

THAME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Culture, Leisure & Recreation Committee held on 11 February 2014 at 6.30pm in the Upper Chamber, Thame Town Hall.

Present: Cllrs D Bretherton, N Champken-Woods, N Dixon (Chairman), M Dyer, L Emery, P Lambert (Town Mayor), D Laver, J Matelot Green (Deputy Mayor) and M Stiles (Vice Chairman).

Non-Voting

Vaughan Humphries

Officers

H Stewart, Town Clerk

A Oughton, Committee Services Officer

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Dite (Holiday), Gunn (Personal) and Matelot Green (Personal).

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Public Participation

There were no applications to address the Committee.

4 Presentation

Sarah Osborne from Tourism Angels gave a presentation on a project she had been working on involving a) the Information Centre and b) Thame as a tourism destination.

The Information Centre (IC) was welcoming but there was no sense of Thame or Thame specific posters. As part of the project council staff had been consulted and had visited the Tourism Information Office based in Marlow. Suggested improvements to the IC included making it more visible from outside the Town Hall, improved signage, incorporating the 'i' symbol and improving the internal layout incorporating better displays and providing staff training to increase product knowledge.

The IC should also look to build on visitor numbers as a consequence of the television series Midsomer Murders. This programme was aired in over 100 countries with each episode attracting over 6 million people. South Oxfordshire was home to 50 Midsomer film locations with locations in Thame being filmed more than anywhere else. Several coach groups of visitors mainly from overseas visited the Midsomer locations each year with numbers increasing year on year. This trend was expected to continue and numbers to treble in 2014. Thame specific press releases, the use of social media to advertise related events, walking trails and increased visible Midsomer products in the IC would promote both the IC and Thame which would benefit the economy of the town.

Cllr Laver entered the meeting during this item.

5 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6 Budget Summary

Members received the budget summary up to 31 December 2013. A full set of the accounts were available for Members to view at the meeting.

7 Reports from Outside Bodies

- a) Cuttle Brook Management Committee - Cllr Laver reported that over the recent period of exceptionally wet weather the Reserve had only experienced one whole day of bad flooding and during that time no water had breached the three vulnerable properties in Cedar Crescent. The water had receded quickly but the ground remained very muddy and it was extremely difficult to carry out any work. That said two work parties had taken place since Christmas. This year the Cuttle Brook will celebrate 21 years since it was designated as a Nature Reserve, there would be an exhibition in the Museum and it was planned to raise the profile of the Reserve by improving the website and the use of social media.
- b) Leisure Centre Management Committee – Cllr Stiles had attended the Festival of Christmas Music in December. The Leisure Centre staff appreciated the input and support of the Town Council and the next management meeting was scheduled for March.
- c) Carnival Committee – Nothing to report. Item to be discussed under item 16.
- d) Football Partnership – Cllr Dyer reported that work continued on decreasing expenditure and increasing income. The AGM had taken place three weeks ago and two new independent directors had been appointed. A number of fixtures had been abandoned due to the bad weather. The staff and people involved with the club continued to work hard with the best interests of the club in mind.
- e) Twinning Association – Cllr Humphries reported that Jeannette Matelot Green had stood down from the Committee and Linda Emery had been elected Chair with Don Butler as Vice Chair. Funds remained healthy. The next film night would be held on 8 March 2014 and the next visit would take place in May.
- f) Cricket Club – nothing to report.
- g) Chinnor RFC – Cllr Stiles reported that the club was about to submit a grant funding application for the redevelopment of the clubhouse.

8 Play Strategy Working Group

The review of the Play Strategy had been completed with no significant changes.

9 Information Centre

A budget of £6,000 was proposed to support some of the recommendations made by Sarah Osborne in her presentation on improving the Information Centre and increasing Thame's profile as a filming location for Midsomer Murders. The district council would match fund the Town Council's contribution from the SODC Market Towns Strategy grant.

RECOMMENDATION that:

- i) Full Council approve £3,000 from the Capital Rolling Fund to support the proposals to improve the Information Centre.***

10 Committee Name

It was suggested that the Committee name be changed to Community, Leisure and Recreation to reflect the community aspects included in the Neighbourhood Plan. It was agreed that the proposal to change the name and the terms of reference for the Committee be taken to the AGM in May..

