

Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on 11th November 2009 at the Old Abbey House, Abingdon.

Present:

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Councillor Peter Fulk | - Chair of Amenities & Recreation |
| Councillor Jim Halliday | |
| Councillor Angela Lawrence | |
| Councillor Patrick Lonergan | - Chair of Best Value Sub Committee Councillor |
| Councillor Lesley Legge | - Chair of Finance & General Purposes |
| Councillor Julie Mayhew-Archer | - Chair of Museum Management Committee |
| Councillor Alison Rooke | |
| Councillor Martin Smith | - Chair of Planning & Highways |

In attendance:

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Councillor Margaret Crick | - Chair of Grants Sub Committee |
| Nigel Warner | - Town Clerk |

69 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from the Mayor of Abingdon, Cllr Patricia Hobby.

70 **Declarations of interest**

Councillors Jim Halliday, Angela Lawrence, Patrick Lonergan, Julie Mayhew-Archer and Alison Rooke all declared personal interests in any matters relating to the Vale of White Horse District Council as they were all elected Members of that Council, specifically the grant application by the Abingdon Sea Cadets and Abingdon Rugby Union FC Ltd., which they had considered as Vale Councillors on the Abingdon Area Committee of 5th November 2009 and the consideration of the Guildhall Working Party minutes on both the open and the confidential agendas.

Councillor Jim Halliday declared a personal interest in the grant application from Abingdon and District Musical Society as he is acquainted with a Member of the Society.

Councillor Alison Rooke declared a personal interest in the grant application from Abingdon and District Musical Society as she is invited, as Chairman of the Vale of White Horse District Council, to some functions organised by the Society.

71 **Grants Sub-Committee Meeting**

The minutes of the Grants Sub Committee held on 3rd November 2009, as circulated with the agenda, were received and considered.

Resolved:

That the grants be approved as detailed in the table overleaf:

| Name of Applicant | Reason for the grant application | Previous grants received | Grant awarded (subject to any note) |
|--|--|--|--|
| Abingdon Rugby Union F.C.Ltd | Installation of flood lights £1000 | None | £450 (Note 1) |
| Oxon Association for the Blind | Reaching Communities Project £321 | November 2007 £500 | £321 (Note 2) |
| Abingdon Sea Cadets | Purchase Boat Trailer £500 | None | £500 (Note 3) |
| Abingdon & District Model Railway Club | Divide store room to provide a Disabled Toilet. £250 | None | £250 |
| Abingdon & District Musical Society | Three Concerts £500 | 2005/6 £300 2006/7 £400 2007/8 £400 2008/9 £300 | £0 (Note 4) |

Notes:

1. Subject to the grant of planning permission and a condition that the design of the floodlights makes every effort to eliminate light pollution.

2. Members were sympathetic to this organisation's aims and its work but concerned that the Council receive confirmation from them that the £500 grant allocated to them during 2008/09 was spent on Abingdon-based projects, as their application seemed to imply otherwise.

Subject to monies having now been spent on Abingdon-based schemes of at least £500 a grant of £321 was allocated, and that authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, the Leader and the Chair of Grants to release the grant allocated.

3. Members were concerned that the cadets needed to raise a significant sum towards the boat trailer and consequently agreed that whilst a grant of £500 be approved it should only be released if and when an order is placed for the boat.

4. Members noted that the budgeted deficit against the concerts was £871. They felt that the concerts provided good entertainment but were concerned that the Society had significant assets amounting to £9,008 at 30th June 2009 of which all except £350 stock were current (i.e. cash-based) assets. Expenditure for the last year of account was £21,781 so there were almost five months of reserves in place to cover expenditure. It was also noted that the society donated £1,183 to charitable causes last year which was more than the deficit.

The Committee noted the budget position for grants following these allocations, as overleaf:

| Budget head | Budget total 2009/10 | Cumulative awards to September 2009 | Awards November 2009 Meeting | Amount remaining |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|--|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| General- 4251/411 | 11,000 | 1,800 | 1,521 | 7,679 |
| Age & Youth 4262/411 | 13,300 | 1,600 | 0 | 11,700 |
| Twinning 4251/303 | 1,500 | 400 | 0 | 1,100 |

72 **Order of business and Exclusion of the public, including the press**

Taking into account the business on the confidential agenda the Chair will proposed and it was **resolved**:

That in accordance with section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, as summarised below:

- Confidential Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on
- Matters arising;
- Property matters;
- Bus shelters;
- Property matters;
- Open Air Swimming Pool;
- Police Community Support Officers.

