

THAME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee of Thame Town Council held on 26 March 2013 at 6.30pm In the Upper Chamber, Thame Town Hall.

Present: Cllrs D W Bretherton, N G Champken-Woods (Town Mayor), D W Dodds, M L Dyer (Chairman), L Emery, H M Fickling, V F Humphries, Peter Lambert (Deputy Mayor), J Matelot Green and M Welply

Non Voting

Cllrs A Dite, D Laver

Officers

Mrs H Stewart, Town Clerk

Mrs C Pinnells, Community Services Manager

Mrs M Robinson, Office Administration Manager

Mrs A Oughton, Committee Services Officer

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Butler (Personal) and Gunn (Personal).

2 Declarations of Interest

Cllrs Bretherton and Dyer declared an interest in item 14 Youth Memorial as Trustees and Secretary and past Chair respectively of the Thame Youth Memorial Trust. Both Councillors left the meeting during discussion of this item.

3 Public Participation

Peter Butt, Chairman of the Thame Youth Memorial Trust, addressed the meeting with regard to item 14 The Youth Memorial. Peter reported the last year had been torturous for the families involved in drawing up the final design for the Memorial Garden. An application for funding from the Lottery had been unsuccessful. However, £2000 had been raised in the last few months with more fund raising events planned together with a large number of grant applications being considered.

Ideally the Trust would like to start works in June/July 2013; however, there is a £14,000 shortfall in the money raised to date. The company supplying the benches at a cost of £5000 was prepared to have the payment deferred until funds were available and a grant of £2000 from SODC was expected shortly. This brought the shortfall down to £7000 and Peter Butt requested that the Council consider underwriting this sum to allow work to commence in June, but that the Trust would continue to raise funds to meet all costs.

Standing Orders were suspended as Members agreed that the order of the agenda should be changed so that this matter could be considered next.

4 Youth Memorial

A timeline for the project was presented to Councillors, the proposed start date of June/July took into consideration the better weather and a built in contingency of 3-4 weeks ensured that the project would be completed before the September Fair and Remembrance Parade.

Members agreed that this was a project well worth supporting and recognised the huge amount of money that had already been raised by volunteers within the community.

The risk of the funding not being raised by the Trust to cover the full cost of the project was considered to be minimal and therefore underwriting the shortfall as demonstrated within the cash flow summary presented should be recommended to Full Council for approval.

RECOMMENDATION TO FULL COUNCIL:

- i) That the shortfall of £6,746 of funding for the Youth Memorial be underwritten by means of a short term loan to the Youth Memorial Trust, to enable the project to commence in June/July 2013.**

5 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting, held on 22 January 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6 Budget/Finance Summary

Members received and noted the budget summary up to 28 February 2013. The full accounts were available at the meeting.

Cllr Laver arrived during this item.

7 Service Priorities

Members received and noted the progress made on the service priorities. New priorities would arise from the Neighbourhood Plan.

8 Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies

- a) Citizens Advice Bureau – Cllr Lambert advised that no meeting had taken place and there was nothing to report.
- b) Thame Museum Trust – Cllr Laver reported the Museum had received the new accreditation and this was good news as it showed the Museum was following the correct guidelines and providing a good service. The accounts were on track although budgeting was proving a challenge with a reduction in visitor numbers on last year. There was a continuing need to find new sources of funding.
- c) Barns Centre – Cllr Matelot Green reported the Barns Centre had bookings every weekend from May – September. Staff were fund raising to purchase a screen and projector for the main hall.
- d) 21st Century Thame – Cllr Fickling reported that support had been given to the recent tourism week with guided walks and an event at The Thatch. Unfortunately the bad weather had meant numbers were less than expected. The equipment pool was going well and the web portal was available for organisations in Thame to enter their details providing a link direct to the organisation’s website. The official launch date was to be confirmed.

9 Scheme of Administration

The Scheme of Administration provides all the documentation that allows the Council to work legally and efficiently. The scheme of delegation provided the terms of reference for the Proper Officer, Nominated Senior Officers and Standing Committees of the Council to act with delegated authority in specific circumstances.

Members approved of the scheme subject to an amendment to paragraph 7.3 to read: "Cheques for petty cash up to £300 can be signed by any two of the following – Chairman, Deputy Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee, Cllr Butler, Cllr Champken-Woods.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the Scheme of Delegation attached to the report be approved subject to the amendment to paragraph 7.3.***

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL:

- i) That the Scheme of Delegation as amended be adopted.***

10 Members' Allowances

Although the Council had agreed some years ago that Members could claim an allowance for expenses arising from their council duties the terms and conditions had not actually been written into a policy document until now.

RESOLVED:

- i) That Member's Allowances Policy be adopted.***

11 Mayor's Allowance

It was important for the Mayor to represent Thame at formal events and attendance should not be curtailed through lack of funds. The level of allowance was last reviewed in 2005. In the past couple of years some Mayors had found that the allocated budget did not cover their expenditure.

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL:

- i) That the Mayor's Allowance be increased to £2,000.***
- ii) That the budget for the Civic Reception be increased to £750.***

12 Internal Audit

Members had reviewed the Internal Audit Interim Report for 2012-13 and there were no major issues arising.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the Internal Audit Interim Report for 2012-2013 be approved with no actions arising.***

13 Treasury Management Policy

By Members agreeing that the Reserve Funds and Precept (as received) could be invested as recommended in the report it was estimated that Interest Income on specifically invested funds would amount to approximately £3,130 p.a. as against the current £1,300 p.a. thus maximising interest at minimum risk.

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL:

- i) That semi-permanent balances in the Council's bank accounts be placed in a constructive mix of Fixed Term Corporate Bonds (FTCBs) as detailed in the report to maximize interest at minimal risk.***

14 Chalgrove Road

The Chairman read a statement from Mr. Scholey of 10 Chalgrove Road about why he considered the land he was wishing to purchase from the Council was surplus to the Council's requirements. Some councillors were more familiar than others with the piece of land being considered so it was agreed that all Councillors of this Committee would make a site visit and the matter would be referred to the next Full Council for a decision.

15 CCTV

The Officer reported that since writing the report an invoice had been received from the district council for less than the estimated budget figure supplied in November. This item was therefore withdrawn.

16 IT Software

Members agreed that it was important that the correct and most appropriate resources should be available for staff to meet the objectives of the Council. Whilst upgrading the software package consideration was also needed to ensure that the hard ware would be able to cope with the upgrade.

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL:

- i) That the purchase of the Adobe Creative Suite 6 Design Standard software at a cost of £1228 be met from the General Fund.***

17 Complaints and Compliments

Members noted the report.

The meeting concluded at 7.43pm

Signed

Chairman,