

THAME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 11 June 2013 at 7.30pm in the Upper Chamber, Thame Town Hall.

Present: Cllrs D W Bretherton (Vice Chairman), N G Champken-Woods, David Dodds, M L Dyer (Chairman), L Emery, H M Fickling, A Gunn, V Humphries 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

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Butler (Personal), Lambert (Council Business), Laver (Personal) and M Welply (Holiday).

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Public Participation

There were no applications to address the Committee.

4 Minutes

The Minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 26 March 2013 and 14 May 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5 Budget / Finance Summary

Members received the budget summary up to 30 April 2013. A question was raised regarding expenditure on 304 Thame Football Partnership – showing a budget estimate of 22.5% staff recharges. Question was raised regarding 115 Car Park – budget estimate on expenditure did not match budget estimate on income. The Clerk would investigate both questions and report back to the Committee.

6 Work Programme

The current Service Priorities did not recognise the true staff work load and with more than 76 live projects resources were being spread too thinly resulting in some projects not reaching completion. The proposed work programme set out a maximum of five projects in the red zone indicating top priority. Projects in the orange zone would move into the red once a priority project had been completed.

Members agreed that this was a good way to manage the work load and the Work Programme would be tabled in this format for future meetings.

7 Verbal Reports from Town Council Representatives on Outside Bodies

- a) Citizens Advice Bureau – Cllr Lambert – nothing to report.
- b) Thame Museum Trust – Cllr Emery – nothing to report until after the AGM on 22 June 2013.
- c) Thame Barns Centre – Cllr Matelot Green – the Barns Centre continued to do well and had bookings every Saturday for the remainder of the year. A quiz night will be held on 21 June 2013 to raise money towards the purchase of a defibrillator.
- d) 21st Century Thame – Cllr Fickling – no new projects, the Barns Centre had received a grant for improvements. Loyalty Card scheme is going well. The equipment bank was a great asset to community groups in Thame and storage for equipment had been increased to two containers. Cllr Gunn had been tasked to organise a display to publicise the equipment bank at the Rugby Club.

8 Museum

Members received the Trustees Report and Accounts for 2012-13. Cllr Dodds reported that the Museum continued to flourish. One major problem was that the Museum could not open all year round due to the heating system not being fit for purpose. This resulted in the Museum closing on weekdays during January and February 2013 and the likelihood of closure completely during the first two months of 2014.

9 Publication Scheme

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 required town and parish councils to have a Publication Scheme. Members agreed that an increase in information on the website would result in the reduction of staffing hours used to process Freedom of Information requests.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the revised Publication Scheme be adopted.*

10 Scout Building

The findings of the annual inspection were noted. A question was raised regarding the gap between the building and the garage which required a physical barrier to be installed to stop anti-social behaviour. This was the responsibility of the Scouts and they would be asked to complete this aspect of the planning conditions.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the actions in the report be implemented by the responsible organisation.*

11 Banner Policy

The Banner Policy had been amended to reflect the responsibility that lay with the organisation that applied to hang a banner across the High Street. After discussion it was

agreed that wording used in the Sponsorship Policy regarding organisations deemed unsuitable for sponsorship would be applied to the banner policy.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the Banner Policy be adopted subject to the addition of a sentence determining what would be unacceptable.***

12 New Server

The current Server that supported the Council's infrastructure needed to be replaced.

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL:

- i) That a new server be purchased through the Capital Rolling Fund at a cost of £10,770.***

13 Parking Administration

The present management of the two car parks was efficient but the equipment used to record information was antiquated. The introduction of new electronic ticketing machine would greatly reduce the number of disputed Excess Charge Tickets.

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL:

- i) That the hardware and software for a new parking administration system be purchased through the Car Parking Budget at a cost of £6220.***
- ii) That an annual contract be agreed with Chipside.***

14 Grant Awards

The Budget Group, made up of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chairs of the Committees had met to discuss the applications received. Members agreed with the recommendations made.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the grant recommendations be awarded in accordance with the attached scheduled and under the powers identified.***

15 Market Traders Rent

Discussion took place on the annual increase which had previously mirrored the percentage increase in the Precept. This year the increase had been exceptional due to circumstances outside of the Town Council's control.

Members agreed that it was unrealistic to expect the Market Traders to pay the total increase and that the increase for 2013-14 should be equivalent to the increase in the Town Council's element of the precept.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the market rent increase for 2013-14 should be limited to the equivalent increase in the Town Council's element of the precept.*

16 Community Governance Review – South Oxfordshire District Council

Following governance reviews at County and District levels, the Town Council had been asked to consider any changes to local governance. Suggestions were discussed with support being given to one ward in the Town but retaining the existing number of 16 councillors.

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL:

- i) That Thame consist of one ward represented by 16 councillors.*

17 Insurance

Members noted the summary schedule of items covered by the insurance policy.

18 For Information:

- a) CCTV – Members noted the report.

The Meeting concluded at 8.28pm

Signed
Chairman, 17 September 2013