

THATCHAM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of a meeting of
Thattham Town Council
held on Monday 27th November 2023 at 19.00hrs
in the Council Chamber, Brownsfield Road, Thattham

Present: Councillor Mark Lillycrop (Mayor)
 Councillors Suzanne Adamantos, Jeff Brooks, John Boyd, Mike Cole,
 Jeremy Cottam, Iain Cottingham, Lee Dillon, Owen Jeffery, Tom McCann,
 Justin Pemberton, Petra Pemberton, Simon Pike, Christine Rice,
 Ben Schiffer-Harte, Stephanie Steevenson and Val Watts

In attendance: Mel Taylor (Town Clerk)
 Steve Ardagh-Walter, West Berkshire Draughtbusters
 Karen Reeve, West Berkshire Action for Refugees
 2 members of the public

FULL/2023/94 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Jay Lunn.

FULL/2023/95 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Schiffer-Harte declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item number 8c (FULL/2023/101c) as a key co-ordinator of Thattham 10k Run.

FULL/2023/96 WEST BERKSHIRE ACTION FOR REFUGEES

Karen Reeve, lead coordinator/volunteer with West Berkshire Action for Refugees, provided an update on the asylum seekers currently/formerly residing at the Regency Park Hotel. Over the course of their stay, the hotel had housed asylum seekers from 24 countries, speaking 14 different languages. During their stay, over 50 had been volunteering locally. All residents had recently received letters advising of the closure of the hotel and that they were to be relocated, mostly likely to either the Bibby Stockholm barge at Portland, Dorset or to Napier Barracks in Folkstone. Some had already been relocated, approximately 100 remained at the hotel. Following an appeal, over 300 suitcases had been donated. During their time at the hotel, 35 to 40 asylum seekers had received 'leave to remain' approval. West Berkshire Action for Refugees continued to support them, along with Thattham Baptist and Glendale Churches. Most were now working and had found homes in the community.

Councillors thanked Karen and WBAR for their efforts and Karen left the meeting

FULL/2023/97 WEST BERKSHIRE DRAUGHTBUSTERS

Steve Ardagh-Walter, a founder of West Berkshire Draughtbusters, gave a presentation on the purpose of the group and provided an overview of achievements to date. Draftbusters were aiming to raise awareness locally and seek more volunteers to get involved.

Councillors thanked Steve for his presentation and he left the meeting

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FULL/2023/98 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A local resident highlighted their concern regarding; dog bins not being emptied often enough, there being too many e-scooters, and charity callers. After establishing that the dog bins concerned were bins owned by West Berkshire Council, Councillors advised the resident to report to West Berkshire Council. The unauthorised use of E-Scooters was on the Police radar, and concerns regarding charity callers should be reported to the Public Protection Partnership, who can provide door stickers.

The resident left the meeting

**FULL/2023/99 MINUTES
RESOLVED**

that the Minutes of the meeting held on 25th September 2023, having been previously circulated, be signed as a correct record of the proceedings.

FULL/2023/100 REPORTS FROM MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR

a) Mayor's Report

Councillor Lillycrop reported that since the last meeting he had attended events including; an interview on Kennet Radio to promote Thatcham Festival, Macmillan Coffee Morning in Bucklebury, Berkshire Vision's AGM,

A-Plan Insurance's rebranding as Howden Insurance, the opening of Total Health at Henwick, an historic visit to the former Newbury Library/Prezzo site ahead of its transformation into an arts centre, Newbury College's Expo event, celebrated National Booksellers' Day with Newbury Bookshelf at Thatcham market, presented medals for Thatcham Tornados, made sausages and milked a cardboard goat with PALS (one of his chosen charities), the opening of Thatcham Pharmacy, drew a rugby raffle at Sa-Zim in the High Street, Greenham Trust awards evening, Kennet School fireworks, WI coffee morning, Volunteer Centre West Berkshire's Services Day, Newbury Pride's Drag Bingo and presented badges to 5th Kennet Vale Rainbows. Councillor Lillycrop also represented the Town Council at the funeral of local stalwart, Joyce Lovelock and attended Thatcham Royal British Legion's Armistice Day Service.

During October, the Mayor attended many events during the Town Council's annual Thatcham Festival, and was proud to lead the Remembrance Day Parade in November.

b) Deputy Mayor's Report

Councillor Adamantos reported that since the last meeting she had attended several events, including; Judicial Service in Reading, launch of Newbury Toy Appeal and Transgender Day of Remembrance. As well as several events during the Town Council's Thatcham Festival and the Remembrance Parade.

