

THATCHAM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of a meeting of the
Finance and General Purposes Committee
held on Monday 28th April 2025 at 19:00hrs
in the Council Chamber, Brownsfield Road, Thatcham

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

In attendance: Mel Taylor (Town Clerk), Miri Willan (Finance Manager) and
 Karen Tangney (Finance Officer)
 1 member of the press (Newbury Weekly News)

FGP/2025/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for lateness was received from Councillor Tom McCann.

FGP/2025/18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

FGP/2025/19 MINUTES
RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting held on 20th January 2025, having been previously circulated, be taken as read, confirmed, and signed as an accurate record.

FGP/2025/20 BUDGET REVIEW 2024/25

- a) Committee reviewed a report of all Council budgets for the period Q1 – Q4, 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025 and noted that, whilst the report covered the full financial year, it was still subject to year-end adjustments and the final accounts for 2024/25 would be presented to Full Council on 23rd June 2025.
- 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 on vandalism costs this financial year to date.

RESOLVED

e) Committee considered a number of year-end adjustments.
 to transfer £40,000 underspend on nominal code 4036 (maintenance) / cost centre 251 (play areas) to an Earmarked Reserve for safety surface repairs at Kennet Heath play area.

RESOLVED

to transfer £150 from the underspend on cost centre 224 (Heritage) to EMR 320 (Uncompleted Projects) – expenditure agreed by the Events Committee (EV/2025/04) for printing Blue Plaque leaflets, however, updated version of the leaflet still awaited.

RESOLVED

to transfer £762 from the underspend on cost centre 129 (Events – Rural Touring Theatre) to EMR 320 (Uncompleted Projects) - due to the final elements of the Rural Touring programme having to be deferred to the financial year 2025/26 due to lack of staff resource within the events team to complete in 2024/25.

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- FGP/2025/20 RESOLVED** **BUDGET REVIEW 2024/25 continued**
to transfer £834 of income received on cost centre 128 (Events – Specials & One-offs) to EMR 320 (Uncompleted Projects) - as this was a grant received to deliver the Youth Music Project which was not able to be delivered in 2024/25 due to lack of staff resource within the events team.
- RESOLVED** to transfer £2,000 from EMR 354 (Thatcham Football Club Grant) to EMR 310 (General Reserve – Working Fund) - as the project for which the funds were committed had not progressed. It was also noted that a previous grant of £5,000 had been reimbursed to the Town Council by the Football Club.
- RESOLVED** to transfer £1,110 from cost centre 265 (Turnfields) to EMR 320 (Uncompleted Projects) - as this was a donation received for enhancements to Jubilee Sensory Garden, works approved by the Turnfields Charity at a meeting on 31st March 2025 and would be carried out in 2025/26.
- RESOLVED** to transfer £858.95 from cost centre 270 (Thatcham Youth & Moorside) to EMR 320 (Uncompleted Projects) – being as yet unspent funds received from West Berkshire Council for maintenance of Moorside Community Centre.
- FGP/2025/21 RESOLVED** **PURCHASE OF A LAPTOP COMPUTER**
Committee considered a quote from the Council's IT contractor for 1 x laptop computer, peripherals and set-up, to complete the Council's commitment and annual investment to transition from desktop computers to laptops, to provide greater flexibility and efficiency.
- RESOLVED** to agree to purchase 1 x laptop computer at a cost of £607¹ (plus potential variance in market prices), funded from the Rolling Capital Fund.
- FGP/2025/22** **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORKING PARTY**
- a)** Councillor Lillycrop, Chairman of the Community Engagement Working Party, presented the Minutes of the meeting held on 13th March 2025 for adoption.
- RESOLVED** to adopt the Minutes of the Community Engagement Working Party meeting held on 13th March 2025.
- b)** Councillor Lillycrop presented the following recommendations from the Community Engagement Working Party:
- i.** To increase the budget for the digital noticeboard.
Up to £10,000 was agreed at the last meeting (FGP/2025/09), funded from Community Infrastructure Levy funds held. An additional £4,662.87 was required, due to additional groundworks required
- RESOLVED** to approve additional expenditure of £4,662.87² for the digital noticeboard, funded from Community Infrastructure Levy funds held.

