

Minutes

of the annual meeting of

Council

held at 7.00 pm on Wednesday 15 May 2013
at the Guildhall, Abingdon



Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Councillor Alison Thomson (Chairman) – in the chair for the election of Chairman

Members: Councillor John Amys, Marilyn Badcock, Mike Badcock, Matthew Barber, Eric Batts, Yvonne Constance, Roger Cox, Tony de Vere, Charlotte Dickson, St John Dickson, Gervase Duffield, Jason Fiddaman, Debby Hallett, Jim Halliday, Jenny Hannaby, Anthony Hayward, Dudley Hoddinott, Simon Howell, Bob Johnston, Bill Jones, Mohinder Kainth, Sandy Lovatt, Ron Mansfield, Sue Marchant, Aidan Melville, Elizabeth Miles, Gill Morgan, John Morgan, Mike Murray, Jerry Patterson, Judy Roberts, Fiona Roper, Robert Sharp, Val Shaw, Janet Shelley, Andrew Skinner, Melinda Tilley, Margaret Turner, Reg Waite, Elaine Ware, Catherine Webber, Richard Webber and John Woodford

Officers: Steve Bishop, David Buckle, Steven Corrigan, Steve Culliford, Matt Prosser, Margaret Reed and Anna Robinson

Number of members of the public: 3

Co.1 Election of chairman

Councillor Mike Badcock was nominated as Chairman.

RESOLVED: to appoint Councillor Mike Badcock as Chairman of the council for the ensuing year.

Councillor Thomson presented Councillor Mike Badcock with the chain of office.

Councillor Mike Badcock read out the oath of office, signed his declaration of acceptance of office, presented Councillor Alison Thomson with the past Chairman's badge, Councillor Marilyn Badcock with the escort's badge and made an acceptance speech.

Councillor Thomson reviewed her time as Chairman of the Council over the past year and thanked Councillors Sue Marchant and Mike Badcock as her Vice-Chairmen over her time in office as chairman and Mark Hewer for their support.

Councillors Barber and Richard Webber paid tribute to Councillor Thomson in recognition of her work as Chairman of the council during the past year.

Co.2 Appointment of vice chairman

Councillor Eric Batts was nominated as Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED: to appoint Councillor Eric Batts as Vice-Chairman of the council for the ensuing year.

The Chairman presented Councillor Eric Batts with the Vice-Chairman's chain of office.

Councillor Eric Batts read out the oath of office, signed his declaration of acceptance of office and made an acceptance speech.

Co.3 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Julia Bricknell, Angela Lawrence, Julie Mayhew-Archer and Helen Pighills.

Co.4 Minutes

RESOLVED: to adopt the minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2013 as a correct record and agree that the Chairman signs them.

Co.5 Declarations of interest

None.

Co.6 Chairman's announcements

The Chairman welcomed Councillors St John Dickson, Andrew Skinner and Catherine Webber to the council following their election at by elections held on 2 May 2013.

The Chairman provided an update on the health of former Councillor Peter Jones. He informed councillors that his Civic Ball would take place on 15 November at the Guildhall and that his charities for the forthcoming year were the Thames Valley and Chilterns Air Ambulance and The Felix Fund. He advised that his chaplain for the forthcoming year would be Glynis Beckett.

Co.7 Urgent business

None.

Co.8 Petitions under standing order 13

None.

Co.9 Questions under standing order 12

1. Question from Councillor Jim Halliday to Councillor Yvonne Constance

"What are the Council's deadlines by which it seeks to reply to requests for information, and what action is taken if the deadline is missed?"

Councillor Constance responded that when the council received formal requests for information, these were logged in a database. Requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 had a target of 20 working days. Subject access requests made under the Data Protection Act 1999 had a response target of 40 calendar days.

During the financial year 2012-13 the council responded to 715 such requests, and 95 per cent of responses were within the target times. In cases where a response is delayed, the requester may make a formal complaint to the council and this would be dealt with through the council's complaints procedure. Once the council's own complaints procedure is exhausted, a dissatisfied customer may refer the matter to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). No cases had been referred to the ICO in the past three years.

Councillor Halliday asked the following supplementary question.

"As I have now been waiting 12 weeks for a reply to a question I asked at the council meeting held on 20 February 2013, please could she ask the Leader of council to reply, before I resort to lodging a formal complaint?"

In response Councillor Constance confirmed that the Leader of council would respond in writing.

2. Question from Councillor Richard Webber to the Leader of the Council

"What weight do you believe a decision of Full Council carries?"

In response Councillor Barber offered to discuss the decision Councillor Webber was referring to.

In asking his supplementary question Councillor Webber referred to the motion agreed at the December Council meeting which urged Cabinet to include appropriate sums for maintenance in its proposed capital budget for 2013/14 and subsequent years to permit the Abbey Meadow Swimming Pool to remain open so that Vale residents can continue to enjoy this facility. He asked whether Cabinet had responded to this motion.

In response Councillor Barber responded that this issue was considered and discussed as part of the budget setting process for the 2013/14 financial year and that the budget agreed by Council at its meeting in February included maintenance funds for this year.

