

THATCHAM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of a meeting of the
Finance and General Purposes Committee
held on Monday 20th January 2025 at 19:00hrs
in the Council Chamber, Brownsfield Road, Thattham

Present: Councillor Mike Cole (Chairman)
 Councillors Jeremy Cottam, Iain Cottingham, Owen Jeffery,
 Mark Lillycrop and Justin Pemberton

In attendance: Mel Taylor (Town Clerk), Laura Carlin (Deputy Town Clerk),
 Miri Willan (Finance Manager) and Karen Tangney (Finance Officer)

FGP/2025/05 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Jay Lunn.

FGP/2025/06 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

Councillor Cottingham joined the meeting

FGP/2025/07 MINUTES
RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meetings held on 28th October 2024 and 7th January 2025, having been previously circulated, be taken as read, confirmed, and signed as an accurate record.

FGP/2025/08 BUDGET REVIEW 2024/25

- a) Committee reviewed a report of all Council budgets for the period Q1 – Q3, 1st April 2024 to 31st December 2024, including projected year-end figures.
- b) Committee noted a report on Reserves and CIL funds held.
- c) Committee noted reports of external grants and sponsorship received this financial year to date.
- d) Committee noted a report of vandalism costs this financial year to date.

FGP/2025/09 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORKING PARTY

- a) Councillor Lillycrop, Chairman of the Community Engagement Working Party, presented the Minutes of the meeting held on 13th January 2025 for adoption.

RESOLVED to adopt the Minutes of the Community Engagement Working Party meeting held on 13th January 2025.

- b) Councillor Lillycrop presented the following recommendations from the Community Engagement Working Party:

RESOLVED i. that the draft Branding Guidelines be adopted.
 to adopt the Branding Guidelines as presented, appendix I to these Minutes.

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- FGP/2025/09** **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORKING PARTY continued**
ii. that the purchase and installation of a digital noticeboard in the town centre be pursued at a cost of up to £10,000, funded from Community Infrastructure Levy funds held.
- RESOLVED** to purchase and install a digital noticeboard in the town centre at a cost of up to £10,000, funded from Community Infrastructure Levy funds held and to delegate authority to the Community Engagement Working Party to agree the final location and specification.
- FGP/2025/10** **SERVICE CHARGES 2025/26**
RESOLVED to agree services charges for the financial year 2025/26 as set out in appendix II to these Minutes.
- FGP/2025/11** **COMMUNITY PROJECT FUND APPLICATION**
Committee considered an application for £250 from the Community Project Fund, from Angels Outreach Community Interest Company, for the project: 'While You Can - Empowering marginalised communities in Thatcham with knowledge on Organ Donation, Advance Care Planning, and Estate Planning'
- RESOLVED** to award a grant of £250 to Angels Outreach Community Interest Company for the project: 'While You Can - Empowering marginalised communities in Thatcham with knowledge on Organ Donation, Advance Care Planning, and Estate Planning.
- FGP/2025/12** **FINANCIALS**
- i. Committee noted BACS payments made from the current account in the previous quarter, which had been audited by Councillors in advance of the meeting (appendix III).
 - ii. Committee noted details of preauthorised payments made from the current account and Clerk's account during the period 1st October 2024 to 31st December 2024 (appendix IV).
 - iii. Committee noted a bank reconciliation report.
 - iv. Committee noted an Aged Creditor report.
 - v. Committee noted an Aged Debtor report.

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- FGP/2025/13 LOCAL PLAN REVIEW**
 Committee considered a proposal to work with neighbouring parishes to seek legal opinion on the proposed revised Local Plan and to allocate £4,000 towards the cost, and to accept public donations from surrounding parishes towards the cost of obtaining such advice.
- RESOLVED** to agree to receive and hold public donations and contributions to be used towards the costs of obtaining King's Counsel opinion on the likely options for amending the Local Plan that was currently with the Planning Inspector, and to allocate £4,000 towards the cost of obtaining such advice.
- FGP/2025/14 DRAFT BUDGET 2025/26**
RESOLVED to continue the meeting beyond 2hrs duration (in line with Standing Order 6.3.10).
- RESOLVED**
- i. Committee reviewed a draft budget 2025/26 v0.6 and considered feedback from the Town Clerk/RFO and Finance Manager. to recommend most of the draft budget 2025/26 v0.6 to Full Council for adoption, with the exception of £20,000 allocated for Professional Fees (nominal code 4060/102) whilst clarity was sought on the purpose of this allocation, and to increase the budget for Tree Surveys and Works (nominal code 4074) by £3,000 to a total of £25,000 across all sites.
 - ii. Committee considered increasing EMR312 – Minimum Reserve – for the financial year 2025/26, in line with the draft budget, and it was agreed to defer to Full Council to consider upon adoption of the budget.
- FGP/2025/15 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.
- FGP/2025/16 PROPOSED SUSPENSE ACCOUNT DEFICIT BALANCE WRITE OFF**
RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council that a deficit balance of £2,444.59 against cost centre 101 be written off and funded from the Rolling Capital Fund (EMR 315).

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 21:25hrs.

Signed: _____ Date: _____