

THATCHAM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of a meeting of the
Finance and General Purposes Committee
held on Monday 17th August 2020 at 7pm
remotely via video conferencing¹

Present: Councillor David Lister (Chairman)
 Councillors John Boyd, Mike Cole, Jeremy Cottam, Ellen Crumly,
 Richard Crumly, Lee Dillon, Richard Foster and Mark Lillycrop (substituting
 for Jennifer Walker)

In attendance: Mel Taylor (Town Clerk) and Steve Tickle (Responsible Financial Officer)
 Brian Woodham (Chairman, Thatcham Surface Water Management Plan
 Funding Committee) (part-meeting)
 1 member of the press (Newbury Weekly News)

FGP/2020/38 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Owen Jeffery and
 Jennifer Walker (Mark Lillycrop appointed as substitute).

FGP/2020/39 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

FGP/2020/40 MINUTES

It was noted that the Minutes of the previous meeting, held on 22nd June
 2020, should have stated in resolution of FGP/2020/32 that Councillor Field
 be invited to be appointed to the Grants Sub-Committee established at that
 meeting.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd June 2020, having been
 previously circulated, be taken as read, confirmed and signed as a true
 record of the proceedings, subject to noting that it had been resolved that
 Councillor Field be invited to be appointed to the Grants Sub-Committee.

1 Member of the press joined the meeting

FGP/2020/41 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The following updates were noted:

i. FGP/2020/32 - COMMUNITY GRANTS 2020/21

Councillor Field had accepted the invitation to be appointed to the Grants
 Sub-Committee.

ii. FGP/2020/29(ii) – CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) - FINANCIAL MATTERS

Expenditure of £7,500 was approved by Full Council for the purchase and
 installation of 21 hand sanitiser units at Town Council owned play areas
 (FULL/2020/48). However, this had yet to be pursued, pending case
 studies and feedback from other Councils.

iii. FGP/2020/33(ii) - FUNDING REQUESTS

A grant award of £8,000 to Thatcham Memorial Foundation was
 approved by Full Council to support recovery from the effects of
 Coronavirus (Covid-19) restrictions (payable in three monthly instalments
 as follows: July £3,500, August £2,500 and September £2,000)
 (FULL/2020/48).

¹ 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/2020/42 SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN

RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders to allow Brian Woodham, Chairman of the Thatcham Surface Water Management Plan Funding Committee, to address the Committee.

Members received a report and presentation from Mr. Woodham and considered a request for a funding commitment of £10,000 per year for the following three financial years (2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24) to support further funding applications to enable completion of construction of the Surface Water Management Plan for Thatcham. Funds would be payable to West Berkshire Council at completion of each scheme.

RESOLVED to reinstate Standing Orders.

RESOLVED unanimously, to support a funding commitment of £10,000 per year for the following three financial years (subject to ratification by Full Council).

Brian Woodham left the meeting

FGP/2020/43 BUDGET REVIEW

a) Members reviewed the whole Council budget for the year to date and were advised that the shortfall for the first quarter of 2020/21 was approximately £23,000, offset by £18,600 of underspends. The shortfall for the second quarter of 2020/21 was estimated at £22,000, offset by approximately £7,500 of underspends.

Councillors Lister and Cole, along with the Responsible Financial Officer and Town Clerk, continued to regularly monitor the financial impact of Covid-19.

RESOLVED to note the information.

RESOLVED b) To receive and note a report on Reserves and CIL/s106 funds held. to note the information.

FGP/2020/44 INVESTMENT WORKING PARTY

Members received the Minutes of the Investment Working Party meeting held on 10th August 2020 and considered the recommendation contained therein that the maturing investments with Close Bros Savings and Nationwide Building Society be reinvested for a further 12 months.

RESOLVED to adopt the Minutes of the Investment Working Party meeting held on 10th August 2020 and to ratify the recommendation contained therein that the maturing investments with Close Bros Savings and Nationwide Building Society be reinvested for a further 12 months.

