

THAME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Thame Town Council held on 20 June 2017 at 6.30pm in the Upper Chamber, Thame Town Hall

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

Officers

G Hunt, Town Clerk
C Pinnells, Community Services Manager
M Robinson, Office Administration Manager
A Oughton, Committee Services Officer

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Butler (Unwell), Champken-Woods (Holiday), and Emery (Holiday). Cllr Cowell absent without apology.

The Town Clerk reported that Cllr Butler was due to undergo surgery today. Councillors extended their best wishes to Cllr Butler for a speedy recovery.

2 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Civic Announcements

Cllr Wyse reported that his first month as Town Mayor had been a busy one. Not listed on the report of Civic Attendances was the funeral of Henry Blyth which had only taken place yesterday. Henry Blyth received the Military Cross whilst on active service in Korea, was a teacher at Lord Williams's School and had served as a Town Councillor.

The Council observed a minute's silence in memory of Henry Blyth.

4 Public Participation and Public Questions

Mr Gavin O'Meara of Shared Access reported that following provisional approval by the Town Council to install a telecoms mast at Southern Road Recreational Ground a public consultation had taken place with letters sent to 443 nearby residents, various impacted organisations, schools, local healthcare providers and local authorities. The consultation had closed on 6 June 2017 and a summary of the responses provided to the Town Council. The next step would be to submit a planning application for the proposed scheme.

It was agreed that discussion of agenda item 20 would take place following public participation.

5 P17/S1670/LB – 32 Upper High Street

A new listed building application for works and alterations to the access and entrance to the site at The Elms had been received which was identical in all respects to planning application P14/S2395/LB (granted permission in 2014) except reference was now included to the proposed extra care home on the site.

It was felt that as P14/S2395/LB remained extant there was no justification for this new application.

RESOLVED that:

- i) A Recommendation of refusal be sent to the District Planning Authority as the access for the existing, Thame Neighbourhood Plan compliant, scheme*

(P14/S2395/LB) was still extant and any future renewal for access should be made in line with that application and the County Council's approved parking scheme for Elms Road.

6 Report from County Councillor N Carter

No report received.

Post meeting the Town Clerk had received apologies from Cllr Carter who stated that he would forward his report by the end of the week.

7 Reports from South Oxfordshire District Councillors

Cllr Dodds stated that the most recent report, prepared by District Cllr White for Parish Councils, had been circulated. Cllr Dodds added that it had been agreed that each District Councillor would have a Community Grant fund of £5,000 to use on projects or services within their wards. The minimum amount that could be applied for was £500 up to a maximum of £5,000. Further details and application forms were available via the District Council's website.

Cllr Matelot Green reported that there had been an increase in the District Council's five year land supply up from 3.8yrs at the beginning of June to 4.1yrs. The recent Planning Appeal at Highclere, Thame Park Road had been dismissed and the venue for the Traveller's Site Appeal had been changed. Biffa had experienced operational problems over the last couple of weeks related to the unusually high temperatures.

8 Notices of Motion

There were no Notices of Motion.

9 Members Questions (under Standing Order 11)

Cllr Dixon asked two questions:

Could an update be provided on the progress of the 'Men's Shed'? Cllr Wyse reported that the working group was in discussion with Chinnor Rugby Club regarding a possible site for the Shed.

Secondly, had Jack & Alice applied for the appropriate licence to place tables and chairs outside their premises in the Buttermarket? The Town Clerk reported that he had recently sent a letter to Jack & Alice regarding the waste bins on the highway requesting that they work together with Prezzo to find an acceptable solution to the problem. With regard to tables and chairs on the highway at various locations in the town, the Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer had been tasked with investigating this further and a report would be given to the Planning & Environment Committee meeting on 27 June 2017.

Cllr Dyer asked that action be taken with regard to the A-Board in the Upper High Street advertising an out of town business.

10 Minutes

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 9 May 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

11 Policy & Resources Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2017 were noted.

12 Community, Leisure & Recreation

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2017 were noted.

13 Planning & Environment Committee

The minutes of the meetings held on 9 May 2017, 16 May 2017 and 6 June 2017 were noted.

14 Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee

The minutes of the meetings held on 9 May 2017 and 16 May 2017 were noted.

15 Internal Audit

The Internal Audit provided an independent and objective review of the Council's internal control arrangements involving the different systems, procedures, custom and practices. The Internal Audit Report 2016-2017 – Final Update showed there were no matters for concern and confirmed that the Council operated a good system of internal control.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The Internal Audit Report 2016-2017 – Final Update be received.*

16 External Audit / Annual Return / End of Year Accounts 2016-17

The accompanying report and appendices provided Members with the relevant background to the Financial Statement (unaudited) for the year ending 31 March 2017 and the Annual Return (including the Annual Governance Statement) for 2016-17.

It was a requirement of the Accounts and Audit Regulations for the Town Council to separately approve the Annual Governance Statement in advance of approving the Accounting Statements. The Financial Statement (unaudited) had been prepared by DCK Beavers in conjunction with the Town Clerk and provided a more detailed explanation of the End of Year accounts and movements in reserves.

