

THAME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Thame Town Council held on 24 September 2013 at 7.30pm in the Upper Chamber, Thame Town Hall

Present: Cllr D Bretherton, A Dite, N Dixon, D Dodds, M Dyer, L Emery, H Fickling, A Gunn, P Lambert (Town Mayor), D Laver, J Matelot Green (Deputy Mayor) and M Welply.

Officers

H Stewart, Town Clerk

A Oughton, Committee Services Officer

L Spokes, Community Project Support Officer

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Butler (Unwell), Champken-Woods (Business), Humphries (Business), Stiles (Business), County Councillor Carter and South Oxfordshire District Councillor Midwinter.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Civic Announcements

It was noted that the Mayor had attended a significant number of events over the last four months. The Mayor went on to highlight the following fundraising events: Tea With The Old Queen on 6 October 2013 at the Thame Theatre, money raised would be donated to the Mayor's charity – Thame Players, the Rotary Swimathon on 13 October 2013 in which a team of councillors would be taking part, A Murder Mystery Night on 16 November 2013. Members were reminded that the unveiling of the Youth Memorial and the Civic Service would both take place on 29 September 2013.

4 Public Participation

There were no applications to address the Council.

5 Chinnor Rugby Football Club

John Ashfield, Jerry Austen-Smith and Jenny O'Donnell from Chinnor Rugby Football Club gave a presentation on the Club's proposed development plans. Appreciation was expressed to the Council for the financial grants received to improve disabled access and the purchase of two defibrillators.

The club was currently celebrating its 50th anniversary having formed in Chinnor in 1963 and then relocated to Thame in 1987. The club is RFU accredited and run entirely by volunteers. Over recent years the membership has grown rapidly putting the existing facilities under pressure.

Subject to planning permission the club has plans to improve the entrance and accessibility, install a lift, make improvements to the kitchen and increase the function room space. Alongside this provide two new changing rooms and a 200 seat covered grandstand with storage facility underneath. The whole project is estimated at £650k but would be split into phases, the first of which will cost £450k with a target completion date of 2015 to coincide with the Rugby World Cup taking place in Great Britain. Funding would be sought from internal fundraising, corporate

sponsorship, the RFU, Sports England and community funds from district and town councils.

The next step was to apply for planning permission and draw up a business plan. The club would be inviting the council to take part in consultations and be involved in the process.

6 Report from County Councillor N Carter

County Councillor Carter had given his apologies – there was nothing to report.

7 Reports from South Oxfordshire District Councillors

Cllr Dodds reported there would be a new advertising campaign to encourage people to recycle following an increase in the amount of waste collected from black bins.

Cllrs Bretherton and Welply reported on the work of the Governance Review Panel which was looking at town and parish boundaries and the number of councillors that served on each council. This review had not taken place before and was a cause of discussion in some areas of the district.

Cllr Welply invited the Chair of Planning and Environment and any other interested councillors to attend a training session on planning being held on 3 October 2013.

8 Police Report

Sgt Hookham from Thames Valley Police gave a report to Council. Concern was raised about cyclists riding without lights and not paying attention to other road users. Sgt Hookham reported that an awareness campaign was planned to tackle these problems which were more apparent at this time of the year as the evenings closed in.

The problem of the public having access to a counter service in the town was raised. Sgt Hookham confirmed that the public counter in the police station would remain open after the station had been redeveloped. The base on the industrial estate was a hub out of which the police operated but would not have any public access. It had been noted that since operations had begun at the new hub there had been an increase in police vehicles driving through the centre of town at speed to attend emergencies. Sgt Hookham agreed that there were two obvious routes from the industrial estate one of which was through the town and he would report back to see if the route through the town centre could be kept to a minimum.

A swabbing operation in the public houses in the town over the last six months had led to a fall in the usage of illegal drugs. However, this seems to have had the effect of pushing the problem into the parks and public spaces around the town. Sgt Hookham asked people to be vigilant and report any suspicious activity to the police.

‘Boy racers’ continued to drive through the town centre creating an issue with safety and noise from exhausts and music systems. The police were aware of the sites in town where these vehicles congregated and would issue tickets appropriately.

9 Notices of Motion

Proposed by Cllr Dyer – Amendment to Standing Orders

“Any Councillor arriving after a meeting has started is not deemed present until the next agenda item, and may neither speak nor vote on the matter being debated when he/she arrived”

This motion was deferred to the Annual General meeting.

10 Questions

No questions were raised.

11 Minutes

RESOLVED that:

- i) The minutes of the meetings held on 18 June 2013 and 20 August 2013 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Mayor.*

12 Policy & Resources Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2013 were noted.

13 Culture, Leisure & Recreation Committee

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

Item 8 – Burial Space

RESOLVED that:

- i) The expenditure of up to £1150 for further site investigation work to be funded from the Capital Revenue Budget be approved.*
- ii) The expenditure for a change of use planning application up to £200 to be funded from the Capital Revenue Budget be approved.*

Item 18 – Service of Remembrance

Deferred for discussion under item 20.

14 Planning & Environment Committee

The minutes of the meetings held on 2 July 2013, 23 July 2013, 13 August 2013 and 3 September 2013 were noted.

15 2013 Pay Award

The national agreement for a one percent pay rise was noted. The increase would be back dated to 1 April 2013 and an allowance in the budget had been made.

16 Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) Nominated Representative

A council representative was sought for the newly formed Oxfordshire South and Vale Citizens Advice Bureau.

RESOLVED that:

- i) Cllr Welply be nominated as the representative on the Oxfordshire South and Vale Citizens Advice Bureau.*

17 Chalgrove Road

Following the decision to give consideration to the sale a small piece of amenity land to the resident at 10 Chalgrove Road the sale of the land had been advertised, planning permission had been obtained and a land valuation carried out.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The sale of the plot of land measuring 109.6m² to the rear of 10 Chalgrove Road, subject to the restrictions listed in the report being included in the covenant of sale be approved.***
- ii) The proceeds from the sale be invested in the improvement of another area of Lea Park be approved.***

18 Swimming Pool

The swimming pool was a joint venture between the town, district and county council. Due to some aspects of the Joint User Agreement not being resolved and a significant lack of procedure as to how repairs and maintenance were ordered, priced, signed off and paid for led to a protracted and difficult situation regarding the payment of invoices.

It was felt that whilst it was not the way the Council would normally conduct business the prospect of a legal challenge for nonpayment was more of a risk than withholding the balance of payments due.

RESOLVED that:

- i) £86,922 be paid to the County Council to meet the balance of payments due on the invoices from 2004 to 31 March 2009 be approved.***

19 Town Hall Refurbishment

Following discussion it was agreed that the Town Hall building was in a poor state of repair and a full refurbishment should be undertaken and funded by a Public Works Loan.

RESOLVED that:

- i) An application for borrowing approval for a loan to the value of £190,250 from the PWLB over a period of 25 years for the full refurbishment works as detailed in the report be approved.***

20 Service of Remembrance

It was agreed that councillors would assemble outside the town hall and process to the Memorial Garden for the Service of Remembrance on 10 November 2013.

The meeting concluded at 8.56pm

Signed.....
Chairman, 17 December 2013