

THATCHAM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of a meeting of
Thatcham Town Council
held on Monday 28th September 2020 at 7pm
remotely via video conferencing¹

Present: Councillor Mike Cole (Mayor)
 Councillors Steve Ardagh-Walter, John Boyd, Jeremy Cottam,
 Ellen Crumly, Richard Crumly, Lee Dillon, Paul Field, Richard Foster,
 Owen Jeffery, Mark Lillycrop, David Lister, Simon Pike and
 Keith Woodhams

In attendance: Mel Taylor (Town Clerk)
 1 Member of public (from meeting start)
 1 Member of public (part meeting)
 1 Member of the Press (Newbury Weekly News)

Prior to commencement of the meeting, the Mayor informed those present that Peter Ellison, former Town Councillor and Consort to former Mayor, Sheila Ellison, had passed away on 15th September 2020. Councillor Ellen Crumly read a tribute to Peter and Council observed a minute's silence.

FULL/2020/67 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jeff Brooks, Lourdes Cottam, Christine Rice and Jennifer Walker.

FULL/2020/68 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Pike declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item number 10 (FULL/2020/76) as a member of Mid & West Berkshire Local Access Forum.

Councillor J Cottam declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item number 10 (FULL/2020/76) as a resident in the vicinity of The Plantation.

Councillor Lister declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item number 10 (FULL/2020/76) as his property backs onto The Plantation.

Councillors E & R Crumly declared non-pecuniary interests in agenda item number 10 (FULL/2020/76) as residents in the vicinity of The Plantation and recreational users of the site.

Councillor Dillon declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item number 10 (FULL/2020/76) as he had been lobbied by a large number of resident Ward members.

Councillor Cole declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item number 10 (FULL/2020/76) as a recreational user of the site.

FULL/2020/69 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No public questions had been received.

FULL/2020/70 MINUTES

Councillor Ardagh-Walter requested that the staff salary benchmarking, discussed at the last meeting of Council (FULL/2020/60(iii)), be presented to the next meeting of Council in November 2020.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 27th July 2020, having been previously circulated, be signed as a correct record of the proceedings.

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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FULL/2020/71 REPORTS FROM THE MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR

Local events had been severely affected by Coronavirus (Covid-19) with many scheduled functions being cancelled, therefore reduced activity was reported by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

(a) Mayor's Report

The Mayor reported that he had attended a wreath laying ceremony and outdoor service at St. Mary's Church to commemorate VJ Day 75 and also a photo-shoot at Thatcham Skate Park with the newly appointed Detached Youth Workers.

(b) Deputy Mayor's Report

The Deputy Mayor had not attended any Mayoral activities.

FULL/2020/72 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

The Town Clerk reported that work continued on the remaining four outstanding actions highlighted by the Internal Auditor during Internal Audits and a progress report would be presented to the next meeting of Council on 30th November 2020.

FULL/2020/73 STANDING ORDERS

Having been proposed and seconded, and subsequently stood adjourned from the last meeting (FULL/2020/63), Council considered adoption of revised Standing Orders. The Mayor expressed thanks to the Standing Orders Review Working Party and, in particular, to Councillor Pike for his efforts in formulating the revised document.

RESOLVED unanimously, to adopt the revised Standing Orders.

FULL/2020/74 APPROVAL AND ADOPTION OF COMMITTEE MINUTES

The following Committee Minutes were presented for adoption:

a) Finance and General Purposes Committee Minutes dated 17th August 2020.

RESOLVED that the Minutes be adopted.

b) Recreation and Amenities Committee Minutes dated 14th September 2020.

RESOLVED that the Minutes be adopted.

c) Planning and Highways Committee Minutes dated 28th July 2020, 11th August 2020, 1st September 2020 and 22nd September 2020.

RESOLVED that the Minutes be adopted.

Councillor Foster reiterated his appeal to the Planning and Highways Committee at its meeting on 22nd September regarding the Planning White Paper "Planning for the Future" and urged all Councillors to read the consultation document.

Councillor Dillon advised that West Berkshire Council's response to the consultation was a cross-party agreed response.

Councillor Jeffery raised concern that, at its meeting on 22nd September 2020, the Committee had considered the concerns of a resident of Maynard Close regarding car parking, as this was outside of the Thatcham parish boundary, whilst acknowledging that it was within a Thatcham district boundary.

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FULL/2020/74 APPROVAL AND ADOPTION OF COMMITTEE MINUTES continued
1 member of public joined the meeting

RESOLVED d) Events Committee Minutes dated 7th September 2020.
 that the Minutes be adopted.

RESOLVED e) Staff Committee Minutes dated 27th July 2020 and 21st September 2020.
 that the Minutes be adopted.

FULL/2020/75 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES

Council considered the following expenditure recommendations from Committees:

i. FGP/2020/42 – SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN

To support a funding commitment of £10,000 per year for the following three financial years [2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24] in support of further funding applications to enable completion of construction of the Surface Water Management Plan for Thatcham, with funds payable to West Berkshire Council at completion of each scheme.

RESOLVED to approve a funding commitment of £10,000 per year for the following three financial years [2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24] for the Surface Water Management Plan and that £30,000 be transferred from General Reserves to an Earmarked Reserve.

ii. RA/2020/77 – SKATE PARK REPAIRS

That expenditure of £11,960 be approved for remedial works at Thatcham Skate Park.

Councillor J Cottam commended the Services Manager for negotiating a cost reduction for these works.

RESOLVED to approve expenditure of £11,960 for remedial works at Thatcham Skate Park, funded from Community Infrastructure Levy receipts.

