

THAME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Thame Town Council held on 17 December 2013 at 7.30pm in the Upper Chamber, Thame Town Hall

Present: Cllr D Bretherton, D Butler, N Dixon, D Dodds, M Dyer, H Fickling, A Gunn, V Humphries, P Lambert (Town Mayor), D Laver, J Matelot Green (Deputy Mayor) and M Stiles.

Officers

H Stewart, Town Clerk

A Oughton, Committee Services Officer

C Pinnells, Community Services Manager

M Robinson, Office Administration Manager

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Champken-Woods (Other Interest), Dite (Holiday), Emery (Holiday) and Welply (Personal).

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Civic Announcements

The Mayor had attended a significant number of events and highlighted just a few. Tea with the Old Queen had raised £315 and the Murder Mystery evening £718 both amounts going to the Mayor's Charitable Fund. The Christmas Light event had been a great success and the Mayor extended his thanks to all those involved. The senior citizens Christmas Tea Party had taken place last week with nearly a hundred participants enjoying an afternoon of food and entertainment.

4 Public Participation

There were no applications to address the Council.

5 Thame Bowls & Tennis Club

Bill Giles, Trevor Copley and Neil Morgan from the Thame Bowls and Tennis Club gave a presentation on the Club's proposed plans for a new club house on Queens Road. The Club was formed in 1924 and subsequently became the Thame Sports Club. Today the club has 120 bowls members, an increase of 50% over the last four years and 250 tennis members, 50 of which were juniors. It is a non-profit making organisation run entirely by volunteers.

The club house is the central point for both clubs but was old and no longer fit for purpose. The club therefore had three options, i) not to do anything, ii) to demolish the club house and build a new one or iii) sell the ground at Queens Road and use the money raised to relocate within Thame.

The preferred option was to demolish the existing club house and build a new one, plans had been drawn up and planning permission gained. It was anticipated that the cost of the project would be £500k. The criteria for applying to Sports England this year only provided the opportunity to apply for up to £50k but it was hoped that would change in the next round of grant funding enabling access to a larger sum of money. The club also intended to apply to the Community Infrastructure Fund at South Oxfordshire District Council but again there was a cap

on the amount that could be awarded. There was no doubt that it was going to be extremely difficult to raise the money required to complete the project.

The club thanked the Council for the opportunity to present their plans and asked for their support moving forward.

6 Police Report

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

7 Report from County Councillor N Carter

Cllr Carter reported that the County Council would hear what the local government settlement figure would be in the next couple of days. It was anticipated that there would be a shortfall in funding of £64 million. Over 1,000 people had attended the public consultations so far, these had been held across the County and the results collated to help the Council make decisions as to where cuts to the budget could be made.

It had become evident that the location of the public consultations had not been convenient for the residents of Thame and it was hoped this would be rectified for any future consultations. However, it was still possible for the public to give their views using the on-line consultation process which did not close until 3 January 2014.

8 Reports from South Oxfordshire District Councillors

Cllr Midwinter reported that the Science Vale was to receive £1.5m to push forward housing to encourage undergraduates into the area. Although not directly affecting Thame this area of South Oxfordshire was already home to a significant number of scientific, research and development and high technology businesses. The District had held training sessions on 'Leading Community Planning' and 'How to Recognise Vulnerable Children' and both had been well attended. Cllr Midwinter wished the Mayor, Councillors and staff a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Cllr Dodds reported that like the County Council the District were expecting to hear what the local government settlement figure would be in the next couple of days. Preliminary assessments indicated that the District would not be in quite the same position as County but could not confirm the budget until the settlement figure was known. The autumn issue of Outlook carried a piece on waste and recycling encouraging the community to recycle. October had seen the best results to date with 73.9% of waste being recycled.

Cllr Bretherton reported that the council was undertaking a Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the report was expected early in January. The Community Infrastructure Levy was scheduled for April 2015.

9 Notices of Motion

Proposed by Cllr Stiles and Seconded by Cllr Gunn:

"That this council consider how to encourage people, who exercise their dogs on Cuttlebrook Nature Reserve, to keep their animals on leads, at least on the town side of the Reserve, in order to decrease the fouling of footpaths and the disturbance of wildlife"

This motion was deferred to the Planning and Environment Committee.

10 Questions

Cllr Stiles asked the question: i) Did the council pay the living wage to its employees? and ii) Did the companies that the council procured pay a living way to their employees? Regarding the first part of the question the Clerk would investigate and report directly to Cllr Stiles. However no information was available to enable the second part of the question to be answered.

11 Minutes

RESOLVED that:

- i) The minutes of the meetings held on 24 September 2013 and 22 October 2013 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Mayor.*

12 Policy & Resources Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2013 were noted.

13 Culture, Leisure & Recreation Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2013 were noted.

14 Planning & Environment Committee

The minutes of the meetings held on 15 October 2013, 5 November 2013 and 26 November 2013 were noted.

15 Personnel Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 October 2013 were deferred to the next Full Council meeting.

16 External Audit

Members noted all the requirements of the audit had been met and extended their thanks to D C K Beavers, the Clerk and staff.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The External Auditor certificate and opinion 2012-13 be approved.*

17 Precept/Council Tax

Discussion took place on the options available to the Council when setting the budget to determine the Precept for 2014-15. Consideration was given to the impact of including the council tax reduction scheme (Option 1) or excluding it (Option 2). It was agreed to set the precept at an additional meeting of Full Council on 21 January 2014 at 6.30pm.

Cllr Matelot Green entered the meeting during this item.

18 Sports Facilities Strategy and Green Living Plan

The Sports Facilities Strategy and Green Living Plan formed part of the requirement of the

Neighbourhood Plan and were originally to be funded through S106 monies collected over all the new developments. There was a need to start the process and it was agreed to front fund the two documents and collect the monies from S106/CIL payments as the developments came on board.

RESOLVED that:

- i) That front funding of £12k for the Sports Facilities Strategy and £20k for the Green Living Plan be approved.***

19 For Information

- a) Service Medal – The Mayor presented Cllr Humphries with The New Zealand Defence Service Medal.
- b) Update on the Public Works Loan – permission for the loan had been granted and the conditions would be confirmed once the precept had been set.

The meeting concluded at 9.05pm

Signed
Chairman, 21 January 2014