

## THAME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Thame Town Council held on 25 April 2017 at 7.30pm in the Upper Chamber, Thame Town Hall

**Present:** Cllrs B Austin, D Bretherton, D Butler, P Cowell, M Deacock, N Dixon (Deputy Mayor), D Dodds, M Dyer, L Emery (Town Mayor), H Fickling, C Jones, P Lambert, A Midwinter and T Wyse.

**Officers**

G Hunt, Town Clerk  
C Pinnells, Community Services Manager  
A Oughton, Committee Services Officer

### 1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Champken-Woods (Holiday) and Stiles (Unwell).

### 2 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Cllr Dyer declared an interest in item 20 as a Council Representative and item 21 as a Trustee and did not take part or vote on these items.

Cllr Bretherton declared an interest in item 21 as a Trustee and did not take part or vote on this item.

### 3 Civic Announcements

Cllr Emery declared that she had been very busy attending numerous appointments. Cllr Emery had enjoyed her year as Town Mayor and had a fantastic time. Members congratulated Cllr Emery on her very successful year as Town Mayor.

### 4 Public Participation and Public Questions

There were no applications to address the Council.  
There were no questions to the Council.

### 5 Report from County Councillor N Carter

Cllr Carter gave a short verbal report and stated that a detailed written report would be submitted after the County Council elections.

The County Council had been ranked 15<sup>th</sup> best Council in the Country for the quality of social care it provided. This showed an improvement on the previous ranking of 33<sup>rd</sup>.

Primary school allocations had been announced with sufficient provision provided for all children in Oxfordshire. In Thame and Chinnor 99% of applicants received their first choice. Across the whole County 94% of applicants received their first choice and 99% received their first, second or third preference. With regard to Secondary school allocations, 98% of children in Thame had received their preferred choice.

The County Council continued to provide a grass cutting service. Some Parish Council's had come on board with their own grass cutting programme.

Exploratory discussions had taken place on what infrastructure requirements may be needed should Haddenham be the chosen site for a large settlement in the Aylesbury Vale Local Plan. With regard to the proposed Thame to Haddenham cycle path, the County Council held s106 contributions of £250,000. It was estimated that the total project cost would be in the region of £2m for a roadside

route. This would be a joint project with Buckinghamshire County Council who would be expected to make the larger contribution towards funding.

## **6 Reports from South Oxfordshire District Councillors**

Cllr Dodds stated that the Report for Parish Councils had not yet been published but should arrive in time for publication at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 9 May 2017. Cllr Dodds reported that the District Council was spending £350,000 on the refurbishment of the changing rooms at the Thame Leisure Centre. The project had been managed to ensure the pool remained open during the refurbishment.

## **7 Notices of Motion**

There were no Notices of Motion.

## **8 Members Questions (under Standing Order 11)**

Cllr Dixon asked a question with regard to the proposed Sport in the Street Event due to take place in June and the recent announcement that the County Council Highways Department had refused permission.

The Town Clerk reported that the Town Council had gone back to the event organiser and suggested different options for a way forward. The organiser was going to email the County Council to see if the decision could be reversed.

## **9 Minutes**

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 14 February 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

## **10 Policy & Resources Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 April 2017 were noted.

## **11 Community, Leisure & Recreation Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 April 2017 were noted.

## **12 Planning & Environment Committee**

The minutes of the meetings held on 21 February 2017, 14 March 2017 and 4 April 2017 were noted.

## **13 Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2017 were noted.

## **14 Annual Town Meeting**

The minutes of the Annual Town meeting held on 28 March 2017 were noted.

## **15 Town Mayor Designate**

Town Mayor, Cllr Emery called for nominations for the position of Town Mayor Designate. Cllrs Dodds and Wyse put themselves forward to be considered for the position of Town Mayor Designate. On being put to the vote an equal number of votes were cast for each candidate. A second vote was held and the vote remained equal for each candidate.

After discussion it was agreed to not to appoint a Town Mayor Designate and to call for nominations for the position of Town Mayor at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 9 May 2017.

## **16 Deputy Town Mayor Designate**

Following the decision made in item 15, it was agreed not to call for nominations for the position of Deputy Town Mayor Designate.

## **17 Town Boundary Signs**

Cllr Bretherton gave a presentation on the issues and proposals for consideration with regard to Town Boundary Signs.

Generally town signs could be any shape or colour and include tourist attraction symbols and road safety messages. A speed limit sign could be placed in conjunction with a boundary sign. New changes by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and the Department of Transport now allowed the incorporation of photographic images.

Where should the town signs be located? On each of the road junctions with the Parish Boundary could mean up to 12 signs. Some of the existing signs could be relocated to better reflect the boundary and perhaps include a sign on the Phoenix Trail. There was currently no sign at Moreton.

The current signage had been in place since 2009, so what next? Members agreed to form a working group to consider proposals / options, together with an idea of costings and report back to Council for consideration.

### **RESOLVED that:**

- i) A working group be formed to consider the next steps. Members to include Cllrs Bretherton, Butler, Emery and Fickling.***

## **18 Midsomer Plaques**

The Town Clerk reported that further to the proposal to install 14 Midsomer Murders Plaques around the town, the Town Council had resolved at their meeting on 24 May 2016, to approve the installation of Plaques on the Town Hall and the Museum building, subject to planning permission. A successful Midsomer Murders workshop had taken place at the Town Hall on 22 June 2016.