73 **Open session**

Following consideration of the confidential agenda the meeting reverted to the open agenda.

74 **Minutes**

Resolved: *that the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meetings held on 8th September 2009 and of the Special meetings held on 28th September, 29th September (reconvened meeting) and 13th October 2009 be signed as a correct record.*

75 **Matters Arising from previous meetings**

Minute 34 – matters arising

A Member stated that he was concerned that he had raised at the last meeting the matter of civic saleable goods, repairs to the Mayor's chain and Freeman's badges. He had been told at that meeting that these matters would be considered at a future meeting but that this had not been minuted and these matters were not referred to on this agenda.

The Town Clerk recalled the discussion and apologised that this matter had not appeared in the minutes of the meeting of 8th September 2009; consequently they had not been put on this agenda either. He stated that arrangements would be made for the repair of the badge as soon as practicable and that he would come forward with costings for Freeman's badges for the next meeting; it was likely that he would recommend that these be procured at the same time as new Past Mayor's badges.

With regard to saleable civic goods, Members felt that there was a demand of such goods. The Town Clerk stated that the Museum Administrator had obtained designs and prices for ties and her expertise in this area from managing the Museum shop was valuable. He suggested that a group of Members met with the Administrator and himself to decide on ordering ties and other goods, and it was **resolved** that these Members be Councillors Peter Fulk and Lesley Legge. Suggestions for goods included ladies' brooches; cufflinks, badges and tiepins. A Member stated that in considering this matter the range of goods offered by the Vale and Downland Museum should be looked at, as they had a good quality and wide-ranging stock.

The report of the Town Clerk in relation to the above was received and considered.

Policies for the Prevention of fraud and corruption and Member-staff protocol: it was noted that it was intended that these policies be circulated for consideration at the next meeting.

Minute 53: Abingdon Information Centre

It was noted that a meeting of the Working Party had been arranged for Wednesday 16th December 2009 at 6.30 pm.

Minute 55: Civic and Community matters

Members noted the following events:

- (i) Mayor's Charity Quiz Night: Friday 20th November 2009 at the Guildhall.
- (ii) The Royal Logistic Corps at Dalton Barracks intend to exercise the Freedom of Abingdon and hold a home-coming parade on Wednesday 25th November 2009, the draft timetable being:

10.30 am – parade from Fire Station;

10.50 am – Mayor and Chairman of District Council take salute at County Hall;

11.00 a.m. – Service at St Helen's Church.

It was noted that this will be a full civic event.

(iii) Charter Day: Charter Day for John Mason School, will be on Thursday 26th November 2009.

(iv) Christmas Extravaganza: It was noted that this is on the evening of Thursday 3rd December 2009 and Kate Garraway, the GMTV journalist and presenter, will be switching on the lights.

(v) Christmas Craft Fair: Saturday 5th December 2009 on the Market Place.

- (vi) Vale of White Horse District Council Chairman's Carol service: Friday 11th December at Peachcroft Christian Centre at 8 pm.
- (vii) Mayor's Christmas Reception: Tuesday 15th December between 4pm and 8 pm.
- (viii) Over 70s' Christmas Party: Thursday 17th December from 4.30 pm.
- (ix) Mayor's Christmas Carol Service: Sunday 20th December at 4.30 pm in St Helen's Church. It was confirmed that robes are not worn on this occasion and there is no set seating plan.
- (x) Mayor's Civic Ball: Friday 26th February 2010.

2. Regular events

It was noted and confirmed that the usual date for the Annual Meeting/ Mayor Making is the second Wednesday in May (the Vale's Annual Meeting is the third Wednesday). Members considered that there were advantages to agreeing to certain civic events being fixed for the same dates each year; this is the case in many towns and allows events to get into diaries in good time. It was noted that the civic service in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea is on the second Sunday of June each year.

Recommended:

That the Civic Ball be arranged for the fourth Friday in February each year (this should therefore avoid half-term);

That the Civic Service be arranged for the third Sunday in June each year (avoiding bank holidays and half-term and giving sufficient time for organisation of the service in election years.

76 **Matters Referred from Other Standing Committees**

County Hall Museum Management Committee

It was noted that the matters referred at the meeting of 13th October 2009 were resolved at the Special meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee of that date.

