4 abstentions. On being put, the Substantive Motion was agreed by 7 votes to nil with 5 abstentions).</i>  <i>(It had been proposed by Councillor Grahame Ash that an SLA be entered into awarding a grant of £300 per year for the next 3 years. However, this was not seconded.</i>  <i>It had also been proposed by Councillor Gervase Duffield and seconded by Councillor Alison Rooke that a grant of £300 be offered, with the Committee noting that it should look sympathetically on any grant application next year).</i>

# Ab.8

- Mr Kirby  
Sympson  
Close,  
Abingdon
- Contribution towards the cost of crown reduction and dead-wooding of a large chestnut tree and installation of a cable brace, plus routine maintenance to a yew tree.
- £160 - Environmental Agenda and Town and Village Vitality Priority. (Amendment proposed by Councillor Mike Badcock, seconded by Councillor Tony de Vere and agreed by 10 votes to 1, with 1 abstention. On being put, the Substantive Motion was agreed by 10 votes to nil with 2 abstentions).
- (It had been proposed by Councillor Roz Smith and seconded by Councillor Alison Rooke that a grant of £50 be awarded).
- Abingdon  
Marathon
- Guarantee against loss of organising a marathon.
- A guarantee against loss up to a maximum of £500 - Social Agenda, Town & Village Vitality Priority. (Proposed by Councillor Jim Halliday, seconded by Councillor Mary de Vere and agreed by 9 votes to 2, with 1 abstention).
- By way of an amendment Councillor Mike Badcock had proposed and Councillor Grahame Ash had seconded that a grant of £750 be offered but this was lost by 5 votes to 6 with 1 abstention.
- Abbey  
Sailing Club
- Contribution towards the cost of purchasing two boats to be available to beginners.
- £250 - Social Agenda, Town and Village Vitality Priority. (Proposed by Councillor Mike Badcock, seconded by Councillor Roz Smith and agreed by 11 votes to nil with 1 abstention).
- Historic  
Building  
Grant  
Scheme -  
Mr Bax,  
Pusey  
Cottage,  
Drayton
- Contribution towards the cost of re-thatching and restoration of a local historic feature.
- £640 - Environmental Agenda and Town and Village Vitality Priority. (Amendment proposed by Councillor Jim Halliday, seconded by Councillor Mike Badcock and agreed by 7 votes to 6, with the Chair having exercised her second and casting vote. On being put the Substantive Motion was agreed by 7 votes to 6, with the Chair having exercised her second and casting vote).
- (It had been proposed by Councillor Peter Jones and seconded by Councillor Mike Badcock that a grant of £1,250 be offered. However, with the agreement of the Seconder, this Motion was subsequently withdrawn).



*It had also been proposed by Councillor Roz Smith and seconded by Councillor Peter Jones that a grant of £750 be offered. However, with the agreement of the Seconder, this Motion was subsequently withdrawn.*

*It had then been proposed by Councillor Jim Halliday and seconded by Councillor Gervase Duffield that a grant of £750 be offered, but this was lost by 6 votes to 4 with 2 abstentions.*

*On being put to the vote, deferral of consideration of the application was also lost by 5 votes to 7.*

*It had also then been proposed by Councillor Mary de Vere and seconded by Councillor Alison Rooke that no grant be offered, but this was lost by 5 votes to 3, with 4 abstentions.*

*It had then been proposed by Councillor Alison Rooke and seconded by Councillor Peter Green that a grant of £125 be offered.*

*An amendment had then been proposed by Councillor Gervase Duffield and seconded by Councillor Monica Lovatt that a grant of £500 be offered, but this was lost by 5 votes to 3, with 4 abstentions.*

<i>NET Management Committee</i>	<i>Contribution towards the cost of increasing holiday activities.</i>	<i>£1,500, subject to a report being made to a future meeting of the Committee providing more information (including an explanation of exactly what the Committee is doing and how it works with other organisations details of activities and details of the numbers of people involved - Social Agenda and Access Priority.</i>
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*(Proposed by Councillor Roz Smith, seconded by Councillor Tony de Vere and agreed by 11 votes to nil with 1 abstention).*