3. Question from Councillor Jerry Patterson to Councillor Mike Murray

"Are you are aware of the latest housing projection data recently issued by the Office of National Statistics?"

In response Councillor Murray confirmed that he was aware of the latest figures which had been provided by the Department for Communities and Local Government. This information, together with other evidence including demographic, housing and economic factors, would be used in the preparation of the county-wide Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). However, this information, whilst used to form part of the demographic evidence, should not be used in isolation to forecast a local plan housing target. The government had advised that the council should continue to follow the existing methodology that informed the South East Plan.

As a supplementary question Councillor Patterson asked whether the revised population figures would result in a reduction in the number of houses provided for in the council's local plan.

The Chairman ruled that Councilor Murray had already responded to this question in his original response.

Co.10 Recommendations from Cabinet, individual Cabinet members, and committees

Council considered the following recommendation from the Cabinet member for commercial services:

Funding for Marlborough Gardens play area at Faringdon

To recommend Council to add £15,213 to the capital programme for improvements to the Marlborough Gardens play area at Faringdon. This expenditure to be funded by use of s106 monies held for this purpose.

Council approved the recommendation.

RESOLVED: to add £15,213 to the capital programme for improvements to the Marlborough Gardens play area at Faringdon.

Co.11 Appointments to committees, panels and joint committees

Council considered the report of the head of legal and democratic services on the appointment to those committees required to be politically balanced together with the Licensing Acts Committee, area committees and joint committees.

The Chairman referred to the following recommendation, tabled at the meeting, and invited Council to agree it.

That for the 2013/14 municipal year Council:

1. appoints the committees and panels for the 2013/14 year, allocates seats to each political group and appoints councillors and substitutes to sit on them as set out in the schedule circulated at the meeting;
2. appoints chairmen and vice-chairmen as set out in the schedule circulated at the meeting;
3. appoints councillors to the Licensing Acts Committee as set out in the schedule circulated at the meeting;
4. appoints all local members representing the wards covered by the relevant area committees as set out in minute Co.16 of the Council held on 21 May 2003 to those committees for the 2013/14 municipal year with the following chairman:
 - Abingdon – Julie Mayhew-Archer
 - North East – Jerry Patterson
 - South East – Bill Jones
 - West – Simon Howell
5. appoints chairmen and vice-chairmen as set out in the schedule circulated at the meeting;
6. appoints Alison Thomson as the council's representative on the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Yvonne Constance as substitute;
7. appoints Bill Jones as the council's representative and Sandy Lovatt as an observer substitute on the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel; and
8. authorises the head of legal and democratic services to make appointments to any vacant committee or panel seat and substitute positions in accordance with the wishes of the relevant group leader.

RESOLVED: to

1. appoint the following committees and panels for the 2013/14 year and to appoint the membership and substitutes, chairmen and vice-chairmen as indicated to sit on them:

Names		SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, 12 MEMBERS POLITICALLY BALANCED	
Conservative (7)		Liberal Democrat (5)	
Eric Batts		Jim Halliday (Chairman)	
Sandy Lovatt		Tony de Vere	
Charlotte Dickson (Vice-Chairman)		Julie Mayhew-Archer	
Jason Fiddaman		Debby Hallett	
Mohinder Kainth		Richard Webber	
Fiona Roper			
Alison Thomson			
Substitutes: All other councillors from the relevant political group (not Cabinet members).			
Names		AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE, 10 MEMBERS POLITICALLY BALANCED	
Conservative (5)		Liberal Democrat (4)	Non group councillor
Simon Howell (Chairman)		Dudley Hoddinott	Angela Lawrence
Mohinder Kainth (Vice-Chairman)		Julia Roberts	
Sandy Lovatt		Pat Lonergan	
Kate Precious		Andrew Skinner	
StJohn Dickson			
Substitutes: All other councillors from the relevant political group. Non group councillors permitted to substitute for each other			
Names		PLANNING COMMITTEE, 14 MEMBERS POLITICALLY BALANCED	
Conservative (8)		Liberal Democrat (5)	Non group councillor
Robert Sharp (Chairman)		Jerry Patterson (opposition spokesperson)	Aidan Melville
Sandy Lovatt (Vice-Chairman)		Bob Johnston	
Eric Batts		John Woodford	
Anthony Hayward		Sue Marchant	
Roger Cox		Helen Pighills	
Margaret Turner			
Fiona Roper			
Janet Shelley			
Substitutes: All other councillors from the relevant political group provided they have received the appropriate training. Non group councillors permitted to substitute for each other provided they have received the appropriate training.			

