

THAME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Thame Town Council held on 21 June 2016 at 6.30pm in the Upper Chamber, Thame Town Hall

Present: Cllrs B Austin, D Bretherton, N Champken-Woods, M Deacock, N Dixon (Deputy Mayor), M Dyer, C Jones, P Lambert, A Midwinter, M Stiles and T Wyse

Officers

M Robinson, Office Administration Manager

C Pinnells, Community Services Manager

A Oughton, Committee Services Officer

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Butler (Personal), Cowell (Business), Dodds (SODC), Emery (Council Business) and Fickling (Personal). District Cllr Matelot Green and the Town Clerk.

2 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Civic Announcements

The Civic attendances for the Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor were noted.

4 Public Participation and Public Questions

There were no applications to address the Council.

5 Report from County Councillor N Carter

Cllr Carter reported that following a cabinet meeting it had been agreed that the double yellow lines on Elms Road would now only be extended at the entrance to the new development at The Elms. Cllr Carter agreed there should be a holistic approach to traffic management in this area and suggested before any development begins at The Elms a meeting between the developer, County Council and Town Council representatives should take place.

The Fire Brigade, supported by other local Brigades, had attended over a dozen incidents in the first hour and half of the torrential storm that Thame endured on Wednesday 15 June. Cllr Carter agreed to follow up the need for gully suckers to clear the drains in the Town to avoid future flooding issues and the problems experienced in East Street.

The County Council had organised a number of roadshows to travel around the County for Town & Parish Council representatives to attend. The first of which was held at Thame Town Hall a couple of weeks ago. Discussions had taken place on the future structure of local government and areas where services could be devolved to local councils such as planning and parking. Cllr Carter would provide an overview of the roadshows once they had finished.

The mobile library services would cease at the end of September. As an alternative, residents who were unable to visit a library, could opt to use the Home Library Service.

The County's adoption service had received a high degree of praise from different quarters and was being looked at nationally as an exemplar. The County was partnering with Oxford

Universities on social work practice reform. A care leaver panel was being formed in association with the Oxfordshire Children in Care Council to focus on changing needs. With regard to adult social care the County was in the top six of Local Authorities out of 152 County, Metropolitan and Unitary Councils for delivering good outcomes for users of social care.

A number of focus group meetings had taken place county wide with feedback used to inform what happens next with regard to Day Centres. This will then be followed by a formal consultation.

£6.5m had become available for the Better Broadband programme; £4m through efficiencies in delivering the programme and £2.5m from a higher than average take up of the Broadband service. The County was in discussion with the three main health bodies on the future shape of the local Health Service.

A question was raised with regard to the delay in the installation of bollards, to protect pedestrians / property, at the Kingsey Road / Tythrop Way roundabout. Cllr Carter agreed to pursue this with the Highways Department and report back to Council.

6 Reports from South Oxfordshire District Councillors

Cllr Champken-Woods reported that the contact telephone numbers had now changed at SODC. A new initiative 'Helping People Find Homes' had been launched to help people find suitable homes. This could be accessed through the Homechoice website.

Oxford Vision – work continues on the District's bid for Devolution with consultants Price Waterhouse Cooper. Up to date information could be accessed via the website <http://www.oxfordhsire.vision>

The District part fund six PCSOs. Between 1 January and 31 March 2016 the PCSOs attended a number of events including the Schools' Community Action Day in Thame. They had also assisted 227 victims of crime.

7 Notices of Motion

There were no Notices of Motion.

8 Members Questions (under Standing Order 11)

Cllr Stiles asked why the German flag had not been flown during the visit by the Bonn students and particularly on the day when they met the Town Mayor at the Town Hall?

Cllr Dixon referred to the Flag Flying Policy that set out the dates when flag flying took place and the flag to be flown. Section 3.2 of the Policy referred to Ad hoc requests to fly flags, not covered by the Policy, these would be determined by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Mayor.

The Flag Flying Policy was due for review in October 2016 and it was agreed that any proposed changes to the Policy would be discussed at the Community, Leisure & Recreation Committee scheduled for 25 October 2016.

9 Minutes

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 24 May 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

10 Policy & Resources Committee

The minutes of the meeting on 10 May 2016 were noted.

11 Community, Leisure & Recreation Committee

The minutes of the meeting on 10 May 2016 were noted.

12 Planning & Environment Committee

The minutes of the meetings on 10 May 2016, 17 May 2016 and 7 June 2016 were noted.

13 Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee

The minutes of the meetings on 10 May 2016 and 17 May 2016 were noted.

