

# Annual Town Meeting

---

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 6 May 2014 at 7.30pm in the Upper Chamber, Thame Town Hall

Present: 50 Residents and Councillors.

## 1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dodds, Gunn and Welply.

## 2 Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 23 April 2013 were noted to be a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

## 3 Town Mayor's Report for 2013-14

Following concerns raised by residents at last year's Annual Town meeting the Mayor was pleased to report that a barrier had been installed at the exit from the Queen Elizabeth Play area onto Harrison Place. The egress from Elms Park onto Park Street had been improved by realignment of the footpath and work by the County Council to the pavement outside the Cooperative Store had stopped the path from flooding during heavy rain.

The year had proved a very busy one with 66 different civic engagements of which the Mayor highlighted just a few; the Montesson Twinning Reception at the Town Hall, being gunked at Lighthouse, visiting the Market Traders Community Day, the opening of the Thame Youth Memorial, the Civic Service at St Mary's church, the Senior Citizens Christmas Tea Party, the opening of the newly refurbished Health Centre, the launch of the defibrillator at the Scout building on Southern Road and most recently Music in the Park.

The Mayor's two chosen charities for this year were Safari and Thame Players Theatre. Various fund raising events had taken place during the year beginning with Tea With The Old Queen performed at Thame Theatre, a Murder Mystery Evening at the Town Hall, the Mayor's Charity Dinner which raised over £3,000, the Mayor's Charity Snooker Open for which the Mayor had donated a cup and hoped it would become an annual event and last week the Mayor's Quiz held at the Town Hall which was well attended and raised £945. Over the course of the year a grand total of £7,000 had been raised and the Mayor had great pleasure in presenting two cheques each for £3,500 to Safari and Thame Players Theatre.

Highlighting some of the achievements of the Council this year, Cllr Lambert made reference to the newly installed lights in Elms Park, thanking the Friends of Elms Park for all the funding raising that had been achieved through the Music in the Park events. The current refurbishment of the Town Hall which would take six months to complete, facilitating the Thame Alliance Group from which Toogle and the Community Bank had been instigated and the launch of a Good Neighbour Scheme by the end of 2014. The Business Forum whose agenda included broadband, apprenticeships and waste recycling and the first Mayor's Breakfast meeting.

### **3 Town Mayor's Report for 2013-14 (contd)**

The Christmas Event had been a great success with members of all primary schools taking part in the Lantern Parade. Planning permission for the Skate Park refurbishment had been granted and funding was currently being sought by the working group to secure the £250,000 required.

The Mayor went on to encourage those who were thinking of standing for election next year to do so; the Council was made up of 16 councillors from all walks of life. They did not always agree but the one common theme was that they had the best interests of the town at heart and did the job to the best of their ability. Cllr Lambert had felt both honoured and humbled to be elected Town Mayor and had thoroughly enjoyed his year.

### **4 Thame Neighbourhood Plan**

A copy of the Annual Update for 2014 was made available to all attendees of the meeting and was also available to view on the Council website.

### **5 Open Forum – Questions from Electors**

Mrs Beatrice Dobie having asked how was the money was being raised to fund the current refurbishment work to the Town Hall was informed that a loan had been secured from the Public Works Loan Board.

Mrs Peggy Long asked several questions relating to the large trees growing in The Elms along the back wall of the Memorial Gardens. There was a particular concern that the trees would be felled once the wall had been knocked down for access to the new development or would there be a preservation order placed on them? There were no firm proposals for the development at The elms as yet and to date there had not been any proposals to demolish the wall at the memorial Gardens. Access to any development would be from the back of the site and one plan had shown access via an existing access at the back of The Elms. Liaison with the Tree Preservation Officer at SODC would take place before any work on the trees in The Elms was carried out.

Mrs Long asked when the developer bought The Elms were they aware there was a good chance that the land could be developed for housing? Cllr Lambert replied the Council could not answer this question and it should be directed straight to the developer.

Mrs Mavis Ayers asked whether there was any chance that Thame In Bloom could be resurrected? Cllr Lambert replied that he thought this was a wonderful idea but it would need a team of volunteers who would be willing to organise it. Cllr Butler echoed the sentiment that Thame in Bloom was a wonderful event and it would be good for the town if it was able to get off the ground again.

Mention had been made this evening of Thame Business Forum and the Mayor's Breakfast, has any thought been given to the businesses that do not fall into either of these categories? Cllr Lambert replied that an invitation to the Mayor's Breakfast had been extended to all the businesses located in the town centre, however only two had attended. The date may have been wrong on this occasion but there were plans to try another breakfast meeting in the future.

## 5 Open Forum – Questions from Electors (contd)

Thame4Business was still alive and kicking but was changing its focus. Comment was made that in the present economic climate businesses were working hard to maintain their business and grow it and the likelihood was that there was little time then to take part in events such as the Mayor's Breakfast.

Mrs Dobie asked what the situation was with the current graveyard at St Mary's? A Planning Application had been submitted to use the small allotment site to extend the existing graveyard. Within the Neighbourhood Plan there was a requirement to provide new burial space to the south of town and negotiations about the exact location continued with developers.

Mr Owen Davies asked if an update could be given on Thame Community Bank? The Community Bank continued to grow and currently had 37 members. Promotion was ongoing encouraging individuals and community groups to open up accounts. Businesses had also been encouraged to take up corporate membership thereby allowing employees to make regular savings into their Community Bank accounts through the payroll.

The meeting concluded at 8.22pm

Signed.....  
Chairman, Annual Town Meeting 2015