

THAME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Thame Town Council held on 27 February 2018 at 6.30pm in the Upper Chamber, Thame Town Hall

Present: Cllrs B Austin, D Bretherton, D Butler, N Champken-Woods, P Cowell, M Deacock, N Dixon, M Dyer, L Emery (Deputy Mayor), H Fickling, C Jones, P Lambert, A Midwinter 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 Dodds (Holiday) and Stiles (Unwell).

2 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Civic Announcements

Cllr Wyse had attended a lot of events and functions since November and highlighted two; the Burns Night Supper hosted by the Mayor of High Wycombe and the concert by the Welsh Male Voice Choir held at St Mary's Church. Cllr Wyse thanked the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Emery for all her support.

4 Public Participation and Public Questions

Mr David Cannon, a resident who had lived in East Street for over 20 years, raised a number of issues related to the highway. The road surface in East Street was in a poor state with potholes and ruts in the road. This had resulted in Mr Cannon's property suffering water damage from vehicles splashing standing water which accumulated in potholes up onto the front wall and windows of his house. He had spoken to the Highways Department and who had visited the site to see the damage caused but he had not heard anything since. Mr Cannon had also reported the problem via the County Council website using Fix My Street.

Mr Cannon understood there were funding issues but felt strongly that the road needed to be managed, not only in terms of the surface but also traffic calming and parking. He suggested solutions such as narrowing the road, a one way system, a 20mph speed limit in the town centre, parking bays and parking permits.

5 Thames Valley Police

Inspector Adrian Hall and Sergeant Neil Anns, of Thames Valley Police (TVP) provided an update on current policing in Thame.

Inspector Hall said the last year had been challenging with more and more events occurring nationally and internationally requiring officer support from other police forces, including TVP e.g. the terrorist attack in Manchester. From 1 June 2017 a new force operating model was introduced mainly due to austerity measures. In South Oxfordshire and Vale of the White Horse area this had resulted in the loss of 14 police officers and 10 staff, which had made a big difference. The new

Neighbourhood Policing model had reduced the number of local neighbourhood police officers overall, but they were now more locally dedicated.

There was some good news to report, crime figures for burglary to dwellings was down 10% and burglary to non-dwellings (i.e. sheds, garages) down by 28%. Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) crime was also down by 6%.

The not so good news was that violence against the person was up 46%, the rise was thought to be largely associated with the large number of anti-social behaviour incidents which occurred in the spring and summer of last year. The incidents had been dealt with positively and a number of people had gone through the criminal justice system.

Rural crime was also up 56%, this was in part due to the way rural crime was recorded and reports received and the work by the police with the rural community encouraging them to report crime.

Sgt Anns had just taken over as lead officer responsible for neighbourhood policing in Thame whilst Sgt Hoskins was on maternity leave. His time would be divided equally between Thame and Henley.

Sgt Anns reported that although he had only been in post for less than a week he had been briefed on a number of the topics of concern and provided the following update. As Inspector Hall had reported there had been a reduction in the size of the Neighbourhood Police team and there were also a number of vacancies for PCSOs awaiting recruitment. Currently there were two PCSOs and two PCs covering the Thame area (104 sq. miles) plus an additional PSCO based in Chinnor / Watlington.

There are a wide variety of issues to address but the team's current focus was primarily on rural crime. The anti-social behaviour around Southern Road Recreation Ground and Elms Park had received a firm response from the police and a number of convictions had taken place. This had resulted in a drop off in the number of calls reporting ASB in these areas. The Neighbourhood team was making good use of civil remedies to reduce crime around the town.

Sgt Anns reported the PSCOs had carried out parking enforcement in the town last Tuesday and issued 29 tickets. The enforcement involved a large amount of police time as vehicles had to be seen in-situ for two hours before a ticket was issued. The Neighbourhood team would look at what could be done in the longer term.

The Neighbourhood team appreciated that there was a general need for the public to see a police presence but with two PCSOs and two PCs the team was thin on the ground with plenty of work to do.

After Inspector Hall and Sgt Anns had answered a wide variety of questions, Cllr Wyse thanked them for attending the meeting and providing an update on local policing in Thame.

6 CCTV Agreement

The draft five year CCTV Agreement from South Oxfordshire District Council had been reviewed by members of the CCTV Working Group, the Town Clerk and the Community Services Manager. The group identified seven items for discussion with SODC officers as listed in the report. Under the new agreement Thame would be the first town in the district to have digital cameras installed.

During discussion Members raised a number of additional items for discussion with District Officers to better understand the system being offered. In what ways will the new system be improved? What will be the resolution and zoom capability of the new cameras? Will the cameras have the capability for 360 degree vision? Will there be the opportunity to deploy mobile CCTV cameras on a short term basis to monitor particular problems? To explore the

possibility of providing a technology review / refresh three years into the new agreement. Review the current camera positions to identify whether different sites would provide wider coverage.