There being no questions the following items were separately voted on and agreed.

Annual Governance Statement 2016-2017

RESOLVED that:

- i) The Annual Governance Statement for 2016-2017 be approved.*

Financial Statement (unaudited) for the year ending 31 March 2017

RESOLVED that:

- ii) The Financial Statement (unaudited) for the year ending 31 March 2017 be received.*

Accounting Statements for 2016-2017

RESOLVED that:

- iii) The Accounting Statements for 2016-2017 be approved.*

17 Mayor of Thame's Charity Trust

The technical report provided an update on the new Trust created primarily to gather gift aid on donations received and showed the technical processes throughout the year. It had subsequently been discovered, following the submission of a GASDS claim (Gift Aid Small Donations) that the Trust must have been registered for at least two tax years and made successful Gift Aid claims before it was eligible to make a GASDS claim.

The two spreadsheets attached to the report showing the monies received and paid out of the Charity Account for 2016-17 and the Income & Expenditure summary for the year had been verified by an Independent accountant.

18 Grants

The Grant Awards Panel had reviewed 14 grant applications totaling £23,546. Each application had been assessed according to the agreed evaluation criteria and a total of £14,750 had been awarded.

A question was raised regarding one of the applications that had been unsuccessful. The Chairman of the Grant Awards Panel responded that the application had been discussed and it was agreed that, on the information provided, it did not meet the criteria. Other possible sources of grant funding had been suggested to the applicant.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The grant awards, as recommended by the Grant Awards Panel, be approved in accordance with the powers identified in Appendix 1 of the report.***

19 Town Flag

The Town Clerk reported that following approval of the Town Flag design at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 9 May 2017 the design had been passed to the Flag Institute for their further advice and to seek formal registration.

The Flag Institute's initial response was supportive and suggested a number of changes before the flag could be registered. Of the suggestions it was the Officers' opinion that two were acceptable; that the lettering was removed and the crest would be better on the hoist side of the flag to make it more visible. This also had the advantage of the river representation being on the 'fly' side thus exacerbating the movement. The comments were taken back the competition winner who agreed and the redesigned flag was now before Council for approval.

It was noted that in not accepting all the changes proposed by the Flag Institute there was a risk that the flag would not be registered.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The refined design be approved and accept that it may not meet the criteria for registration with the Flag Institute.***

20 Shared Access Approach

Discussion took place with regard to the responses to the consultation and the proposed location of the telecommunications mast.

Members were disappointed that the raw data of the responses from the consultation had not been received despite a request being made by the Town Clerk 10 days ago. Also that no detail had been provided on the further information sent to objectors by Pegasus and whether that further information had adequately addressed the objectors concerns.

It was felt that further investigations should be made into alternative locations for the mast, within the tree line, on Southern Road Recreational Ground and information provided on the size of the proposed mast in comparison with that of other existing masts in the town.

After discussion Members agreed that in principle they were not opposed to a mast being installed at Southern Road Recreation Ground but that discussion should be deferred until further information had been received.

RESOLVED that:

- j) Discussion be deferred until further information was received that addressed the concerns raised by Councillors in regard to the public consultation responses and the location of the mast.***

21 Disposal of Amenity Land at Pickenfield

At the meeting of the Council on 26 April 2016 it was agreed in principle that the amenity land adjacent to 20 Pickenfield could be disposed of subject to a covenant in the deed to restrict any development on the land.

In line with the Land Acquisition and Disposal Policy the necessary steps had been taken to progress the sale and the legal documents relating to the disposal of the land had now been received.

No objections had been received in response to the public notice.

RESOLVED that:

- j) The legal documents relating to the sale of amenity land adjacent to 20 Pickenfield be signed and sealed.***

22 Midsomer Plaques

It was noted that the planning application for the installation of the Midsomer Plaques had been submitted to the District Planning Authority and that Officers continued to provide support and advice on the project as required.

23 Town Carnival

The success of the Town Council's entry in the Carnival Parade on Saturday 10 June was noted. The whole Parade had been spectacular and the Carnival a great success. The Council extended its thanks to everyone who took part and to the organisations and individuals who provided the costumes and props. Special thanks were given to the Community Services Officer for co-ordinating the Town Council's winning entry.

24 Red Kite Radio

It was noted that the official launch of Red Kite Radio had taken place on Sunday 18 June 2017. The Town Council had been invited to take part in live broadcasts, on alternate Friday mornings, commencing on 1 July 2017. Officers would maximise opportunities with the media outlet.

Red Kite Radio would have a promotional stall at the Town Music Festival on Saturday 8 July 2017.

25 Town Centre Sports Event

The Town Centre Sports Event on the evening of Friday 23 June 2017 was noted. As agreed the Town Council would provide £1,500 of funding towards the overall estimated cost of £8,000 for the event. As before, the High Street Car Park would be closed from mid-afternoon on the day of the event.

26 Thame Town Music Festival

It was noted that the arrangements for the Town Music Festival on Saturday 8 July 2017 were well advanced and a review of operational requirements had been undertaken.

The meeting concluded at 7.44pm

Signed
Chairman, 15 August 2017