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FGP/2020/45 COMMUNITY GRANTS 2020/21

Members received the Minutes of the Grants Sub-Committee meeting held on 16th July 2020 and were advised that the following grants had been awarded from the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Recovery Fund, amounting to £3,500 of the initial allocation of £5,000:

Application Ref	Organisation	Grant Awarded
18033	Swings & Smiles	£500
18043	Home-Start West Berkshire	£500
18142	Dingley's Promise	£500
18174	Greenham Control Tower	£250
18175	Response Organisation	£500
18210	Berkshire Women's Aid	£1,000
18216	Spotlight UK	£250

RESOLVED to adopt the Minutes of the Grants Sub-Committee meeting held on 16th July 2020 and to note the above grant awards.

FGP/2020/46 THATCHAM LIBRARY

i. Members received a report from West Berkshire Council Library Service on restoring library services as the Covid-19 lockdown eased.

RESOLVED to note the report.

ii. Members received correspondence from Paul James, West Berkshire Council Culture & Libraries Manager, in response to the Town Council's enquiry regarding the level of library contributions for 2020/21, given that libraries had been closed due to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. Members considered the Town Council's contribution towards Thatcham Library for the financial year 2020/21.

RESOLVED to approve payment of a grant of £24,480 towards Thatcham Library for the financial year 2020/21 and to advise West Berkshire Council that the Town Council would be willing to enter into a longer term agreement from 2021/22, subject to a commitment from West Berkshire Council to carry out the previously discussed improvement works to Thatcham Library, which included an enhanced entrance and installation of an accessible toilet.

FGP/2020/47 FUNDING REQUEST FROM GREENHAM AND CROOKHAM COMMONS COMMISSION

Members considered a request for funding from Greenham and Crookham Commons Commission. Councillor Foster, as Thatcham Town Council representative to the Commission, spoke on the work of the Commission and why the funds were needed, for administration. It was noted that funding requests had been submitted to Thatcham, Newbury and Greenham Councils and it was understood that Greenham Parish Council had approved a grant of up to £500 per year, on condition that other member organisations also contributed "an appropriate amount".

RESOLVED to award funding of £500 per year, for three years, to Greenham and Crookham Commons Commission, subject to contributions also being provided by Greenham Parish and Newbury Town Councils.

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FGP/2020/48 WEST BERKSHIRE COUNCIL POST-COVID RECOVERY GRANTS

Councillor Ardagh-Walter had advised that West Berkshire Council had allocated £1,000 per District Councillor to be used for local projects to assist with post-Covid recovery. This allocation was in addition to the normal Members' Bid money and the funds could be used for either revenue or capital projects and did not need to be match funded. Two key criteria were that projects must be able to be completed within 6 months, and they should have an explicit link to West Berkshire Council's recovery strategy (health, educational & economic success, the environment, quality of life, etc). Councillor Dillon advised that he would be using his allowance to support recovery from the impact on children/families and domestic violence and encouraged all Town Councillors to put forward suggestions to their Ward District Councillor/s to ensure Ward allowances were utilised, to benefit residents. Councillor Dillon reminded Members that additional funds were also available through West Berkshire Council's Members Bid programme and the Town Council's Community Grants and Community Project Funds programmes.

RESOLVED to note this information and to encourage Town Councillors to put forward suggestions to their Ward District Councillor/s.

FGP/2020/49 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 1st June 2020 to 31st July 2020 (appendix II to these Minutes).

RESOLVED to note the information.

c) Members received details of bank reconciliations (appendix III to these Minutes). Members questioned why an account name was not listed against the first Bank Statement Balances entry and this would be clarified.

RESOLVED to note the information.

FGP/2020/50 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 the Commission had met on 18th June 2020, nothing significant to report.

- **HomeStart West Berkshire**

Councillor Foster reported that the group was continuing to support families remotely and that a meeting was held on 16th July 2020, focusing on financial analysis.

- **Thatcham Volunteer Bureau**

Councillor E Crumly reported that volunteer drivers were operational again but no notice of any meetings yet.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.37pm.

Signed _____ Date _____