Councillor McCann joined the meeting

¹ Actual cost at time of order £639 due to time between quote [9th April 2025] and order [29th April 2025]

² Actual cost at time of order £14,674.02 due to time between quote considered at CEWP meeting [13th March 2025] and order [8th May 2025]

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FGP/2025/22	<p>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORKING PARTY continued</p> <p>ii. A phased redesign of the Thatcham Town Council logo as things were replaced, to remove the fly hook. Members were mindful of the potential impact on other Thatcham organisations who used the same logo design.</p>
RESOLVED	to conduct an audit of organisations using the same logo design and to refer to Full Council for the final decision.
FGP/2025/23	<p>STRATEGIC FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS</p> <p>Committee reviewed proposed updates to the Treasury Management Plan 2025/26 and Financial Regulations 2025/26.</p>
RESOLVED	to recommend the amended Treasury Management Plan 2025/26 and Finance Regulations 2025/26 to Full Council for adoption.
FGP/2025/24	<p>PROPOSED PURCHASE OF SILENT DISCO EQUIPMENT</p> <p>Committee considered a business plan and recommendation from the Town Clerk that the Council invest in the purchase of Silent Disco equipment to complement hall hire and for use at Council events and activities.</p>
RESOLVED	to approve expenditure of up to £2,200 for the purchase of Silent Disco equipment, funded from the Rolling Capital Fund.
FGP/2025/25	<p>PROPOSED ZERO-BASED BUDGET EXERCISE</p> <p>Committee considered a recommendation from Councillor McCann to undertake a zero-based budgeting exercise in preparation for the financial year 2026/27.</p>
RESOLVED	to undertake a form of zero-based budget exercise, and that Councillors McCann and the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee be appointed to a Working Party to undertake the review, supported by the Finance Manager.
FGP/2025/26	<p>CLEANING CONTRACT TENDER</p> <p>Committee considered a report from the Town Clerk regarding the Town Council's new cleaning contract tender and were advised that the deadline for submission of tenders was 16th May 2025 and it was anticipated that evaluation would be conducted in late May / early June, with the new contract expected to commence on 1st August 2025.</p>
RESOLVED	to appoint the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee to undertake tender evaluation with the Place Manager and Facilities Manager.
FGP/2025/27	<p>WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL – SERVICE DELIVERY OFFERS</p> <p>Committee considered a report from the Town Clerk regarding the potential extension of library opening hours and the potential transfer of ownership and management of litter and dog waste bins.</p>
RESOLVED	to agree to the principle of the transfer of litter and dog waste bins, up to the £30,000 allocated in the budget for devolved services, and to survey the locations, levels of usage and size of litter and dog waste bins, and report back to the next meeting of this Committee.

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FGP/2025/28

GRANT APPLICATIONS

a) Committee considered the following Community Project Fund applications:

RESOLVED

i. From 7th Thatcham Brownies, for £250, for the project 'Summer Camp and events during summer term'.
 to award a grant of £250.

RESOLVED

ii. From Thatcham Comedy Club, for £250, for the project 'West Berks Comedy Festival'.
 to award a grant of £250.

RESOLVED

iii. From Project Salama, for £250, for the project 'Fundraising Party'.
 to award a grant of £250.

b) Committee considered the following Community Grant applications on The Good Exchange:

It was noted that both applications would be subject to matched funding from the Town Council's annual agreement with Greenham Trust.

RESOLVED

i. Application reference 20877 – The Thatcham (Old Blue Coat School) Charity, total remaining funding required £1,000, for the project: 'Renew car park fence'.
 to award a grant of £500 (matched funded to £1,000).

RESOLVED

ii. Application reference 20828 – Newbury Pride, total remaining funding required £3,393, for the project: 'Newbury Pride in Thatcham'.
 to award a grant of £1,696.50 (matched funded to £3,393).

RESOLVED

in accordance with Standing Order 6.3.10, to continue the meeting beyond 2 hours duration.

FGP/2025/29

FINANCIALS

a) 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 I).

b) Committee noted details of preauthorised payments made from the current account and Clerk's account during the period 1st January 2025 to 31st March 2025 (appendix II).

c) Committee noted a bank reconciliation report.

d) Committee noted an Aged Creditor report.

e) Committee noted an Aged Debtor report.

f) Committee approved an annual list of suppliers paid by Direct Debit (appendix III).

g) Committee agreed continuation of the Town Clerk's authority to approve card refunds for service deposit returns.

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- FGP/2025/29** **FINANCIALS continued**
 h) Committee authorised payment of salaries for the financial year 2025/26.
- FGP/2025/30** **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**
RESOLVED that, in view of the confidential (FGP/2025/31 & FGP/2025/33) and commercially sensitive (FGP/2025/32) 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/2025/31** **PROPOSED LAND ACQUISITION**
RESOLVED Committee considered a report from the Town Clerk regarding the 'alleyway' between Beverley Close and the Memorial Playing Field. to investigate Thatcham Town Council securing the long-term future of the alleyway between Beverley Close and the Memorial Playing Field, and to approve expenditure of up to £2,000 for solicitor fees.
- FGP/2025/32** **NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN**
RESOLVED Committee considered a recommendation from the Town Clerk, and an indicative quotation, to commission an external contractor to support progression of the Neighbourhood Development Plan. to obtain three quotes from external contractors for consideration.
- FGP/2025/33** **BAD DEBT WRITE OFF**
RESOLVED to write off a debt of £144.00 against sales ledger account number MK004, Karen Miller Ward Ltd, for non-payment of market fees following termination of their pitch.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 21:27hrs.

Signed: _____ Date: _____