

THAME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Thame Town Council held on 14 November 2017 at 6:30pm in the Upper Chamber, Thame Town Hall

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

Officers

G Hunt, Town Clerk

L Fuller, Community Project Support Officer

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs M Deacock (Business), N Dixon (Business) and L Emery (Unwell).

2 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Civic Announcements

After noting the list of events attended, Cllr Wyse stated that he had been very busy over the last few months. He particularly highlighted the Service of Remembrance on Sunday 12 November.

4 Public Participation and Public Questions

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

The Clerk noted that representatives of the Thame Town Cricket Club were in attendance and available to answer any questions on Agenda item 10.

5 Report from County Councillor N Carter

No report received.

County Cllr Matelot Green explained that due to a personal commitment, Cllr Carter was not in attendance and had not been able to provide a report.

Cllr Stiles asked for an update on the new 280 / X8 bus route. Cllr Matelot Green stated that Cllr Carter has had one meeting and has another meeting arranged to discuss this.

6 Reports from South Oxfordshire District Councillors

The report from the District for October had been circulated.

Cllr Matelot stated that the District Council had instigated, alongside a District Councillor for Wallingford, a growth bid for the future funding of the Market Town Co-Ordinator role but was uncertain about how successful this would be. Cllr Matelot added that she appreciated what the Town Council's Market Town Co-Ordinator had done for Thame.

Cllr Matelot gave an update on her Councillor Grant, stating that she had allocated £3,900 so far but that time was running out for organisations to apply so ways to increase publicity of the scheme needed to be looked at. Cllr Champken-Woods and Cllr Dodds highlighted some concerns with the process of applying online, such that it excluded those who could not access the internet. It was also noted that many organisations do not have a signed constitution, which is a requirement to apply. Cllr Bretherton, who had applied for a grant via the scheme, said the process was over bureaucratic and needed to be simplified. Cllr Matelot added that the process was being looked at.

Cllr Matelot noted that there had been some complaints regarding the bin collections recently in Thame. Cllr Matelot explained that due to new vehicles and staff changeover at Biffa, there had been some missed collections and duplicate collections, adding she was aware of at least one case where the resident had received a letter of apology from Biffa. Cllr Dodds added he was confident it would all be sorted.

Post meeting the Town Council received the November Report from Cllr Matelot.

7 Members Questions (under Standing Order 11)

There were no questions.

8 Minutes

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 15 August 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

It was noted that with regard to Minute 3, that the subsequent hirers of the Showground, in their set up for their event, stated that they found the site and its surroundings to be in an atrocious state, rather than the good state as stated in the Minute.

9 Policy & Resources Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2017 were noted.

10 Community, Leisure & Recreation Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2017 were noted.

A report was presented to the Community, Leisure & Recreation Committee outlining that the quotes received to build the new Clubhouse were in excess of the funds available. A recommendation was made at that meeting to Council to either provide further underwriting subject to Cricket Club still maintaining its seeking of existing funds to support the project or abandon the project. The Committee recommended that Council continues to support the Cricket Clubhouse Redevelopment by adopting the additional funding proposals outlined in paragraph 20 of the report.

Cllr Austin stated that the cost had been increasing and felt the process so far had been unsatisfactory. Cllr Austin also raised concerns that providing funding would involve diverting funding allocated to the Community Facility fund.

Cllr Champken-Woods explained that one of the reasons for the increased costs was the addition of a separate entrance and lift for disabled people. This is a key requirement for the

Thame & District Day Centre who will move into the new clubhouse to enable them to increase their operating hours and number of members.

Cllr Stiles also raised concerns over the allocation of some of the Community Facility fund to the Cricket Clubhouse, adding that it may set a precedent for other projects.

Cllr Cowell sought clarity on the final contract cost. The Clerk stated that the Town Council was still negotiating the costs.

Cllr Fickling asked whether the funding support, if given, could be a phased approach. The Clerk explained that as a public body, the Town Council has to secure complete funding in order to sign the contract with the chosen contractor.

Cllr Dyer supported the Day Centre's plans to move and expand, and asked whether a hire fee had been agreed. Cllr Champken-Woods said a price had been agreed which was less than they are currently paying. Cllr Jones stated the new Cricket Clubhouse would be an asset to the community. Other Members expressed support for the project.