Planning & Highways Committee – none.

Amenities and Recreation Committee

Minute 51: Members received and considered the report of the Town Clerk in relation to a recommendation of the above Committee.

Recommended: *that a computer station be installed within the Town Council offices for Members use and that the digital mapping software be installed amongst other software packages to be funded from the small projects budget.*

77 **Guildhall Working Party**

The minutes of the meetings of the Guildhall Working Party held on 2nd September, 21st October and 5th November 2009, as circulated with the agenda, were received and considered.

Resolved: *That the Committee receive the minutes of the meeting of the Guildhall Working Party held on 2nd September, 21st October and 5th November 2009 and approve any recommendations contained therein.*

78 **Christmas Extravaganza Joint Committee**

The minutes of the meetings of the Christmas Extravaganza Joint Committee held on 2nd and 29th September 2009, as circulated with the agenda, were received and considered.

A Member queried whether there had been any discussions regarding organising the Extravaganza earlier in the day or on a Saturday. The Town Clerk stated that the date itself had been the one chosen by the Chamber of Commerce on the basis that they believed this to be the best day for the local shops; it was thought that the Saturdays before Christmas would be busy anyway and the thinking behind a Thursday was to encourage trade in on that day. It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee was on Tuesday 26th January 2010. Members requested that the date of the 2010 Extravaganza be agreed at that meeting and that the Choose Abingdon Partnership be invited to attend and take a role in the event.

It was noted that the fireworks were due at 8.15 pm and this would put make the time available for Members to judge the shop competitions even shorter than useful. It was therefore **resolved** *that a rota of Members for the shop competitions be drafted with a view to commencing judging at 5.00 pm, and that the Chamber of Commerce be contacted so that their Members are aware of this.*

Resolved: *That the Committee receive the minutes of the meeting of the Christmas Extravaganza Joint Committee held on 2nd and 29th September 2009 and approve any recommendations contained therein.*

79 **Twinning Forum**

The minutes of the meetings of the Twinning Forum held on 20th October 2009, as circulated with the agenda, were received and considered.

Resolved: *That the Committee receive the minutes of the meeting of the Twinning Forum held on 20th October 2009 and approve any recommendations contained therein.*

80 **Choose Abingdon Partnership – Interim Board/ Board**

The minutes of the meetings of the Choose Abingdon Partnership Interim Board held on 7th September 2009 and of the Board held on 19th October 2009, as circulated with the agenda, were received and considered.

It was noted that the Council is represented on the above body and minutes of the meetings of these bodies are enclosed with the agenda so Members are kept up to date with developments.

The Committee noted that the official launch event of the Partnership was due to take place in two sessions, 2.30 to 4.00 pm and 7.00 to 8.30 pm on Monday 30th November 2009 at the Guildhall.

Resolved: *that the Committee note the minutes of the meetings of the Choose Abingdon Interim Board held on 7th September 2009 and of the Choose Abingdon Board held on 19th October 2009.*

81 **Joint Economic Forum**

The Committee noted that the Annual Meeting of the Forum is due to take place at 7 pm on Monday 7th December 2009 in the Committee Room at the Old Abbey House. A Member expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that a meeting scheduled some time ago had been re-arranged resulting in him being now being unable to attend. The Chair of the County Hall Museum Management Committee stated that the meeting had been moved to make way for a public meeting regarding the County Hall Improvement and Access Project, and that this date had been chosen on the basis of the availability of officers from English Heritage, who it was important attended the meeting. She regretted that this had resulted in the Joint Economic Forum date being changed.

82 **Schedule of Accounts**

The Committee received and considered the Schedule of Payments for 1st August to 31st October 2009. It was noted that in many cases the payments shown include V.A.T at the standard rate and that this is reclaimable but unfortunately the computer programme does not allow the VAT element to be shown on the payments schedule. Amounts rechargeable from the accounts, e.g. from the County Council for the Residents' Parking Scheme were indicated with "R."

It was reported that Members had made enquiries of the Town Clerk in relation to a number of payments and had been satisfied with responses given.

It was noted that a minibus and driver were hired on 10th September for Members and the works team to attend the Saltex Exhibition in Windsor (payment 14710). The exhibition had been attended for a number of years and Members considered that attendance was important as the full range of grounds maintenance and play equipment available on the market could be viewed and it was often possible to procure goods at significant discount, therefore saving the Council money. However the Committee requested that the Amenities and Recreation Committee give thought to the most economic way of travelling to the exhibition which could mean using private cars or hiring a minibus if there is a Member or member of staff with the requisite minibus licence. The Committee **resolved** accordingly.