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FULL/2023/101 APPROVAL AND ADOPTION OF COMMITTEE MINUTES

The following Committee Minutes were presented for adoption:

a) Finance and General Purposes Committee minutes dated 30th October 2023.

RESOLVED to adopt the Minutes.

b) Planning and Highways Committee Minutes dated 17th October 2023 and 14th November 2023.

RESOLVED to adopt the Minutes.

c) Events Committee Minutes dated 6th November 2023.

RESOLVED to adopt the Minutes.

d) Staff Committee Minutes dated 9th November 2023.

RESOLVED to adopt the Minutes.

FULL/2023/102 DRAFT TREASURY MANAGEMENT PLAN

Council reviewed a draft Treasury Management Plan and considered a recommendation from the Finance and General Purposes Committee, arising from its meeting on 30th October 2023 (FGP/2023/054), that it be adopted.

RESOLVED to adopt the Treasury Management Plan, as presented.

FULL/2023/103 CONCLUSION OF EXTERNAL AUDIT 2022/23

Council noted the following statement from the External Auditor's Report for the year ended 31st March 2023: 'on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.'

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP 26th September 2023

Notice of conclusion of audit was published on 29th September 2023.

FULL/2023/104 PROPOSED NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Council considered the following motion from Councillor Pike:

"This Council resolves to request the Town Clerk to apply to West Berkshire Council for designation of the Parish of Thatcham as a Neighbourhood Area."

RESOLVED unanimously, to support the motion and to instruct the Town Clerk to action accordingly.

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FULL/2023/105 GRANT APPLICATION – GREENHAM CONTROL TOWER

Council considered a request from Greenham Control Tower for funding towards its '5 years and moving forward with purpose' application on The Good Exchange.

RESOLVED to award a grant of £250 which was eligible for matched funding under the Town Council's agreement with Greenham Trust.

FULL/2023/106 ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

Council received notification that West Berkshire Council was carrying out a review of Polling Places and Polling Districts within West Berkshire and proposed to introduce two constituencies; Newbury County Constituency and Reading West and Mid Berkshire County Constituency, as recommended by The Boundary Commission for England. No amendments to the Thatcham polling arrangements were proposed. The review also provided opportunity for any elector or interested party to make representations on the current arrangements for voting.

RESOLVED to request that West Berkshire Council establishes a polling station south of the river to accommodate voters in the Thatcham Colthrop and Crookham Ward, and that Councillors may feed comments on accessibility to the Town Clerk for inclusion in the Council's response.

FULL/2023/107 REPORTS

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

Council noted a report from Councillors McCann and Steevenson who were present at Council Surgery in The Broadway on Saturday 7th October 2023 and Councillors Adamantos and Steevenson who were present at Council Surgery in The Broadway on Saturday 4th November 2023.

b) Reports from West Berkshire District Councillors

The following reports from West Berkshire District Councillors were noted:

Councillor Dillon reported that from a projected £8.3m overspend, £5m of savings had been found. A further £14m of savings were proposed for the next financial year (2024/25), of which £7.5m had been found from internal efficiencies, with £1.1m - £1.3m directly impacting services which were out for public consultation until 11th January 2024.

Members' Bids' were due to be decided the following day, the available funding was oversubscribed but Community Infrastructure Levy may be used when appropriate.

Councillor Cottam added that the Council's External Auditor had congratulated West Berkshire Council on the savings.

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FULL/2023/107 REPORTS continued

c) Outside Body Reports

- i. Council considered a request, supported by Councillor Brooks, that Councillor Jeffery be appointed as representative to the West Berkshire Therapy Centre, in addition to existing appointees Councillors Brooks and Steevenson.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Jeffery as an additional representative to West Berkshire Therapy Centre.

- ii. Reports from a number of appointees to outside bodies were noted.

FULL/2023/108 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that in view of the confidential 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.

Councillors Cottam, Dillon and Schiffer-Harte left the meeting

RESOLVED in accordance with Standing Order 6.3.10, to continue the duration of the meeting beyond two hours.

FULL/2023/109 STAFFING MATTERS

Council received a report following a recent staff review and considered the recommendations therein which were supported by the Staff Committee (STA/2023/16ci).

RESOLVED to adopt the staff review report and support the recommendations contained therein, with the exception of the role relating to a Neighbourhood Development Plan which would be addressed at a later date.

There being no further business the Mayor declared the meeting closed at 21:22hrs.

Signed: _____ Date: _____