

## THAME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 22 April 2014 at 6.30pm in the Upper Chamber, Thame Town Hall.

**Present:** Cllrs M Dyer (Chairman), D Bretherton (Vice Chairman), D Butler, N Champken-Woods, , L Emery, H Fickling, , V Humphries, P Lambert (Town Mayor), and M Welply

### **Non-Voting**

Cllr D Laver

### **Officers**

H Stewart, Town Clerk

C Pinnells, Community Services Manager

M Robinson, Office Administration Manager

L Spokes, Project Support Officer

### **1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr J Matelot Green (Deputy Mayor). Absent without apologies: Cllrs D Dodds, A Gunn

### **2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3 Public Participation**

There were no applications to address the Committee.

### **4 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 February 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **5 Budget Summary**

The budget summary up to 31 March 2014 was presented and the three significant underspends explained. A full set of the accounts were available to view at the meeting.

### **6 Investment Summary**

A summary of the investment performance showed continued good performance. It was requested that when any withdrawals were made it should be shown in the summary. This would explain the differences during December 2012 when a withdrawal was made for the purchase of the new depot.

## 7 Reports from Representatives on External Organisations

- a) Citizens Advice Bureau (Cllr Welply) – Cllr Welply had nothing to report.
- b) Thame Museum Trust (Cllrs Emery and Laver) – Cllrs Emery and Bretherton reported on the income and expenditure for the last financial year. Concerns were raised regarding a leak in the roof and the deterioration of previous repairs to a leak in the main gallery. The Trustees had been advised to purchase a humidistat, light meter and material covers to preserve the displays and to cap the chimneys to prevent falling debris entering the galleries. Cllrs Emery and Laver reported that the preliminary ideas of the Thame Remembers Project had been well received.
- c) Thame Barns Centre (Cllrs Butler and Matelot Green) – Cllr Butler reported that the Barns Centre was running well and had numerous wedding bookings for 2014 and 2015.
- d) 21<sup>st</sup> Century Thame (Cllrs Fickling and Laver) – Funding had been secured from SODC to reprint the 6 information leaflets produced by 21<sup>st</sup> Century Thame. The web portal was currently being rebuilt and that the shop improvement scheme was being put into abeyance due to lack of demand from business owners. Footpath signage on Lea Park was being pursued, however, it was discovered that numerous paths in the area did not have names.
- e) Thame and District Housing Association (Cllr Butler) – Cllr Butler had nothing to report.

## 8 NALC Conference – What Next for Localism

Cllr Gunn had provided a report of the Conference as he was unable to attend the Committee meeting.

## 9 Market Agreement

The five year agreement between the Council and the Thame Market Traders Co-Operative Limited (Market Traders) expired on 31 March 2014. A new agreement had been drafted with the intention to continue with the existing conditions for a further four years. The Market Traders were requesting an amendment such that the fixed fee was replaced with a flexible fee based on the number of pitches let each week.

Members discussed the request but decided that a fixed rate would promote consistent attendance from traders and an offer of two rent-free weeks would assist in covering loss of earnings from pitches not let throughout the year.

**RESOLVED that:**

- i) The terms and conditions of the Thame Market Traders Co-Operative Limited Agreement for 2014 – 18 be agreed.*
- ii) The rent be increased in line with the precept for 2014-15*
- iii) The rent be reviewed on an annual basis after receiving the Market Traders*

***audited accounts.***

**10 Kebab Van**

The trading arrangements between the Council and the Kebab Van proprietor expired on 31 March 2014 and the Committee was asked to agree the terms and conditions of a new agreement taking into consideration the request from the proprietor for the Agreement to be transferred to a family member if necessary. Members demonstrated their resounding support for the continued trading of the kebab van as it was deemed a popular and successfully run family business. It was proposed that this might be possible if the agreement was between the Council and the company name as opposed to an individual. It was agreed that the Clerk seek legal advice regarding this suggestion.

**RESOLVED that:**

- i) Subject to clarification of the named parties to the agreement the terms and conditions enabling the Kebab Van to trade in the Upper High Street Car Park be agreed.***

**11 Fair Agreement**

The one year agreement between the Council and the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain, London & Home Counties Section (the Guild) expired on the 31 January 2014. The agreement being presented had been drafted with the intention of granting a three year contract with the Guild to hold two fairs in Thame each year. The Guild had requested a four year fixed fee agreement but Members were of the opinion that a three year agreement allowed each council administration the ability to review the agreement midway through its term.

The Officer presenting the report recommended that terms should include a statement preventing Guild Members from obtaining preservation rights to any independent, community events. An amendment to Fair Stewards remaining the same for a three year period was agreed such that the Council must approve any appointed Stewards for the Thame fairs.

**RESOLVED that:**

- i) The Showmen's Guild of Great Britain London & Home Counties Section be allowed to hold a September and October Fair in Thame for the next three years subject to the amendments as discussed, being made to the Agreement.***

**12 Insurance Contract**

Due to the considerable reduction in cost with the current provider, it was agreed that the insurance policy would remain with the current provider, WPS, for the next three years.

**RESOLVED that:**

- i) WPS be appointed as the insurance provider for the next three years.***

### **13 Internal Audit**

The Internal Audit Interim Report for 2013-14 was presented with no actions required..

**RESOLVED that:**

- i) The Internal Audit Interim Report be approved*

### **14 Thame Players Theatre**

Thame Players Theatre had confirmed that it would like to proceed with an interest free loan of £38,000 from the Council. The Clerk asked for two Members to join her when meeting the Theatre representatives to agree the terms and conditions of the loan. Cllrs Bretherton and Champken-Woods volunteered.

### **15 Elms Park**

There had been a fifteen year licence (1998 – 2014) with Oxfordshire County Council for the use of Elms Park Recreational Ground with a fee of £500 per annum. The licence allowed John Hampden Primary School permitted use for physical activity by the children who attend the school and any visiting sporting teams. Oxfordshire County Council had requested a renewal of the Licence for a further fifteen years (2014-2029), with an annual fee of £800 to be reviewed in accordance with RPI in the fifth and tenth years.

The Committee was informed of a request from a local historian to carry out a non-invasive archaeological survey of Elms Park. It was agreed that the survey could commence as any results would provide the Museum with knowledge of the archaeological history of the area.

**RESOLVED that:**

- i) The License with Oxfordshire County Council for the use of Elms Park by John Hampden School be agreed.*

*Cllr Butler left the meeting at 7.23pm.*

### **16 Standing Orders**

The Standing Orders had been reviewed by Officers and the proposed amendments were marked in the copy presented to the Committee. The document still had to be reviewed by the Town Clerk who asked for any Members that had comments to bring them to her attention within the next ten days so that a final draft could be presented for adoption at the Council AGM in May.

A previous request from a Councillor to prevent any Member who arrived late during an item to be unable to vote on that item was noted to be illegal. However, it was suggested that the Council undertook an un-written agreement that this rule should be adhered to. Members also noted that the new policy regarding named voting on financial regulations needed to be included in the Town Council's Standing Orders.

## **17 Delegations**

The Scheme of Delegations being used had been effective during the past year but Members were asked to review them before the Full Council AGM in May and inform the Town Clerk if they had any concerns or amendments for consideration.

## **18 Depreciation**

This item had been considered by the Committee in September 2013 and had inadvertently been left on this agenda. The Town Clerk apologised for the oversight..

## **19 Complaints/Compliments**

The report was noted.

The meeting concluded at 7.38pm.