Resolved *that the Committee approve the Schedule of Payments for the period 1st August to 31st October 2009.*

83 **Financial, Performance Monitoring and General report of the Town Clerk**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk in relation to the above, as circulated with the agenda. This report incorporated the summary of income and expenditure for the year to date and details of known variances. At this stage it was anticipated that where additional expenditure was likely to be incurred,

this could be matched by savings elsewhere, although the Town Clerk stated that he would report more fully on this during the budget cycle.

Members reviewed the schedule of key objectives for the year and noted that the Council had made significant progress. The Town Clerk stated that he anticipated that the Council should be in a position to submit its application for Quality Council status by 31st March 2010. There are now 694 Quality Councils out of the 10,000 parish, town and community councils in England and Wales.

In relation to the Council's key objectives, of the 16 objectives he anticipated that 14 were likely to be fully or substantively achieved. This included work on improving communications, although it was noted that new notice boards would require a budget provision in 2010/11. With regard to flood action groups, money had been set aside, the existence of the scheme had been publicised and applications were awaited. Of the two remaining objectives, the identification of a new cemetery site, work could commence later in the year but a proposal to employ a land agent would need to be brought forward to the January 2010 meeting. The other one, achieving an HLF stage 2 pass, was now in the hands of the HLF trustees and would be determined in March 2010.

Consultation on accounting practices and the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (FRSSE)

The Committee considered the letter and consultation from the Joint Practitioners Advisory Group dated 22nd October 2009. This Group is the body setting proper accounting practices for smaller relevant bodies in England such as Town and Parish Councils.

The Town Clerk explained that there were changes to the regulations governing the way in which the Council's accounts were drafted. With effect from 1st April 2009 the Statement of Recommended Practice the "Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom," commonly known as the SORP, no longer applies to Town and Parish Councils. In future proper practice for Town and Parish Councils will be governed by "proper practices" requirements contained in "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – A Practitioners' Guide" and the FRSSE. Whereas the SORP meant that Town Councils were obliged to compile their accounts in the same way as County and District Councils the FRSSE-based guidance would mean that accounting requirements would be similar to those in place for smaller organisations in the private sector. In principle the Town Clerk felt that this change was a positive one as the FRSSE was more appropriate in relation to the size of the Council compared with the SORP.

In detail there were more similarities than changes. Requirements – and costs – in relation to FRS 17 (the Financial Reporting Standard in relation to pension fund disclosures) remained the same. However, there were significant changes in relation to fixed assets, which would be included in the FRSSE in terms of historic cost rather than the various bases currently used, depending on the type of asset, which included the lower of cost or net realisable value and current replacement cost. There was no requirement for a cash flow statement. There would be a major change to the analysis of income and expenditure from CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) standard headings (which were often more applicable to principal authorities than parishes) towards summary categories such as charges made for services, precept, direct service costs and grant-aid expenditure. Finally there was a requirement for an annual report to be included in the accounts. This

would build upon the explanatory foreword in the current SORP-type accounts and provide the reader with a much-needed explanation of the accounts.

The FRSSE would give Councils the option to include discretionary notes to the accounts. However there was a word of caution as such notes would be subject to audit and therefore well-meaning and helpful statements could regrettably simply increase audit fees and lead to possible qualification. The change in accounting regime would also mean that there would be extra work involved in drafting up the 2008/09 accounts as the 2007/08 comparatives would have to be recalculated from SORP to FRSSE accounts.

Members welcomed the principal of the change to FRSSE accounts, subject to the detailed guidance of the Joint Practitioners Group but trusted that if this change is approved, that this would be the last major change to Local Council accounting for some time.

Resolved: *that authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to respond to the consultation from the Joint Practitioners Group in relation to the change in accounting requirements for local Councils and the guidance, giving a broad welcome to the changes.*

Audit matters

Members were pleased to note that the Audit Commission had issued an unqualified report in relation to the Council's financial statements and the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources and the Committee thanked the Town Clerk and staff for their work in achieving this.

It was further noted that Auditing Solutions had undertaken internal audit work on 9th November 2009 as part of the Council's five year internal audit programme. The next scheduled internal audit was due to take place on 4th and 5th February 2010.