11 Elms Park Lighting

The lighting scheme had been ordered with a completion date scheduled for the end of April. Following placement of the orders an increase in cost had occurred due to the time delay between quoting for the work and placing the order.

RECOMMENDATION that:

- i) Full Council note the additional expenditure of £730 which was unavoidable when placing the order.***

12 Town Awards

After discussion it was agreed that the categories for 2014 remain but the change with the "Person of Courage" award criteria being amended to "Someone of any age who has overcome adversity or facing everyday life challenges".

RESOLVED that:

- i) The 2014 category of awards be approved.***

13 Christmas Event

The Dickensian Christmas Event in 2013 had been a great success and now planning for 2014 required a decision on the options being presented. The lantern parade had encouraged many more children and families to participate and it was strongly felt that it should be included again. It was commented on that the length of the event should be shortened with the focus on family entertainment.

The budget for organising the event was minimal and relied heavily on sponsorship. This had always been achieved in previous years but Members were asked to accept that if the funds could not be raised then there would be an overspend that would need to be met from

Council resources. The Committee agreed that although the probability was low the risk had to be accepted.

RESOLVED that:

i) The SantaCon option as presented be used as the theme for 2014.

RECOMMENDATION that:

ii) Full Council agree that should there be a deficit of funding for the event it will be met from the General Fund.

14a. Commemoration of First World War

A number of proposals to commemorate the centenary of the First World War were presented for approval. They were all supported with the exception of the two minutes silence on Armistice Day which would be observed outside the Town Hall in 2014 but in 2018 it would take place in the Memorial Gardens to mark the centenary of the cessation of the war.

There were various groups and organisations organising events to commemorate the centenary and having these listed on the Council's website would be useful for the community. Cllrs Emery and Dixon volunteered to gather this information and provide a summary for Officers to put on the website.

RESOLVED that:

i) The proposals presented, with the exception as minuted above be undertaken to commemorate the First World War.

RECOMMENDEDATION that:

ii) Full Council approves a budget of £2000 from the General Reserve to commemorate the centenary of the First World War.

14b. Cllr Bretherton presented 'Thame Remembers'. The aim of this project was to commemorate World War I by researching all the names on the Thame and Moreton War Memorials to discover more about their lives, to identify the location of their grave or memorial and place a 'Thame Remembers' cross on each resting place. An example of the cross was shown.

Thame Museum would lead the project but would require administration support from the Town Council, this would be best achieved through a Partnering Agreement. The main partners however, in delivering the project would be the people of Thame. The project would be launched in August and would run for two and half years. Most of the funding would be sought from the Heritage Lottery Fund but it would also require a contribution from the Town Council and grants from other funding bodies to achieve the projected cost of £22,100.

There was an assurance that if the project went ahead the Council would not be at risk of having to meet any expenditure not met through fund raising as the project would only be

implemented to the amount of money raised.

RECOMMENDATION that:

- i) Full Council agrees to support the 'Thame Remembers' project by entering a Partnership Agreement and***
- ii) Based on the budget presented the Council provides up to £2000 during the two and half years of the project***

15 Skate Park

Six companies had been invited to tender for the redevelopment of the Skate Park and those accepting the invitation would present their proposals to users and Councillors at a meeting at Meadow View Park on Monday 17 February 2014.

The tenders would be evaluated taking into consideration the outcome from the presentations and the preferred supplier would be presented to Full Council on 25 February 2014. The redevelopment is subject to planning permission and will cost in the region of £250,000. Fund raising will be a major challenge with an application to SODC's CIF grant and financial support from the Town Council being approved by Full Council.

16 Town Events

Due to the resignation of the Chairman of the Tidy Thame Committee and the Carnival Committee, Councillors were asked if there was a volunteer from the Council willing to take on the responsibility for heading the organisation of these events. The Council did not have the staff resources as they stood, to assume any additional responsibility but staff did usually offer to work overtime on the day of the event to provide assistance. No hands were raised and it was agreed to take it to Full Council for consideration.

17 St Mary's Flower Festival

The Council had been invited to take part in St Mary's 2014 Flower Festival, the theme being 'Memories'.

RESOLVED that:

- i) Cllr Matelot Green subject to her agreement, be nominated to organise the Council's display with a budget of £75.***

18 Maintenance Report

The report was duly noted.

The meeting concluded at 8.20pm.

Signed
Chairman, 15 April 2014