

## THAME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Community, Leisure & Recreation Committee held on 11 February 2020 at 6.30pm in the Upper Chamber, Thame Town Hall.

**Present:** Cllrs D Bretherton, N Champken-Woods (Chairman), P Cowell (Deputy Mayor), A Dite, M Deacock, M Dyer, K Gregory, A Midwinter (Town Mayor) and T Wyse

**Non-Voting**

Cllr Francis

**Officers**

J Cole, Town Clerk

C Pinnells, Community Services Manager

A Oughton, Asset Manager

L Fuller, Committee Services Officer

### 1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence received from Cllrs Jones (Business) and Tipping (Unwell).

### 2 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations.

### 3 Public Participation and Public Questions

There were no applications to address the Committee.

There were no questions put to the Committee.

### 4 Lord Williams's School Update

Mr Jon Ryder, Head Teacher at Lord Williams's School, thanked the Town Council for the opportunity to present an update on their plans to expand both the Lower School (Towersey Road) and Upper School (Oxford Road) sites.

The school recognises the town is expanding and is committed to serving the community of Thame and of the school, which extends beyond Thame to neighbouring villages. From September 2022, at the request of and in agreement with Oxfordshire County Council, the school will increase to 12-form entry starting from Year 7 who will reach the Upper School site in September 2025. There is significant S106 money which the local authority have collected to spend on the school's expansion which will require careful management to ensure it is able to provide for expansion on both the upper and lower school sites. Mr Ryder reported that exciting plans were coming soon and the Town Council will be involved in this during the planning consultation process.

Mr Ryder then moved on to the school's longer-term vision for next 15 years to improve existing building stock, and to provide a new performing arts centre, replace the technology block to offer better computer facilities and improve the sports facilities. It is difficult for the school to build up reserves and therefore the school are hoping to launch a major fundraising campaign to assist in delivering a new performing arts centre. This would enhance student's learning in drama, dance and music on the Upper School site, whilst also providing a great resource for the whole community to use.

Mr Ryder hoped that a fundraising board would be set up and the Town Council would be involved in this over a period of 4-5 years, as well as the community. The school would be seeking advice and connections / contacts from the Town Council, and a meeting in around three months may be held to help facilitate the initial stages of collecting ideas and influencing the plans. Mr Ryder advised that there was a long way to go and at this stage the main focus was on gathering expressions of interest.

Cllr Champken-Woods thanked Mr Ryder for his presentation and update.

*Cllr Deacock entered the meeting during this item.*

## **5 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 October 2019 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

## **6 Budget Summary**

Members received the Budget Summary up to 5 February 2020.

## **7 Reports from Representatives on External Organisations**

The report was noted.

Cllr Champken-Woods added that Sinaia, like the UK, had also recently experienced stormy weather, with blizzards and strong winds that resulted in 50 trees falling in the town. Cllr Midwinter also added that during the Sinaia visit to Thame, she was presented with two books which have since been deposited at Thame Library who will be running a mini-exhibition.

## **8 Thame Football Partnership / Artificial Pitch**

The report was noted. The Town Clerk reported that a meeting had been held with Thame Football Partnership (TFP), the Football Foundation (FF) and the Football Association (FA). The grant application was now being submitted, and the Town Clerk sought authorisation for the final funding letter to be presented to the FF in order for the application to proceed to determination.

There had only been a two-week window for the Town Council to get their questions answered which had been challenging. The Town Clerk reported that the responses to the questions had been received earlier in the day, which confirmed that the FF conform to the EU Procurement Regulations which the Town Council must abide by. It was also confirmed that the Town Council will have to forward-fund the VAT as the FF discount this and would not be able to make any exceptions. Therefore the Town Council will be seeking to recover and reclaim the VAT as soon as possible, hopefully on a monthly rather than quarterly basis.

The project will be complete within a sixteen-week period, meaning that there will be some significant invoices to pay given the cost of the project and the short timescale.

The Town Clerk will be meeting with the S106 Officer tomorrow to discuss the possibility of forward-funding the S106 money (approximately £300,000), to avoid similar delays experienced with the Cricket Club Redevelopment in reclaiming the money and to allow the Town Council to manage its finances better. The Town Clerk has also established that the grant will not be repaid in a lump sum, but the Town Council have to apply for a percentage share each time and the turnaround on this has been confirmed as two weeks.

Members raised concerns about the potential difficulties in reclaiming the VAT and S106 monies and the impact on Officer workloads. The Town Clerk reassured Members that all money due to the Town Council would be reclaimed / recovered as soon as possible, and that a project brief with delegated tasks for the Town Council's Officer Management Team had been prepared and agreed.

