

THAME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Thame Town Council held on 22 January 2019 at 6.30pm in the Upper Chamber, Thame Town Hall

Present: Cllrs D Bretherton, N Champken-Woods, P Cowell, N Dixon, D Dodds, M Dyer, L Emery (Deputy Mayor), H Fickling, P Lambert, A Midwinter (Town Mayor), M Stiles and T Wyse.

Officers

G Hunt, Town Clerk

A Oughton, Committee Services Officer

A The Town Mayor thanked the Town Clerk on behalf of the Council for the tremendous job he had done in the lead up to Christmas and into the New Year during what was a period of difficult personal circumstances.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Austin (Personal), Deacock (Business) and Jones (Holiday). Cllr Butler absent, no apology received.

2 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Cllr Midwinter declared an interest in item 6 as Thame Youth Projects was one of the Mayor's chosen charities for this civic year and item 9 as a Trustee of Thame Museum.

Cllr Emery declared an interest in item 6 as a member of Thame Youth Projects and item 9 as the Council's External Representative for Thame Museum.

Cllr Dyer declared an interest in item 9 as a member of Thame Museum and item 10 as the Council's External Representative for Thame Football Partnership.

The Town Clerk further declared there was a general dispensation for the whole Council to allow discussion and setting of the Precept. There was also a dispensation in place for External Organisation representatives. There was also a dispensation in place to allow all members involved with Thame Museum to discuss item 9.

3 Public Participation and Public Questions

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

4 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 13 November 2018 and 18 December 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

5 Budget and Precept for 2019-2020

It was a legal requirement for the Town Council to set the Precept based on approval of the Budget for 2019-2020. The Town Clerk presented the report which gave detail on the process of how the proposed Budget and Precept had been reached.

The 2019-2020 Revenue Budget had been prepared by the Budget Working Group through an iterative process. The draft budget was circulated to Councillors and a press release published

on 19 November 2018. A Budget drop-in session was held on 4 December 2018 for members of the public to comment.

Cllr Bretherton commented that the Budget Working Group had met several times, the budget had been through exhaustive analysis and had been subjected to a robust public consultation. The only item that had changed since December was the additional funds to provide a screen at the Remembrance Service.

Members commented that given the work and projects undertaken it was a remarkable achievement that for the financial year 2019-20 the underlying precept increase for normally provided projects, functions and services is 1.44% (without the impact of the devolved services from Oxfordshire County Council / South Oxfordshire District Council).

It was noted that for the fourth year running, the Town Council would also primarily call on its Capital Reserves for capital projects, rather than funding through the precept. This reduced level of capital funding for the precept could not be sustained for much longer.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The 2019-2020 budget be approved.***
- ii) £726,939 be raised for the precept for 2019-20.***

Cllr Fickling entered the meeting during discussion of this item.

6 Thame Youth Projects Group

At the Full Council meeting held on 13 November 2018 the Town Council agreed in principle to the long term funding of a Youth Outreach Worker subject to more detailed information being received. Thame Youth Projects Group had now provided further detail in the form of a Youth Worker Vision, a Job Description and Person Specification.

Members were agreed it was important to provide the security of long term funding for the role. The provision of a Youth Worker was much needed providing help and advice for the young people of Thame and a link between young people and key stakeholder groups. It was also important, once a Youth Worker had been appointed, for the Town Council to hold further discussions with Thame Youth Projects Group on the potential to expand / reprovise the changing room facilities at Southern Road Recreation Ground.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The allocation of 3 x £15,000 (from the 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21 budgets) to Thame Youth Projects Group for use toward the long term funding of youth outreach work in Thame be approved.***
- ii) Further discussions with Thame Youth Projects Group take place on the potential expansion / reprovise of the Changing Room facilities within Southern Road Recreation Ground, including the use of specifically allocated s106 funds***

7 Splash Pad Project Proposal

Following discussion at the Community, Leisure & Recreation Committee on Tuesday 23 October 2018, the Committee recommended that 'The Council considered supporting the Splash Pad Project proposal subject to funding being sought'. At the Council meeting on 13 November

2018, it was resolved that the Splash Pad Project proposal be supported and that further detailed funding proposals would be brought to a future meeting of the Council for consideration.

Members considered the report which provided further background on the funding proposals. It was agreed the installation of a Splash Pad at Southern Road Recreation Ground was a good idea, providing a free facility for all ages to enjoy. However, further investigations were needed as to what infrastructure would be needed to support the Splash Pad, the impact on the Maintenance Team's time at what was already a busy time of year and the exact costs that will be covered by SMS Environmental Ltd.

