

Full Council

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| Title: | Annual Town Meeting |
| Meeting Date: | 18 January 2022 |
| Contact Officer: | Mandy Sturdy, Town Clerk Lizzie Fuller, Committee Services Officer |

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 22 March 2022.

Background

2. The last Annual Town Meeting took place in 2019, which had an open forum but no other theme / presentation. Both the 2020 and 2021 meetings were cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions.
3. 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.
4. 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.

The Agenda

5. The agenda is normally:
 - a) Minutes from previous year (mandatory)
 - b) Town Mayor's report (as it provides a convenient opportunity)
 - c) Community presentation of some sort (often to help increase attendance)
 - d) Open Forum – Questions from Electors (the main purpose of the meeting)

Proposal

6. Officers have considered how previous meetings have been managed and suggest the following for the 2022 meeting:

- Start the meeting at 7pm (rather than 7:30pm)
- Suggested timings for the meeting (which would be advertised in advance to keep timings on track):

7:00pm: Minutes from previous meeting & Town Mayor's Report
7:10pm: Presentation from Thame Green Living
7:30pm: Questions relating to Thame Green Living presentation
7:40pm: Presentation from Thame Youth Projects
8:00pm: Questions relating to Thame Youth Projects presentation
8:10pm: Open forum / questions from Electors
8:30pm (approx.): Meeting close.

- Copies of the new Thame Town Guide will be available, which has a 'Green' theme.
- Display boards be positioned around the room to showcase relevant projects, such as the Thame Outer Circuit.

Managing questions at the Annual Town Meeting

7. 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.
8. Any publicity to include continued information on the different areas of responsibility of the different tiers of local government (as shown in our [website infographic](#)).

Resource Appraisal

9. The Town Council is sufficiently resourced to provide whatever is required to support the Annual Town Meeting.
10. Officer time to arrange a community presentation and facilitate the open forum.

Risk Assessment

11. The meeting must be held in accordance with any Covid-19 national guidance and the Town Council's Covid Risk Assessment. However, it is anticipated that the guidance will enable the Annual Town Meeting to take place this year. The following measures will be taken, and advertised in advance of the meeting:
 - Encouraging attendees to bring their own water bottles / flasks as refreshments will not be served.
 - Displaying the agenda on the projector rather than printing 80 copies (although a handful will be printed).
 - Providing the option to submit questions in advance if people do not feel comfortable attending, or are unable to due to Covid isolation.
12. If Covid guidance changes, it may be necessary to limit the numbers attending and provide additional safety measures such as facemasks, hand sanitisers and ventilation.
13. Review of emergency evacuation procedure in advance of meeting.

Legal Powers

- Local Government Act 1972 Sch 12 para 7 (1)
- Localism Act 2011 s1

Recommendation:

- i) The Annual Town Meeting on Tuesday 22 March 2022 start at 7pm.**
- ii) In addition to the signing of the previous meeting's minutes and the Town Mayor's report, the agenda include timed presentations from Thame Green Living and Thame Youth Projects followed by an open forum.**