Having declared a pecuniary interest in the next agenda item, Councillor Lister left the meeting

FULL/2020/76 THE PLANTATION, FLORAL WAY

i. The Council had become aware of the proposed sale of The Plantation, designated ancient woodland located off Floral Way. The site had been publicised as having “development opportunity”.

Notification had subsequently been received from West Berkshire Council of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) on the woodland, issued on 16th September 2020. If no objections to the TPO were received, it would become a permanent Order.

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FULL/2020/76 THE PLANTATION, FLORAL WAY continued

Councillor Dillon informed Council of actions to date and thanked local residents for their support, and West Berkshire Council Officers and Trading Standards for their assistance.

Councillor Dillon called upon the Town Council to support the following actions:

- a) To write to West Berkshire Council to express the Town Council's support of the establishment of a woodland Tree Preservation Order on The Plantation.
- b) To agree in principle to the Town Council's Public Rights Of Way Working Party gathering evidence of the establishment of well-worn paths for in excess of 20 years, for submission to West Berkshire Council.
- c) To write to West Berkshire Council to express support that an Article 4 Directive (restricts the scope of permitted development rights) be placed on the site.
- d) To call upon West Berkshire Council to designate the site as green space in the emerging Local Plan, as the Town Council recognised the benefit the land had to the local population and how it enhanced the sense of community and wellbeing for all, as could be demonstrated by its use during the recent lockdown.

RESOLVED unanimously, to support the actions as detailed above.

The Mayor commended West Berkshire Council Officers and Thatcham Town Councillors for their work to date.

ii. MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR PIKE

Council considered the following Motion from Councillor Pike, that:
"Thatcham Town Council resolves to apply to West Berkshire Council for it to make an order to record the footpaths within the wood known as The Plantation on the Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way, and requests the Rights of Way Working Party to research the evidence to support this application."

RESOLVED unanimously, to support Councillor Pike's Motion and that Councillors J Cottam and Cole (with Councillor Dillon as a substitute, if needed) be authorised to endorse the documentation for submission to West Berkshire Council.

Councillor Dillon thanked Councillor Pike, who subsequently thanked the Definitive Map Officer at West Berkshire Council for their assistance.

Councillor Lister re-joined the meeting

2 members of public left the meeting

FULL/2020/77 CARBON FOOTPRINT

Council received a Carbon Footprint Report, commissioned by the Town Council and reviewed by the Environmental Working Party, and considered a recommendation from the Working Party that the Report be adopted and the suggestions contained within be incorporated into the Town Council's Environmental Action Plan.

RESOLVED to adopt the Carbon Footprint Report and incorporate the recommendations therein into the Town Council's Environmental Action Plan.

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FULL/2020/78 CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) UPDATES

There were no updates to report relating to Council operation resulting from Covid-19 restrictions.

FULL/2020/79 REPORTS

(a) Reports from Thatcham Town Councillors and West Berkshire District Councillors on Council Surgeries

Members noted reports from Council Surgeries carried out by Councillors Cole and Field on Saturday 1st August 2020 and Councillors R Crumly and Jeffery on Saturday 5th September 2020.

Councillor Dillon requested that the Planning and Highways Committee calls for details of roads in need of repair in the town, for submission to West Berkshire Council's funding programme.

(b) Reports from West Berkshire District Councillors

Councillor Ardagh-Walter reported that (i) The installation of Orcas on the A4 to define the cycle lane had recently been completed and advised that, should more be installed in the future, these were likely to be the larger version with smaller ones on the mid-town stretch; (ii) the impending scheduled resurfacing of the A4 from the east of the town to the Aldermaston Roundabout would result in queuing traffic and delays were expected; and (iii) he continued to work on waste and recycling matters.

The following questions were raised in response to Councillor Ardagh-Walter's report:

Councillor J Cottam enquired whether extending kerbs might be an alternative to Orcas.

Councillor Ardagh-Walter responded that kerbs were more expensive and there was insufficient budget.

Councillor R Crumly enquired whether the Orcas were temporary.

Councillor Ardagh-Walter responded that whilst currently in a trial phase, funded from Central Government's Active Travel Fund, it was hoped that they would be a long-term installation to support safer cycling.

Councillor Woodhams enquired whether there was an update on the Town Council's request that the speed limit on the A4 at the western end of the town be reduced from 40mph to 30mph.

Councillor Ardagh-Walter responded that speed limits were not part of the greener travel plans but this request was moving through West Berkshire Council's processes.

Councillor Lister enquired whether there was an update on the Town Council's request that Lawrences Lane be pedestrianised.

Councillor Ardagh-Walter responded that it had been nominated as a proposed project but no definitive response had yet been made.

Councillor J Cottam reported that work was underway to address complaints that he had been dealing with regarding overgrown vegetation at Tull Way and Heath Lane.

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FULL/2020/79 REPORTS continued

(b) Reports from West Berkshire District Councillors continued

Councillor Jeffery reported that he had received complaints from constituents regarding the condition of Station Road and advised that an electronic bus time display in the bus stop on the western side of The Broadway was now functioning, having been faulty. Councillor Dillon advised that downloadable Apps also provided live tracking of buses.

**(c) Reports by Town Council Appointees to Outside Bodies
Lady Frances Winchcombe's Thatcham Foundation**

No reports received.

Thatcham Relief in Need Charity and Thatcham Parochial Charities

No updates to report.

**FULL/2020/80 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.

1 member of the press left the meeting

FULL/2020/81 RECOMMENDATION FROM THE STAFF COMMITTEE

Members considered a report from the Town Clerk and a recommendation from the Staff Committee, arising from its meeting on 11th March 2020 (STA/2020/07) regarding a confidential staffing matter.

RESOLVED to proceed with the recommendation from the Staff Committee arising from its meeting on 11th March 2020.

There being no further business the Mayor declared the meeting closed at 8.51pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____