RESOLVED that:

- i) ***The allocation of up to £60,000 from the Capital Receipts Reserve towards the Splash Pad project at Southern Road Recreation Ground be approved, subject to further detailed feasibility / operational analysis.***

8 Matchstick Model of the Town Hall

The Town Council had been offered the opportunity to purchase a matchstick model of Thame Town Hall made by a former resident of the town. Members appreciated the dedication and time taken to produce such a detailed model but felt it was not appropriate to purchase the model. A proposal was put forward to purchase the model and duly seconded but after being put to the vote the proposal fell.

9 Thame Museum Lease Extension

A request had been received from Thame Museum Trust to extend the lease which currently had 14 years remaining. Extending the lease would help the Trust in seeking funding for an extension to the Museum building.

RESOLVED that:

- i) ***The Town Council enter into discussions with Thame Museum with regard to an extension and relevant update to their lease, at a cost of around £1,000 in legal charges.***

10 Thame Football Partnership / Artificial Pitch

The Thame Sports Facility Strategy defined a need for an additional artificial pitch in Thame and suggested three potential locations: Lord Williams's School (who already had such a facility and no room for a further pitch), Chinnor Rugby Football Club (for whom this was not currently a priority and have alternative ideas) and Meadow View Park.

Thame Football Partnership (TFP) were keen to progress the installation of an artificial pitch at Meadow View Park and the Town Council had already given permission to TFP to submit the relevant planning application and agreed the merging of s106 funding from three related projects to maximise the funding opportunity.

It was agreed that the Town Council support TFP in its ambitions for a new full size artificial pitch as part of continued improved infrastructure provision for Thame.

RESOLVED that:

- i) ***Meadow View Park is the correct location for the Artificial Pitch.***

- ii) Officers, likely to be the Town Clerk and the Community Services Manager, do what is required to enable the success of the project (while minimising time spent and restricting total project spend to under £10,000).*
- iii) A working group is created, similar to the Cricket Club Clubhouse Redevelopment Working Group, with similar authorities. That Cllr Cowell be nominated as a further Councillor to serve on the working group along with Cllrs Bretherton and Dyer. (Terms of Reference to be agreed at a future meeting).*
- iv) Any required lease changes that may be required by the funders and / or Oxfordshire County Council as freeholders be agreed (subject to scrutiny by the Working Group).*
- v) A new partnership / working together agreement is defined, based on that with the Cricket Club, making it clear what TFP is responsible for and what the Town Council is responsible for. (For agreement at a future meeting / or by the proposed Working Group).*
- vi) All resolutions will be in line with the content / context of the tabled report.*

11 Chinnor RFC Loan

It was noted that Chinnor RFC had given notice to draw down the final £35,000 in line with the agreed loan agreement and that the final portion of the loan had commenced on 14 January 2019.

12 Annual Town Meeting Plan

Discussion took place on the structure and content of the Annual Town Meeting to be held on Tuesday 26 March 2019. Following the Town Clerk's email on 3 January 2019 various suggestions for topics were made, as well as an appeal to better control meeting timings.

Given the variety of current local and broader issues potentially affecting the civic parish, the Town Clerk suggested that no specific topic / theme be used this time, to maximise the time for open forum / public questions.

It was agreed that this approach be adopted, with advance publicity of the meeting along with potential areas of discussion and encouragement to attend.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The Annual Town Meeting on Tuesday 26 March 2019 will have no specific topic or theme to allow maximum time for open forum / public questions.*
- ii) The Town Mayor will chair a formal panel, made up of the Town Clerk, the four Chairs of Committees, a District Councillor and a County Councillor to provide answers to the questions raised.*

13 Publicity for 2019 Elections

Members considered the proposal that one or more Councillors are nominated to take the lead on preparing and executing a publicity campaign to encourage members of the public to stand in the May 2019 Town and Parish elections.

RESOLVED that:

- i) Cllrs Bretherton and Dixon be nominated to take the lead on preparing and executing a publicity campaign to encourage members of the public to stand in the Town Council Elections on 2 May 2019.***

14 Thame Cricket Pavilion – Collateral Warranties

RESOLVED that:

- i) The sealing of the collateral warranties for the Thame Cricket Pavilion be approved.***

The meeting concluded at 7.41pm

Signed
Chairman, 26 February 2019