Names			GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE, 15 MEMBERS POLITICALLY BALANCED
Conservative (8)		Liberal Democrat (6)	Non group councillor
Charlotte Dickson (Chairman)		Bob Johnston	Aidan Melville
Marilyn Badcock (Vice-Chairman)		Dudley Hoddinott	
John Amys		Ron Mansfield	
Alison Thomson		Val Shaw	
Anthony Hayward		Elizabeth Miles	
Bill Jones		Catherine Webber	
Gill Morgan			
Eric Batts			
Substitutes: All other councillors from the relevant political group provided they have received the appropriate training. Non group councillors permitted to substitute for each other provided they have received the appropriate training.			
Names			APPEALS COMMITTEE, 3 MEMBERS POLITICALLY BALANCED
Conservative (2)		Liberal Democrat (1)	
Matthew Barber		Richard Webber	
Roger Cox			
Substitutes: All other councillors from the relevant political group			

Names			LICENSING ACTS COMMITTEE, 15 MEMBERS POLITICALLY BALANCED
Conservative (8)		Liberal Democrat (6)	Non group councillor
Marilyn Badcock (Chairman)		Dudley Hoddinott	Aidan Melville
Charlotte Dickson (Vice-Chairman)		Ron Mansfield	
John Amys		Val Shaw	
Alison Thomson		Elizabeth Miles	
Anthony Hayward		Catherine Webber	
Bill Jones		Andrew Skinner	
Gill Morgan			
Eric Batts			

2. appoint all local members representing the wards covered by the relevant area committees as set out in minute Co.16 of the Council held on 21 May 2003 to those committees for the 2013/14 municipal year with the following chairman:
 - Abingdon – Julie Mayhew-Archer
 - North East – Jerry Patterson
 - South East – Bill Jones
 - West – Simon Howell
3. appoint Alison Thomson as the council's representative on the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Yvonne Constance as substitute;
4. appoint Bill Jones as the council's representative and Sandy Lovatt as an observer substitute on the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel; and

5. authorise the head of legal and democratic services to make appointments to any vacant committee or panel seat and substitute positions in accordance with the wishes of the relevant group leader.

Co.12 Virements

None.

Co.13 Report of the Leader of the council

Council received the Leader of Council's report and noted his revised scheme of delegation that, following the departure of Councillor Yvonne Constance from the Cabinet, designated HR, IT and Customer Services to Councillor Reg Waite, Legal and Democratic Services to Councillor Matthew Barber and appointed Councillor Yvonne Constance as adviser to Cabinet on liaison with Oxfordshire County Council over planning related issues.

Co.14 Motions under standing order 11

1. Motion proposed by Councillor Matthew Barber and seconded by Councillor Yvonne Constance:

"This Council supports the campaign by South Hinksey Parish Council calling for pedestrian ramps to be provided at the replacement railway bridge between South Hinksey and Oxford. This Council requires the Chief Executive to write to Network Rail outlining the concerns of this Authority about the omission of such access."

In supporting the motion a number of councillors expressed the view that the electrification of the railway and the requirement to replace the bridge to accommodate this work provided an opportunity to improve the amenity of local residents by enhancing pedestrian access between South Hinksey and Oxford. The view was expressed that there was no legal requirement for the provision of a footbridge and that due to the height of the bridge any ramp would need to be of a considerable length.

In response to a suggestion the Leader of council confirmed that he would contact both Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council regarding funding for the project.

On being put the motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED:

That Council supports the campaign by South Hinksey Parish Council calling for pedestrian ramps to be provided at the replacement railway bridge between South Hinksey and Oxford. This Council requires the Chief Executive to write to Network Rail outlining the concerns of this Authority about the omission of such access.

2. Motion proposed by Councillor Sandy Lovatt and seconded by Councillor Charlotte Dickson:

"This Council congratulates the Cabinet on introducing 2 hour free parking and requests the Cabinet to look at other measures to support the local economy."

Whilst welcoming the increased footfall and stimulus to local economies and viability of the market towns resulting from the introduction of two hour free parking councillors

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highlighted the need to adopt a more strategic approach to stimulate the economies of the district's towns and villages. Initiatives suggested included increasing the tourism potential of the district, ensuring the benefits of Science Vale UK were extended to a wider area and improving infrastructure for businesses.

RESOLVED:

That Council congratulates the Cabinet on introducing 2 hour free parking and requests the Cabinet to look at other measures to support the local economy.

3. Motion proposed by Councillor Jenny Hannaby and seconded by Councillor Richard Webber

"This Council congratulates the officers and contractors on the continued high rate of recycling being achieved within the Vale of White Horse District."

Councillor Matthew Barber moved and Councillor Reg Waite seconded an amendment as follows with the deleted word crossed through and the additional words shown in bold:

"This Council congratulates the officers, ~~and~~ contractors **and most importantly residents** on the continued high rate of recycling being achieved within the Vale of White Horse District."

With the consent of Council the mover and seconder of the original motion accepted the amendment.

In supporting the motion a number of councillors made suggestions to further support recycling – more frequent collections from bring banks, the provision of additional small electrical appliances collections and further public awareness on what can be recycled, especially which type of plastic container, to avoid contamination.

The Leader of Council informed councillors that officers were working on a web based communication page to better inform residents.

RESOLVED:

That Council congratulates the officers, contractors and most importantly residents, on the continued high rate of recycling being achieved within the Vale of White Horse District.

The meeting closed at 8.16pm

Chairman