Pension Fund Forum

It was noted that the next meeting of the Pension Fund Forum was due to take place on Wednesday 9th December 2009. This meeting gives the Council the chance to hear directly from the key advisors to the Pension Fund, and an indication of prospects for the 2010 valuation. **Resolved:** *that the Council be represented at the Forum by Councillor Tim Oates and that the Forum also be attended by the Council's Responsible Financial Officer (the Section 151 officer under the Local Government Act 1972), the Town Clerk.*

Resolved: *that the report of the Town Clerk be noted and approved.*

84 Burgess Trust

The Committee received and considered the report of the Twinning Officer in relation to the above, as circulated with the agenda.

It was reported that in September 1989, the late Miss D Burgess of Burgess Printers Ltd donated the sum of £15,000.00 to the Joint Twinning Trust (JTT). She requested that part of the money should be used for the JTT Third World Project and the remainder used as decided by the Trust. The JTT set up the Burgess Trust Travel Fund with the balance and agreed that each year the Trust would pay for young

people aged between 16 and 23 from the town of Abingdon to visit one of the twin towns of Abingdon and the Vale of White Horse for a period not to exceed two weeks. The Town Council now administers the trust fund and the interest earned on the capital is used to award grants to young people aged between 17-23 to undertake study visits to the twin towns.

Over the years, the criteria applied to the fund appear to have switched between

1. young people living in Abingdon (and surrounding villages) and
2. young people either living in Abingdon or attending school in Abingdon

More recently, the scheme has been open to young people either living in Abingdon (and surrounding villages) or attending school in Abingdon.

The Twinning Officer had suggested that the criteria be reviewed and agreed.

It was **resolved**:

That applications for Burgess Trust awards be invited from Young people (aged 17-23) who either live in Abingdon or attend school or work in Abingdon and live in the surrounding villages (to be determined by the Designated Area Guide issued by Oxfordshire County Council).

The Committee noted that the Trust Fund has a balance of £14,946.41 of which £13,000 is the base sum to be retained. This left £1,946 for grants although the Twinning Officer had suggested at least half of this be retained for future years, as interest rates are low. It was noted that for the year to 31st January 2009 the Trust fund earned £359.66 interest.

85 **Abingdon Integrated Transport Strategy (AbITS)**

The Committee received and considered the report of Town Clerk in relation to the above. It was noted that the Council had been involved as a partner in the AbITS since its inception and is represented by one member on the AbITS Members Working Group, which advises the County Council Cabinet Member for Transport.

The report included the Council's main resolutions on AbITS since 2001 and also a copy of the response from Councillor Rodney Rose, Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet Member for Transport, in relation to the Council's recent request for a copy of the report on the proposal for a diamond interchange at the A34 Lodge Hill junction.

Members noted the detailed work which the Council had undertaken over the years in attempting to give positive advice which was sometimes taken by the responsible authority. The Council's AbITS Representative gave an update on the latest AbITS Members' Working Group (MWG) meeting. The County Council had commissioned a report on the Wharf Bridge at the cost of £15,000 and there had been a proposal at one stage that the Bridge become two-way. This had been vigorously opposed by the local residents and the idea had now been dropped; there were no proposals to change the operation of the Bridge and the Town Council representative welcomed this at the meeting.

There had been a discussion at the MWG regarding the future of the group. The Council's representative had resisted proposals to restrict the work of the group to strategy and take away discussion of detail. She commented that the discussion of

detail by local members had been important in correcting some of the problems in implementing the AbITS system, for instance with regard to Stratton Way. This discussion of detailed fulfilled the commitment made in the initial to implement, monitor and review.

The Council's AbITS representative expressed concern that the consultation in relation to the proposal for a contraflow cycle lane in East St Helen Street remained outstanding, although she understood the consultation was due to be carried out in January 2010.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Members Steering Group was due to take place on Thursday 21st January 2010 at 10 am in the Guildhall. This meeting will consider the Halcrow report in relation to the possibility of opening up the junction at Lodge Hill on the A34. Councillor Ian Hudspeth had stated that other interested parties would be invited to attend.

Resolved: *that the report of the Town Clerk in relation to the above be noted.*

86 **Local Community Flood Action Groups**

The report of Town Clerk, as circulated with the agenda, was received and considered.

