

THATCHAM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of a meeting of the
Finance and General Purposes Committee
held on Monday 23rd January 2023 at 7pm
in the Council Chamber, Brownsfield Road, Thatcham

Present: Councillor Mike Cole (Chairman)
 Councillors Jeff Brooks, Lourdes Cottam, Richard Crumly, Lee Dillon,
 Richard Foster, Owen Jeffery, Mark Lillycrop (substituting for Councillor J
 Cottam) and David Lister

In attendance: Trudy Blackney (Deputy Town Clerk)
 Mireille Willan (Finance Manager)

FGP/2023/001 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
 An apology for absence was received from Councillor Jeremy Cottam
 (Councillor Lillycrop appointed as substitute).

FGP/2023/002 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
 Councillor Crumly declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9
 War Memorial Insurance Grant (FGP/2023/009) as a Trustee of
 Thatcham Memorial Foundation.
 Councillor Cole advised that he was a Trustee of the Thatcham Memorial
 Foundation, however, was appointed as Town Council representative and
 that Vice Chairman, Councillor Dillon, would chair the relevant agenda
 item.

FGP/2023/003 MINUTES
RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on the 24th October 2022 and 12th
 December 2022 having been previously circulated, be taken as read,
 confirmed, and signed as an accurate record.

FGP/2023/004 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING
 There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

FGP/2023/005 BUDGET REVIEW 2022/23
a) Members reviewed the projected budget report for the whole Council
 budget for the current financial year, with arising questions answered
 by the Chairman and Finance Manager.
b) Members noted a report on Reserves and CIL/s106 funds held.

FGP/2023/006 BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2023/24
a) Members reviewed a draft budget and precept for the financial year
 2023/24, which had been prepared taking into consideration feedback
 arising from a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes
 Committee on 12th December 2022.

The draft proposed an 8.75% inflationary increase to the Band D tax-
 base (tax base 2023/24 = 9261.1), at £95.60 per annum (2023/24),
 providing a proposed precept of £885,361.
RESOLVED that the draft budget and precept be recommended to Full Council for
 adoption.

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- FGP/2023/006 BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2023/24 continued**
- b)** Members considered the following proposed movements of Reserves:
- i. £24,221.72 from EMR347 Henwick Worthy to EMR312 General Fund Working Balance.
 - ii. £3,000 from EMR359 World War Events to EMR312 General Fund Working.
- RESOLVED** that the proposed movements of Reserves be recommended to Full Council.
- c)** Members considered service charges for the financial year 2023/24, prepared in line with the proposed draft budget considered in item 6(a) above.
- RESOLVED** to approve the increases in service charges for the financial year 2023/24, as presented (appendix I).
- d)** Members considered a recommendation from Officers to increase the current allotment maintenance deposit from £20 to £60 per plot, to reflect contractors' fees for remedial works [when required] to relinquished allotment plots more accurately. Average costs to clear the plot for re-letting were £60.00 depending on condition. Maintenance deposits were withheld from a tenant if a plot required remedial work prior to re-letting, following relinquishment or tenancy termination.
- RESOLVED** to increase the maintenance deposit per allotment plot from £20 to £60 with effect from the financial year 2023/24.
- FGP/2023/007 PURCHASE OF PUBLIC ADDRESS (PA) EQUIPMENT**
- Members considered a request from the Events Manager for authority to purchase the following equipment, to enhance the Town Council's portable PA system, following issues which had arisen at recent events.
- i. Microphone: £59.00 (plus mic clip, cable for microphone and storage bag.
 - ii. Additional speaker: £127.20
 - iii. Basic stand for the speaker: £43.00
 - iv. Leads to allow speaker High Quality Twin RCA To Twin RCA Leads 6m: £9.99.
- Total £239.19**
- RESOLVED** to refer this item to the Events Committee to consider if the proposed equipment was sufficient for the Town Council's requirements, following liaison with Councillor Pike who had expertise in this field, and to delegate authority to the Events Committee to approve expenditure of up to £500.00 to purchase appropriate equipment.
- FGP/2023/008 THATCHAM YOUTH – ROLLER DISCO**
- Notification had been received from Thatcham Youth that its monthly Roller Disco closed, its current format, at the end of 2022, following the closure of its skate provider.
- It was agreed to request that Thatcham Youth provide a financial breakdown of costs associated with the roller disco, and how the funding would re-appropriated, when presenting their annual report.

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FGP/2023/009 WAR MEMORIAL INSURANCE GRANT

Having declared an interest, Councillor Crumly left the Chamber

With the Chairman having declared an interest, Councillor Dillon took the Chair to enable Councillor Cole to speak as the Council's representative on Thatcham Memorial Foundation.

Members received an update from Councillor Cole regarding the request from Thatcham Memorial Foundation for reimbursement of £777 for recharge of the War Memorial Insurance for the year 2022/23, an increase of £450 from the previous year. Originally considered at the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on the 24th October 2022, Thatcham Town Council had requested evidence and quote comparisons to ensure due diligence had been conducted. The Town Council had been providing a grant to Thatcham Memorial Foundation for the cost of insuring the war memorial since <2011. Members noted the insurance of the memorial was very specialist and Councillor Cole had satisfied himself, through research, that the request from the Committee for more quotes was unattainable and that the quote was reasonable.

RESOLVED to approve reimbursement of the cost for the current insurance year and to review alongside the Town Council estate to compare the cost of insuring the Millennium Monument and whether alternative insurance options were available.

Councillor Cole was reinstated as Chair and Councillor Crumly re-joined the meeting

FGP/2023/010 FINANCIALS

i. Members received proposed BACS payments due from the Imprest account.

RESOLVED to approve the proposed BACS payments (appendix II).

ii. Members noted details of pre-authorised payments from the Imprest Account, Soldo pre-paid debit card and Clerk's Account during the period 1st October 2022 to 31st December 2022 (appendix III).

iii. Members noted bank reconciliations (appendix IV).

RESOLVED to temporarily exclude press and public to enable questions on the Aged Creditor and Debtors reports, which were not for publication, to be discussed.

iv. Members noted an Aged Creditor report.

v. Members noted an Aged Debtor report.

RESOLVED to invite press and public to re-join the meeting.

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FGP/2023/011 REPORTS FROM TOWN COUNCIL APPOINTEES

The following verbal reports were noted:

Greenham and Crookham Commons Commission

Councillor Foster reported that at the last meeting the commission had discussed a Fun Run on Christmas Day.

**FGP/2023/012 RECOMMENDATION FROM THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
WORKING PARTY**

Committee considered a recommendation from the Community Engagement Working Party regarding commissioning of a new Town Guide.

RESOLVED to support commissioning of a new Town Guide and to delegate authority to the Community Engagement Working Party to progress, with final content agreed by Council and to enquire what a 'feature article' for the Town Council would provide.

**FGP/2023/013 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC
RESOLVED**

that, in view of the commercially sensitive nature of the business to be transacted, it was advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they were instructed to withdraw.

**FGP/2023/014 RECOMMENDATION FROM THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
WORKING PARTY**

Committee considered a recommendation from the Community Engagement Working Party regarding an opportunity for a new website.

RESOLVED to support the proposal to commission a new website, as per the Town Clerk's report and to delegate authority to the Community Engagement Working Party to progress, with final content agreed by Council.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.43pm.

Signed _____ Date _____