

**THATCHAM TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of a meeting of the**  
**Finance and General Purposes Committee**  
**held on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2020 at 7pm**  
**remotely via video conferencing<sup>1</sup>**

Present: Councillor David Lister (Chairman)  
 Councillors John Boyd, Mike Cole, Jeremy Cottam, Ellen Crumly,  
 Richard Crumly, Richard Foster, Owen Jeffery and Jennifer Walker

In attendance: Mel Taylor (Town Clerk) and Steve Tickle (Responsible Financial Officer)  
 Councillor Lourdes Cottam  
 Iain Cottingham (Chairman, Thatcham Town Cricket Club) (part-meeting)  
 Nathan Gregory (Chairman, Thatcham Memorial Foundation) (part-meeting)  
 1 member of the press (Newbury Weekly News)

**Prior to the start of the meeting, the Chairman led a one-minute silence in honour of the victims of a knife attack at Forbury Gardens, Reading on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

**FGP/2020/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

**FGP/2020/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Cole and Jeffery declared non-pecuniary interests in agenda item number 10(ii) (FGP/2020/33(ii)) as Trustees of Thatcham Memorial Foundation.

Councillors E and R Crumly declared non-pecuniary interests in agenda item number 10(ii) (FGP/2020/33(ii)) as they had been lobbied by the applicant to support the funding request.

**FGP/2020/26 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2020, having been previously circulated, be taken as read, confirmed and signed as a true record of the proceedings.

**FGP/2020/27 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

**FGP/2020/28 BUDGET REVIEW**

a) Members were informed that the out-turn for the financial year 2019/20 was a £17,840 underspend and were advised that the full accounts would be presented to Full Council for adoption when it met on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

**RESOLVED**

to note the information.

b) Members reviewed the whole Council budget for the financial year 2020/21, including estimated outcomes, and were advised that Councillors Lister and Cole, along with the Responsible Financial Officer and Town Clerk, were meeting regularly to consider the financial impact of Covid-19.

<sup>1</sup> The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020

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**FGP/2020/28 BUDGET REVIEW continued**

b) For the first quarter of 2020/21 a shortfall of £22,000 was estimated on affected services. This was being closely monitored as the situation progressed and reviewed against the Town Council's General Reserve position.

**RESOLVED** to note the information.

*Iain Cottingham and Nathan Gregory joined the meeting*

c) Members received a report on Earmarked Reserves and CIL/s106 funds held.

**RESOLVED** to note the information.

**FGP/2020/29 CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) - FINANCIAL MATTERS**

Members considered the following matters resulting from the Coronavirus (Covid-19) crisis:

**i. Remedial works at public conveniences**

Members were advised that the Recreation and Amenities Committee, at its next meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2020, would be considering expenditure for remedial works at the public conveniences in Thatcham Broadway, for essential works to facilitate re-opening of the facility, currently estimated at £7,000 plus additional cleaning costs.

**RESOLVED** to note this information.

**ii. Hand sanitiser – play areas**

Members considered a proposal and quotation for £6,659.96 to purchase hand sanitiser units for all entrance/exit points to Town Council owned play areas, plus installation cost of £40.00 per unit.

**RESOLVED** to delegate authority to the Town Clerk to proceed with the purchase and installation of hand sanitiser units for all play areas, subject to the Clerk being satisfied of the equipment's durability and positive references and that delivery was less than 3 months' lead time.

**iii. Thatcham Town Cricket Club – Rent Suspension Request**

**RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to allow Iain Cottingham to address the Committee.

Mr Cottingham presented a request from Thatcham Town Cricket Club for a temporary suspension of rent, following the suspension of cricket activities due to Coronavirus (Covid-19) restrictions. Mr Cottingham advised that the Club had applied for £20,000 from their Business Interruption Insurance, which had been turned down but awaited the outcome of a challenge in a Court Hearing in July. The outcome of which was expected in August 2020. If the Club subsequently received the funds, the payment holiday would not be required.

**RESOLVED** to reinstate Standing Orders

**RESOLVED** to agree to a six months' rent holiday from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021, amounting to £1,440, subject to this not being required should the Club's claim for Business Interruption Insurance be awarded.

*Iain Cottingham left the meeting*

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**FGP/2020/30 RECOMMENDATION FROM THE EVENTS COMMITTEE**

Members considered a recommendation from the Events Committee that funding of £175 per week be approved for a Bournemouth University placement to work with the Events Manager and Events Officer for a 15-week (\*) minimum period work placement, to support the planning and delivery of Town Council events (EV/2020/23(v)).

Members were advised that there was sufficient funding in the Salaries budget to support this proposal, due to the delay in recruitment of the Clerk's Assistant.