It was noted that Members were briefed by the District Council in November 2008 on the principles of Local Community Flood Groups was explained. The District Council see Town/ Parish Councils as having a role either in creating or developing such groups or supporting them by endorsing their registration. In terms of registration the District Council was seeking general confirmation from the Parishes that the group actually exists rather than making a judgment on any proposed schemes. It was noted that to date the Council had registered the St Helen's Mill Group and it was anticipated that there would be an application for the Stert Group.

The Committee discussed the Council's policy in relation to grants to Flood Action Groups and felt that it was preferable to ask groups to apply for funding to the District and then the Town as the District Council are better placed to make judgments on the value of schemes, there being no "in-house" resource at the Town Council to make these judgments.

Resolved:

1. *That the Council's registration of the St Helen's Mill Flood Action Group be endorsed and authority to register groups be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Leader of the Council;*
2. *That any applications for grant funding from flood action groups be considered by the Town Council following their consideration by the District Council.*

87 **Oxfordshire Fire Authority Integrated Risk Management Consultation Action Plan 2010-11 and Proposed Changes to Shift Patterns at Abingdon and Didcot Fire Stations**

The report of Town Clerk in relation to the above was received and considered together with correspondence from the Fire and Rescue Service. A date was suggested by the Town Clerk but this was not convenient for Members and another dated would be sought.

Resolved: *that the report of the Town Clerk in relation to the above be noted.*

88 **New Waste Collection and Recycling Services**

The report of Town Clerk in relation to the above was received and considered together with correspondence from the District Council. Members considered that the group referred to in the recommendation below should include a local Member from the Abbey Barton and Ock Meadow Wards.

Recommended: that the Council appoint three Members to the group to meet up with District Council regarding new waste collection and recycling services, this group to be appointed at the meeting of the Town Council.

89 **Byelaws**

The report of Town Clerk in relation to the above was received and considered. The Leader had requested this report in response to a number of changes made by the government in relation to the process of the making of and the penalties for breaking byelaws. Essentially there were two main changes proposed to the byelaws regime: firstly to simplify the way in which byelaws are to be made, so that once a proposed byelaw had been consulted on, prepared and advertised they no longer required confirmation by the Secretary of State; secondly there was a proposal to allow the enforcement of byelaws to take place through fixed penalty notices as an alternative to fines in the Magistrates' Court.

Members noted the powers of Town Councils to make byelaws which were subsidiary to statute and could generally only be made in respect of premises which they own or control, with a few exceptions relating to bathing and cemeteries.

However, this did not change the general advice that byelaws were undesirable and not a particularly helpful way of dealing with matters. This had been summed up by the late Charles Arnold-Baker in *Local Council Administration* (2009) who stated: *"Byelaws are seldom effective and therefore seldom desirable. Before seeking to make one, a council should consider whether the mischief can be cured in some other way; for example a shallow ditch is more likely to deter illicit parking in a village green than a byelaw on a noticeboard which nobody reads."* Anecdotal evidence from the National Association of Local Councils suggests that the Police are often reluctant to prosecute for breach of a byelaw because of the difficulty of securing evidence for the breach of the byelaw. Finally in many cases there were already laws in place to address the problems which byelaws sought to tackle and they simply needed to be enforced, as indeed a byelaw would need to.

It was noted that introducing byelaws would require a budgetary provision to be made.

Members considered that the Council was active in the area of community safety, for example through its contribution towards the costs of a town centre Police Community Support Officer, frequent contact and liaison with the Police, through its membership of the Neighbourhood Action Group and through a grant to CCTV and that any issues of anti-social behaviour etc should be addressed through these routes.

In response to a question from a member the Town Clerk stated that whilst Abingdon Borough Council did make byelaws as far as he was aware the Town Council had not made a byelaw since its inception in 1974.

It was **recommended** that the Council identify any issues in relation to anti-social and “low level” criminal behaviour which it believes are not being dealt with adequately and in the first instance use existing mechanisms by raising the issues with the Police and Neighbourhood Action Groups, taking measures to “design out” or deter such problems and consider existing legislation (including any existing byelaws) and only consider the introduction of new byelaws if these existing mechanisms did not work and the byelaw could be enforced.

90 **Publicity**

It was noted that publicity either had been or would be given to many of the matters discussed at the meeting. There were no additional matters specifically highlighted by Members for publicity.

The meeting rose at 10.10 pm.

Signed Date