

## ABINGDON TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET SUMMARY FOR 2009-10

The Council aims to establish and maintain high quality, cost effective services to meet the needs of residents, businesses and visitors in Abingdon and to promote the social, economic, environmental and cultural interests of the town for the benefit of the whole community. The Council provides services from the cradle to the grave – from play equipment to cemeteries. A summary of the 2009/10 budget and how it relates to the Council Tax is set out below:

<b>Budget</b>	<b>Expenditure 2009/10 £</b>	<b>Income 2009/10 £</b>	<b>Net expenditure 2009/10 £</b>
Museum	166,909	46,680	120,229
Cemetery	104,382	39,360	65,022
Recreation & Open Spaces	234,389	19,600	214,789
Community & Tourism	77,529	17,250	60,279
Other Community inc. markets, Christmas lights and street furniture	78,655	35,755	42,900
Town centre & partnership	61,000	0	61,000
Democratic, Corporate, property and other Services	371,701	32,775	338,926
Grants (excl. swim pool, Albert Park)	52,400	0	52,400
Residents' Parking Scheme	58,178	60,986	-2,808
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,204,643</b>	<b>252,406</b>	<b>952,237</b>
Transfer from revenue reserves			
Transfer to capital projects– County Hall/Museum access	117,000	0	117,000
Transfer to capital projects reserve – new cemetery	10,000	0	10,000
<b>Total amount required from Council Tax (Precept)</b>	<b>1,331,643</b>	<b>252,406</b>	<b>1,079,237</b>

### What does the Town Council do?

The Town Council's services are wide and varied and include the Museum, the cemeteries, recreation, open spaces, allotments, residents' parking schemes (on behalf of the County Council), markets, Christmas lights, Abingdon in Bloom, fairs, fisheries, street furniture, bus shelters, town twinning, archives, issuing various publications and organizing events. Some of these services are provided in partnership with other organizations. The Council also encourages and supports the work of many groups in the community. Last year over 40 different groups were awarded grants by making grants available.

The Council has an important role in representing the town's interests, for example, in commenting on each of the 263 planning applications made in Abingdon last year.

The Council has put the town's views forward in relation to the Abingdon Integrated Transport Strategy, Post Office and telephone box closures and most recently the Local Plan, where the Council expressed very serious concerns about proposed developments in the south-west of the town.

Further details on the Council's services may be found on the Council's website, [www.abingdon.gov.uk](http://www.abingdon.gov.uk).

### **The 2009/10 budget**

The Council has carefully considered its budget for 2009/10 and it has been set to allow the Council to continue to deliver its many and varied services to the town. There have been many matters to consider in setting the budget. There are cost pressures on the Council and the recession has had a number of results, one being a significant reduction in investment interest.

### **County Hall and Museum Improvement and Access project update.**

In 2008 the Heritage Lottery Funds awarded a grant of £1,999,000 towards the County Hall and Museum Improvement and Access project, the total value of which is £3,500,000. The project allows for the first full refurbishment of the building since 1956, including the installation of a lift to the basement and the Sessions Hall. The "development stage" is now in progress. During this stage detailed design work has to take place so that planning permission and listed building consent may be obtained. The project budgets will re-evaluated and fundraising will take place. Two early grants obtained are £300,000 from Oxfordshire County Council and £300,000 from Vale of White Horse District Council. The Council is again setting aside £117,000 towards this project in 2009/10.

**Last year a number of new initiatives started and these have now been reviewed.** During 2008/09 the Council set aside £15,000 towards town centre initiatives, and this included promoting more events on the Market Place such as "Abingdon's Got Talent" and the continental markets. This work continues into this year. The Council has been working with business, the Chamber of Commerce and the County and District Councils to establish the "Choose Abingdon Partnership." This Partnership will aim to sustain and improve the vitality of the town in order better to meet the commercial, cultural, economic, social and educational needs of the community through bringing key players together and working on an agreed strategy to take Abingdon forward. £20,000 of new money has been set aside by the Town Council, and this has been matched by the County and District Councils.

Previously the Council set aside funding for a Police Community Safety Officer for the town, half funded by the Council and half by Thames Valley Police. The Council has direct control over the work of this Officer which will help the town in many ways, and a further £16,000 is set aside during 2009/10. The Council improved access to the Museum by extending the good work it does with children and families, such as the very popular Egyptian days, and providing a better service to local schools and it has set aside a further £8,500 for this work.

Whilst flooding is not a Town Council responsibility, the Council takes very seriously the threats to lives and property which flooding can bring. The Council has set aside £10,000 to pump prime projects by registered Neighbourhood Flood Action Groups in the town to alleviate the risk of flooding.

There are many other areas in which the Council has been working to improve the town, and it is not possible report on all of these in this article.

### **Where does the money come from?**

Unlike the other Councils and the Police authority, the Town Council receives no government funding and none of the business rates. All of its income derives from charges for services, investments and the Council Tax, the tax paid by residents of Abingdon. Each year Abingdon Town Council calculates the cost of running its services. Income, such as market rents, cemetery fees, Museum shop receipts, and interest, is deducted from these costs to leave the net expenditure on services for the year. The remaining sum, the “precept”, is the amount collected from Abingdon residents for Town Council services. **For 2009/10 this will be £1,079,737 resulting in a council tax on a Band D house of £86.70 for the whole year towards Town Council services. This is a total charge of just under 24 pence per day per household. This is below the average for the larger Town and Parish Councils in Oxfordshire.**

The Vale of White Horse District Council collects the council tax on behalf of the County Council, the District Council, Thames Valley Police and the Town Council. For comparison, the overall Council Tax for a Band D property in Abingdon for 2009/10 is as follows:

Oxfordshire County Council	£1,130.62	(76.3% of the bill)
Thames Valley Police	£151.27	(10.2% of the bill)
Vale of White Horse District Council	£112.31	(7.6% of the bill)
Abingdon Town Council	£86.70	(5.9% of the bill)
Total Band D Council Tax	£1,480.90	

For more information please contact Mr Nigel Warner, Town Clerk at Abingdon Town Council, The Old Abbey House, Abbey Close, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 3JD. For telephone enquiries please call 01235 522642 or e-mail [enquiries@abingdon.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@abingdon.gov.uk).