

THAME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 17 September 2013 at 6.30pm in the Upper Chamber, Thame Town Hall.

Present: Cllrs D W Bretherton (Vice Chairman), D G Butler, N G Champken-Woods, M L Dyer (Chairman), L Emery, H M Fickling, A Gunn, V Humphries, P Lambert (Town Mayor) and J Matelot Green (Deputy Mayor)

Officers

H Stewart, Town Clerk
A Oughton, Committee Services Officer
C Pinnells, Community Services Manager
M Robinson, Office Administration Manager
L Spokes, Community Project Support Officer

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Welply (Business). Absent with no apologies Cllr Dodds.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Public Participation

There were no applications to address the Committee.

4 Investment Portfolio

Rupert Baron and Andrew Hess from Rathbone Investment Management gave an overview of the Council's investment portfolio. Following the mandate from Members, for capital growth with low to medium risk an 8.2% growth had been achieved. Rupert Baron suggested the Council consider investing more on the equity side giving a little more risk but offering a greater potential for growth. The fifty-fifty split of investments would remain the same and the advice was to err on the side of caution when investing public money.

The Chairman thanked Rupert and Andrew for their presentation and Rathbone's continued good management of the Council's investments.

5 Street Pastors

The presentation by the Street Pastors was deferred until the next Committee meeting.

6 Minutes

The minutes of the committee meeting held on 11 June 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

7 Grants

The level of grant funding to be awarded to the Street Pastors was deferred until the

Committee had received a presentation on the work of the organisation.

8 Budget Summary

Members received the budget summary up to 31 July 2013. A full set of the accounts were available to view at the meeting.

9 Reports from Outside Bodies

- a) Citizens Advice Bureau – Cllr Lambert – nothing to report.
- b) Thame Museum Trust – Cllr Emery – nothing to report.
- c) Thame Barns Centre – Cllrs Butler and Matelot Green reported that the Barns Centre continued to do well. The Christmas Party would be held on 14 December 2013.
- d) 21st Century Thame – Cllr Fickling reported that the projects in place were doing well or nearing completion. The equipment bank required volunteers to book equipment in and out. Peter Woodman had met with the Town Clerk to discuss possible future partnership projects. Cllr Bretherton had withdrawn from the committee but would not be replaced at this time.

10 Investment Strategy

It was agreed the Investment Strategy met current needs and should remain in place for the next year.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The Investment Strategy for the next twelve months be approved.*

11 Depreciation of Fixed Assets

It was agreed that the Policy on the Depreciation of Fixed Assets met the current needs.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The Policy for Depreciation of Fixed Assets be approved.*

12 Fees and Charges

The hiring fees for the Town Hall and Southern Road Recreation Ground (SRRG) were reviewed on an annual basis. Current charges for similar facilities within the town and locally had been taken into consideration. In setting the two tier charging level at SRRG it was hoped to encourage local clubs to use the facilities.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The increase of the hiring charge for the Upper Chamber to £27 and £14 per hour be approved.*

- ii) The increase of the hiring charge for SRRG football pitch to £32 and £35 for adults (inclusive of VAT) per game be approved.***

13 Saturday Surgeries

A detailed log recording the number of visitors who had attended Saturday surgeries in the past 17 months showed that out of the total issues raised a very small number were Town Council related. It was proposed that Saturday surgeries would stop in their current form and a pre-booked appointment system be implemented.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The monthly Saturday Councillor Surgery in its current format be discontinued and replaced with an appointment system.***

14 Swimming Pool

The item was deferred to Full Council.

15 SODC Electoral Review

Views were being sought on the current polling arrangements in the town. The Committee agreed that whilst the polling station at John Hampden school was not ideal, in that the school had to close on polling day, there was no suitable alternative to cover that particular area.

It was agreed that SODC would be informed of the views of the Committee.

16 Guide Building

The annual inspection report of the Guide Building was noted with no further action required.

17 Church Meadow (Cricket Ground) Boundary

A detailed report accompanied by photographs described the dilemma over the boundary line between Bell Close and the cricket ground. Attempts had been made to take the ditch into Council ownership but these had been contested by the owner of 2 Bell Close. To pursue this matter would involve a protracted and costly legal battle. Taking all factors into consideration Members were advised that the Council should establish a definite boundary on the cricket ground side of the ditch and have this registered at Land Registry for future reference.

RESOLVED that:

- i) A boundary be established on the cricket side of the ditch between Church Meadow and Bell Close and registered with the Land Registry.***
- ii) An agreement, proposed by 4 Bell Close, be signed with the property owners abutting this boundary.***

18 External Electricity Points

The terms and conditions for the hire of the external electricity points at the Town Hall were presented for approval.

RESOLVED that:

- j) That the terms and conditions be approved.***

19 Thame and District Housing Association

After discussing the options of having representation on the Management Committee of the Thame and District Housing Association it was agreed that having Cllr Butler report on the business rather than have no feedback at all.

RESOLVED that:

- j) Cllr Butler act as the representative of the Town Council on the Thame and District Housing Association Management Committee.***

20 Christmas Working Arrangements

The Christmas working arrangements were noted.

21 Compliments and Complaints

The summary sheet had been changed to include verbal compliments and complaints. The report showed that compliments far outweighed the complaints and the Town Council should be proud of what it does. There had been a number of complaints about the speed of the public access computers in the Information Centre. Action would be taken to resolve this problem.

22 For Information

It was noted that Action for Market Towns had awarded a Commendation to the Council in recognition of the Thame Neighbourhood Plan.

The meeting concluded at 8pm

Signed
Chairman, 10 December 2013