RESOLVED that:

- i) Subject to further investigation, Officers being satisfied that all the points raised during discussion have been addressed and securing the best possible deal for Thame, the new five year CCTV Agreement be approved.*

7 Report from County Councillor N Carter

Cllr Carter had provided a detailed report which the Town Clerk had circulated to Councillors.

In response to the concerns raised by Mr Cannon during item 4 of the agenda Cllr Carter stated that the District Council was responsible for the cleanliness of the street and the County Council for the other matters raised.

The problem of parking was not just restricted to East Street but a common problem across the town. Cllr Carter would arrange for the gulleys in East Street to be cleaned, with regard to potholes half a dozen had been identified and were scheduled to be filled in early March. Unfortunately he could not give any real assurances about funding being available to improve the road. Cllr Carter had campaigned hard over the last five years for Park Street to be resurfaced and the work was finally scheduled to take place during the 2018/19 financial year.

Cllr Carter had not received any complaints related to speeding vehicles in East Street but he could arrange for a speed assessment to be carried out by either using handheld devices or lines across the road.

Other current highways issues on Tythrop Way and Oxford Road were raised by Councillors.

8 Reports from South Oxfordshire District Councillors

District Cllr Champken-Woods had circulated the District report for January and had nothing further to add.

District Cllr Matelot Green reported that all the District Councils in the County had agreed to go with the Growth Board, however, South and Vale were still not happy about some things despite having signed the agreement. Particularly with regard to using the SHMA (Strategic Housing Market Assessment) figures instead of the OAN (Objectively Assessed Needs) figures which were 30,000 fewer homes than the SHMA.

The SODC Local Plan was due to be submitted to the Inspector at the end of March. If the Inspector was not happy and asked for the Chalgrove site to be removed, developers were poised ready to submit an application for 6,500 new homes on the Harrington site.

The District Planning Committee continued to meet every three weeks out of four which is in part why District Councillors were loath to call-in applications unless there were very strong material considerations for doing so.

Cllr Matelot Green had met with members of the Moreton Residents Association regarding concerns related to the planning applications along Rycote Lane and also parking on the grass verges opposite the industrial area close to the Rycote Lane roundabout.

9 Members Questions (under Standing Order 11)

Cllr Dixon raised a question regarding the litter picking cycle at Southern Road Recreation Ground following a complaint she had received from a resident who had found broken glass around mid-morning on a Saturday.

The Town Clerk reported that the Maintenance Team did all they could to ensure litter was cleared and if it had been seen the team would have removed it. The Town Clerk asked that any reports of this nature are emailed to him as soon as possible to include details of the date, time and location to enable a review take place.

10 Minutes

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 16 January 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

11 Policy & Resources Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2018 were noted with one amendment.

12 Community, Leisure & Recreation Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2018 were noted.

13 Planning & Environment Committee

The minutes of the meetings held on 28 November 2017, 19 December 2017, 9 January 2018, 30 January 2018 and 20 February 2018 were noted.

14 Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee

The minutes of the meetings held on 19 December 2017 and 30 January 2018 were noted.

15 Electronic Payments

Having been agreed in principle by the Council to use electronic payments instead of cheques, the Electronic Banking Procedure detailed how the new process of electronic payments would be undertaken to ensure a proper procedure was in place to meet all audit requirements. By moving to electronic banking annual savings would be made as bank fees incurred through cheque processing would cease, cheques would not be required to be posted to suppliers and there would be no further requirement for pre-printed cheques.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The procedure for electronic payments be approved.*

16 Effectiveness of Internal Control / Financial Risk

The Town Council was responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of its internal controls and measures taken to mitigate financial risks. In reviewing the financial risks amendments had been made to financial risk assessment numbers 1 & 3 due to the introduction of electronic payments. A new financial risk assessment, Number 9 – Strategic Risk Register, has been added which outlines the risks and controls in place with regard to strategic risks the Town Council may face.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The measures taken to mitigate financial risks be approved.*
- ii) The effectiveness of internal control be approved.*

17 Internal Audit Programme

The Internal Auditor was appointed at the Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 21 April 2015 on a five year contract. Good corporate governance required the Council to review the Programme of Work annually to ensure it meets the needs of the Council.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The Annual Internal Audit Programme of Work for 2018-19 be approved.*

18 Southern Road Recreation Ground – Car Park Lighting

Members noted the update on the long term lighting solution at Southern Road Recreation Ground car park.

19 P17/S1069/FUL & P17/S1670/LB – The Elms, 32 Upper High Street

Members noted that South Oxfordshire District Council had refused planning permission for planning applications P17/S1069/FUL and P17/S1670/LB for the erection of an Extra Care housing development (Use Class C2). The Town Council had recommended refusal on both the applications when they were discussed at the Council meetings on 9 May 2017 and 20 June 2017 respectively.

The meeting concluded at 8.14pm

Signed
Chairman, 24 April 2018