

THATCHAM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of a meeting of the
Finance and General Purposes Committee
held on Monday 22nd January 2024 at 19:00hrs
in the Council Chamber, Brownsfield Road, Thattham

Present: Councillor Mike Cole (Chairman)
 Councillors John Boyd, Jeremy Cottam, Iain Cottingham, Owen Jeffery,
 Mark Lillycrop, Jay Lunn, Tom McCann and Justin Pemberton

In attendance: Mel Taylor (Town Clerk) and Miri Willan (Finance Manager)

FGP/2024/01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
 There were no apologies for absence.

FGP/2024/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
 Councillor Cole declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item number 7ii (FGP/2024/07ii) as Director of the KATS production that was the subject of the grant funding application.

Councillor Cottingham declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item number 6 (FGP/2023/06) as Chair of Thattham Town Cricket Club.

FGP/2024/03 MINUTES
RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 30th October 2023, having been previously circulated, be taken as read, confirmed, and signed as an accurate record.

FGP/2024/04 WATER PIPE SPUR REPAIR
 Following approval at the last meeting for an unbudgeted repair recharge from Thattham Memorial Foundation for a damaged water pipe spur that supplies water to the Council Offices and Cricket Club (FGP/2023/55), Committee considered responses to the questions raised.
 Members were pleased that the Foundation was looking into insurance, but were concerned that insurance wasn't currently in place. It was felt that the response relating to the cause of the damage to the pipe was inconclusive.

RESOLVED (i) to request that the Foundation undertake an assessment of potential future issues with the pipes and flow, particularly in light of the impending heavy goods traffic flow during construction of flood alleviation works, and to request that Ardent Consulting Engineers were aware of the location of the pipes and ensure appropriate safeguarding measures were in place.
 (ii) to liaise with the Council's Solicitor [Gardner Leader] regarding a legal agreement relating to responsibilities and recharges, and an easement with regard to the water pipeline.

FGP/2024/05 BUDGET REVIEW 2023/24
 a) Members reviewed a report for the whole Council budget for the period April to December 2023, and questions were answered by the Town Clerk/RFO and Finance Manager.

b) Members noted a report on Reserves and CIL/s106 funds held.

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- FGP/2024/06** **THATCHAM TOWN CRICKET CLUB RENT REVIEW**
 It was noted that the routine rent review relating to the lease between Thatcham Town Council and Thatcham Town Cricket Club for the Browns Field site, was due January 2024.
 Councillor Cottingham advised that in Sport England's response to West Berkshire Council's planning application for flood alleviation works at the site, they had referred to an extension to the lease.
- RESOLVED** to defer the rent review, pending potential lease renegotiations resulting from construction of flood alleviation works on the Browns Field site; to refer the comments of Sport England relating to the lease to Full Council; and to consider registering the Browns Field site as an Asset of Community Value.
- FGP/2024/07** **COMMUNITY PROJECT FUND**
 Committee considered the following applications for funding from the Community Project Fund:
- i. Newbury and Thatcham Repair Café**
 £250 for start-up costs for 2024.
- RESOLVED** to award a grant of £250 from the Community Project Fund, to be processed through an existing application on The Good Exchange, thereby benefiting from the Council's matched funding agreement with Greenham Trust.
- Having declared an interest in the following application, Councillor Cole relinquished the chair to Vice Chairman, Councillor McCann*
- ii. Kennet Amateur Theatrical Society (KATS)**
 £240 to hire a professional props package for a production of Fiddler On The Roof in February 2024.
- RESOLVED** to award a grant of £240 from the Community Project Fund.
- Councillor Cole resumed the chair*
- FGP/2024/08** **DRAFT BUDGET 2024/25**
- a)** Committee reviewed a draft budget and reserves report for the financial year 2024/25.
- RESOLVED** to support the draft budget 2024/25 as presented, and to recommend to Full Council for adoption when it meets on 29th January 2024.
- b)** Committee considered service charges for the year 2024/25.
- RESOLVED** to approve the recommended service charges, as presented (appendix I).
- c)** Committee retrospectively approved allotments rents for the calendar year 2024, approved by the Chairman in accordance with Standing Order 4.5, due to time constraints (appendix II).
- FGP/2024/09** **FINANCIALS**
- i.** Committee received proposed BACS payments due from the current account.
- RESOLVED** to approve the proposed BACS payments (appendix III).
- ii.** Committee noted details of pre-authorised payments from the current account, Soldo pre-paid debit card and Clerk's account during the period 1st October 2023 to 31st December 2023 (appendix IV).

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FGP/2024/09 FINANCIALS continued

- iii. Committee retrospectively approved payments made from the current account on 19th December 2023, and supported approval of the payments by the Town Clerk and Finance Manager in accordance with Financial Regulation 5.5a, due to the extended period between relevant meetings to approve payments (previous report, for R&A, was produced on 5th December for a meeting on 11th December, due to the Christmas break) resulting in an interim payment run to avoid late payment charges (appendix V).
- iv. Committee noted the bank reconciliation (appendix VI).
- v. Committee noted an Aged Creditor report.
- vi. Committee noted an Aged Debtor report.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 20:34hrs.

Signed _____ Date _____