

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE HELD ON 16<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2005**

**PRESENT**

Mr. Steeples presided over Mesdames Harrison and Holmes, Messrs. Mackin and Gray.

**1. APOLOGIES**

Mr. Coward. Mr. Wren.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Mrs. Harrison declared an interest in Item 7 – Funding-Shefford P3 Group.

**3. DONATION REQUEST – MID BEDS LINK-A-RIDE**

A request for funding has been received from the operators of the Mid Beds Link-a-Ride Community Transport Committee. Information was also received regarding the continuing success of the scheme which completed over 8,000 journeys, 2,700 of which were made by customers who required a wheelchair facility. Membership has increased from 691 to 787. The committee acceded to the request for a donation of £100.

**4. CRISTMAS LIGHTS – REQUEST FOR FUNDING/INSURANCE**

A letter has been received from a representative of the Christmas Lights committee regarding the Town Council's contribution towards this year's lights display. The committee agreed to pay £250 accordingly. The letter also enquired as to whether or not the Council would investigate the possibility of including cover for the erection of the Christmas lights in their insurance policy. The Council's insurer's stated that they were unable to offer cover for such a function. Bearing this in mind, it was felt preferable that the Lights Committee should obtain insurance quotes themselves and then make further representations to the Council.

**5. DONATION REQUEST – CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES/LIBRARY**

The Committee has received a letter from the Team Librarian at the County Council requesting a donation to assist towards funding for children's events at the library in the forthcoming year. The Committee agreed to pay £100.

**6. TOWN PLAN**

A question was raised by a Council member enquiring as to why there was no mention of the land earmarked for the extension of the burial ground wasn't marked in the Town Plan. Apparently the topic wasn't mentioned in the consultation and as such couldn't be considered for entry. However, the Town Plan is only in draft form and will be reviewed in due course.

**7. DONATION REQUEST – P3 GROUP**

At this point Mrs. Harrison declared an interest.  
A request for funding has been received from the Shefford Parish Paths Partnership known as P3. The letter stated that not only is the group coming to the end of their supply of leaflets and needs funding to reprint them but also the map board has faded. The group consists of volunteers who monitor footpaths, clears fallen trees plus many other actions but does not have any income. The committee is to reply that regrettably their precept has already been set for the forthcoming year with no such figure being included. However, it is understood that applications to assist with funding from other bodies have already been made and as such the committee is to suggest that further representations should be made to them once a final figure from other funding sources has been confirmed. Consideration may be given when the 2006/7 year precept is set towards the end of this year.

**8. GRATUITY – PREVIOUS CLERK**

A letter has been received from the external auditor regarding the previous clerk's gratuity. The content of the letter was discussed and it was decided to seek further information from the Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils.

**9. TRANSPORT TOKEN SCHEME**

The Youth Participation Officer from Mid Beds District Council has written regarding the 2004/2005 Transport Scheme Tokens. The Officer has suggested that regrettably as Shefford hasn't used any of its allocated tokens, then consideration should be given as to whether or not the Town Council would still like to continue with the scheme in 2005/6. A suggestion that the tokens currently held by the Council should be returned to the District Council was also made. The Committee decided to keep the tokens in the hope they will be used by youths in the during the new financial year.

**10. COMPUTER TRAINING COURSE – CLERK**

It is hoped that a new computer system will soon be purchased and installed by the Town Council. Bearing this in mind, there may be a requirement for the clerk to receive further training and as such a tutor has been found that is prepared to offer this facility at the Council Chamber.

**11. RENT INCREASE – COUNCIL CHAMBER**

Information has been received regarding the increased rent for the Council Chamber premises. It was suggested that enquiries should be made as to the formula used in calculating the rent increase as it appeared to be somewhat larger than anticipated.

**12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

It has been established that the Town Council will shortly be taking over the running of the town's website.

The meeting closed at 9.50 p.m.

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