

THATCHAM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of a meeting of
Thatcham Town Council
held on Monday 30th January 2023 at 7pm
in the Council Chamber, Brownsfield Road, Thatcham

Present: Councillor Jeff Brooks (Mayor)
 Councillors Steve Ardagh-Walter, John Boyd, Mike Cole, Jeremy Cottam,
 Richard Crumly, Lee Dillon, Paul Field, Richard Foster, Owen Jeffery,
 Mark Lillycrop, Simon Pike, Christine Rice and Keith Woodhams

In attendance: Mel Taylor (Town Clerk)
 2 members of public
 1 member of the press (Newbury Weekly News)

FULL/2023/01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lourdes Cottam, Ellen Crumly and David Lister.

FULL/2023/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

FULL/2023/03 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No public questions had been received.

FULL/2023/04 MINUTES

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting held on 28th November 2022, having been previously circulated, be signed as a correct record of the proceedings.

FULL/2023/05 REPORTS FROM MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR

a) Mayor's Report

The Mayor reported that during the period 29th November 2022 to date he had attended events, including; presentation of recognition awards to volunteers, several festive services and concerts, including; Community Hospital League of Friends, St Mary's Church, Sing Louder Choir, Thames Valley Police Thanksgiving Service, Santa Fun Run, Two Saints lunch, Royal British Legion AGM, Newbury Town Council Civic Carol Service, St Finian's Christmas Fair, Thatcham Library coffee morning, Cold Ash Brass Christmas concert, also, 12th of the 12th Remembrance Service at Greenham Control Tower, Holocaust Memorial Day at West Berkshire Council, a tour of West Berkshire Therapy Centre, Volunteer Centre West Berkshire's Volunteer's recruitment event, wassailing at the Nature Discovery Centre, Thatcham Cancer Support Group's 4th birthday celebration and KATS' 'Dick Whittington' show rehearsal.
 As well as the Town Council's French Market, 'Warming Up For Christmas' event and hosted the Civic Carol Service.

b) Deputy Mayor's Report

The Deputy Mayor reported that during the period 29th November 2022 to date he had attended; Kennet School winter concert, Santa Fun Run, Elf the Musical at Kennet School, and various festive events.

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FULL/2023/06 BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2023/24

- a) Members considered a draft budget for the financial year 2023/24, recommended to Council by the Finance and General Purposes Committee following its meeting on 23rd January 2023.
 The draft budget 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.
 Councillor Ardagh-Walter urged Council to consider including a voluntary contribution towards Thatcham Library for the year 2023/24.
 Members recorded thanks to Councillor Cole and Officers for preparation of the draft budget.

RESOLVED (i) to adopt the draft budget as presented, and (ii) that a precept of £885,361 be issued in accordance with the requirements of Section 150 (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to meet the expenditure as set out in the budget.

- b) Members considered the following re-allocation of Reserves, recommended to Council by the Finance and General Purposes Committee following its meeting on 23rd January 2023:

- 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 to approve re-allocation of Reserves, as set out above.

FULL/2023/07 APPROVAL AND ADOPTION OF COMMITTEE MINUTES

The following Committee Minutes were presented for adoption:

RESOLVED a) Recreation and Amenities Committee Minutes dated 19th December 2022. to adopt the Minutes.

RESOLVED b) Finance and General Purposes Committee Minutes dated 12th December 2022 and 23rd January 2023. to adopt the Minutes.

RESOLVED c) Planning and Highways Committee Minutes dated 13th December 2022 and 10th January 2023. to adopt the Minutes.

RESOLVED d) Town Centre Committee Minutes dated 16th January 2023. to adopt the Minutes.

RESOLVED e) Events Committee Minutes dated 5th December 2022. to adopt the Minutes.

FULL/2023/08 ROYAL MAIL POSTAL DELIVERY SERVICE ACROSS THATCHAM

Members considered engaging with Royal Mail to raise concern at the severe lack of deliveries currently being experienced with the Royal Mail postal delivery service across Thatcham, and its impact on residents and businesses. Councillor Jeffery advised that, following publication of a letter in the Newbury Weekly News, several residents had contacted him expressing the same issues. Councillor Ardagh-Walter advised that Laura Farris MP was due to meet with Royal Mail regarding the issues.

RESOLVED that a letter be sent to Royal Mail, from Councillors Dillon and Jeffery, requesting reinstatement of a proper delivery service.

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FULL/2023/09 COMMUNITY AWARDS PANEL

Members considered appointment of Councillors to join the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on the Community Awards Panel, scheduled to meet on Wednesday 15th March 2023 to agree the Community Awards 2023. Categories for Community Awards this year were: Community Contributor, Environmental Champion and Inspiring Young Person.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillors Boyd, Cole and J Cottam, along with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, to the Community Awards Panel 2023.

FULL/2023/10 WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL DRAFT COUNCIL STRATEGY 2023 - 2027

Councillor Field left the meeting during this item

On 13th January 2023 West Berkshire Council opened a consultation on its draft Council Strategy 2023 – 2027. Members considered a draft response prepared by Councillor Pike.

Members felt that the timing of the Strategy should have been after the impending election in May 2023.

RESOLVED to approve Councillor's Pike draft response to the consultation as presented and to submit to West Berkshire Council (appendix I).

FULL/2023/11 REPORTS

(a) Reports from Thatcham Town Councillors and West Berkshire District Councillors on Council Surgeries

The next Council Surgery was scheduled for Saturday 4th February, 10am in The Broadway, to be conducted by Councillors L Cottam and Field. Councillor R Crumly offered to substitute if needed.

Councillor Woodhams expressed concern at recurring reports of highways issues, such as white-lining, unstable signage, pot holes and overgrown shrubbery.

RESOLVED to refer Councillor Woodhams' concerns to the Planning and Highways Committee, requesting that it monitors outstanding highways issues reported to West Berkshire Council.

(b) Reports from West Berkshire District Councillors

The following reports from West Berkshire District Councillors were noted:

Councillor Ardagh-Walter reported that West Berkshire Council's 'Report A Problem' service had been updated and urged Councillors to use as an efficient and effective means of reporting issues. It was suggested that paper forms be made available for Council Surgeries. Councillor Cottam reported that there were ongoing issues with emptying of dog bins.

Councillor Dillon encouraged residents to engage with the Local Plan Review consultation, that proposes development of 'approximately 1,500' houses in the town during the Plan period. The consultation was open until 3rd March 2023.

Councillor Jeffery reported that today he had attended the first meeting of a task group established to identify and liaise with developers regarding the health requirements of the community. Councillor Jeffery had also been appointed as West Berkshire Council representative on Berkshire Maestros.

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FULL/2023/11 REPORTS continued

(c) Reports by Town Council Appointees to Outside Bodies

The following report from Town Council Appointees to outside bodies was noted:

Councillor Cole advised there was nothing new to report from **Thatcham Parochial Charities**, and that **Thatcham Relief in Need Charity** continued to award modest grants for essential items, such as curtains, carpets and furniture.

FULL/2023/12 EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

It was noted that an extraordinary meeting of Full Council had been scheduled for Tuesday 28th February 2023, 7pm in the Council Chamber, to consider the Town Council's response to the Local Plan Review Regulation 19 consultation.

There being no further business the Mayor declared the meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____