

Full Council

Date:	21 January 2020
Title:	Annual Town Meeting
Contact Officer:	Jayne Cole, Town Clerk

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide background for the discussion on the structure and content of the Annual Town Meeting on Tuesday 26 March 2019.

Background

2. Various suggestions for topics have been made previously, as well as an appeal to better control meeting timings and potentially restrict discussion to topics that the Town Council have control over.
3. The meeting is a meeting of the electorate, not the Town Council, and at the meeting, the electorate are entitled to raise any question on any public matter, although normally only on topics relating to the parish.
4. The agenda is normally:
 - a) Minutes from previous year (mandatory)
 - b) Community presentation of some sort (often to help increase attendance)
 - c) Town Mayor's report (as it provides a convenient opportunity)
 - d) Open Forum – Questions from Electors (the main purpose of the meeting)
5. Last year's meeting covered the following matters:
 - Cattle Market
 - Green Living Plan
 - Parking issues and enforcement
 - Condition of pavements along southern side of the High Street
 - Flooding at the turning circle at Lord Williams Upper School
 - Visibility issues for vehicles turning onto at Wenham Road
 - Request for hedge planting at St Mary's cemetery
 - The provision of burial spaces in Thame
6. Town Clerk is suggesting that the Town Council consider including the opportunity at the Annual Meeting of the Town for the community to vote on which projects it wishes to support for funding from the community element of CIL¹

This would allow those wishing to receive funding to make a 5 minute Dragons Den like presentation and those present would have the opportunity to vote².
7. If this approach is adopted it would also require:
 - a) Effective advanced publicity on potential projects and presentations, and this may increase the numbers of residents attending.

¹ The Town Clerk is in the process of finalising the CIL Allocation Policy ready for adoption.

² This process is known as Participatory Budgeting

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- b) The Mayor to introduce the presenters and ensure that they keep within the 5 minute time limit with Officer assistance.
 - c) PA system set up
 - d) A method of voting; the simplest being by ballot or ping pong balls in clear tubes which creates an additional entertaining and interactive element.
8. Managing the questions at the next Annual Town Meeting
- a) To continue to use a formal panel – made up of the Mayor (who has to Chair if present), the Chairman of each Town Council Committee, a District Councillor, a County Councillor and the Town Clerk – to provide answers to each question raised, or a commitment to take them away for further investigation and provide a later response.
 - b) Any publicity to include continued information on the different areas of responsibility of the different tiers of local government (as shown in our [web-site infographic](#)):

Proposal

9. To introduce a Participatory Budgeting element to the Annual Town Meeting and to continue to use a formal panel to manage the questions at future Annual Meetings.

Resource Appraisal

12. The Town Council is sufficiently resourced to provide whatever is required to support the Annual Town Meeting.

Risk Assessment

- 13. By introducing a competitive community element there is a risk that it may increase the numbers of those wishing to attend. This may be mitigated door entrance management, the arrangement of seating in the chamber and compliance with our health and safety obligations.**

Legal Powers

14. Local Government Act 1972 sch 12 para 7 (1)
15. Localism Act 2011 s1
16. Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 and as amended 2019