# Ab.10

*The Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre (Oxford) Contribution towards the cost of installing an electrically operated automatic door for wheelchair users and people with limited mobility.*

(i) *that the application be referred to the Executive as the service is considered to be District wide, with the Executive being invited to determine the application favourably it being noted that this Committee is supportive of awarding a grant; and*

(ii) *that should the Executive decline to make a grant award the application be resubmitted to this Committee for a further consideration.*

*(Proposed by Councillor Alison Rooke, seconded by Councillor Grahame Ash and agreed by 11 votes to nil with 1 of the voting Members not being present during consideration of this item).*

- (g) *that the Executive be advised of this Committee's concerns regarding levels of grant award noting that further guidance on appropriate levels of grant, including percentages, together with advice of how other area committees allocate their grant funds would be helpful; and*
- (h) *that the Chair of the Informal Working Group reviewing the grants criteria be encouraged to complete the review as soon as possible;*
- (i) *that pending the report from the Informal Working Group, the Officers be requested not to include any recommended grant offers;*
- (j) *that the parish cleansing grant bids for 2005/06 be determined as follows: -*

*Appleford-on-Thames £250  
(Proposed by Councillor Mike Badcock, seconded by Councillor Mary de Vere and agreed by 5 votes to nil with 7 abstentions)*

*Drayton £402  
(Proposed by Councillor Mike Badcock, seconded by Councillor Monica Lovatt and agreed by 7 votes to nil with 5 abstentions)*

## Ab.11 BUILDABILITY SCHEME OF ABITS

The Committee received and considered a Briefing Note together with a timetable prepared by the Head of Innovation and Enterprise and Councillor Roz Smith, being the Executive Member assigned to the AbITS project.

It was reported that works were due to start later this year and that the County Council had agreed to continue to fund the project.

# Ab.11

Reference was made to details in the Briefing Note regarding congestion and it was noted that this information needed updating. One Member suggested that as this was such an important project for Abingdon, an item should be included on the agenda for the next meeting it being noted that work would have started on the gateway projects.

It was proposed by Councillor Roz Smith and

*RESOLVED (nem com)*

*that an information report be included on the agenda for the next meeting.*

## Ab.12 DELIVERING THE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

The Committee received and considered a Briefing Note prepared by the Head of Innovation and Enterprise on targeting grants for the benefit of Abingdon. Also, the Committee was asked to consider whether it wished to pursue any of the issues previously discussed. It was suggested that these matters could be included in a prospectus shaped by the framework of the Community Strategy which was very broad. A possible format for such a prospectus was set out. It was commented that publishing a prospectus would be a help to the local community and would set out how support was to be given to the local community and organisations.

One Member commented that whilst this briefing note was a prompt to look at all of these things, he considered that the prospectus needed a further column containing a message back up to the partnership. He commented that it would be unwise of the Committee to take on everything and then only do the things that it was responsible for. He suggested that further work was needed with a view to adopting such a prospectus at a future date.

One Member referred to the former meetings of the Abingdon Forum, suggesting that the representatives on that forum should be invited a future meeting of the Committee to give advice on this matter. She suggested that support either financially or through Officer assistance could be offered to them.

However, other Members disagreed with the suggestion commenting that it could be seen as giving organisations false hope for support. Furthermore, it was considered that this Committee should prepare a prospectus in the first instance and that comments on that should then be sought. It was considered premature to effectively reactivate the Forum without the Committee knowing its own priorities and objectives.

One Member suggested that this matter should be included on the agenda for the next meeting, prior to the Community Grants item. She referred to her recollection of forums, commenting that more needed to be done for young people. She referred to the Community Strategy document, suggesting that the needs of young people were not emphasised enough. She suggested that the Committee needed to put its own "gloss" on that document for the Abingdon area. She advised that with a limited budget the Committee needed to target its money.

*RESOLVED*

*that this matter be included on the agenda for the next meeting.*

Ab.13 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members were reminded of the dates for future meetings of the Committee. Members noted that the next meeting coincided with the Abingdon Fair. The Democratic Services Officer reported that she would endeavour to rearrange that meeting in consultation with the Chair of the Committee.

*RESOLVED*

*that the agenda report be received.*

**Exempt Information Under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972**

None.

The meeting rose at 9.30pm.