

THAME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Thame Town Council held on 18 December 2012 at 7.30pm in the Upper Chamber, Thame Town Hall

Present: Cllr D W Bretherton, D W Dodds, M L Dyer, H M Fickling, A Gunn, V F Humphries, P Lambert (Deputy Mayor), D A Laver, J Matelot Green, M Stiles and M Welply.

Non Voting

None

Officers

Mrs H Stewart, Town Clerk

Mrs A Oughton, Committee Services Officer

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs D G Butler (Medical), N G Champken-Woods (Other Interest), M Ciortan (Other Interest), N M Dixon (Personal), County Cllr N Carter and District Cllr A Midwinter.

2 Declarations of Interest

Cllr D W Dodds declared an interest in Agenda Item 12, Civil Parking Enforcement and left the room during this item. Also Agenda Item 15, Neighbourhood Plan, whilst Cllr D W Dodds did not take part in any discussion he remained in the room at the request of the Chairman.

3 Civic Announcements

The Christmas Event had been a great success and the Deputy Mayor thanked the staff and everyone involved for their hard work. The Senior Citizens Tea Party had been a very enjoyable event and thanks were expressed to councillors and staff for their help.

4 Public Participation

There were no applications to address the Council.

5 Report from Oxfordshire County Council

Cllr N Carter had a meeting at County Hall and sent his apologies. There was nothing significant to add to the report given to Council on 27 November 2012.

6 Report from South Oxfordshire District Council

Cllr M Welply reported on a successful, intelligence based, drug operation in Thame. The Internal Audit Committee at SODC was now offering internal audit services to local town and parish councils.

Cllr D W Bretherton reported that he and Cllr A Midwinter had met with the Chief Executive of the District Council, the subjects discussed would be covered later in the agenda.

7 Notices of Motion

There were no notices of motion.

8 Questions

Cllr D W Bretherton tabled the following question:

‘Can the Mayor confirm that the criteria for eligibility to apply for co-option as a councillor is the same as that for eligibility to stand as a candidate for an election. And not as oversimplified in the Thame Gazette last week?’ ‘Could he also confirm that applicants for co-option will need to declare their eligibility in a similar way to election candidates?’

It was thought that eligibility to apply for co-option was not the same as that for a candidate who wished to stand for election although it would be good practice to apply such criteria. Clarification would be sought and if not automatically applicable a motion to that effect would be put before Council at the next meeting.

9 Minutes

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 27 November 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Deputy Mayor.

Minute No. 17 – should read Resolved: *‘i) That the Town Hall Turret Clock mechanism, pendulum weight bar and weights are donated to the Thame Museum’.*

10 The minutes of the **Planning and Environment Committee** held on 4 December 2012 were noted.

11 Committee Membership

Cllr V F Humphries agreed to sit on the Culture, Leisure and Recreation Committee.

12 Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE)

Concerns were raised about parking issues in the town around the abuse of parking on yellow lines and restricted areas. This problem had slowly increased due to the lack of enforcement by the police, PCSOs and no traffic warden. Sensible enforcement rather than rigid enforcement should be imposed. The management of the Upper High Street and Lower High Street car parks was good and council car park attendants ensured time limits were enforced.

It was agreed a letter would be sent to the SODC cabinet minister for Thame explaining the concerns about parking issues within the town and seek his support moving forward.

13 External Audit

Regulations had been revised during the year for the procedures of certification, approval and publication of accounting statements. Instead of a review of the effectiveness of internal control being considered by any council committee it had to be considered by the full council. During 2011-12 the review of was not timetabled for Full Council until 3 April 2012 and consequently the Council has received a Qualified Audit.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the report of the External Auditor is accepted by the Council*

14 Precept

An update was received on the Local Council Tax Support Scheme being implemented by Government and the significant changes that would result. Billing and major precepting authorities would receive less income for any given level of council tax that was set. To avoid this Government had allocated central funding which would broadly provide 90% of the shortfall.

Members noted that it would be important when setting the precept to plan for the grant not to continue indefinitely and the possibility that the Secretary of State may introduce capping from 2014-15.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the Council would meet on 15 January 2013 to set the precept.*

15 Neighbourhood Plan

A letter had been sent to SODC in November requesting that the £20,000 Front Runner grant be passed on to the Town Council. To date no written response had been received.

It was agreed to wait until the New Year and if a suitable response had not been received to then invite the Chief Executive to meet with the Council.

16 Exclusion of the Public

RESOLVED: i) Pursuant to Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 it is resolved that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during consideration of Agenda Item 17.

17 Neighbourhood Plan

Discussion took place regarding the contract terms and conditions for Tibbald's Planning and Urban Design. Whilst the Council felt the Neighbourhood Plan process had been very intense and fast moving, Tibbald's felt it had taken longer than expected and had incurred additional costs as a result. It was agreed that any request for additional funding would be fully investigated before a decision on payment was made.

The meeting concluded at 8.57pm

Signed
Chairman, 15 January 2013