Cllrs Austin and Midwinter questioned whether a limit could be set, given that it is a huge project and there were concerns that more funding may be required in the future. The Town Clerk stated that the full costs spreadsheet was available to view and defines all project and client costs. The Clerk is confident that costs won't increase but an agreement by Council, to provide the additional funding, is required to be able to commit the contractor to a price.

Representatives of the Thame Town Cricket Club thanked the Town Council for their support and hoped that the project would be a great success.

RESOLVED that:

- i) ***The Council continues to support the Cricket Clubhouse Redevelopment by adopting the additional funding proposals outlined in paragraph 20 of the report.***

11 Planning & Environment Committee

The minutes of the meetings held on 5 September 2017, 26 September 2017, 17 October 2017 and 7 November 2017 were noted.

12 Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee

The minutes of the meetings held on 26 September 2017 and 7 November 2017 were noted.

13 Personnel

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2017 were noted. The Town Clerk noted that Cllr Wyse had been elected chairman of the Personnel Committee, but that the meeting had been chaired by Cllr Emery in his absence. The Dignity at Work policy was recommended by the Personnel committee for adoption at Council.

RESOLVED that:

- i) ***The Town Council adopts the Dignity at Work policy.***

14 External Audit

Members received the Summary Report of Outstanding Audit Points from the External Auditor. The Clerk explained that the Town Council had fulfilled all its obligations and submitted its accounts to the External Auditors. The Council was informed of the presentation issues in its accounts two days before they were due to be signed off. The loan to the Rugby Club and the repayments had both been double-counted which had caused the presentational issues. There had been no issues with the underlying accounts but the requested changes to the figures on the Annual Return required approval by Council.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The Town Council approves the amendment of the Annual Return, as a result of a very late auditor highlighted issue with the Annual Return presentation of figures, to reflect the accurate underlying accounts.**

15 Town Boundary Signs

The update on the proposals for the new Town Boundary Signs was received. Cllr Fickling stated that the Working Group had met on several occasions and were now presenting their design proposal. Cllr Fickling explained that since the report was published, a minor amendment had been made to the design, as the centre of the cross on the Town Council's logo was to be coloured white to make it more prominent. Cllr Fickling asked Members to approve the design, locations, supplier and funding of the revised town boundary signs, and to approve the next steps.

Cllr Stiles asked whether a solution had been found to make the French and Romanian flags stand out, as they currently blend into the background. Cllr Fickling stated that they were going to be given a white border.

Cllr Jones questioned the sizing of the letters 'T' and 'h' on the design proposal. Cllr Fickling explained the fonts used were part of the Town Council's corporate image rebranding project which took place last year.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The Town Council approves the design, locations, supplier and funding of the revised town boundary signs**
- ii) The Town Council authorises the working group to progress the implementation plan through to conclusion, with the Town Clerk agreeing any reasonable additional funding required from the Rolling Capital Fund.**

16 Thame Community Hospital

Members received the written update from Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust on the progress of the pilot project at Thame Community Hospital.

Cllr Champken-Woods reported that the pilot project was proving popular and successful in reducing the number of patients being admitted to hospital beds. It was also reported that the stakeholder group had extended the trial from 6 to 12 months to review the trial during the winter pressures, and there were plans for a large ultrasound to be installed.

Cllr Midwinter added that she was doubtful about the project to start with, but had been impressed by how many people had used it.

Post meeting Cllr Champken-Woods added that the staff at Thame Community Hospital had received the Patients Choice award from Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust on Friday 10 November.

17 War Memorial Panel – Additional Names

Members were pleased to see that more names were being added to the Thame and Moreton War Memorials. Cllr Midwinter raised concerns over where the names were going to fit on the memorial. Cllr Dyer assured Members that there were options available but the Working Group needed to work with the Town Council's Asset Manager and war memorial advisors to find the best option.

Cllr Butler added that he thought the Service of Remembrance on Sunday, held at the Thame War Memorial, was wonderful.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The Town Council approves the additional names of servicemen, as agreed by the War Memorial Panel, are added to the Thame War Memorial and where appropriate also to the Moreton War Memorial.**

18 Schedule of Meetings

The schedule of meetings for 2018-19 were approved.

The meeting concluded at 7:28pm.

Signed
Chairman, 16 January 2018