14 Internal Audit

The Internal Audit assessed the different systems, procedures, custom and practices and checked all operated as they should. The Internal Auditor visited four times during the year with the Internal Audit Report 2015-16 – Final Update being the last report. Overall there were no matters for concern and the report confirmed that the Council operated a good system of internal control.

Councillors thanked the Town Clerk and Officers for their hard work that had resulted in the good Internal Audit Report before Council.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The Internal Audit Report 2015-2016 – Final Update be received.*

15 External Audit / Annual Return / End of Year Accounts 2015-16

Annual Governance Statement 2015-16

It was a new requirement of the Accounts and Audit Regulations for the Town Council to separately approve the Annual Governance Statement (page 2 of the Annual Return) in advance of approving the Accounting Statements. The Town Council was responsible for ensuring that there was a sound system of internal control which included the preparation of the accounting statements. It was agreed questions 1-8 be answered as yes and question 9 was not applicable.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The Annual Governance Statement for 2015-16 be approved.*

Financial Statement (Unaudited) Year Ending 31 March 2016

The Financial Statement (unaudited) for the year ending 31 March 2016 had been prepared by DCK Beavers in conjunction with the Town Clerk.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The Financial Statement (unaudited) for the year ending 31 March 2016 be received.*

Accounting Statements within the Annual Return 2015-2016

The figures within the Accounting Statements (page 3 of the Annual Return) were established from the Financial Statement via the Annual Return Working Paper.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The Accounting Statements for 2015-2016 be approved.***

16 Grant Awards

The aim of the Grants Scheme was to promote a vibrant and active community within Thame, enhancing and maximising the range of services in the Town. Discussion took place on whether funding for the Citizens Advice Bureau should be removed from the Grant funding budget and be considered separately as part of the Council budget setting process in October.

The Grants Panel also considered applications from organisations for free use of Council premises and outside space. It was proposed that 25 hours free use be allocated to the Town Clerk to be used at his discretion.

Members agreed that the Grants Policy required fundamental changes to be made and that a review should be undertaken.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The grant awards, as recommended by the Grant Awards Panel, be agreed in accordance with the powers identified in Appendix 1.***
- ii) That in future, funding given to the Citizens Advice Bureau be removed from the Grant Funding budget and be included in the annual budget setting process.***
- iii) That 25 hours free use of Council premises and outside space be allocated to the Town Clerk to be used at his discretion.***

17 Bus Subsidy

Cllr Stiles reported the good news that the service providers of the 280 and 40 bus routes had confirmed there would be no change to the services after 20 July 2016. However, the biggest subsidy and potentially the biggest impact would be the loss of the six day a week 120 / 121 / 123 / 124 service.

It was felt important that some sort of travel service was maintained which enabled residents to travel into the centre of the Town. Since the report had been written Vale Travel had confirmed that they could not commit to providing a service just one day a week, the minimum requirement would be two days. Cllr Stiles had contacted a number of travel operators to establish interest in providing a reduced service but was unable to report any progress at present.

Members agreed to spend up to £6,250 from the Localism Fund / General Reserves but that any proposals that required funding over that figure would be brought back to Council for further discussion.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The Town Council delegates responsibility to Cllr Stiles and Officers to spend up to £6,250 from the Localism Fund / General Reserves, with support funding from other parishes, to enable, if feasible the partial continuation of the 120 / 121/ 123 / 124 bus service for up to a further year beyond 20 July 2016.***

18 Thame Arts & Literature Festival Publicity

Organisers of the Thame Arts & Literature Festival (TAL) had requested permission to increase town centre publicity for the event to be held on 12 to 16 October 2016. This included; a) hanging banners from the 15 floral standards in the Town Centre, b) a banner placed on the bottom railings at Priest End and c) an open sided gazebo outside the front doors of the Town Hall during the weekend of the event (14, 15 & 16 October).

After discussion Members agreed to the proposals with the exception of the gazebo which it was felt was too large. However, a standard 3m x 3m gazebo positioned away from the front doors of the Town Hall would be acceptable.

RESOLVED that:

- i) Proposals a) to hang banners from the 15 floral standards within the Town Centre and b) to place a banner on the bottom railings at Priest End be approved.***
- ii) A gazebo measuring no more than 3m x 3m may be placed near to the Town Hall but positioned in such a way as not to cover or block the entrance to the Town Hall be approved.***

19 Skate Park

Members noted that an outreach project by Sports for Streets would take place at the Skate Park.

The meeting concluded at 7.50pm

Signed
Chairman, 16 August 2016