

THATCHAM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of a meeting of the
Finance and General Purposes Committee
held on Monday 14th December 2020 at 7pm
remotely via video conferencing¹

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

In attendance: Mel Taylor (Town Clerk) and Steve Tickle (Responsible Financial Officer)
 Paul James (West Berkshire Council, Culture and Libraries Manager)
 1 member of the press (Newbury Weekly News)

FGP/2020/60 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
 No apologies for absence were received.

FGP/2020/61 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
 There were no declarations of interest.

FGP/2020/62 MINUTES
RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 26th October 2020, having been
 previously circulated, be taken as read, confirmed and signed as a true
 record of the proceedings.

FGP/2020/63 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING
 There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

FGP/2020/64 THATCHAM LIBRARY
 Paul James, West Berkshire Council Culture and Libraries Manager, was
 invited to address Committee to discuss the proposed refurbishment of
 Thatcham Library, as highlighted in the 2019/20 Libraries Annual Report.

Mr James confirmed that West Berkshire Council was committed to running
 and improving Thatcham Library and advised that a condition survey had
 recently been carried out and the results were awaited. Mr James invited the
 Town Council to a site visit at some point in the near future to assess
 potential improvements and development.

Having made voluntary contributions to the running costs of Thatcham
 Library for the past three years, when considering any potential future
 funding commitment, Committee sought commitment from West Berkshire
 Council that the previously discussed relocation of the entrance and
 installation of an accessible toilet would be carried out in the calendar year
 2021 and Mr James agreed to put this to the West Berkshire Council
 Portfolio Holder.

Committee expressed its thanks to all staff and volunteers involved with
 Thatcham Library.

The Chairman thanked Mr James for attending and he left the meeting

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/2020/65 BUDGET REVIEW 2020/21

- a) Members reviewed the whole Council budget for the year to date.

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.

- b) Members received a report on Reserves and CIL/s106 funds held.
to note the information.

RESOLVED

- c) The Responsible Financial Officer advised that an application had been submitted to West Berkshire Council for c.£18,000 of Central Government funding awarded to Local Authorities to support the financial impact of Covid-19, for the first half of the financial year, and a formal response to the application was awaited. The application reflected the loss of income, offset by reduced expenditure, and also sought a cap on the Town Council's contribution to Henwick Worthy Sports Ground and Kennet Leisure Centre.

RESOLVED to note this information.

FGP/2020/66 DRAFT BUDGET 2021/22

- a) Committee considered a draft budget for the financial year 2021/22, which was based upon a 2.75% precept increase. It was noted that, at the time of the meeting, the tax base figure for 2021/22 had not been received from West Berkshire Council.

RESOLVED to recommend the draft budget to Full Council, as presented.

- b) Committee reviewed the following draft Policies:
i. General Reserves Policy 2021/22
ii. Earmarked Reserves Policy 2021/22

RESOLVED to adopt the General Reserves and Earmarked Reserves Policies 2021/22, as presented.

FGP/2020/67 COMMUNITY GRANTS

Correspondence had been received from West Berkshire Spokes in regard to a grant of £700, awarded in January 2020, via the Good Exchange, as a contribution towards a £109k project to resurface the canal towpath. West Berkshire Spokes advised that during the course of the works it was discovered that there were water voles using the canal along part of the area that was due to be resurfaced. This necessitated a reduction in the amount of work that could be done and the project was finally completed for the sum of £55,091.55. An approximate 50% reduction in the original project costs. Greenham Trust had reduced their donation by 50% from £50k to £25k and West Berkshire Spokes sought confirmation of the Town Council's requirement in regard to its £700 grant.

RESOLVED that West Berkshire Spokes retain the underspent element of the grant to spend on other project/s of benefit to Thatcham residents.

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FGP/2020/68 INVESTMENT WORKING PARTY

Committee received notification from the Investment Working Party that, following consultation with Councillor Lister, Chairman of this Committee, an investment with Lloyds Bank, due to mature on 12th November 2020, was reinvested for 12 months at an interest rate of 0.2%.

RESOLVED to ratify reinvestment of the matured funds with Lloyds Bank as detailed above.

FGP/2020/69 BUDGET / EXPENDITURE COSTS

a) Members received proposed 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 October 2020 to 30th November 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.

FGP/2020/70 REPORTS FROM TOWN COUNCIL APPOINTEES

There was nothing to report.

There being no further business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.43pm.

Signed _____ Date _____