### **RESOLVED that:**

- i) Following the Town Clerk's meeting with the SODC S106 Officer on Wednesday 12 February 2020, a final funding offer letter be presented to the Football Foundation in order to for the application to proceed to determination.**

## **9 Cricket Club Clubhouse Redevelopment**

The Town Clerk reported that the Town Council was due to receive the S106 money and will be meeting with South Oxfordshire District Council's S106 Officer tomorrow to discuss any remaining S106 monies due to the Town Council. The building had been signed off which means the Town Council can now put the application in to recover the second half of the £125,000 grant. Various snagging issues had caused the delay in getting the building signed off.

#### **10 Joint TTC / SODC Fundraiser**

The report was noted. The Joint Fundraiser on Friday 8 May would include crazy golf, a bouncy castle and an RBL Poppy Appeal stall, as well as a Nations Toast to the Heroes of WW2 at 3pm. The Community Services Manager is providing operational support in event planning, and various community groups have agreed to assist on the day.

#### **11 VE Day Celebration 2020**

The report on plans to celebrate VE Day 2020 was noted. In addition to the Joint TTC / SODC Fundraising event on Bank Holiday Friday (8 May) there would be a Tea Dance on Sunday 10 May featuring the Bob Cutting Big Band, with associated operational actions being progressed by the Community Services Manager. The Memorial Gardens will be planted with a bespoke bedding design in time for the celebrations in May. The Memorial Bench kindly donated by Thame Remembers has been delivered and will be installed in April. Cllr Bretherton added that he had been to see the bench and it looked very impressive.

#### **12 Farmers Market**

It was noted that the Farmers Market in January successfully took place on Montesson Square with traders hoping to permanently relocate there. The Community Services Manager added that due to poor weather, there had only been two stalls at the Farmers Market earlier in the day. It was concerning that the number of trading stalls remained low, but it appears other local Town Councils were experiencing the same. The Community Services Manager continues to promote the Farmers Market via social media.

#### **13 South Pole Play Area**

The report was noted. The large Rotator Bowl at South Pole Play Area, Southern Road, was identified as being in poor condition in the RoSPA Report (October 2019). It is proposed that the Rotator Bowl is replaced with an inclusive roundabout which conforms to the Disability Discrimination Act. Members supported the idea, however a concern was raised about the deterioration of Elms Park Play Area which was in much need of investment. The appeal at The Elms had delayed and complicated the improvements at Elms Park, and it was suggested that the Town Council should progress the idea of self-funding the repairs rather than waiting on S106 funding.

#### **RESOLVED that:**

- i) The replacement of the Rotator Bowl with an inclusive roundabout at a cost of £6,418.00, funded from Community Infrastructure Funds, be approved.**

#### **14 Thame Town Guide Review 2019 / Production 2020**

The report and the intention to repeat the in-house production of the Town Guide were noted. Cllr Midwinter thanked the Market Town Co-Ordinator and Committee Services Officer for all their hard work in bringing the production of the Town Guide in house last year.

#### **15 Christmas Event Feedback 2019 / Date for 2020**

The report was noted. Cllr Midwinter thanked those Councillors who helped at the event and all the Town Council Staff who worked hard in making the event happen. The Community Services Manager

highlighted that a poll had been held on social media and through the newsletters to identify whether residents and businesses would prefer the event to be held on Friday 27 November (269 votes) or Friday 4 December 2020 (369 votes). It was suggested in future years, the event should be held on the Friday closest to the 1 December, rather than the first Friday in December. The committee felt the 4 December was the preferred date in line with the views of the community.

**RESOLVED that:**

- i) Thame's Christmas Light Switch-On event be held on Friday 4 December 2020.**

**16 Memorial Gardens**

The report was noted. The Asset Manager explained that the silt level in the Memorial Ponds was just below the waterline and required the ponds to be drained and then cleaned. This would present an opportunity for the brickwork to be assessed and to repair the Pearce Memorial Fountain, which can only be done when the ponds are drained. The fish would be stored in an enclosed container at the Memorial Gardens during the works. It was suggested that some form of netting is laid over the ponds in future to limit silt build up from leaves.

**RESOLVED that:**

- i) The refurbishment of the Memorial Ponds and Pearce Memorial Fountain, funded from the rolling Capital Reserves, be approved.**

**17 Cuttle Brook Management Plan**

The report and the draft Cuttle Brook Management Plan were noted. A concern was raised that the Management Plan did not include the planting of new trees. The Asset Manager explained that trees which were suffering from disease, such as ash dieback, would be replaced however the Cuttle Brook Conservation Volunteers felt the reserve had sufficient trees at present.

The Asset Manager added that a wider town tree survey was being planned which would identify other potential sites for tree planting.

**RESOLVED that:**

- i) The Cuttle Brook Local Nature Reserve Management Plan 2020-2024 be adopted.**

**18 Maintenance Report**

The report was noted.

The meeting concluded at 7.23pm

Signed .....  
Chairman, 7 April 2020