Funding of £1,000 had been agreed towards the costs of the production of a new leaflet and the prize money gained through the Great British High Street competition had also been invested in the project.

Helen Johns, with support, had sought further permission / £100 financial contribution from each of the 14 proposed locations most of whom had responded, two had declined. Helen Johns was in discussion with the District Planning team who had confirmed that only one Listed Building application would be required (for all 13 listed building locations) at no cost.

### **RESOLVED that:**

- i) Officers be given delegated authority to decide on the final position of the Town Hall plaque.***
- ii) A further £615 reserved funding be used for the wider project.***
- iii) Permission be granted for the required planning application to be made in the name of Thame Town Council.***

## 19 Cricket Club Clubhouse Redevelopment

The Town Clerk reported that the project was progressing well and that the latest amendment to the planning application had been discussed by the Planning and Environment Committee earlier in the evening with a recommendation for approval to the Planning Authority.

A professional project manager had been appointed and the project was now at the point when swift decisions would need to be taken. Members considered the draft Terms of Reference for a formal Working Group / Steering Committee with sufficient delegated powers to allow swift decisions and proper joint control over the build project / grant funding conditions.

### RESOLVED that:

- i) The Terms of Reference for the Cricket Club Clubhouse Redevelopment Working Group be approved.*
- ii) Cllrs Emery and Jones be approved as Councillor Representatives to serve on the Working Group, in addition to Cllr Champken-Woods.*

## 20 Thame Football Partnership Permission Request

Members considered a request from Thame Football Partnership (TFP) for permission to submit an application for planning permission to the District Council to install a new artificial pitch. The principle being in line with an option discussed in the Sports Facility Strategy. The Sports Facility Strategy did define other potential locations for the additional artificial pitch within Thame. Other parties may also submit planning applications and seek allocation of associated s106 funding. Granting permission to TFP to submit a planning application was for the planning application only and did not implicitly fix the location.

Lease conditions required that TFP obtained written permission from the Town Council as Meadow View Park was under lease conditions executed from Oxfordshire County Council via a Head Lease to the Town Council, who in turn was landlord via an Under Lease to TFP.

### RESOLVED that:

- i) Approval be given to Thame Football Partnership to submit a planning application, as stated in the report and for Officers to take all relevant steps required by the lease.*

## 21 Youth Memorial

Members considered the renewal of the Thame Youth Memorial Trustee (TYMT) and Town Council Partnering Agreement originally signed in April 2012 to oversee the installation, funding and management of the area and expired on 3 April 2017.

The Partnering Agreement had been amended to reflect the future maintenance requirement and the role responsibilities of both parties for a further five years. The amendments had been developed and discussed with the TYMT who had agreed and signed both agreements for the Council to approve.

### RESOLVED that:

- i) The sealing of the Youth Memorial and Council Partnering Agreement be approved.*
- ii) That Cllr Lambert be approved as an External Organisation Representative as a Thame Youth Memorial Trustee.*

## 22 Carnival

Following on from last year's successful entry by the Town Council in the carnival parade, the Town Mayor called for volunteers to join in the fun and participate in the Town Council's float on Saturday 10 June 2017.

It was noted that the following Councillors volunteered to be involved; Cllrs Austin, Deacock, Dixon, Dyer, Emery, Jones, Midwinter and Wyse. A number of apologies were also noted.

## 23 Grants

Members noted that the Grants Award Process for 2017 had commenced on 27 March 2017. The closing date to receive completed applications was 2 May 2017.

## 24 Unitary Proposal

Discussion took place on further information, circulated by the Town Clerk, in relation to the submission to Government of the proposal 'A New Council for a Better Oxfordshire'. Oxfordshire County Council had suggested that parishes could offer letters of support. It was agreed that at the current time the Town Council would not submit a formal letter.

## 25 P16/S3525/FUL – Thames Valley Police, Greyhound Lane

Members noted that District Cllrs Champken-Woods and Dodds and Town Cllr Austin and the Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer represented the Town Council at the District Planning Committee meeting on 5 April 2017 to speak in favour of refusal on P16/S3525/FUL – Thames Valley Police, Greyhound Lane. After discussion the District Planning Committee agreed to refuse planning permission.

Members extended their thanks to the District and Town Councillors and especially to the Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer for his hard work on preparing a response to this application.

## 26 Victoria Mead Residents Association

A request had been received from Victoria Mead Resident's Association (VMRA) to formally register with the Town Council as a Resident's Association. The rules which set out how VMRA would represent their members and from which the constitution was formed were agreed at the AGM held on 3 April 2017.

### **RESOLVED that:**

- i) The Victoria Mead Resident's Association and their Association Rules be formally acknowledged.*

## 27 Summer Closure

Members agreed that the Town Hall would close for one afternoon during the summer, to enable a summer staff event to take place, at officers' own expense.

### **RESOLVED that:**

- i) The Town Hall be closed for one afternoon during the summer to enable a summer staff event to take place.*

**28 Grass Cutting**

Members noted that Oxfordshire County Council had proposed a new Grass Cutting agreement for sealing. The Town Clerk / Proper Officer was of the view that the existing agreement was sufficient and was seeking further details on any new commitments / restrictions whilst minimising any legal costs.

**RESOLVED that:**

- i) If a new agreement was necessary and acceptable to the Town Clerk / Proper Officer that delegated authority be given to the Town Clerk / Proper Officer to authorise its sealing.***

The meeting concluded at 9.15pm

Signed .....  
Chairman, 9 May 2017