*(\*) Placement originally understood to be for a minimum period of 13 weeks, subsequently advised that this was now a minimum period of 15 weeks.*

**RESOLVED** to approve the University Work Placement.

**FGP/2020/31 PROPOSAL FOR STREETLIGHTING – HANBURY WALK**

Councillor Jeffery presented details of a Members' Bid he and Councillor Kessell had submitted to West Berkshire Council, proposing to install streetlighting on Hanbury Walk, between Moorside Community Centre and Spurcroft School. The scheme was supported by the Headteacher and Chair of Governors of Spurcroft School. The total project cost was £11,500 and an application for funding of £5,000 had been submitted to Greenham Trust, plus £5,500 from the Members' Bids, leaving a shortfall of £500.

**RESOLVED** to support Councillors Jeffery and Kessell's application and to award funding of £500 to the project, from CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) receipts.

**FGP/2020/32 COMMUNITY GRANTS 2020/21**

Members considered a proposal from the Town Clerk to establish a Coronavirus (Covid-19) recovery fund on The Good Exchange to provide funding for organisations to support their recovery from the effects of the crisis.

**RESOLVED** (i) to approve establishment of a Coronavirus (Covid-19) Recovery Fund on The Good Exchange, with an initial budget of £5,000, from the existing Community Grants budget, but with flexibility to increase, subject to approval by the Finance and General Purpose Committee;

(ii) to establish a Grants Sub-Committee as follows:

Membership: 5 Members

Quorum: The quorum shall be 3 Members

Terms of Reference:

To have delegated powers to exercise the functions of the Council in considering and assessing applications for financial grant aid and allocating awards as deemed appropriate within the total predetermined budget for that purpose, and in line with financial procedures as set out in the Financial Regulations.

The Sub-Committee shall provide the Finance and General Purposes Committee with details of all awards, at the next meeting following any grant award.;

(iii) that Councillors J Cottam, R Crumly, Lister (\*) and Walker be appointed to serve on the Sub-Committee.

(\*) subsequently agreed by unanimous vote to appoint Councillor Cole to serve on the Sub-Committee instead of Councillor Lister.

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**FGP/2020/33 FUNDING REQUESTS**

**i. WEST BERKSHIRE YOUTH HUB**

Members considered correspondence from Greenham Trust regarding an application for funding on The Good Exchange for West Berkshire Youth Hub (application reference 18148).

**RESOLVED** to award funding of £1,500 to the project.

**ii. THATCHAM MEMORIAL FOUNDATION**

Members considered a request from Thatcham Memorial Foundation for financial support to assist with the effects of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) restrictions, as follows:

- (i) to maintain access for the general public to the Memorial Playing Field;
- (ii) to restore full grounds maintenance to the site; and
- (iii) to continue the current one-hour free car parking in the War Memorial car park for a further month to facilitate queues at the Health Centre and Boots pharmacy.

**RESOLVED** to award funding of £8,000, payable in 3 instalments, as follows: £3,500 in July 2020; £2,500 in August 2020; and £2,000 in September, subject to review at each instalment prior to payment.

*Nathan Gregory left the meeting*

**FGP/2020/34 SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS**

Members received a year-end annual report from Thatcham Youth, who have a Service Level Agreement with the Town Council.

**RESOLVED** to note the information.

**FGP/2020/35 POLICIES**

Members considered drafts of the following policies, prepared by the Responsible Financial Officer:

- i.** Investment Strategy 2020/21
- ii.** Banking and Investment Policy 2020/21

**RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council that the above documents be adopted, as presented.

**FGP/2020/36 BUDGET / EXPENDITURE COSTS**

**a)** Members received proposed BACS payments due, from the Imprest account (appendix I to these Minutes).

**RESOLVED** to approve the payments.

**b)** Members received details of pre-authorized payments made from the Imprest Account, Soldo pre-paid debit card and Clerk's Account during the period April 2020 to May 2020 (appendix II to these Minutes).

**RESOLVED** to note the information.

**c)** Members received details of bank reconciliations (appendix III to these Minutes).

**RESOLVED** to note the information.

**d)** Members received an annual list of suppliers paid by direct debit (appendix IV to these Minutes).

**RESOLVED** to approve the annual list of suppliers paid by direct debit.

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**RESOLVED** e) Members considered continuation of card refunds for deposit returns. to approve the continuation of card refunds for deposit returns.

**FGP/2020/23 REPORTS FROM TOWN COUNCIL APPOINTEES**

Members noted the following verbal reports from Town Council appointees to outside bodies:

**Greenham and Crookham Commons Commission**

Councillor Foster reported that he had attended a virtual meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> June; use of the Common had increased and some BBOWT (Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust) staff had been furloughed, a new Chairman had been elected, and it had been identified that administrative support was needed for which a funding request may be forthcoming.

*Councillor Walker left the meeting*

**HomeStart West Berkshire**

Councillor Foster reported that the Board met virtually on 29<sup>th</sup> May; support was continuing to be provided without visiting families and they were forward planning for post Covid-19.

**Thatcham Nursing Society**

Councillor L Cottam – nothing to report.

**Thatcham Volunteer Bureau**

Councillor E Crumly reported that the AGM scheduled for June had been postponed.

**Thatcham Youth**

Councillor Lister – nothing to report.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.26pm.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_